

Northam indicated that the alteration he suggested would be on all fours with the position in the Arbitration Court. I do not think that is so. In the Arbitration Court there are, as a general rule, two disputant parties—the employer and the employee—and it is necessary for them to submit their cases for decision. The consumer, who is very vitally interested in almost all the cases that come before the court, has no representation other than by the President, who again is appointed by the Government of the day, whatever its political complexion may be, to represent the community at large.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is a very weak argument to put forward at six minutes past six.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member drew the parallel and I am pointing out that I do not think it applies. Hence it seems to me that the present set-up, which has been preserved in all the States following on the Commonwealth system, is not unsuccessful, is not open to any real or trenchant criticism, and should not be altered. Consequently, I oppose the motion.

On motion by Mr. Brady, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 19th July, 1949.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

As to Rental Home Applicants, Fremantle.

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Chief Secretary:

What is the Government's reason for forcing applicants for rental homes in the Fremantle area to serve a term in the converted Army hut camps before allotting them a home, when this condition is not enforced in any other part of the State?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

In the Fremantle district the Housing Commission converted into flats a number of Army camps to provide temporary accommodation for urgent hardship cases. The occupants of these flats were given to understand that, subject to satisfactory tenancy, they would be transferred to Commonwealth-State rental homes as opportunity offered. In order to honour this promise, the Commission has for some time past allocated the homes erected at Hilton Park to occupants of the Army flats in the Fremantle district and key personnel of the Electricity Commission employed at the South Fremantle power station. Accommodation vacated in the flats is then made available to other urgent cases.

A similar policy is not necessary in districts other than Fremantle as the Commission has only two small converted camps at Wembley and South Guildford and the placing of tenants from these camps does not present the same difficulty as there are a number of centres in proximity to Perth in which they can be housed.

MOTOR VEHICLES.

(a) *As to Allocation Board and Staff.*

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Honorary Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many members comprise the Motor Vehicles Allocation Board?

(2) What are the names of the members?

(3) What salaries are paid to members of the board?

(4) How often does the board sit?

(5) How many other employees are there on the board?

(6) What has been the total cost of administration of the board each year since its inception to the 30th June, 1949—

(a) State Government;

(b) Commonwealth Government?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied :

- (1) Two.
- (2) A. J. McLaren and P. D. Ferguson.
- (3) Mr. Ferguson, £669 per annum.
Mr. McLaren, sitting fee only, £2 2s.
- (4) When there are sufficient vehicles to allocate. Thirty meetings have been held from the 1st January, 1949, to the 30th June, 1949.
- (5) Three.
- (6) (a) £1,660 5s. 10d., which also includes expenses for tractor control and cost of staff for this purpose.
- (b) From the 26th May, 1947, to June, 1947, £130 approximately ; July, 1947 to June, 1948, £2,623 14s. 1d. ; July, 1948, to December, 1948, £2,153 9s.

(b) *As to Applications for Purchase Permits.*

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Chief Secretary :

- (1) What has been the total number of applications received by the Motor Vehicles Allocation Board since its inception to the 30th June, 1949 to purchase new motor vehicles of North American origin ?
- (2) What is the total number of cars and utilities of North American origin that have come under the jurisdiction of the Motor Vehicles Allocation Board for the purpose of release by permit since the inception of the board to the 30th June, 1949 ?
- (3) What has been the total number of applications—
 - (a) received ;
 - (b) approved
 by the Motor Vehicles Allocation Board to purchase—
 - (a) cars ;
 - (b) utilities

of North American origin from persons domiciled in the Eastern Goldfields districts, east of Coolgardie, and including Leonora, Gwalia and Laverton ?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied :

- (1) 4,540—since the inception of the State board.
- (2) Since the inception of the State board—Cars, 326 ; Utilities, 205.
- (3) It is impossible to supply this information with any degree of accuracy. List of permits is available for inspection by the hon. member at his convenience.

LIQUID FUEL BOARD.

As to Staff and Operations.

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Chief Secretary :

- (1) Are the Liquid Fuel Board's office and staff in this State still operating ?
- (2) What duties are they performing and how many are employed on the staff ?
- (3) If still operating, what is the amount paid monthly for salaries ?
- (4) What is the highest salary paid to any member of the staff ?
- (5) What number of persons comprise the Liquid Fuel Board in this State ?
- (6) What remuneration or allowance is paid to members of the board ?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied :

The State Government has no authority in liquid fuel organisation in this State, the whole matter being organised and financed by the Commonwealth Government. The following answers are, however, supplied to the hon. member's questions :—

- (1) Not "operating" but office accommodation and staff have been maintained under instructions from the Commonwealth Government.
- (2) Some employees have been made available on loan to other departments ; others have been engaged in overtaking arrears of recording and filing and anything else which is necessary to keep the organisation intact in conformity with Commonwealth instructions. Employees number 76.
- (3) Approximately £1,700.
- (4) £747 per annum.
- (5) Three.
- (6) Nil.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 3), £4,700,000.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th July.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [2.25] : I want to join other members who have protested against the altered method of calling Parliament together. We feel there are not many opportunities in the session for private members to ventilate various matters, particularly regarding their own districts, and that in the elimination of the Address-in-reply debate they have been robbed of one of their few chances of speaking on general topics. Of course, one would not expect the Government supporters in this Chamber

to endorse our protest, because one of the outstanding features of this Parliament has been member's dumb docility.

Hon. L. A. Logan : We object to that !

Hon. W. J. Mann : Repeat that !

Hon. G. FRASER : A lot of people often object to facts, but nevertheless must face up to them. On many occasions Government supporters have remained dumb during debates on vital measures ; so that no protest can be expected from them concerning the procedure adopted in calling Parliament together on this occasion.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : You are a bit inconsistent, you know !

Hon. L. A. Logan : Have a look at the voting results !

Hon. G. FRASER : I am talking about voicing protests on behalf of our constituents on many matters vitally affecting them. One would not expect to say something that is correct without raising the ire of someone whose conscience is probably hurting him.

Hon. A. L. Loton : The hon. member has not got a conscience !

Hon. G. FRASER : One is pleased to be able to attend here today under different circumstances from those which have prevailed in the past few weeks. Both Government and Opposition members can join in feeling pleasure that the strike in this State is over and that we are again almost back to normal. I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks and gratitude to the State Disputes Committee of the A.L.P. for the wonderful work it did in regard to the settlement of the strike. If it had not been for the efforts of those men, we would probably still be labouring under chaotic conditions. While I congratulate the State Disputes Committee on its attitude, I cannot extend the same thanks to the State Government.

Hon. R. M. Forrest : What did you want it to do ?

Hon. G. FRASER : I wanted the State Government to endeavour to obtain a settlement just as the State Disputes Committee did.

Hon. R. M. Forrest : It had nothing to do with the State Government.

Hon. G. FRASER : When a request was made to the Government it said, " We cannot intervene. This dispute is Australia-wide and no settlement can be arrived at locally."

Hon. R. M. Forrest : Give in to the " commos " !

Hon. G. FRASER : The State Disputes Committee did not give in to the " commos " any more than the Government did. It was up to the Government to do everything possible to effect a settlement. The Government did not think twice about intervening in conjunction with the employers when it came to imposing some penalty on the workers. It could intervene then ; but when it came to doing something towards a settlement of the strike—

Hon. R. M. Forrest : It was nothing to do with the Government.

Hon. G. FRASER : —it sat on the fence. It was nothing to do with the Government when the employers wanted to take action, either, but it could intervene then !

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : What did Mr. Chifley do ?

Hon. G. FRASER : While I can congratulate the State Disputes Committee on its action, I am sorry to say I cannot do the same so far as the Government is concerned.

Hon. R. M. Forrest : What did you want it to do ?

Hon. G. FRASER : I wanted it to take some action because the employers said they would do nothing so far as local settlement was concerned.

Hon. H. Hearn : They never said any such thing !

Hon. G. FRASER : I am not an employer like the hon. member and can only be guided by what appears in the Press.

The Chief Secretary : I presume you read the leading article ?

Hon. G. FRASER : I had seen it in the Press before the leading article appeared. The leading article stated that the Government, when approached to intervene, was prepared to back the Employers' Federation in the attitude adopted by that organisation.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : The State Government backed up Mr. Chifley.

Hon. G. FRASER : So did the State Disputes Committee, but that did not stop the committee from doing something locally.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : Mr. Chifley did something locally, too, in regard to his legislation.

Hon. G. FRASER : The State Government just sat on the fence and refused to do anything. If it had not been for the good

graces and the hard work of the State Disputes Committee, we would never have had the trouble settled.

I wish to take the opportunity now to bring forward one or two local matters. I shall not take up much of the time of the House. I believe that one particular portion of my electorate has received a very raw deal from the Government, or a Government department. I refer to North Fremantle and the extension of the sewerage system to that area. This district has been, all these years, without it, notwithstanding that some 24 or 25 years ago, when I was a local municipal councillor, I moved for the extension of the system to that district. At the time, we were told by the experts that it was impossible, or rather that there were great engineering difficulties involved, so nothing was done.

The Chief Secretary: When was that?

Hon. G. FRASER: Approximately 1925 or 1926. My reply then was that I could see no greater engineering difficulties in that area than there were in such a place as Sydney. The two places were comparable from the point of view of hills and dales, and so on, and yet Sydney was sewered. Down the years nothing was done until just prior to the war, when a start was made. The war intervened, and that was the end of the programme. Since the war ended, the sewerage people have come back to the district and connections are now being made. This is one of the parts of the metropolitan area that can least afford expense, yet the unfortunates there have to foot the bill for the present high costs of these services. Naturally enough, most of them will apply to the Government for the progressive payment system. Under that heading we find they must first of all pay five per cent.—I raised this matter by way of a question in order to get the information—for the loan of the money. That, in these days, is a very high rate.

In the earlier period it was a case of dear money and cheap labour or working costs. Today we find it is cheap money and dear working costs. But anyone who comes under the progressive payment scheme of the Government for sewerage connections, has to meet both dear costs and dear money. I was rather astounded at the reply of the Minister when he informed me that the Treasury was paying four per cent. for the money it loaned to the Sewerage Department, because that seems a

high figure for a Government to have to pay for its money. Particularly is that so when we make a comparison with the rate that has to be paid by the man off the street who goes to the Commonwealth Bank to obtain a loan for a particular purpose. He can get his money at 3½ per cent.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You try and see how easy it is to do that!

Hon. G. FRASER: It is quite easy for a person off the street to walk into the Commonwealth Bank today and borrow money for a particular purpose—that is, housing—at 3½ per cent. interest.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The rate is 4½ per cent.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am telling the hon. member it is 3½ per cent.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I am telling you what I was told last week.

Hon. G. FRASER: And I am telling the hon. member the rate that applied in the cases I have handled. Any branch of the Commonwealth Bank in the metropolitan area will arrange a loan at 3½ per cent. yet we find that a Government department cannot make better provision than four per cent., which means that by the time it farms it out to other departments, another one per cent. is added; and five per cent. is a high rate to pay today. On top of that, these people have to pay 2½ per cent. for supervision, making a total of 7½ per cent. to be paid on the money they require under the progressive payment system of the Sewerage Department. I cannot see why 2½ per cent. is charged.

If such people made their own private arrangements, there would be no 2½ per cent. for supervision, because the tender price would be the complete amount at which the contractor would be prepared to carry out the installation. The only extra work, as far as I can see, that the department has to do is to call tenders, and I do not see that 2½ per cent. can be charged for that. I hope the department, or the Government, will look into the matter and see whether these charges can be lessened. I repeat, 7½ per cent. is a very high rate for these people to have to pay, particularly in view of the fact that they are having their connections made at a time when costs are at their peak.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What is about the cost involved with an ordinary four or five-roomed house?

Hon. G. FRASER: I admit this is a very bad area inasmuch as there is a tremendous amount of stone in some parts, and in the low-lying portions the mains are put down under water, so that extra expense is involved. In the low-lying areas, if a connection has to be made, the water has to be pumped out while the work is being done. Those I have checked that have been done in the last few months, have cost about £130 to £140.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That means about £3 for superintendence.

Hon. G. FRASER: That goes on the whole time.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Does it?

Hon. G. FRASER: The five per cent. goes on the whole time.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: But the 2½ per cent. would be the one charge.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not know. They charge 2½ per cent., but for what period, I do not know. When added to the five per cent., it makes a very dear job indeed. Another point is that on occasions when the plumber has come along to do the connecting, he has experienced some difficulty. The Sewerage Department, wherever possible, makes a mark on a fence or some other convenient place, to show where the junction for a particular house is; but the fence may be removed, with the result that a fair amount of guesswork is involved. If the plumber has to dig in order to get at the junction, he might have to go six or eight feet, partly through stone, which means a difficult and costly job. Instead of the department putting a mark on a fence, which might disappear, it would be better if a piece of wire were run from the junction to a little above the surface of the ground to indicate the exact spot. The difficulties experienced at present have added considerably to the costs of connection.

Another matter in regard to my province, and one on which I asked the Leader of the House to obtain information for me, is in connection with the Tydeman report. This district has been badly hit by the fact that the Tydeman report contained only vague information and the people therefore do not know where they stand. A number of workers' homes were to be built there during the past two or three years, but they have been held up, pending some finality in regard to the harbour report. When

we got the report, we were no further advanced. I am anxious for something to be done and for definite information to be given us so that the people of the district will know where they are in this regard.

The report shows that a bridge is to be built or that a line is to be run off the present railway to a point near Point Brown. On examining Point Brown, and the diagram supplied in the report, it will be seen that this spot is somewhere north of Point Brown; but through lack of definite information as to where the line is to run, the whole district is in a state of uncertainty. As I have said, the building of workers' homes is held up, and there is also to be considered the expenditure on sewerage work that is being done. If the report were more definite, perhaps a great deal of work that is being done would not be carried out, thereby saving unnecessary expenditure.

It has been suggested that I am asking for secret information, but I do not see that there can be anything confidential about where a railway is to run between two points. If fairly accurate information were given in this regard, the people concerned would know how best to act. If the proposal is proceeded with, it will mean the cutting up of the whole district. In some quarters it is said that the report is to be implemented in the next 50 years. If that is all that is entailed with regard to the railway, it will not matter, but taking into consideration the state of the railway bridge and the fact that 17 or 18 years ago we were told, when negotiating for a bridge over the Swan River, that the present traffic bridge was being built with an expected life of 20 years, I think we should be given more definite information now.

Within the last three or four years, some expert submitted the opinion that the present railway bridge then had a life of about seven years, which coincided with the original estimate. That would indicate that a new bridge must be built in the next four or five years, but as yet there appears to be no sign of Government activity in that direction and the people of the district are becoming disturbed because they do not know what is intended to be done in that regard. There has been one fatality already in connection with the railway bridge, and in view of the two estimates I have mentioned as to its life, residents are becoming worried about the matter. I hope the Minister will

be able to give some more definite information than I have so far been able to obtain in answer to my questions. The people, of the area naturally desire to know as soon as possible what portion of the district will be affected by the new railway, and desire some announcement about the new bridge.

I have been endeavouring to get from the Minister and the Government some information about housing, but the answers given to my questions have merely confirmed what I already knew and have not explained why Fremantle is the only area of the State where people must live for a term in the camps before qualifying for rental homes.

The Chief Secretary: That is not necessary.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Minister says that because we have certain camps in the area and other districts have not, these people must serve a term in the camps before obtaining rental homes.

The Chief Secretary: But you do not want preference given to people not living in the camps?

Hon. G. FRASER: If people not living in camps cannot get preference in the Fremantle area, why is it given to such people in other districts?

The Chief Secretary: But they do get preference in your area.

Hon. G. FRASER: They do not. Those who are not in the camps are getting no rental homes at all, and I think they should get a percentage of the available houses. I do not think my request is outrageous. In no other part of the State has a person to serve a term in a camp before being granted a rental home.

The Chief Secretary: They do not have to do that anywhere.

Hon. G. FRASER: I ask members to judge for themselves, in the light of the questions I have asked and the answers given.

The Chief Secretary: Those living in the camps are given preference.

Hon. G. FRASER: No-one can dispute that, but I am asking why people not living in camps are not given a percentage of the homes available in the Fremantle area. I want the same treatment given to the Fremantle people as is extended to those in other parts of the State.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The only advantage is that the people in Fremantle area have camps and many others have not.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member has not raised his voice in this Chamber with regard to housing conditions and the treatment of these people by the Government. I want the same conditions to apply in this regard in the Fremantle area as apply to the rest of the State. Anywhere except in the Fremantle area applicants, if their cases are good enough, are granted rental homes without first having to live in camps. A couple of years ago in this House I raised an objection because only two homes per month were being granted to residents in the camps. At that time there were about 160 people in the camps and they were being allotted 24 homes per year. I protested and asked that a greater percentage be given to those people.

Hon. H. Hearn: You got what you asked for.

Hon. G. FRASER: Instead of doing the sensible thing, the Government entirely reversed its policy and gave all the available homes to the camp dwellers. What I requested was that a happy medium be arrived at.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: They cannot build all the homes together.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am talking about a fair distribution of what homes are available.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You want one thing one week, and something else the next.

Hon. G. FRASER: First of all the Government gave those living in the camps no houses, and then the lot.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You are most inconsistent.

Hon. G. FRASER: I asked for a greater percentage of the available houses to be granted to camp dwellers—not 100 per cent. No-one wants all the available houses to be given to either section of the applicants. A happy medium is all that is required. Fair treatment should be given to all sections of the community, but that is not what is being done in the Fremantle area. I know of cases of people whose need is urgent, as is proved by inspection and everything else, and who are approved as suitable for rental homes—

Hon. W. R. Hall: Outside the metropolitan area?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am speaking of persons who, from a health point of view, can be certified as being unfit for life in the camps. Because of the fact that all homes

built in the area are being allotted to camp dwellers, other people are excluded. What we want is a little consideration to each section of the community and not all the homes allotted to one particular section. What we are asking for is only what is being done in all the other parts of the State. The other day the Chief Secretary, in reply to a question of mine, stated that other urgent cases in the Fremantle area are housed in the Melville, Naval Base, Gun Park and Mosman Park camps. It sounds very nice on paper.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: You have not been out in the country very much.

Hon. G. FRASER: But what do we find? At the moment we have 17 cases of eviction listed in the Fremantle area. There is not one camp into which we can put these people. So, what is the use of coming along to this House and telling members that there is provision for urgent cases in the camps? I tell the Chief Secretary now that for all of the 17 cases listed for eviction within the next few weeks in the Fremantle area, there is not one camp available.

The Chief Secretary: There are a lot of big houses in Fremantle, and there are very few people in them.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the Chief Secretary will do something from a Government point of view, to take over these big houses to house the people, we will be very pleased. If the Chief Secretary cannot stand up to the job, and if his Government cannot provide the homes which it set out to do when elected, then it ought to take other action. This Government is the Government of the day and if it cannot do the job in one way, then it ought to do it in another. We would support it in any move in that direction. I repeat that for the 17 eviction cases listed within the next few weeks, there is not one camp available, let alone a house.

Therefore we find ourselves in a very unfortunate position and we feel in the Fremantle area that we are not getting a fair go. It is not because of the lack of representation. We have hammered the Government in order to try to get homes built in the Fremantle area, and I defy any supporter of the Government to produce figures—I know anything can be proved with figures—to show that we are receiving a fair proportion of the homes built in comparison with the applications and the number of needy cases. The applications

received in the Fremantle area, and the number of homes being built, cannot be compared to other parts of the State—excluding the North-West. I repeat, I will defy any supporter of the Government to say that the Fremantle area has ever had any sort of a deal from this Government.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Did you get any better from the last one?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. As a matter of fact, I have stated in this House before that for the first six months that this Government was in power it did not sign even one contract for the Fremantle area. I challenged the Government to produce one home that had been built after it had been in office for 12 or 13 months, and it could not do so.

The Chief Secretary: You are on very dangerous ground.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not on dangerous ground. "The West Australian" received my challenge the Monday after my election, which was approximately the 10th May. It was a challenge to the Minister to produce one house and as yet "The West Australian" has not printed that challenge. That was about 14 months ago, and yet when I went to the office, the editor told me that they would give me a fair go. That was the fair go I received from "The West Australian."

The Chief Secretary: You have not gone yet.

Hon. G. FRASER: The reason why "The West Australian" did not print my challenge was because it wanted to shield the Minister. He could not show me a house that had been built in the Fremantle area in the first 12 months that his Government had been in office. Can members wonder why we Fremantle members come along to this House protesting against the raw deal we have received so far as the housing question is concerned? All homes being constructed in the Fremantle area are being allotted to key men in the power station and to camp dwellers only. No other applicants are given a home, and that has been the position for some time. The Chief Secretary admitted that in answer to my question.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You had better shift the camps out of Fremantle.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yet the Government says it is making provision for these people. But what about the 17 eviction cases?

The Chief Secretary: You had better get the State Disputes Committee of the A.L.P. to settle the problem for you.

Hon. G. FRASER: There is a camp not yet completed at Naval Base, and that will be coming into use, in all probability, within the next month or two.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: That will solve the problem.

Hon. G. FRASER: No, it will not, because it will supply only six additional flats. That will be the last camp to be converted in the Fremantle area. There will be no more, and yet we are told that provision is being made for all the camp dwellers and the hundreds of applicants who have been examined and approved. That is the only consideration we can get—in the camps, and yet there are no camps available. If the Chief Secretary will look at the list of urgent cases at the State Housing Commission, he will have his eyes opened. There was an allotment of 38 rental homes to camp dwellers, but I do not know of any other contracts that have been let in the Fremantle area. We have always tried to impress upon the Government that Fremantle is an area that must have a large number of rental homes. It always has had, and it always should have.

Hon. H. Hearn: Why?

Hon. G. FRASER: Because it is an area where there are a large number of casual workers.

Hon. H. Hearn: Wharf lumpers?

Hon. E. M. Davies: No, furniture manufacturers!

Hon. G. FRASER: Most districts have settled populations but we have to carry a population that goes all over the State in order to do work. We have a larger percentage of casual workers than any other district.

Hon. W. J. Mann: How does that come about?

Hon. G. FRASER: Because of that, it is necessary that we should have more rental homes than the other part of the State. But what do we find? We are receiving less than any other area and by comparison we have received a very raw deal. That is why Fremantle members have been talking on this particular question for a number of years.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Taking the metropolitan area as a whole, you have not done too badly.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am talking about our portion of the metropolitan area—the port.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Why are the workers casual?

Hon. G. FRASER: If members representing other portions of the State like to have their say, well and good; but there are more casual workers in Fremantle than anywhere else. There are more seasonal occupations. For instance, there is wool.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They have more holidays down that way!

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: The work on wool goes on all the time.

Hon. G. FRASER: No, it does not. It might have done in the last 12 months or so, but usually there is an exodus from Fremantle after the seasonal work has finished. A number of the men leave Fremantle and travel to other parts of the State.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: What other industries are there? Can you name any?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. The oil companies employ a large number of men during certain times of the year, and when they are not required they have to migrate to other parts of the State for employment. Then there are the meat employees. A large number of them go to Wyndham each year, and there are others as well.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But their wives live in Fremantle.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, some of them; but there is a large casual population in Fremantle and that necessitates more rental homes.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It is a casual sort of place, isn't it?

Hon. G. FRASER: They are not the class of people who could buy a home in any particular place.

Hon. H. Hearn: Are there more there at election time?

Hon. G. FRASER: They cannot do so because of the fact that they are not there for very long, and most of them occupy rental homes. I am trying to impress upon the Government the necessity, not of cutting down the number of rental homes in Fremantle, but of increasing the number. If the Government will only give us a fair go in comparison with other portions of the State, we will be quite satisfied; and I do not think that is an unreasonable request to make.

When we found that the power house was to be built there, the Government did not make any bones about overcoming the hous-

ing problem for its employees. They are the only ones that get preference, and they are people coming in from other parts of the State to work on the power house. Those individuals, with the camp dwellers, are the ones receiving all the homes being allotted in the Fremantle district. Good luck to them! I have no complaint about that, but it seems to me there are urgent cases in the district that should be given some consideration and are not receiving it. So I am hoping that we will not have to raise our voices in protest again. I am satisfied that the Government should bestir itself. I know that it takes a lot to shift it. One could trot out a number of complaints from our own districts, and I hope there will be an opportunity to present them during the session.

Hon. G. Bennetts: All I can get for my constituents are 8 x 10 calico tents.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [3.1]: The Government should be congratulated that it did make an attempt to get this House and another place into working order without the necessity of a long Address-in-reply debate.

Hon. G. Fraser: I brought somebody in, anyway.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The hon. member who has just spoken has been exceptionally vocal on this occasion.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It is the longest speech he has ever made.

Hon. W. J. MANN: One can recall the time when his Party was in power and how few of the then Government's supporters ever spoke on the Address-in-reply. Mr. Fraser mentioned something about members "doing something." It comes with ill grace from him and members of his Party to talk of the dumb docility of Government supporters when we think of their record during past years. To be fair, I suppose the supporters of the Opposition in this House should be congratulated on the way that they have—

Hon. L. A. Logan: Supported the Government!

Hon. W. J. MANN: —listened to Caucus in that they should speak on every possible occasion and lose no opportunity of abusing the Government.

Hon. W. R. Hall: That is what we are here for.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The hon. member has suddenly awakened to that fact, because I cannot recollect any occasion when all the members of the Opposition spoke on the Address-in-reply. If my memory serves me correctly, this year, all of them, with one exception, have spoken at length on this Bill.

Hon. W. R. Hall: We have that right. Surely you do not want to take that from us!

Hon. W. J. MANN: No, I do not.

Hon. W. R. Hall: We have to keep this House going.

Hon. W. J. MANN: That is a new one! Going where?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The hon. member wants it to go West.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Mr. Fraser spoke about having a "fair go" with certain complaints. He said that he went to a certain place and saw a certain gentleman and after 16 or 18 months, nothing had happened. I once occupied a position similar to that of the gentleman Mr. Fraser referred to, and my practice was to give everyone a fair go. If a person came to me with a matter of no importance, I said to him: "Get out, and that quickly." If one has anything of value to say to a newspaper, it is given publicity, but I am not prepared to say what value could be placed on the hon. member's statement. I am only pointing out that there are "fair goes," and "fair goes," and the hon. member received the fair go, to which, I suppose, he was entitled.

Hon. G. Fraser: Mine was only about six lines.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I want to correct the hon. member with respect to a remark he made that any man off the street can go into the Commonwealth Bank and obtain money for 3½ per cent.

Hon. G. Fraser: I said for a particular purpose.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I would like to know the purpose.

Hon. W. J. MANN: One day last week, I went into the Commonwealth Bank and saw the sub-manager, I think, and I said to him, "Can I submit a case on behalf of a constituent of mine who desires some accommodation to build a home for himself?" This constituent was a young working man and he had waited until he

was almost desperate to obtain a home under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. As he felt he could wait no longer, he decided to build a home on the self-help principle, for which he desired some extra money. I was clearly told by the officer at the bank that the rate of interest was $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and if the hon. member does not like to accept that statement, I invite him to come with me and see the officer who told me, and get the information first-hand.

Hon. G. Fraser: A man can get money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I can give you the information pointing the other way.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The hon. member has my statement and offer. I want to congratulate the Government on the progress it is making under the most difficult conditions. Never in the history of this State have conditions been so difficult as they are today. No matter how it toils, it is faced with difficulties of every possible description, and I think it is facing up manfully to them and, all things considered, is doing a good job.

Hon. G. Bennetts: You have had plenty of homes built in your district.

Hon. W. J. MANN: No. If I liked to set up a moan and bellow, I could join all the Labour members and say, "I have not got so-and-so."

Hon. G. Bennetts: You get ten homes to every one we get.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Rubbish! I support the second reading of the Bill.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [3.8]: First of all, I would like to express my delight at seeing Mr. Baxter here again after his long illness, and I think everyone will agree with me in that. I congratulate him on his recovery.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Thank you.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There are just a few matters that require a reply from me, and I will deal first with those raised by Mr. Bennetts who said that one of the reasons for the deterioration of the finances and the difficult position in which the Government finds itself, was on account of the bulk handling facilities at Fremantle.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I said that I would stand corrected.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member is being corrected now! I think a member should be a little more sure of his facts before making such statements, and I think Mr. Bennetts got out of his depth a little when he spoke about the bulk handling facilities at Fremantle. He said that the Government had not received any money from Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. as a result of transferring the operations to that company from the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and that there was no agreement. There is an agreement, signed last year, and even if there had been no agreement, the Government is not dealing with people who are here today and gone tomorrow. It is a co-operative company owned by the farmers; and even if there was a delay in signing the agreement, which I admit there was, I do not think that any trouble could have been anticipated regarding it. The company has made good to date all the interest and sinking fund payments it should have paid, as was its duty.

Hon. G. Fraser: It has had a pretty fair go.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: And has given a fair go in return.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: What is wrong with the Government giving the company a fair go? Mr. Fraser seems to take exception to the fact that it has been treated fairly and has had a fair go.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is all we are asking for in connection with other things.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Most decidedly the Government has treated Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd., fairly. One of the first tasks I undertook as a Minister was to visit Fremantle in order to investigate the possibility of handing over the lease facilities to Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd. At that time it was expected that at least £120,000 would have been spent by the previous Government on the provision of additional facilities for the handling of wheat. We know what costs were two or three years ago.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Quite apart from the materials situation.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, and the labour problem as well. I say without fear of successful contradiction that the cost would

have been more like £200,000. I was criticised for the action that the Government took on this matter at my suggestion. I am not ashamed of what was done, particularly as Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd. considerably stepped-up the handling of wheat from the start. The most satisfactory arrangements that apply in this State are those that relate to the bulk handling of wheat at Fremantle. The Government has lost nothing in consequence of the action taken and has received all the money due to it.

During the course of his remarks Mr. Bennetts mentioned the use of pyrites at Norseman. He was on fairly good ground in that respect, but the position is not altogether as he stated. If pyrites were used in this State for the manufacture of superphosphate, it would cost the manufacturers, and eventually the farmers, quite a lot more money. I admit it is desirable, if possible, to use local products for the manufacture of superphosphate, but if we find that such a course would mean an additional cost of 15s. per ton, we must seriously consider the position. I believe the answer to the situation would be, if we were to use local pyrites for the manufacture of superphosphate at Norseman, for the Commonwealth Government to provide the necessary money in order to alter the existing plant or put in a fresh installation. However, that is not the point about which we need be so concerned. It would be a long job. It may be desirable in some instances to use pyrites. We know it was done during the war. While I certainly would like to help the Norseman district, it would be ridiculous to advocate the sole use of pyrites for the purposes outlined. I think Mr. Bennetts also mentioned something about eggs, but I do not think his comments were made when discussing the Supply Bill.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You will have an opportunity to correct him on that later on.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, he will be corrected when we come to deal with the Marketing of Eggs Bill.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [3.14]: The Supply Bill, when presented at this stage of the session, usually is passed quite promptly; but this time I appreciate

the fact that there was no opportunity for an Address-in-reply debate. In consequence, I informed members that I would not exercise the right given me to hurry the measure through at the one sitting. After members heard the speech just delivered by Mr. Fraser, they probably thought the Government was justified in doing away with the Address-in-reply debate this year.

Hon. G. Fraser: You do not like that class of criticism.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know an election will be looming shortly, and I venture to say that Mr. Fraser will be one of those most anxious to get away to help his comrades in the difficult task before them, and certainly he will agree that the House should not be sitting at that stage.

Hon. G. Fraser: I know who will face the most difficult task.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Various complaints were voiced during the course of the debate, but it was very pleasing to me to hear members speak and launch their so-called complaints, grumbles or growls—call them what we like—against the Government. On the other hand, it was very gratifying indeed to know that so many of the complaints were absolutely groundless and could be fully explained away.

Hon. G. Fraser: Perhaps to your satisfaction!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The expression used by the voluble gentleman who keeps interjecting was something about dumb—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Doras.

Hon. G. Fraser: No, docility.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That was the expression. No doubt, there were good reasons. If some persons thought about the situation, they must have realised the very difficult position confronting the State today. There are others who are not dumb, but they never mention in any shape or form what had been done previously. There was no mention about the arrangements that had been made by the previous Administration before the war ended for coping with peacetime conditions. There were no suggestions whatever that any post-war arrangements had been made. There was no mention of the appreciation of the great difficulties ahead, such as we are experiencing at present. There was no suggestion of the shortening of hours and therefore the lessening of production—

none whatever—nor was there any reference to the various strikes or to the fact that we cannot get ships turned round quickly.

It was of great significance that the members who spoke against the Government were all from Fremantle—where the ships are very slow in being turned round. There was no reference by them to strikes and the slow work on the waterfront. There was no mention of the shipping strike nor yet of the industrial upheavals in the Eastern States that have prevented the production of commodities essential for housing, in the shape of building materials, iron and so forth. They did not speak of the shortage of water pipes. No-one can possibly build a house unless the water is laid on.

All those commodities have to be secured from the Eastern States and supplies have been held up, especially during the last few years, in consequence of strikes and the extreme shortage of labour. On the other hand, what have we heard? We listened to a great many complaints that were not reasonable at all. They were complaints of the type that one would expect from a person one met in the street and who, while voicing loudly his grievances, had not really given any serious thought to the general situation.

In the course of his remarks, Mr. Fraser complained about the camps provided in his province. If he so desires, I have not the slightest doubt that the Housing Commission would be only too pleased to shift the camps from where they are situated to some other area where they would be appreciated. True, very great difficulties have been experienced at Fremantle. What the Housing Commission did was to convert a large number of Army huts into camps and make them available to persons in the most necessitous circumstances, with a promise that houses would be made available for them as soon as possible.

Hon. G. Fraser: Are you trying to make out that this affects only Fremantle whereas it is a State-wide matter?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am dealing with the hon. member's complaints regarding the camps at Fremantle. When he said that persons were promised houses when they were given temporary accommodation, he also complained because other people who were living in shocking conditions as well, were not provided for. But they will get those camps as soon as they are vacated. What on earth is wrong with that?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Far better than living in caravans, as people in other places have to do.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, unfortunately some people have to do that, not only in Fremantle but also in other parts of the country. Mr. Fraser did not make a suggestion of any sort, size or description as to how this difficulty could be overcome. If he would spend as much time and energy on trying to find means to overcome these difficulties instead of merely finding fault with things which we know exist, which we are doing our utmost to correct, and which unfortunately are due to the fact that no proper foresight was displayed prior to 1947—

Hon. G. Fraser: That is not right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is, and whether right or wrong, that is what the people thought at the time of the election. Take another complaint by the hon. member—the Tydeman report on the Fremantle harbour. Mr. Tydeman made an excellent report on the extension and future of the harbour.

Hon. G. Fraser: I did not make any complaint about his report.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member will keep quiet, I shall be able to show that he did. He complained that we had not told him where the bridge would go.

Hon. G. Fraser: I was asking for information. That is not making a complaint.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am glad to hear that the hon. member did not make a complaint, so I shall say that he did not complain about the Government at all, but merely referred to the Tydeman report. I remind the hon. member that this is a report which has to be considered, and before it can be considered, surveys must be made. It is a broad outline report, and surveys have not been made. Nor has it been decided that the report shall be adopted. How is it possible, then, for any Government to say what route the railway will take or where the bridge will be built? To do that is impossible. Further, the residents of North Fremantle are not the only ones who will be affected. North Fremantle is only a portion of the district. The railway has to be taken along the south side of the river to a point opposite Point Brown; consequently others in addition

to the residents of North Fremantle are concerned. It is impossible to say what will be done until the report is considered.

Hon. G. Fraser: Have you started to consider it yet?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member also asked about residents of North Fremantle having to pay five per cent. for money and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for supervision on sewerage connections. Of course there is a charge for supervision; somebody has to pay for it at North Fremantle, just as people in all the other suburbs have to pay for it. I do not know why those people should pay the Government that percentage in view of the hon. member's remarks that it was crass stupidity to do so as anyone could walk into the Commonwealth Bank and get the money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Hon. G. Fraser: You cannot twist my remarks around like that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not twisting the hon. member's remarks around; I am merely pointing out what he said, and I am pleased that he now appreciates that what he said was wrong. Obviously, if anyone could borrow money from the Commonwealth Bank at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., why not the people of Fremantle?

Hon. G. Fraser: I said for a particular purpose.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What is this but a particular purpose?

Hon. G. Fraser: It would not be for building.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It would be for improvements. Trust moneys are lent for such a purpose; it is the best security available. However, it might be that the bank does not agree with Mr. Fraser.

Concern was expressed by Sir Charles Latham as to where the money was obtained to meet the deficit in the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the financial year just closed. The money came from a carry-over of unspent loan funds. Ultimately it is expected that the Grants Commission will make good the deficit and, when that is done, the loan money that has been temporarily used will be repaid.

The question of the Government's guaranteeing an overdraft for a coalmining company was also raised by Sir Charles Latham, but I point out that both companies have been assisted in this way. These guar-

antees are given with the object of increasing the production of coal by mechanisation of the mines. Both companies were already operating on overdrafts and required additional money. A bank in the ordinary way would not advance the whole of the money necessary to provide machinery, and, as the Government is vitally concerned in securing an increase in the quantity of coal produced, it is felt that the guaranteeing of an increase in the overdrafts is fully justified, having regard to the economic benefits the State will enjoy as a result of the increased coal production following the installation of the machinery.

A protest was also voiced by Sir Charles against the Government's making advances for the assistance of industry. However, as he pointed out, Parliament has already given the Government this power by legislation. Perhaps Sir Charles will move to have the Industry (Advances) Act, 1947, repealed.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Do not encourage me in that direction.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Still, I am sure the hon. member fully realises that, for the sake of the State's economy, the Treasury should be given some authority to assist industry, both primary and secondary, for the general welfare of Western Australia. In previous years the hon. member has supported proposals for loans to the farming industry.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The position of the farmers has improved now.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Extreme emphasis was laid on the financial position by Mr. Gray, who said that the general world position should have made the Government more careful. He, however, neglected to say anything about Commonwealth finance, which most seriously affects State finance; and, further, one cannot expect an enormous surplus in the Commonwealth and also one in the State. No State under present world conditions could carry the burden of so-called free medicine, unemployment pay, pensions, call-up money on wharves, with such high taxation and need for making up arrears of maintenance during the war years, when very little thought seems to have been given to the future financial position of the State.

The deficit was due to rising costs and to the additional rehabilitation work done by the railways beyond what was contemplated in the Budget. The railway revenue was

less than was expected, because of the need to divert 51 locomotives to water haulage when otherwise they would have been earning income from the transport of other commodities. Owing to the lack of locomotives, about £100,000 has to be paid as subsidies for the road transport of superphosphate. Labour costs rose beyond the anticipations of the Government, and the long dry summer conditions necessitated water haulage by the railways, again to a degree not anticipated.

The very large accumulation of deferred maintenance on the railways was by no means all due to the interruption of the war. It was partly the result of neglect over the years since 1933, and the Government is determined to overtake those arrears, even though the cost may be heavy. I point out that much of this outlay could have been avoided had the previous Administration provided funds for proper maintenance, as has been shown by the report of the recent Royal Commission. The hon. member will note that I have not emphasised the effect of the 40-hour week, although, of course, that was the main cause of the increased cost of labour. I am pleased to say that in these remarks I am supported by Mr. Bennetts, who said—

Our previous Commissioner of Railways was not in a happy position so far as the finances of the Railways were concerned.

Members will see that to a large extent the deficit was due to the losses incurred by the railways.

The original group of 37 houses at Hilton Park was constructed under four contracts made between April, 1945, and April, 1946, and the group was finally completed in April, 1947. It was expected that the contractor would carry on with repetitive work, but he intimated after the completion of his contract that he could not undertake further work. Tenders were called in July, 1947, but the prices were considered too high and no tender was accepted. A joint approach was then made by the Fremantle Council and the State Housing Commission to local builders and the problem was discussed at a well-attended meeting of Fremantle builders held in October, 1947. As a result, a liaison service was set up in Fremantle to assist builders, and an officer of the State Housing Commission was deputed to attend at Fremantle twice weekly specially to attend to builders' requirements.

This service has been appreciated and has reduced the time lag, as well as enabled

builders to have direct contact with the Housing Commission officers in their own sphere of operations. The joint approach of both authorities and the cooperation of builders enabled the Commission to undertake a further batch of contracts spread over eight separate contracting firms, resulting in the completion of a further 43 homes. In addition, 94 homes are under construction and contracts are now being arranged for an additional 58. To further ease the position the Commission acquired the Naval Base military camp and converted it into flats. In the past 12 months over 40 families have been comfortably housed at this centre.

The position has been made more difficult at Fremantle as the result of the number of properties changing hands, purchasers taking action to obtain possession and, I understand, of large houses having few occupants in them. The Fremantle Municipal Council has worked in close cooperation with the Commission and whilst the programme at Fremantle has been fraught with difficulty, nevertheless the combined efforts of all associated with the industry have resulted in substantial progress being made in recent months.

With regard to the complaints about the State Housing Commission, considerable improvement has been effected since the Commission entered its new quarters. Members are well aware of the difficulties of administration in the old building. The counter staff at present is sufficient for normal requirements, but on occasions difficulty is experienced in handling an unexpectedly large number of inquirers. Arrangements have been made for a relief inquiry officer.

During his speech, Mr. Hall quoted a specific instance with respect to the difficulty experienced by the St. John Ambulance Association in securing supplies. The file shows that approval was indicated on the 5th August, 1947, after an inspection at Kalgoorlie by officers of the Commission. Plans and specifications were not lodged until the 1st December, 1948, and the permit was issued on the 13th December, 1948. Surely the blame for inability to procure materials cannot be laid at the door of the Commission. The time which elapsed between the date of notification of approval and the lodgment of plans would have been sufficient to complete the building, but unfortunately the applicant is now faced with the procurement of materials at a time when supplies are most difficult to obtain owing to the recent industrial dispute.

The Government recognises the difficult position with respect to materials. Considerable interruption in supplies has occurred since December last, mainly through power breakdowns and more recently the coal strike. The timber industry shows signs of improvement—it was the least of the industries affected by the coal strike. The limitation of exports and the new mills shortly coming into production will improve the position. Supplies of cement have been exceedingly difficult to obtain owing to expanding Government works and notwithstanding good average tonnages from the local works. The Government has imported a large quantity of cement and will continue importing it until the local company can increase its plant and output.

A committee of Government officers has been set up to obtain materials from abroad. It will coordinate all Government buying and cooperate with merchants and others who are in a position to assist. The field will be wide and cover all lines in short supply. With regard to the complaint about the erection in the metropolitan area of a big hotel and other large buildings, I know of no new hotel project and assure the House that every application for an industrial permit is carefully examined by the State Housing Commission and the Department of Industrial Development. Only a very limited number of such projects are authorised and then only those proved to be the most essential.

With respect to accommodation in out-back areas for railway employees, the State Housing Commission makes a proportion of homes available in the area in which it is building. The Railway Department is now actively taking up the question of home-building and the State Housing Commission will provide permits for a balanced and expanding programme.

The Black Diamond open-cut was referred to by Mr. Gray. The open-cut is progressing satisfactorily and at the present time a considerable body of coal has been uncovered. There is little doubt that the operations of the company have disclosed a very large area which can be worked by open-cut methods. While the engineer referred to by Mr. Gray—Mr. Johnstone—did recommend that the scheme of operations should be altered, he agreed that the open-cut had very great prospects. Other engineers who reported on the project were of the opinion that there were sound reasons governing its commence-

ment by the company at its present site. During the last two or three years there has arisen a greater demand for coal and the Black Diamond project, coming into operation so rapidly, has helped very considerably to meet the demand.

As to the Southern Cross-Coolgardie road, I would point out in reply to Mr. Hall that the distance between the No. 5 Pumping Station and Coolgardie is 152 miles and that in December, 1946, most of this length of the road was unconstructed. During the past two and a half years, 76 miles, or half of the length, has been constructed, 68 miles having been surfaced with bitumen or tar primed. At the Coolgardie end of the road, work has proceeded continuously and as fast as possible with the labour and plant available. It is intended to assemble men and plant and establish an organisation in the vicinity of Southern Cross to begin construction between Southern Cross and Yellowdine. The Government is fully seized of the importance of this road. It has provided the sum of £175,000 for the construction of the road between the No. 5 Pumping Station and Coolgardie.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Will that gang go to Southern Cross?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The guess of the hon. member is as good as mine and, as he is in the Labour movement, he might have a better idea. The surfacing of 68 miles of this road, having regard to the claims of many other roads and works and the provision of the £175,000 I have mentioned, shows that this road has not been neglected.

Hon. W. R. Hall: It should have been constructed years ago.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I agree entirely with the hon. member. He confirms my early remark that we are suffering now because many things that should have been done long ago have not been attended to. An announcement referred to by Mr. Bennetts related to the appointment of additional dentists for the schools dental service, an expansion of which has been approved by the Government to the extent of four additional dentists. Unsuccessful endeavours have been made to secure three dentists locally and from the United Kingdom. So far only two have accepted appointments and commenced work. It is proposed to station the next appointee at Kalgoorlie, provided the necessary accommodation can be obtained.

Goldfields school children and those in the surrounding districts will then have in their midst a dentist capable of giving more regular treatment than that which has been available hitherto. These children are not as badly off as others in country districts where no dentist at all is in practice. As regards dental treatment for pensioners and indigents, these are at no less a disadvantage than their fellows in other country areas. They can, however, get treatment at the Perth Dental Hospital. There was a concessional arrangement with the Dental Association by which members took impressions and, after the making of the plates by the Dental Hospital from those impressions, the plates were forwarded to the dentists, who fitted them and made any small adjustments. Some time ago, however, the Dental Association decided that it was unwilling to undertake this work except at full charges. It is considered that the association's attitude arises from the extreme pressure under which its members are working in their private practices, which would be limited to some extent by undertaking honorary or semi-honorary work.

With reference to the medical examination of school children, those attending schools in the metropolitan area are examined with a frequency of slightly under two years. In country areas the frequency is from three to three and a half years. In the metropolitan schools only selected age-groups are examined, whereas in country schools children of all ages are examined.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I was speaking not only of Kalgoorlie, but also of country districts.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is fully realised that the provision of decent accommodation for employees goes a long way towards obtaining a contented staff; and while everything possible is being done by the Railway Department to speed up the construction of houses, the progress in this direction has fallen short of the target on account of the staff position and the shortage of materials, conditions which prevail everywhere. Merredin is a large junction station and the majority of railway men centred there are traffic employees. It is assumed, therefore, that Mr. Bennetts, who spoke on this subject, had the wages staff of the Traffic Branch in mind, and in regard to the transfer of these men the following is the practice: In the case of, say, a vacancy

for a guard at Merredin, rather than transfer a guard from the metropolitan area, a local head shunter would be offered the job, which in his case would mean promotion.

A similar procedure would be followed when a head shunter was required by promoting a shunter to the vacant position. In respect of locomotive staff, if a driver were required at Merredin, invitations would be extended to, say, the staff of the East Perth locomotive depot; but if no response were forthcoming the driver with the longest service in the depot would be called upon to transfer to Merredin. This arrangement has the blessing of the union concerned and it appears to be giving general satisfaction. Incidentally, staff transferred to centres where suitable accommodation is unobtainable are entitled to claim an allowance of 30s. a week for a maximum of six months.

The reorganisation of the Railway Department became essential and the best men available were procured. It is too early to see the effect. However, Mr. Bennetts need not have any fears that the Government is not acting in the best interests of the people of Western Australia but in the interests of single individuals. No-one has ever suggested that individuals are in any way unhappy or disappointed as a result of the Government's action in applying what are believed to be the best means of obtaining the best men.

Regarding the alleged preference to the despatch of Bunbury trains, presumably the reference was to the "Australind." This train is not called upon to handle the large amount of van traffic carried by the Kalgoorlie trains, and it is to this factor that the bulk of the late departures from Perth can be attributed. The Kalgoorlie express leaves Perth at 5 p.m. and not 5.30 p.m. as is reported to have been stated by one hon. member. An examination of the records for May shows that the train was on time on 14 occasions; and with regard to the latest departure for the month, the train was 48 minutes behind schedule on account of complications arising from a derailment. For June, up to the commencement of the strike, the train was recorded as being on time on 12 occasions and the worst performance was a 28-minute delay due to the express waiting for a connecting suburban train. On any occasion that a passenger train is held up by a goods train ahead of it in the section, there is certain to

be a good reason for this, even though it is not apparent to the uninitiated. Traffic working provides for preference to be given to passenger trains over goods trains, and similar preference to country trains over suburban services.

Reference was made by Mr. Bennetts to the transfer of policemen. The Commissioner has given me to understand that police officers are never transferred from one place to another until accommodation has been made available, except under exceptional circumstances; and the two cases the hon. member has in mind arose in exceptional circumstances. Mention was also made by Mr. Bennetts to the need for a close picket fence at the Norseman school. In this regard the opinion of the technical officers of the Public Works Department was sought; and as a result of their advice that the provision of such a fence would not abate the dust nuisance at the school, approval naturally has not been given for incurring this expense.

So far as the provision of a septic tank system at the Norseman school is concerned, a report from the Public Works Department indicated that on account of the nature of the soil, such an installation would be very costly and of doubtful success; and, further, in view of the other building commitments for the school, including the erection of a domestic science and manual training block, the Treasurer was unable to approve of the installation of a septic system.

In his concluding remarks Mr. Bennetts said, "Obviously, to get what they want presents no trouble at all to the people in the metropolitan area or the South-West," and I think that was the reason for so many inaccuracies creeping into his speech. He referred to the school which has been provided at Floreat Park. At present no State school exists at Floreat Park although it is hoped to proceed with the erection of one shortly. Regarding the Busselton school, to which he referred, although approval was granted as long ago as 1947 for the re-modelling of the existing building and for additions, in view of the extreme overcrowding and the necessity to use a local hall for school purposes, it has not yet been possible for this work to be completed. School building in all parts of the State is of necessity confined to the minimum requirements to accommodate children at each centre, owing to the serious position

and lag in the school building programme evident when the present Government took office.

The Fremantle hospital was the subject of comment by Messrs. Gray and Davies. I am advised by the Principal Architect that he has no knowledge of the committee to which Mr. Gray referred as having been set up to examine the position with regard to this hospital. The Town Planning Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, did visit the site with Mr. Huelin 10 or 11 years ago for the purpose of advising Mr. Huelin whether alterations should be made on the site. Some years ago the Principal Architect realised that extensive additions would be required to the Fremantle Hospital and he commenced an examination of the buildings and site to see what could be done.

Owing to pressure of other work the investigation was dropped, and he is not yet in a position to say whether a new hospital incorporating the existing buildings is a reasonable proposition. He is very definitely of the opinion that before any alterations and additions are made to the hospital, this problem should be thoroughly investigated. The £250,000 to which Mr. Davies referred was not an estimate of the cost of extension and rehabilitation. At that time estimates were being prepared for post-war works, and without any real knowledge of what would be required, it was considered advisable to include £250,000 for work on the Fremantle Hospital.

Several proposals were prepared for this work and were under discussion between the Medical Department and the local hospital people for many months. Finally the scheme was approved in February of this year, and the work was put in hand as soon afterwards as it was possible to arrange for it with the present limited labour force. A request was received by the architectural branch in May, 1948. This asked for a report on specific buildings but did not by any means cover the whole of the buildings on the site.

Part of the report was prepared and later was returned for further revision. Unfortunately this has not yet been done. The preparation of the report on the buildings, as sought by the Hospital Board in 1948, is in hand, and it will be submitted as soon as possible. The work of investigation respecting the air conditioning of the theatre is now being undertaken. Nothing

can be done in connection with the design of the R.M.O. quarters, additions to nurses quarters, the maternity hospital, and an additional ward for females, until it has been decided whether the present Fremantle Hospital can be economically and satisfactorily extended to form a suitable modern hospital. This general investigation will be undertaken as soon as possible, but it will take some time before a definite answer can be given.

As regards the Base Hospital, it must be remembered that the Government did not wish this building to be occupied for housing. The present occupants are squatters, and are there merely on sufferance. Had these people not taken possession, the building would have been removed long ago. It will be demolished as soon as the housing position has sufficiently improved to make possible the provision of homes for the present occupants. In these circumstances, expenditure must be kept to an absolute minimum.

Specifications have been prepared for the calling of tenders by the Tender Board for the supply of radio equipment, and by the Public Works Contract Clerk for the installation of radio equipment. No tenders were received for installation, and it was, therefore, necessary to recall tenders to cover both supply and installation. An order was placed with Messrs. Atkins, Ltd., the successful tenderers, on the 24th June, 1949. Since that time, the necessary equipment, which is not standard, has been in process of being made up, and progress to date is as follows:—

- (a) The three receivers have been completed.
- (b) The cabinet to house the receivers has been fabricated and is now awaiting painting, which cannot be carried out until gas supplies are available for baking the enamel.
- (c) The timber coverboards for the surface wiring have been prepared as far as was possible with limited electricity supplies.
- (d) The pillowphones and selector switches have been ordered and despatched ex Sydney.
- (e) Lead covered cable being unobtainable, substitute synthetic rubber covered cable has been ordered, delivery quoted at six weeks after resumption of electric power supplies, ex Sydney.
- (f) Manufacture of mould for the rubber covers to the pillowphones is in hand.

Considerable work has been done in the workshops, although nothing has yet been done at the site, nor will it be possible to commence operations at the hospital until supplies of cable are received.

Regarding the auxiliary plant referred to by Mr. Davies, Harris, Scarfe & Sandovers submitted a quote to the Fremantle Hospital, dated the 11th February, 1949, for the supply and delivery of an engine and generator, complete with sub-frame. On the 23rd March, 1949, the Tender Board, according to the hon. member, knew nothing, but the Tender Board's approval was granted on the 24th March—the next day. On the 5th May, 1949, Sandovers completed the foundation drawings, and these were received by the Public Works Department. On the 25th May, 1949, drawings of the engineroom were received from the Principal Architect—obviously these plans could not be put in hand prior to receipt of the foundation drawings from Harris, Scarfe & Sandovers on the 5th May, 1949—and on the same day the order was placed for installation, including foundations and engineroom, and for the work of prefabricating the engineroom, tank stands and tanks, silencer support, etc. Also, blue metal and cement for foundations were immediately ordered.

On the 3rd June, 1949, Harris, Scarfe & Sandovers completed the sub-frame and mounted the engine generator unit, and acceptance tests were run. On the 11th July, 1949—three days before Mr. Davies made his speech—the plant was handed over to the hospital in working order after completion of trials on site. It will be appreciated that, although the plant was quoted for on the 11th February, 1949, much planning work was required by both Harris, Scarfe & Sandovers and the Public Works Department prior to completion of the installation, and it is not considered, with this factor in mind, that the time taken has been excessive.

The position of the goldmining industry was referred to by Messrs. Heenan, Hall and Bennetts, who represent the Goldfields. It might be pointed out that the industry, physically, in Western Australia is in a good position. It is admitted that we have lost three substantial producers in the Wiluna, Triton and Emu mines, but in the first two cases this has resulted because the payable ore bodies have cut out, and not through the present high cost of production. In the case of the Emu, the company had exhausted its capital, and there is little doubt that this mine will at some future date be reopened.

On the other hand, there is a number of substantial future producers already proved and ready to go into production when the gold position is clarified. These include the Bullfinch property, held by the Western Mining Corporation, in the Yilgarn goldfield, the Porphyry mine, held by an amalgamated group, including Wiluna in the North Coolgardie Goldfield, the Western Mining Corporation's Coolgardie property, the Nevoria gold mine in the Yilgarn field, and the Mt. Charlotte project at Kalgoorlie. These will all be large producers. The goldmining industry is suffering at the moment because of the fact that costs, in common with all costs, have risen greatly, but the price of gold has remained static. It is probably the only commodity which has not increased in price.

Another serious factor is the shortage of labour. Many men left the Goldfields during the war and, because of rehabilitation courses and work offering nearer the cities, have not since the end of the war returned to the fields. The larger mines could greatly increase their output immediately if sufficient labour were offering. It will be noted of recent months in the Press that constant advertisements for labour on a large scale have been appearing. The State Government has done everything possible to assist the industry over the present difficult period. It has financed to the extent of £160,000 the purchase and operation of the Goldfields Firewood Supply Co., Ltd., which provides the fuel for the power manufactured on the Goldfields for the mines; and I am sure that Sir Charles Latham does not object to that.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: If it is a business proposition, why is not private finance available? That is what beats me. Hedges never asked for any advance when he ran it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: When Hedges was there, the company did not have to go so far out for wood; it did not have to pay so much to the employees; and it did not have the difficulty that the present company has with regard to labour. This money was advanced in order that wood could be obtained for the mines, and so that the company could get some mechanical equipment which would ease the labour conditions. It was a question of either making the advance or the mines closing down.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I would not mind a subsidy to the goldmining industry, but I do not like it being given to a business company such as this.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As the hon. member knows, when the Government advances money to a private company, it is well secured. In a case like this, where it is to keep an industry going the Government is as well secured as it is possible to be, but not from a banker's point of view. This advance was made to keep the industry going until other fuel was available. The company has to pay off a certain amount per annum, and the rollingstock, which would be useful to our own railways, would be available to us in the case of final default, which I do not think will eventuate. The State Government has also provided financial and technical assistance wherever possible, and has reduced domestic water charges in an endeavour to keep the people on the fields.

As the price of gold is governed internationally, the State Government has never relaxed its efforts to get the Commonwealth Government to take some action to increase the price, and thus enable the matter of high costs to be overcome. The State Government has also rendered considerable assistance to the mines in obtaining necessary plant and machinery expeditiously. It was greatly as a result of its efforts, in collaboration with the Chamber of Mines, that such Commonwealth assistance to the industry as has already been rendered was obtained.

The matter of assistance to prospectors was mentioned by Mr. Heenan. The State Government has continued the prospecting scheme which was inaugurated by its predecessors. The number of prospectors has been reduced annually since the war because of the fact that many of them have obtained lucrative employment in the goldmining industry. There has been no limitation by the Government of the number who could receive assistance. To increase the amount of sustenance at the present time would not be likely to encourage more prospectors, as it would not be possible to make the increase such as could compete with the rate of wages on the Goldfields.

There is little doubt in my mind that when the price of gold is increased, or costs come down, and labour is obtained by the operating mines, prospectors will once more seek to discover new goldfields, and will be financed again by individuals as formerly.

The prospecting scheme was initiated in the depression, and was an emergency scheme only to relieve unemployment. Mr. Bennetts asked that more be done by the State Government for the prospectors, despite the fact that their number has decreased greatly since the end of the war and the fact that the Government has maintained all State batteries so that every operator is able to crush his ore. Not only has the Government maintained the batteries, but it has not increased crushing charges, despite the fact that costs have, as is well known, risen enormously.

Practically every private battery has raised its charges, but the Government, as a measure of assistance, has not. As a result, the State Batteries are showing a loss on operations amounting to £1,537,447 10s. 2d., as at the 31st December, 1948. That was the total loss over the years. No Government mill has yet been erected to treat sulphide ores, but the State has recently provided assistance to the Spargo's mine, on the condition that it will treat refractory ores for the public. The company is now in the course of rehabilitating its mine and plant and, if this work is satisfactory, will then re-open the plant to treat its own and public ore. A survey of the position showed that there was insufficient ore of this nature forthcoming at present to warrant the erection of a Government mill solely for this purpose.

The action of the Government in connection with the recent coal strike was commented on by Mr. Fraser. He congratulated the State Disputes Committee, and I believe the whole of the community is pleased that that committee stood so well behind the Commonwealth Government and took the part of law and order as against lawlessness and communism. Of course, the State Government made the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Government well aware of where it stood. It was not until last Thursday that the State Disputes Committee came out into print in connection with the matter.

Hon. G. Fraser: But they were on the job all the time.

Hon. H. Hearn: They were not the only ones.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It was only last Thursday that they came into print in this regard, but that is not to say that they were doing nothing before that, nor does it say that the State Government was idle.

I do not think any good service is to be rendered by going over the facts regarding what now is, as far as this State is concerned, the late dispute. Now that everyone is back at work, I think that the whole community, including the miners, are infinitely happier and better off. I am pleased that industry can now resume its normal functions, without Party recriminations of any sort, whether justified or not.

I take this opportunity, Sir, to welcome back among us Hon. C. F. Baxter who, in hospital a week ago, did not look nearly as well as he does today. I sincerely trust he will have a quick and complete recovery.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th July.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [4.30]: I was called out of the Chamber when the Honorary Minister for Agriculture introduced the Bill, and as "Hansard" has not lately been printed, I was not able to acquaint myself with all he had to say. The Bill is a simple one and the purport is to enable the board to collect an amount, which is not stated, from the producers who have permits to dispose of eggs and from dealers who have the right to receive and dispose of eggs. I understand that the amount is one penny per dozen.

In looking over the report of the Western Australian Egg Board for the year ended the 30th June, 1947, which was tabled by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture on the 8th September, 1948, and is the latest account of the operations of the board available, the amount of turnover—that is, the cost of running the board,—was about £30,000. It may be a little more now, but I should say that the amount would be roughly about that, as the number of eggs handled by the board is almost the same.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Is that the Western Australian Board only?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Yes.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : £30,000 a year !

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON : Yes. The number of eggs handled by producers and dealers, in round figures, is about 2,000,000 dozen a year, so the total charges to be imposed under this measure will be about £8,000 a year. As the Bill gives the board authority to collect that amount, I do not think it would be out of place to review the operations of that body in order to know exactly what it is doing, and we are doing, by giving it that authority. Actually, I intend to support the Bill because the board is doing a very good job and it is really a question as to whether the same standard of work could be performed by any other means.

Egg boards have been established in each State in Australia and the original formation of the one in this State was under an Act passed in 1945. In introducing the Bill to establish the board, the then Minister for Agriculture explained that a move had been made in 1938 but it fell through on that occasion as there was a difference of opinion on the part of producers as to its value. After that, the war broke out and egg marketing became chaotic. The Army took most of the supplies, with the result that provision for civilians was very erratic. The Commonwealth then took over control by the establishment of a committee. In 1945, a Bill was introduced in another place to set up an egg marketing board in this State to take over the functions of the committee, which was then operating, and it was suggested that a levy of a half-penny a dozen be paid to the board as it was assumed that that would be the actual cost of operations.

Since the board has been in operation, the actual cost to the producers, per dozen, has been about 3d., although the actual levy at the moment is 3½d. per dozen on eggs handled. During the war years the committee did a considerable amount of egg pulping and converting of eggs into egg powder, as well as sending oversea a considerable number of eggs in shell. With the cessation of hostilities, the call for egg powder ceased and since that time there has been no egg powder produced, although the facilities for manufacturing it are still in existence.

When the original Bill was being debated in another place, it was suggested that it might operate until 1950 and the position could then be reviewed. That point, I

think, is worthy of note because there is a tendency, once boards become established, to regard them as something permanent. In the main, boards undoubtedly do a very good job ; but where a board has control, there is always blackmarketing here and there. One cannot help it, but where there is a system of free marketing, naturally there can be no blackmarketing because all marketing operations are free.

Some figures, as to the actual eggs handled by the board, might be of information to members. For the year ended 1946-47, the actual production in this State—that is the recorded production as handled by the board—was 6,735,578 dozen. That was about 5½ per cent. of the total Australian production. Disposals by producers holding selling permits were about 30 per cent. of the total, 70 per cent. being handled by the board. The receipts by the board itself, on the central floor, were 3,509,384, or 52 per cent. of the total, and by the agents' floors in various parts of the country, 976,005 dozen, representing 40.49 per cent.

In the country depots 281,133 dozen, or 4.18 per cent. of the total were received, making 70.77 per cent. of the actual number handled by the board. The producers who operated under permit sold 1,239,668 dozen, or 18 per cent. of the total, and the storekeepers 729,388 dozen, or 10.83 per cent. of the total. So the overall recorded production was 6,735,578 dozen. That was slightly lower than for the previous year, and the actual value of the eggs received was £339,089. The gross price average was 1s. 8.26d. and the net price average, for that year, was 1s. 5.37d. The number of rejects was remarkably small and .12 per cent. were broken. That is about one egg in a thousand. Bad eggs totalled .69 per cent., which is about seven per thousand, and that is also a remarkably small figure.

It might be interesting to members to tell them of a happening in Victoria when I was there early last year. I was staying with some old school friends of mine and they told me that they were selling their fowls. They were getting only 3d. and 4d. a dozen for their eggs and I happened to know that the price in Melbourne was 2s. 9d. The margin for retailers was 4d. and there seemed to be something odd about 2s. 5d. being the price to the wholesalers and yet the producers were receiving only 3d. and 4d. a dozen. I told them about it and they informed me that when they sent their eggs

to the floor they were candled and graded and there were quite a number of rejects. They had to pay the freight on those rejects and they had to pay the Egg Board charges as well, with the result that they were getting only 3d. and 4d. a dozen for them.

I do not know whether members are aware of exactly what is meant by candling. I suppose most members do, but for the benefit of those who do not I will explain to them just what it means. I witnessed the operation on the Geraldton floor. A light is partially screened but there is one aperture about the same shape and size as an egg. When the egg is placed against that aperture, the light shows through it and an expert can tell immediately if the egg is defective. The board conducts other operations such as the supplying of cases and fillers, and a small charge is made for them. In the discussion of a Bill such as this, where the amount involved is quite large and the department is performing a service to the community, these facts and figures, as to its operations, are of interest to members and should be made known.

Incidentally, with regard to the figures for the Geraldton floor, the number of eggs actually produced in the district totalled 60,280 dozen for the period from May, 1948 to March, 1949, and the total consumption was 46,042 dozen. As they had a surplus—actually it represented 26,718 dozen—during the months of September, October, November and December, to tide over the lean months they had to call upon the board to supply their requirements of 12,530 dozen. The floor operator informed us that he was recompensed to the extent of 1d. per dozen for performing that service. That does not seem to be an excessive charge against the producers. I submit these facts and figures to members, because I think they are interesting and enable them to appreciate the purpose of the Bill and the effect it will have.

HON. H. A. C. DAFFEN (Central) [4.41]: I have made inquiries regarding the Bill and I find that the poultry men have asked for the measure. The Honorary Minister for Agriculture informed the House that legislation was required to enable administration to be tightened up and the regulations more effectively enforced. I am sorry to say that I see in this a further chipping away of the rights and freedom of the individual. I

feel that the repercussions will be much the same as those that applied in connection with butter rationing. In that instance, the system resulted in the total disappearance of farm butter, and those in the country areas who were producers and contributed to the supplying of rural towns, became themselves consumers.

Under the Marketing of Eggs Act any person who owns 20 or more fowls is regarded as a producer and as such is required to register. Thereafter he has to sell his eggs at the wholesale price, send them to the district selling floor or dispose of them under a permit issued by the board. One of the tendencies the legislation is intended to obviate is the securing by the producer of any return above the wholesale price. Supposing he is supplying a hotel or an eating-house, where the eggs are to be consumed and are not for re-sale, I think the producer should be able to secure a premium of, say, 2d. per dozen for them, provided his product is worth it and he renders the hotel or restaurant efficient service by maintaining supplies when, and as, required. To prevent him from acting freely in the matter is to throttle his incentive and initiative.

I am all for orderly marketing schemes, but I dislike the all-pervading element of compulsion that seems to creep into them all. Such schemes should have the interest of the Government, through the responsible Minister, and should attract support by demonstrating their efficiency rather than be maintained by compelling all to join in and thereby stultify initiative and incentive. It must be agreed that producers have received better and more uniform prices under the Marketing Board's administration, and I therefore propose to support the Bill, though with some reluctance on the points I have mentioned.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [4.45]: I shall not delay the House long in making a short contribution to the debate. I believe the producer receives a better price for his eggs through an orderly marketing system, but people from the agricultural areas who have despatched eggs to the market in the past have complained bitterly about the losses that take place between the time the eggs leave the farm and when they reach the floor. I understand that a producer has sent down 15 dozen eggs, and when they reached their destination only 11 dozen could be accounted for.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : You could not blame the board for that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : No, but if there is that wastage, the board might devise some means by which the producers could be assisted, possibly by means of a new type of box or container that would safeguard the property. Under the existing system, the cases evidently are opened and the eggs removed.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : They are possibly taken by someone in transit.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : In the old days the farmer who made egg production a side line, generally sent his supplies to the store and had to accept any old price that was offered. I remember that prices in those days were never very satisfactory. I can recollect an instance of eggs fetching 5d. a dozen. That price would usually be received in the flush period. I quite appreciate that in more recent times prices have been better controlled and, in consequence, poultry farmers derive a considerably greater return than formerly. At present many people instead of sending their eggs to the board, dispose of them through the local storekeepers and, of course, a small additional charge has to be paid on that account. I was amazed to hear the figures quoted by Mr. Simpson regarding the cost of the board, and I think the Minister had better clear up that point.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : I can do so quite easily.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : If the figures were correct, the cost of the board would be terrific, and I cannot see the producers accepting such a position. I intend to lodge the protest that I have voiced on previous occasions, and that is that the board does not guarantee the eggs as fresh. I know they are marked, candled and so forth, but when some eggs get to the consumer they are found to be pretty stale.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : Possibly some of your friends in the country only collect the eggs once a month !

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : No, they always collect the eggs twice a day. When they are sent from the board, the eggs are supposed to be marked and are guaranteed, more or less, as quite good. I do not know that that applies to all the eggs or that they are always properly dated. I know that when I suggested that the eggs should be dated, I was told that if that were

done, possibly they would put on the date of the following day. Some shrewd people might do that.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : You would not eat an egg that was dated a couple of days back if you could get one marked with the current date.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : No. As a matter of fact, I know of one instance where a man bought some eggs and he found they were marked with a date which was two days after he had received them. I think the Minister should clear up the point regarding the cost of the board, because it is an important matter. If that information gets out to the producers, they will think there is very bad management in some direction. I do not know whether the board provides cases for eggs or not.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : I think the cases are hired out.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : Some arrangement might be come to by which more substantial fastenings should be fixed to the cases. At present, genuine complaints are being made about the number of eggs being pilfered, so something must happen to them between the time they leave the farm and when they reach the board.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East—in reply) [4.51] : I am gratified at the reception given to the Bill. The main point to be cleared up, as Sir Charles Latham says, is the statement that it costs £30,000 to administer the board. That statement made by Mr. Simpson is very misleading indeed, as it implies that the administration of the board costs £30,000 per year. I suppose that is how Sir Charles Latham interpreted the statement.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : Yes.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE : That sum also provides for pulping, which is a very considerable item in the marketing of eggs, as well as for candling, grading, packing and administration throughout the year, although perhaps not all the year.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : Does the board pulp the eggs as well ?

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE : Yes. I have seen it done at the Fremantle Meat Works.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt : They still do it ?

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. It is seasonal work.

Hon. H. A. C. Daffen: Do they still dry the eggs?

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. A lot of drying was done during the war, but the drying building is now used for other purposes. The Commonwealth has spent a large sum of money on the Market Trust. If one divides '240,000 by 30,000, the sum is not very much. It is about £150 per year per employee, so Mr. Simpson was misleading when he said it cost £30,000 per year to run the board. Anyone who has seen the grading and other operations, as I have, will know the tremendous activities carried on by the board, which is doing an excellent job.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Can you give us the cost of the total return in comparison with the cost of handling?

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it is in the report. I cannot give the figures offhand. The other night I attended a meeting of producers at Mundaring and we discussed marketing methods. About 30 people were present and I asked them whether they would prefer to go back to the old system of marketing, and there was a roar of "No." I think it will be found that the majority of commercial poultry farmers are of that opinion. It took a lot of convincing to get them to agree that a marketing board was desirable and necessary, but I very much question whether even 5 per cent. of them would wish to return to the old method.

The board is a good thing for everybody concerned. Instead of eggs costing last month or today about 5s. or 6s. a dozen, and in September 6d. a dozen, it is better to have an even price throughout the year. That is what the board does. It puts away so much for a stabilisation fund in order to keep the price uniform. Mr. Daffen said that marketing schemes were compulsory. Of course, we cannot have a marketing scheme that is not compulsory. It would not work.

Hon. H. A. C. Daffen: I said, "in the main."

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Most of the marketing schemes in Western Australia, and in the Eastern States, too, are satisfactory.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It is "voluntary" compulsion.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Generally speaking, it was asked for. The consumers are better off, notwithstanding that they complain today because they have to pay 3s. 8d. or 3s. 10d. per dozen for eggs in Kalgoorlie, but that will not last very long.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The cost of feed is high.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is terrific. I discussed that aspect with the poultry farmers and some of them said it was almost impossible for them to carry on. They said their business was a losing proposition last month and this month.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is true, too.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: On the whole, we ought to be happy that we have an Egg Marketing Board and that things are going along as well as they are. I obtained some information as to the complaint made by Mr. Bennetts. By the way, Mr. Bennetts has received a lot of attention today.

Hon. H. Hearn: A lot of publicity, too.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is the information I received. As Kalgoorlie is outside the area proclaimed under the Act, the Egg Marketing Board has no jurisdiction over that centre. The Department of Agriculture, however, can require compliance with the regulations under the Agricultural Products Act in the matter of grading and stamping. The supplies for the Kalgoorlie market are drawn from the Great Southern area, the eastern wheatbelt and, during the season of low supply, direct from South Australia. In addition, supplies are sent from the Egg Marketing Board to Kalgoorlie during the lean period.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Kalgoorlie got most of its eggs from Adelaide in pre-war days.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I do not know why Kalgoorlie cannot supply itself with eggs and why there are not more poultry farmers there. Unfortunately, Kalgoorlie has to obtain its egg supplies from far and wide, which adds to the expense that is piled on to the consumers.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We are unable to get enough water to grow feed.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I doubt that. I have seen lucerne and vegetables growing at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We made application for water for market gardens, but were unable to get it.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The egg supply for Kalgoorlie is drawn from within the area proclaimed under the Act, that is, west of the boundary line from Burracoppin to the south coast, and it must be obtained through authorised sources. The eggs are required to be graded and stamped. Eggs sent from the board's floors in Perth are supplied at wholesale rates, plus 1d. per dozen for packing and grading and freight, which would be an additional 1d., and at the present time, on a 2s. 11d. wholesale basis, the eggs landed in Kalgoorlie would be approximately 3s. 1d. per dozen.

There are certain wholesalers at Kalgoorlie who charge a handling fee of up to 2d. per dozen, so that those eggs when distributed to retailers would be 3s. 3d. per dozen, to which would have to be added the retail margin allowed by the Prices Commissioner of 5d. per dozen, making a gross price of 3s. 8d. to the consumer. According to this information, the storekeepers at Kalgoorlie are making a good rake-off per dozen. Mr. Bennetts says that they are charging 3s. 10d. per dozen, so he had better take the matter up with the Prices Commissioner. His merchants are apparently making a little too much. The eggs which are supplied from South Australia would be approximately the same price, or a little higher because of the additional freight charge.

During the flush season, however, the price in Kalgoorlie drops considerably and in most cases is below the wholesale price in Perth. That should be some satisfaction to Mr. Bennetts. I advise him next September and October to check the price charged in Kalgoorlie with the Perth price, and he will then find that the Kalgoorlie consumers are getting their eggs cheaper than the consumers in Perth. That is something for him to think about. He should not blame the board.

Representations were made to me as to exempting eggs for hatcheries. I thought there was some merit in these representations when they were made to me, but on investigation I found that such eggs get

the benefit of the stabilisation price. The hatcheries have to pay 1s. per dozen more than the stabilised price. For that reason I did not prosecute my inquiries as to this matter any further.

I will take up with the Egg Marketing Board the matter of theft, referred to by Sir Charles Latham, to see if anything can be done. I do not think we should blame the board, because the eggs have to go over the railway. Not all eggs go to the local storekeeper. I would say the matter lies entirely in the hands of the Railway Department. I can assure the hon. member that whatever can be done will be attended to in order to tighten up the supervision of eggs in transit.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1.)

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th July.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [5.3]: The whole intention of the Bill is to try to get rid of the fruit-fly. During the last two or three years there have been other amendments to the Act in an endeavour to do something towards controlling and eliminating this pest. I do not think this measure will do all that is required.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I know, and I said that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It would be better for us to tackle the position as it ought to be handled. There should not be any voluntary work at all; it should be compulsory. After all, the man who is careless makes it more costly for the one who is careful. I know that many owners of orchards bait their trees while the man alongside, who has two or three trees, does nothing, so that the fly breeds in them like one thing. No matter what precautions the careful man takes, he cannot keep his fruit clean.

When I first read the Bill I thought it was very good, but I find that the position is getting worse. There was a time when we would not get any fly at Northam, York

and such places, but I tell the Minister that it is right out in the agricultural areas, 186 miles from the city. Quinces and such fruits are badly affected. That is due to the fact that cases of fruit, particularly stone fruit, are sent out and are so badly contaminated that very little of their contents is fit for consumption when they reach their destination. When I have gone into the fruit shops to buy peaches and nectarines particularly, I have even found fly hovering around the fruit, and when I have taken them home they could not be used.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : Not fruit-fly hovering around in the shops ?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : Yes.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : I have not seen one. I have seen a blow-fly, but not a fruit-fly.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : The Minister might want spectacles because a fruit-fly is much smaller than a blow-fly. While it is inconvenient for us to suffer the disability in the State, the important thing is the export of our fruit. For that reason, I think we ought to get the fruit-growers, at their conference, to agree to some form of compulsion for two or three years to see if we can clean it up. From information that has reached me, the Agricultural Department in South Australia sent men out to strip all the trees in certain areas, and to take the fruit away and burn it.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : Do you know what it cost ?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : A considerable sum of money, but the fruit-fly is costing us a lot today. The first cost is the best, if it is the last.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : Can you suggest where the Agricultural Department is to get the money to do that ?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : I am not sure that it would not be the producers.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : That is what the Bill sets out to do.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : There is not enough in it.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : I think there is.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : I am not complaining. I want to help the Minister in this respect. The people in the City of Perth itself, with their fig trees, peach trees, apricot trees and so on, and some-

times grapes, are the worst offenders. I do not think any inspectors ever visit the city areas. I have not seen any for a long time. They did for a while when the Act was first introduced, but when the first payment was provided for in the Act——

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : That is another Act.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : Yes. It is one shilling.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : But this is another Act we are talking about.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : Yes, but I am talking of the same money and the same control. I admit there are two Acts. At that time, some inspection work was done, but I am afraid very little is carried out now, particularly in the metropolitan area. In some cases action was taken against certain owners, but very few prosecutions have been launched for a long time in connection with fruit-fly infestation. If we are going to deal with this question, let us do so in a manner which will provide the possibility, anyhow, of completely cleaning up the pest. I do not know whether that is possible or not. There is a fruit-fly which affects the quondong trees. I saw where it was said that the native fruits were not affected. There are very few quondongs in this State that are not affected by the fruit-fly. I do not think the position is nearly so bad in New South Wales. I have picked quondongs on many occasions, and I do not think I have ever had more than 10 clean fruit from a tree. Whether the fruit is infected by the Queensland fruit-fly, or not, I do not know.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : We are dealing with the Mediterranean fly.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : It is no use people saying that fly is not in the native fruits, because it is. We also find it in the native cherry in the South-West. That might be news to Mr. Mann.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : What part of the quondong does it get into ? There is only the skin and the nut.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : Has the Minister never taken the skin off the nut ?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : Yes, thousands of times.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : Has he not seen the maggots ?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : No.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : The next time I find some I shall bring them here.

The Chief Secretary : Do not bring them into the metropolitan area.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM : I will bring the fruit in a sealed container so that the fly cannot escape. I have never seen a quondong tree that is free from the maggots. We know that there are other wild berry fruits that are hosts for the fly. In taking action now, let us deal seriously with the matter and clean it up.

During the debate, Dr. Hislop gave an interesting address on the life cycle of the fly, and I heard the same story many times in another place when the late R. S. Sampson spoke on this subject. He took a great interest in it, and did a great deal towards helping to publicise the necessity for cleaning up the fruit-fly. I hope the Minister will take the matter seriously. I know he is anxious, while he is in office, to do all he can to provide fruit capable of being marketed, and fruit in respect of which, when it is marketed, the people who buy it will want to come back for more ; and that is what we all desire.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.11] : I hope this measure will effect some improvement in the fruit-fly position as we have known it for a number of years. I can quite endorse what Sir Charles Latham says about the presence of the fly in other than domestic fruits. I have on a number of occasions seen fruit-fly in certain of the hawthorn family. There was a time, I think, when the hawthorn was made a noxious weed in Victoria. Because of that. I was astonished, not very long ago, to see fruit-fly in lemons, something I would have thought impossible. The matter of inspections, particularly in the metropolitan area, seems to be a thing of the past, if it ever did exist.

Hon. G. Fraser : It did.

Hon. W. J. MANN : Someone may have come to my home when I was not there, but I have no recollection of any person having made a visit, and I have half a dozen fruit trees. Whilst one does not object to paying a fee for the registration of one's orchard in order that a record may be kept of properties on which fruit trees are growing, one does feel, seeing that the menace

is not decreasing but increasing, that much more frequent visits should be made. Quite a number of other things are affected, besides fruits as we know them. I know a property where there is a shrub growing—I think it is called a miniature guava. It is a little round plum-like berry.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : They get badly affected.

Hon. W. J. MANN : It is a beautiful host for the fruit-fly. I understand these shrubs are to be found in hundreds of gardens in the metropolis. All these things should be taken into consideration. The owners of the ordinary fruit trees are supposed to pick any fruits that are infected, and burn them, whereas people can grow these shrubs—which are just as effective hosts as any fruit tree and they come in at the right time to carry the fly over—without any notice being taken at all.

I wish this amending legislation every success, and hope some good will come of it. I would like to know why the word "plant" is used throughout this Bill, particularly as the Plant Diseases Act dealing with compulsory fruit-fly baiting makes no reference whatever to plants. The word used in that Act is "trees." There seems to be some anomaly which the Minister may be able to explain. Whilst the word "plant" can be applied to anything that grows from the earth, it is not used in the accepted sense in orchards or similar establishments. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.16] : I support the second reading of the Bill and wish to express my opinion on the present organisation controlling plant diseases in the metropolitan area. Sir Charles Latham mentioned the good work performed by the late Mr. Sampson. For some years there used to be an inspector in the metropolitan area whom I knew well.

Hon. G. Fraser : He was a good man.

Hon. E. H. GRAY : He was a very conscientious man, and he used to tell people, regardless of whether he had the power or not, that if they did not spray their trees and do the job properly, the trees would be cut down. At present it is impossible to expect fruit-fly to be eradicated when there are so many people who have trees but take no interest in them. I think that the payment of 1s. registration fee is ridiculous,

and a number of other people are of the same opinion. I believe it would be quite safe, and would receive the support of growers in the metropolitan area with a few fruit trees, if that registration fee were doubled.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : It should be 5s.

Hon. E. H. GRAY : I would not say that, but I think it should be 2s.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : Some people may have only one tree.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : That tree might be an exceptionally bad host.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : I am not against the suggestion. In fact, I am rather pleased that it has been made.

Hon. E. H. GRAY : Owing to the tremendous motor traffic within it, the metropolitan area is a dangerous spot for fruit-fly, because infected fruit can be carried from there all over the place. In view of the fact that many orchardists have spent thousands of pounds on the eradication of this pest, I hope the Minister will consider the possibility of obtaining, as quickly as possible, a competent inspector to police the metropolitan area. I have been told by people who consider they know all about the question that there are numbers of berries and fruits that act as hosts for fruit-fly, and that the spraying of trees is only a waste of time, because there are numerous types of bush trees and shrubs that are full of fruit-fly. If that is correct, the cooperation of the local authorities is required so that those trees and shrubs can be got rid of.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : Which wild fruits would they be ?

Hon. E. H. GRAY : I could not say, but the person who informed me of that fact was very emphatic.

Hon. L. Craig : Baiting has an extraordinarily good effect.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : If effectively carried out.

Hon. E. H. GRAY : It is of no use one man baiting his trees if his next door neighbour is neglectful. I would like to see the whole position reviewed and a capable inspector appointed.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.20] : I support the second reading although, like other hon. members, I do not think the Bill will have the effect of eradicating fruit-fly. I do not believe it sets out to do so. If more attention were paid by the department to the trees owned by the average householder

in the metropolitan area, probably a greater eradication of the fruit-fly menace would eventuate. I suppose I could safely say that it is the odd person in the metropolitan area who worries about fruit-fly in his backyard trees. I admit that people pay 1s. registration fee, but that is about as much as they do. There are some conscientious people who bait and spray, but the average person knows nothing about the matter, with the result that they do not attempt to care for their trees. I do not think I have yet visited one place where the trees have been absolutely free of fruit-fly.

With figs, for example, the first crop is generally quite good, but the second crop is invariably full of the fly. It is not the fault of those people themselves who own such trees that they do not spray or bait them ; the fault lies in their ignorance of the subject. The inspector referred to by Mr. Gray was an excellent man, and did a conscientious job. But all he did was to advise people to do certain things or the tree would be cut down, and away he went. What is the use of one or two inspectors in the metropolitan area ? All they can do is to issue instructions, but they cannot return to see whether those instructions have been complied with.

Hon. G. Bennetts : What about the country ?

Hon. G. FRASER : I do not know whether it is practicable, but I would ask the Minister to inquire whether his department would give consideration to the services of an officer being made available to people requiring them and that those people bear the expense. One of the greatest dangers is the ignorance of people as to baiting and spraying. As many of them do not understand how to go about it, they would be prepared to pay for the services of an officer to do the job for them. The scheme is worthy of consideration, and if something along those lines can be done it will result in an appreciable decrease of fruit-fly in the metropolitan area.

We all know the value of baiting. The Spearwood area was free of fruit-fly for many years because the growers there combined voluntarily to have spraying done not by themselves but by men whose services were paid for from a pool they had set up. Therefore, it was not left to the individual to do the job. Each grower contributed to the expenses of these men, with the result that this district enjoyed immunity from the fly.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : That is the purpose of this Bill.

Hon. G. FRASER : Well, I hope it will be successful. However, the Spearwood scheme, like many others, eventually broke down because one or two said, "I am not going to pay into it any more." The result is that fruit-fly is as bad in the Spearwood area now as it was before. It is rather disconcerting, and it is giving our fruit a bad name, to find that there is very little of it free from fruit-fly at certain times of the year.

The people at the Metropolitan Markets are particularly careful but, no matter how vigilant they may be, the fruit is sent out infected because it is in the markets such a short time. The fruit ripens in the shops where the fruit-fly develops, and the customers suffer. At some periods of the year it is almost impossible to buy fruit that is wholly free of fruit-fly. I do not agree with Mr. Gray that the registration fee should be doubled, because I do not think that move would prove popular.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : We have to do many things that are not popular.

Hon. G. FRASER : That is so, but if the department were giving the service, it would not matter if the fee were doubled. However, there is no justification for doubling it, if there is no service. Some rapid efforts are needed, and I hope they are effected quickly, otherwise we shall find the good name of the State in relation to fruit production will have been lost.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [5.25] : There is one aspect of this legislation to which we could give consideration and that is the method of paying the fee. I have been one of the innocent victims who has to make a special journey to the department in order to pay my shilling. I quite agree with Mr. Gray that the increase in fees, commensurate with a good service, would be more popular. Surely it is not beyond the department's conception to make some arrangement to obviate a person making a special trip to the department to lodge his fee. I think this is a serious matter and the Government is to be congratulated upon the way it is endeavouring to tackle what is a serious menace. But some consideration should be given to the thousands of people who have to pay the registration fee of 1s.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : The department will take 1s. duty stamps on the card.

Hon. H. HEARN : If it is intended to give a better service, I agree that an increased fee should be charged to people in the metropolitan area and I am sure that a better arrangement could be devised for its payment.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [5.27] : I support the Bill. Mr. Fraser said that two inspectors could be appointed to advise people in the metropolitan area as to what to do to protect their trees from fruit-fly. I would go further and say that a lot could be done in the country as well, because in a number of places I have visited the people did not realise the danger of fruit-fly and perhaps a little advice given to them would save a lot of trouble. I suggest that a little pamphlet should be published and sent out to the various road boards for distribution to persons owning fruit trees with instructions as to how the pest can be eradicated.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : Instructions are printed on all the cards that are issued now.

Hon. G. BENNETTS : A lot of people in outback places do not license their trees and therefore would not receive that card. Sir Charles Latham mentioned the quondong tree and I can back him up in his statement because from that tree one would be fortunate to obtain one quondong that was free of fruit-fly. How that tree becomes infested I do not know, but I think it is actually a grub that causes the damage.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture : Yes, it is a grub.

Hon. G. BENNETTS : I was with a person one day who purchased from a shop in the city, some apples that appeared to be quite good. However, when the fruit was opened, it was absolutely riddled with fruit-fly. If something could be done to advise country people per medium of the road boards and municipal councils, it might be necessary for only one year, because they would then be educated to realise what a danger the pest is. I am certain that one-half of the people who possess trees would not know how to use a spray, and something along the lines I have suggested would certainly be useful

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East—in reply) [5.30]: I am pleased that so keen an interest has been taken in the Bill. Mention has been made of compulsion, but compulsion exists now. All that this Bill sets out to do is to increase the amount of compulsory community spraying; in other words, the whole district shall be sprayed by other than the orchardists themselves. I think that is what Mr. Fraser intended. After a poll has been taken, it will be compulsory for every orchard in the district to be baited.

As I stated in my remarks when moving the second reading, we have tried out this scheme for the first time and there was not enough money to enable the job to be done. We propose to increase the levy by 100 per cent. so that sufficient money will be available. Apart from this, it is compulsory for people in other districts to spray or bait their orchards, even though such a scheme is not in operation there. That explanation should remove any misconception.

As to quondongs, I do not profess to be an expert and so I sought expert advice. I asked, "Is it possible to exterminate fruit-fly in Western Australia?" The answer I received was, "Yes, theoretically, because there is no native host." I asked, "What about quondongs?" The reply was, "No, it does not affect them." I know that Sir Charles Latham is right up to a point, because I have seen the grub in quondongs, but I do not think it is the Mediterranean fruit-fly.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I do not think so, either.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is the Mediterranean fruit-fly with which we are trying to deal. I do not expect that this legislation will carry us all the way, but it will be a step on the road to getting rid of the fruit-fly. Much hinges on the question of transport, but shortly there will be held in Melbourne a conference of representatives of all the States to consider what can be done.

I agree that much of the problem centres in the backyard orchards. That was the experience in South Australia. There a sum of £300,000 was spent mostly on cleaning up the orchards in and around Adelaide. Nearly everyone there has quite a good orchard, due to the excellence of the soil, and fruit trees are grown not only in back-

yards but also in front gardens. I agree that if we could clean up the trees in the metropolitan area, we should be going a long way towards exterminating the fruit-fly. I was glad to hear Mr. Gray state that he would support a measure to increase the registration fee.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Cannot you do it by regulation?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think so; it comes under the Act that deals with the registration of orchards. I believe that the orchardists of our State are the last of any producers to seek Government assistance. They have taxed themselves by the orchard registration fees and nearly all the inspectors are paid by the orchardists. The exceptions are two inspectors paid by the Government. The suggestion that there is no inspector in the metropolitan area is not quite right; there has been an inspector for some years, and it is only through lack of funds that we have not more.

The suggestion by Mr. Fraser that the Department of Agriculture should give advice to educate people as to the right thing to do will receive consideration. In South Australia the authorities act ruthlessly. If only one tree is infested, off comes all the fruit. That is the only way to deal with the pest. Such treatment does not entail much hardship for people living in the city because they are growing trees for ornamental purposes or for fruit for their own use and are not dependent upon the produce for a living.

I have some sympathy with Mr. Hearn's suggestion. I advocated something along the same lines previously and was told that I could pay the registration fee for five years in advance. That might be a solution of the difficulty he mentioned.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Can that be done now?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was told so.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Last year I tried to pay two years' fees and the official would not accept them.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Then I stand corrected. When I went to register my mulberry tree in York, I made a similar complaint and was told I had better pay five years in advance, which I did.

Hon. H. Hearn : That is because you are so well known in York.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE : Whether the official was authorised to accept it, I do not know. If we double the fees, it will be worth while to pay 10s. rather than 5s. As I have mentioned, our trouble has been lack of finance, but everything that can be done will be done. Where the compulsory scheme has operated in the Armadale area, the results have been very pleasing, and I have tried to influence the people of Kalamunda to adopt a similar scheme. They prefer to watch the progress in the Armadale district for perhaps another year or two. However, I am firmly convinced that the scheme is well worthwhile and that there is no objection to the additional levy.

Hon. W. J. Mann : What about the word "plant" ?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE : I am not sure why it was inserted. Perhaps it was to cover any other plant or tree that might harbour the fruit-fly.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : In the interpretation section, a tree is not mentioned. It says "Plant includes any part of a plant and extends to fruit."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE : I do not think it matters much.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham : It does not. We know what it means.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE : I have been informed that the fruit-fly can be carried over by rose trees, but not by any native fruit.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment.
 - 2, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.
 - 3, Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment (Continuance).
- Received from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 5.44 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 19th July, 1949.

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

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Section "B," 1948.

Mr. SPEAKER : I have received from the Auditor-General a copy of Section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of