

Legislative Assembly

Friday, 25th November, 1955.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Suspension of sitting	2225
Questions : Harbours, damage to Bunbury breakwater	2225
Hospitals, proposed construction at Hilton Park	2225
Kwinana, land for Tube Makers of Australia Pty., Ltd.	2225
Tramways, removal of disused lines	2226
Annual Estimates, 1955-56, Com. of Supply, Votes and items discussed	2226, 2253
Point of explanation	2285
Com. of Ways and Means	2294
State Trading Concerns Estimates, 1955-56, tabling of Estimates, Com.	2299
Bills : Hospitals Act Amendment, returned Albany Harbour Board Act Amendment, returned	2250
Fertilisers Act Amendment, Council's amendments	2250, 2252
Licensing Act Amendment (No. 1), Council's amendments	2250
Licensing Act Amendment (No. 3), 2r., defeated	2250
Government Railways Act Amendment, Council's amendment	2292
Council's message	2303
Assembly's request for conference	2303
Council's further message	2304
Conference managers' report	2304
Council's further message	2307
Public Works Act Amendment, Council's amendments	2293
Loan, £11,604,000, returned	2292
Administration Act Amendment, Council's message	2292
Appropriation, Message, all stages returned	2300
Town Planning and Development Act Amendment, Council's amendments	2302, 2303
Close of session, complimentary remarks	2304
Adjournment, special	2307

QUESTIONS.

HARBOURS.

Damage to Bunbury Breakwater.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has the damage caused by severe winter storms to the breakwater at Bunbury been assessed?

(2) If so, what is the estimated amount?

(3) When is it proposed to commence repairing such damage?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Repairs are estimated to cost £2,000 to £3,000.

(3) Early in the new year.

HOSPITALS.

Proposed Construction at Hilton Park.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Has finality yet been reached in the protracted negotiations that have been taking place in regard to securing the proposed hospital site at Hilton Park?

(2) If not, what is holding up agreement with the Fremantle Council?

(3) When is it anticipated that a commencement will be made with the construction of the first phase of the proposed new hospital?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) This matter has been delayed pending the siting of a controlled access road. This aspect will be finalised in the near future.

(3) This is recognised as a high priority, but date of commencement of construction will depend upon availability of loan funds.

KWINANA.

Land for Tube Makers of Australia, Pty. Ltd.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

With reference to the reply given on the 24th November to my questions relating to Tube Makers of Australia Pty. Ltd.—

(1) Was the price asked by the Government for the land in excess of that charged to the Government by the Commonwealth Government for the land surrendered by the Commonwealth at Kwinana?

(2) Was the site offered by the Government acceptable to the company?

(3) Was the price required by the Government unacceptable to the company?

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I suggest that you suspend the sitting until the ringing of the bells. Members of the Ministry and the Leader of the Opposition are at a function which apparently has not concluded. Therefore Ministers are not available to answer questions and so on so that business can be proceeded with. In the circumstances, I think it would be wise if you suspended the sitting for a few minutes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will leave the Chair until the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended from 2.19 to 2.27 p.m.

[The Speaker took the Chair.]

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, but it should be made clear that land offered to Tube Makers of Australia Pty. Ltd. is land resumed under the Industrial Development (Kwinana Area) Act, 1952, and not land transferred from the Commonwealth to the State.

(2) Yes. The site was selected by the company.

(3) A draft agreement covering the transaction has been in the company's hands since the 7th June, 1955. At no time has the company advised that the price stipulated in this agreement was unacceptable.

TRAMWAYS.

Removal of Disused Lines.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) In view of the report in "The West Australian" of the 23rd November that disused tram lines in William-st. are being pulled up, does this indicate that such tram lines in Oxford-st., Woolwich-st., and a small section in McCourt-st. and Cambridge-st., will be pulled up in the near future?

(2) If not, does he know that there is considerable dissatisfaction at the long delay in removing these lines which are both unsightly and dangerous?

(3) Will he take steps to give high priority to this work over similar work elsewhere, and if not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The removal schedule agreed upon with the City Council provides for the removal of the Cambridge-st track during the year 1956-57, the Oxford-st. lines during 1957-58, and the Woolwich and McCourt-sts. track during the year 1959-60.

(2) I am aware of several requests for the removal of tram tracks. These tracks are no more dangerous than when trams were operating over them, or those tracks over which trams now function.

(3) No. It is not intended to amend the order of priority as agreed upon with the Perth City Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1955-56.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Lands and Surveys, £593,749
(partly considered):

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [2.32]: I listened with close attention to the remarks of the Minister for Agriculture when he was introducing his Estimates last night. He asked for comments from members and gave an assurance that he would speak in closing the debate. I hope he does so, because yesterday we had the unfortunate

spectacle of the Minister for Education and Native Affairs introducing his Estimates and then bolting from the Chamber without answering the questions that were asked. The member for Nedlands had some very searching questions to ask him about the administration of the Department of Native Affairs and particularly about the reports which could be so damning overseas to this State.

Personally, I was disappointed that the Minister for Agriculture had very little to say about the Government's intentions for dealing with the tremendous build-up of the wheat surplus in this State. The position is one of very grave import. I know that he is in a cleft stick, inasmuch as he has been approached by two different organisations on the matter of dealing with the wheat surplus.

In speaking about that matter I should like to advise members that the company has already built up a storage capacity for 75,000,000 bushels, and if we add the mills' capacity of 2,000,000 bushels, we find that we have a storage capacity representing 213 per cent. of normal requirements when we have a crop of 36,000,000 bushels. If we add oats and barley, which would increase the normal receipts for the year to 40,000,000 bushels, we have a storage capacity of 190 per cent. with the addition of those three coarse grains. This is completely uneconomical.

We still have wheat unsold that was produced two years ago. Members may be interested to know that a cargo that left Fremantle this week—I saw it being loaded on Tuesday—was in excellent condition, except that the grain had lost a good deal of weight, through the boring of the wheat berry by weevil, but the sample of that wheat was quite good f.a.q. There will be some loss through the diminished weight, and the farmer stands to lose if weight is lost as well as if the wheat is not of f.a.q. standard when it is sent overseas.

It is necessary for the Commonwealth and for the Governments of all States where wheat is a major crop to take some action in this matter. We had not received any word from the Commonwealth Government as to its attitude for some months, and then we received word from Mr. Menzies and Mr. McEwen that there should be no restriction on or reduction of acreages. It is of no use the States putting the responsibility on the Federal Government; they have to share the responsibility, because any plan that is agreed upon must be accepted by the wheat exporting States just as much as by the Federal Government.

The Minister for Mines: Where did the plan emanate?

MR. ACKLAND: From the Agricultural Council, which is composed of the Ministers for Agriculture in the various States and

the Federal Minister for Commerce and his advisers. They meet in consultation, but as far as I am aware nothing has been done, and I hope that when the Minister replies, he will have something to tell us about this matter. We are not selling our wheat overseas, and we are not selling our oats and barley nearly as freely as we were last year.

Mr. May: That applies to coal. What do you think about that?

Mr. ACKLAND: The hon. member may talk about that. I do not know anything about coal, and I sometimes think the hon. member would be wise if he did not have so much to say about wheat.

Mr. May: I shall probably give you a bit more.

Mr. ACKLAND: I quite expect that. I know that the Minister is in a very uncomfortable position, because he has been approached by the company that has a monopoly of the handling of wheat in this State, and also by the president of the wheat section of the Farmers' Union. The policies put to the Minister, although they may sound somewhat similar, would be found to be different in practice.

I should like to mention that the company handling the wheat here is responsible to its shareholders and is not responsible to any industrial organisation. I have learnt that there are 4,942 members of the Farmers' Union whose first industrial activity is wheat growing, and 1,712 who put wheatgrowing as their second activity, making a total of 6,654. These are authentic figures that have been supplied by the Farmers' Union. On the other hand, there are 12,000 wheat growers delivering wheat to C.B.H., and the company on behalf of those growers is asking that instead of being requested to erect further storage capacity to the extent of 20,000,000 bushels, which will be needed next year if there is no restriction on production, it should receive a percentage of the growers' wheat, compiled on the basis of an average of five years production—the period is immaterial as that could be adjusted—and that it should be on a siding basis.

If at Northampton there is insufficient storage to take the whole of the farmers' crops, the company will be under an obligation to take it, but if at Gnowangerup, several hundred miles away, there is not sufficient storage to take more than 50 per cent., the Farmers' Union asks that 50 per cent. should be the basis of deliveries received over the whole State even if some storage silos were not filled to capacity.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you suggest that the Government should enforce a reduction of acreage?

Mr. ACKLAND: No, and I am not asking for it, but the Minister would have been wise had he been prepared to bring down

legislation in readiness for next year—all the wheat will be received this year—which would make it possible for the company under its set-up to receive a percentage according to the space available.

Mr. Court: What do you mean by next year?

Mr. ACKLAND: I mean the crop to be sown in the autumn of 1956. There is storage for all the wheat that will be available this season.

Mr. Court: You are presupposing that there will be a further increase in 1957.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am speaking of an average crop of 36,000,000 bushels. Men who are in a position to judge with accuracy have estimated that this year 42,000,000 bushels will be delivered to the bins. If that happens and we do not sell more wheat overseas between now and this time next year, there will be a shortage of storage capacity possibly equal to 20,000,000 bushels. That is a matter of arithmetical calculation.

So I think it is necessary that something should be done. Half-a-million was spent last year on building a silo at Midland Junction, which has to be paid for by the growers. This year storage for 10,000,000 bushels is being erected which also has to be paid for by the growers. Under an arrangement that has been made with the Australian Wheat Board, however, the board will repay the cost of those installations by liquidating the outlay for their erection over a period of six years by way of rent on A.C. storage charges over the period. The company is under an obligation to see that those silos are filled, because the Australian Wheat Board will be paying the full storage capacity rental to the company whether they are full or only half full.

It is essential that the Minister should come to some decision. I have already said that the Wheatgrowers' Union, which represents only 50 per cent. of those who deliver wheat to the installations, has asked that the Government should do something that would in effect scale down wheat growing in this State. The company is anxious to see that the bins are full to capacity and there will have to be some variation in the percentage that is received in different parts of the State to bring that about. I have mentioned that it is expected that there will be 42,000,000 bushels of wheat delivered to the receiving agents this year, and approximately 10,000,000 bushels of oats.

The grain trade people in the United Kingdom informed me quite recently that the best oats which the U.K. and Europe are receiving at present are what is known as Ballidu, an oat bred by the Department of Agriculture. It is by far the best oat that is going to the United Kingdom market and I know that the Department of

Agriculture has now an oat which appears to be better than Ballidu. It is expected, as I say, that there will be 10,000,000 bushels of oats delivered this year and nearly 3,500,000 bushels of two-row and six-row barley. I know that the Minister has a job on his hands. Victoria is not anxious that there shall be any restrictions at all and there we have an opportunity for him to help persuade that Government to do the right thing by Australia and call a bit of a holiday in wheat production throughout the main producing States. I do not suggest that we should have a reduction in Western Australia which would make it possible for the Eastern States to sell more, but something will have to be done and the responsibility is equally that of the State and the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth is trying to pass the buck to the States and they are doing exactly the same thing with respect to the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not true for this State.

Mr. ACKLAND: I did not say "Western Australia" but "the States."

Mr. Court: You accept the theory that they cannot increase sales?

Mr. ACKLAND: They are trying to do so. I am sorry I gave such an unsatisfactory answer to the member for Netherlands on this matter some time ago. Delegations have been sent to various parts of the world, but have been in the main unsuccessful. Somebody suggested that we should sell to China, but we could not get a market there. China did not want our wheat and is not as hungry as we are sometimes led to believe.

We had a good market for flour in Ceylon, but the French farmer is being subsidised by about 10s. per bushel and the result is that he can sell his wheat to the French miller fairly cheaply. Due to that, France is now beating us for the market in Ceylon. We sell some wheat to India and some to Indonesia, but we are up against a tough proposition. I believe that while so many countries, including the United Kingdom and France in particular, pay high subsidies, we will be in difficulties although I do not believe that, taking the long view, we will not be able to go on with our expansion after we get through this recession in wheat growing.

Mr. Johnson: Are those people selling below the wheat agreement price?

Mr. ACKLAND: They are selling outside that price.

Mr. Johnson: Could we not do that?

Mr. ACKLAND: I suppose we could, but no Australian Government is prepared to sell much below the guaranteed price. They do not want to contribute towards that scheme although I think they will have to sooner or later.

There has been a great deal of controversy about Australia changing from the f.a.q. basis to a grade system and Dr. Sutton, one time Director of Agriculture in this State, has been possibly the most active man in Australia in this regard. While in the United Kingdom I tried to find out what was wanted there with regard to the f.a.q. standard and all those I approached were unanimous that we would not do the Australian wheat trade any good if we changed to the grade system. The English miller buys 50 per cent. of high grade high protein wheat from Canada and the U.S.A. There are vast quantities of that wheat in those countries, which is uniform in grade and quality and though we can grow it here, it would be done at considerable economic loss.

I ask the Minister to do his part in stepping up the quality of wheat in this State by not permitting his agricultural experimental stations to distribute anything but strong white wheats of reasonable protein content. We are growing a lot of low-standard wheat and when I was at the Wongan Hills State Farm the other day I saw crops of Bencubbin, which is a low-quality wheat. But there are other wheats on which I thought the whole of the activities of the department should be concentrated. I do not suggest that we, as they do in America, should dock certain varieties of wheat. I understand there are 23 varieties in America grown in that country, which are docked because of the low quality, but I think the department should encourage the farmers to grow nothing but wheat which is acceptable and of high quality.

Although it has been denied, it is true that Western Australia grows the second lowest grade of wheat in Australia. Queensland grows the highest, mostly due to climatic and soil conditions, but also because of the varieties. Victoria grows damnable wheat which the board finds great difficulty in selling and part of that is due to the variety and part due to the climatic conditions.

The Minister for Agriculture: They are working on that continually and our percentage of quality wheat has increased greatly over the last few years.

Mr. ACKLAND: Agreed. Four years ago our percentage of high grade wheat was 7 per cent. That has now improved greatly, but we are still the second lowest and the next is South Australia with somewhere about 30 per cent. followed by New South Wales with about 50 per cent. and Queensland with 85 or 90 per cent. high grade wheat. The Department of Agriculture should do something in that regard.

I wish now to refer to the rabbit poison 1080 which the department is not permitting anyone to use because they say it is dangerous. We know merchants are selling it over the counter in the Eastern States

and that it is not as poisonous as the ordinary strychnine which so many people use in this State. The Vermin Branch is making a very costly service available to the growers and I heard recently that because a man at Kojonup did not have many rabbits on his property, they refused to go there and he could not get the poison because it was not available in this State except through the Department of Agriculture, and the Vermin Branch was not willing to use it on his property.

As Minister for Lands, the Minister who introduced these Estimates is I think responsible for the No. 2 rabbit proof fence and the sale of it. I believe £120 per mile is far in excess of the value of much of that fence. I believe many miles of it should be sold at about £80 per mile. The farmers adjacent to it could then buy it and it could be sold to them on two or three-year terms. If it were sold to them instead of being pulled up—after which it is of little value—there would be continuity of the fence owned by the farmers rather than just bits here and there with somebody taking part of it away for erection in other portions of the State.

I was interested to hear the Minister's remarks about the Inkpen estate on York-rd. and would have liked more information than he gave. A number of people far in excess of the blocks that will be available are waiting impatiently for an opportunity to purchase some of that land and I suggest that in the interests of those people the Minister should see to it that they have some finance of their own rather than that they depend on the department or the Rural & Industries Bank to finance the whole of the improvements.

Improvements in that class of country, as I know, are expensive. It is good land but costs a great deal to bring under production and if a man is to carry as a debt the whole cost of improvements he will be handicapped and it will be impossible for him to make a success of it.

The Minister for Agriculture: I agree.

Mr. ACKLAND: I congratulate the Government on buying that property as I know its worth. Third year pasture on that land will carry two sheep per acre and it will carry more than that if provision is made to conserve feed for the lean period of the year. I understand some of the Inkpen estate is the subject of controversy between the Lands Department and the water purification people and that there is likely to be some of it not thrown open for selection.

Hon. D. Brand: It is a controversy of long standing.

Mr. ACKLAND: I would like the Government to give a quick decision regarding its attitude towards land along the Helena River. Many landholders there are afraid to continue with improvements that they would like to effect as there is a possibility of the land being resumed and I have

never yet known—in spite of the discussion here recently—a man who has had land resumed—particularly agricultural land—to get back from the resumption authorities anything like its value. But I think it necessary—if not necessary, at least most desirable—for the Government to decide quickly upon a policy so that this land, which is so highly productive after it is given the right treatment, can be taken from the landholders or an assurance given to them that they may continue with their improvements.

Personally, I do not pretend to know much, or anything at all, about the poultry industry, but I do know that it is not in a healthy position and suggestions are always being made that the growers of grain should make concessions to that industry. It is of interest to note that the Government of the United Kingdom adopts a totally different policy towards its egg producers. A sum of £20,000,000 was paid last year to the egg producers of that country to allow them to function effectively. I do not like subsidies; I do not like them in my own industry, but rather than see one section of the community subsidising another, I think some notice should be taken of what has been done in the United Kingdom to put the whole of its agricultural industry on a more profitable basis.

Mr. Court: Other sections are subsidising production for reasons of defence.

Mr. ACKLAND: I think it is mostly to be self-sufficient; they are so wrapped up in their self-sufficiency that last year the British Government spent £A350,000,000 in subsidies to the various branches of agriculture. It is getting results from it, too. Those of us who went to the first world war and trained on Salisbury Plain will remember what a desolate place it was. It grew nothing but little bits of tuffetty speary grass and one found a few shepherds with a few hundred sheep spread over thousands of acres of that plain and down country. But today it is a Garden of Eden and it has all been brought into production. I saw 40, 50 and 60 bushel crops of wheat and 80 and 90 bushel crops of barley growing on that land which had only two or three inches of soil, and nothing else, over white chalk.

Mr. McCulloch: All chalk.

Mr. ACKLAND: There is no getting away from the fact that the Department of Agriculture in England is doing a good job, particularly with its experiments. I had an opportunity of visiting the East Malling experimental station and farmers' properties in Devon and the Romney Marshes in Kent. I saw crops which did not look to have any mineral deficiency at all, yet, after two applications of minor elements, applied in the form of a spray, the crops increased from somewhere in the vicinity of 60 bushels to 100 bushels. That is on land in the Romney Marshes

and the red soil of Devon, which is considered to be some of the most fertile soil in the world.

The Treasurer: They grow some good strawberries.

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not know what the Treasurer said, but it is quite true that my people came from Devonshire. It shows that we have to look to our laurels if we want to capture the United Kingdom market and, after all, the United Kingdom has been our best customer for years. When we consider that the farmers there are able to increase their crops to such a marked degree simply by the introduction of minor elements, particularly on land which is so highly productive, we realise that we have the job in front of us.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [3.51: When the Minister replies to the debate I would like him to give us an indication of what the Government has in mind as regards assistance to dairy farmers. There is no need for me to go into the details of suggestions that have been put forward, but I understand that the Commonwealth Government has—as a good many of us expected it would do—turned down the State's suggestion to share in the expense involved. I understand that the Premier gave an undertaking that, in the event of the Commonwealth Government's not assisting the State in this matter, the State would battle along on its own—it, was stated in words to that effect.

Mr. Heal: Why did you say that you thought the Commonwealth Government would turn it down?

Mr. HEARMAN: I can understand the member for West Perth asking that question because he is not closely in touch with the industry as we are. The broad problem is, to summarise it—

Mr. Heal: I was trying to help you.

Mr. HEARMAN: —that the butter producers supply more than Australia's requirements and the export market is a poor one. Consequently, we show a loss on our export of butter, and that position has obtained for a number of years. As the cost of production in Western Australia is not the highest in Australia, although the actual quantity produced is among the lowest, if the Commonwealth accepted the proposition of the State to assist the industry, it would almost certainly have requests from other States for similar assistance. This assistance to States where there are many more dairy farmers than there are in Western Australia would have the unfortunate effect of increasing the production of butter and aggravating the problem of exports.

Most of us who are in touch with this matter were not in the least surprised when the Commonwealth did not accept the proposition put forward by the Government. It is true that the outlook for dairy farmers

today is better than it was a few months ago; the export market has improved appreciably and it looks as if our dairy farmers will get back, for their year's work, a return comparable with what they received last year—just what it will be we do not know. As the Minister will agree, I think, the prospects are appreciably better than they were. But that does not mean to say that the findings resulting from the investigation made into the industry by the Commonwealth, during its survey, are still not substantially correct. The problems facing the industry will continue to be difficult to overcome and this is not the only Government that has been confronted with them; they are not easily solved and I am not trying to minimise them in any way.

As the Commonwealth has turned down the State's request—in fact, I expected it would have turned it down much earlier—dairy farmers would be interested to know what they can expect from the State and I think some indication of where they stand would be timely. Dairy farmers, like all other farmers, have to use superphosphate and the quantity they use is largely dependent on how much they can afford to pay for it; and it is time superphosphate orders were in. It is true that a number of them use only a small amount but nevertheless the superphosphate works at Picton are generally booked out and as they usually produce more super than the works were designed to manufacture, it is desirable that orders be placed.

If the Minister has anything to offer dairy farmers, it could easily affect the amount of super they order and that in turn must affect their production next year. If the Minister could give us some indication of what the Government has in mind or when some statement will be forthcoming, it would be appreciated by those associated with the dairying industry, particularly the butterfat section.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [3.121: Firstly, I would like to congratulate the officers of the department generally and those in Geraldton in particular for the work they have done during the last 12 months in the interests of agriculture and the State as a whole. I understand that the officers in the metropolitan area now have better facilities for research and ordinary departmental work, and that is all to the good.

This afternoon we heard an interesting speech from the member for Moore and I can assure him that I was very interested in it because of the importance that wheat growing is to the districts I represent. A lot of wheat is sent to the port of Geraldton and at present a huge silo is being re-erected for the storage of wheat. I think some of the hon. member's suggestions should be investigated so that we can find the ways and means of disposing of our surplus.

The hon. member also referred to the new rabbit poison. Fortunately myxomatosis, which was spread in the Geraldton, Northampton and Greenough districts a few years ago has had good results, which are still manifest, because one sees only a few rabbits in those areas. However, there are odd places where rabbits have been seen running across the road, as was the case in the old days, but the departmental officers in the district are constantly on the job, and I am sure that they will keep the rabbits down to a minimum.

Both the Minister and the department have recently been advised of the value a research station in Geraldton would be to the poultry farmers of that area. At first sight it might not look so important because there are research officers in the metropolitan area who travel to Geraldton and advise the farmers in the district, and my experience has been that they do quite a good job. I understand the idea is to build up in the area an export trade of frozen poultry carcasses. It is believed by people interested that such a trade could be developed in Malaya, Singapore and in the islands north of Australia. I understand it would not be difficult to get a suitable property at a reasonable price if the department could see its way clear to set up such a station.

The other subject with which I wish to deal and which is most important, is the necessity of starting very shortly what is frequently referred to as a meat works, though I think, at this stage, that is a misnomer. It could be a Government-assisted abattoir or a Government abattoir, or even a municipal abattoir which could deal with the surplus lambs and other sheep that might be available in the district. It could be done by establishing killing stations.

It has been suggested that the Government could be approached to subsidise, by way of rail freights, persons wishing to send fat lambs to the metropolitan markets or Robb's Jetty, for export. But in the first place, it might be better if a killing station were set up and, instead of livestock being brought down by rail, the frozen carcasses could be transported by road until such time as the 60,000 carcasses per annum stage was reached. That would, of course, call for the setting up of our own works and the export of the products from the port. Those who have been interested in the scheme know that the Minister and the department have the matter in hand. But I bring it before the Committee in the hope that something can be done in the near future in the direction I have outlined.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [3.18]: I would like briefly to say a word on the dried fruit industry. Undoubtedly, the Minister is aware that a stabilisation scheme is being worked out for the dried

fruit industry in Western Australia. But the point I want to bring to his notice is that that scheme would not be to the benefit of Western Australia. I have in mind the possibility of writing to the Federal Minister for Agriculture to point that out to him.

A stabilisation scheme in Australia can only favour Eastern States growers for the reason that, in this State, we grow currants. In the East, however, they grow mostly sultanas, lexias and currants in a small way. Lexias are bringing a very low price on the market today, and sultanas are substantially firm overseas, but in Western Australia we are enjoying good prices overseas for our currants, and the effect of a stabilisation scheme on currants would be to support the low prices of other varieties of dried fruits. I have had a full discussion of the matter with my people, and we feel we would be in the position of subscribing to stabilise the price, particularly for lexias.

During the war, dried fruits went through a very unfortunate period. Other primary products were sold on the open market, but the Commonwealth Government took control of the dried fruit industry and fixed the price of the different varieties at a very low figure; I think it was about £38 a ton. Today we are again on the open market and are enjoying prices as high as £109 and £110 a ton. At present, the British market is begging this State for more fruit, but unfortunately we cannot supply it because, during the past few years, we have had bad weather in both seasons—in the ripening stage, and also in the drying stage.

The effect has been that some of the fruit has been slightly damaged by mould. We have the fruit but we are not permitted to send it overseas. Recently, I was able to find a market in Holland, and they willingly took 3,000 cases, and would probably have cleaned up the lot if we had been allowed to get it away. After all, a little mould in dried fruit is not detrimental. It has been referred to as penicillin. Bakers will tell members that a little mould will help dough to rise. The authorities are particularly strict here and we are unable to send overseas fruit so affected.

At different times the Minister has received deputations from the dried fruit growers and has had the position pointed out to him. I want to impress on the Committee, however, that the situation in which the dried fruit growers find themselves is due to bad weather and not to prices. Prices today are quite firm. Officers of the department are playing a big part and helping the industry by means of the latest scientific methods of increasing production. We have had Professor Olmo from Canada in the State. I have heard his addresses and seen his

lantern slides. But in Canada the properties are under irrigation to a large extent whereas here there is no irrigation. The result is that they produce heavy and profitable crops.

Great changes have been made in the industry. For instance, today growers are advised not to use too much fertiliser but to grow nitrogenous cover crops. The Swan district has gone down considerably in its production, though I think it is gradually being brought back. My main reason for speaking is to ask the Minister to watch the point I raised about the stabilisation scheme, because we will gain nothing from it, whereas we shall be contributing to it.

Mr. Brady: Do you think Professor Olmo's advice to growers has been helpful?

Hon. L. THORN: I do. As a matter of fact, he has given us a great deal of information and has indicated to us economic ways of handling the crops. The hon. member will have noticed that they handle their wine crops and dried fruits by more or less bulk handling. They have even gone so far as trying to train sultana vines. The member for Guildford-Midland and I saw a slide which illustrated an attempt that was being made to invent a machine to cut the crop but, from my experience, I would say they still have a job in front of them. If it were possible to grow vines regularly so that the fruit could be cut by machinery, one would think that the job would be worth while.

The methods of handling crops in California today are greatly in advance of ours. The Swan Settlers' Co-op. in which I am interested, each year supplies sweat boxes to growers. It might be interesting to members to know that sweat boxes are used for the fruit to be brought to the packing shed in the rough. Today we have 45,000 of those boxes, costing about 4s. each. It is a tremendous cost, and we do not always get them back; quite a number of them are used for kindling. This matter takes a lot of controlling. In California, however, they have a different system of handling that problem, but we are not big enough to lay out the capital, mainly for the reason that we have not got it.

The company with which I am connected is a non-profit concern; it is a growers' company and we do not look for profits. Expenditure is mostly taken out of trading. We have been able to trade sufficiently over the last few years to pretty well cover expenses, and therefore we hardly have to draw on the pool at all. But if it were necessary for improvements to be made, we would draw on the pool because after all, it belongs to the growers.

I would now like to touch on the question of light wines. I think it is a pity that we cannot introduce legislation to permit

the public to take light wines with their meals, because they are most beneficial. The wine industry is not asking for the selling of heavily fortified wines for that purpose but suggests that such wines as Burgundy, Chablis, Hock and others could be served in restaurants with meals. There is a difference between those wines.

To keep up the guarantee in the sweet wine, it must be fortified to 35 per cent. The method is that as the juice is being fermented, the alcoholic content is tested by sacrometers and other instruments. If it goes to 22, it is built up to 35. All our sweet wines are built up to 35, but most of our light wines range from 18 to 22. There is a difference in the alcoholic content and, to a large degree, it is not intoxicating. A great deal must be consumed before it can have any effect. Indeed, I think that beer would be far more intoxicating.

Hon. D. Brand: We will have some wine at our table tonight.

Hon. L. THORN: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is prepared to pay for it, I will drink it. It is important to encourage the drinking of light wines. I have been through France, and stayed in Paris, and seen people in countries overseas drinking wine with their meals, and one would not find a more sober crowd. I am not one to encourage drinking at any time, but the fact remains that we have a valuable asset in our wine industry, and I think the request of the winemakers is a reasonable one.

The Minister for Health and the Minister for Agriculture were approached to see whether something could not be done to assist in that direction, and I think it would be well worth while. It would be better to see our people taking their alcoholic beverages with meals than going into wine saloons or hotels and consuming quantities of liquor without having anything to eat. One of the greatest secrets in consuming alcohol is to eat something as well. One is often offered a dry biscuit with a glass of wine, and that absorbs quite a lot of the alcoholic content.

Mr. Sewell: And not drink too much!

Hon. L. THORN: That is right. Overconsumption is no good to anybody.

The Minister for Health: Not even if it is too much water.

Hon. L. THORN: Too much water is no good either. I hope the stage will be reached when it is agreed that it would be desirable to legislate to allow our light wines to be drunk in restaurants with meals. I am not asking that they should be served as they are in hotels or wine saloons but that people might be allowed to drink them with meals. That would be of great assistance to the industry.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [3.32]: I heard the Minister say the Government intends to box on—or perhaps I should say progress—with the research station at Wiluna.

Hon. L. Thorn: "Box on" is the right expression.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I advocated the establishment of that research station some years ago, and it is badly required. We have many difficulties in the pastoral areas, and pastoralists are penalised.

Mr. Rhatigan: What about the Kimberleys?

Mr. O'BRIEN: They have their research stations and are not doing too badly. We have a large pastoral area in the Murchison and no research station whatsoever. If pastoralists strike any trouble with their stock, as they do—and in spite of their many years' experience they are puzzled at times by the different diseases that become prevalent—they cannot obtain any help. If a research station is established in the near future—as I hope it will be—a lot of their problems will be solved. And not only their stock problems. A number of pastoralists intend to undertake irrigation and grow different fodders and a research station would be of great benefit to them in that connection. I hope the Government will push on with the project, and that it will receive every consideration from the Commonwealth Government.

I would also like to mention the matter of vermin destruction. The Vermin Board is doing a wonderful job in combating dingoes, emus, kangaroos and foxes. We do not hear much of the department's work. It has a large army of dingo trappers in the outback, keeping down the dogs, and because of the good job done by the board only pastoralists who are on the outskirts are suffering from the dingo menace.

Dingoes do get in through the outskirt stations, but before they can go very far they are trapped or poisoned. A man by the name of Charlie Blair is doing a wonderful job with his gang in combating dingoes. Mr. Tomlinson has another way of dealing with them and that is by aerial baiting. He deserves every support and encouragement in the scheme he has established.

I heard the member for Moore say something about rabbit-proof fences, and that it might be a good idea to sell the No. 2 fence to pastoralists and farmers with adjoining properties. I have had in mind that that would be a good idea. But while some of the people whose properties adjoin the fence desire to purchase the length along their properties, others are quite content with the existing position and claim that the fence is well looked after and that it would be a disadvantage if it were not maintained by the Vermin Board. I consider it should be optional,

because away up north there are many miles to be travelled and, as in other directions, costs have increased. There is no doubt that the men do their work well, but it is very costly. If a pastoralist desires to purchase a certain section of the fence, an agreement should be reached with him.

Rabbit trappers are sometimes asked what they are trying to do, and on what side of the fence they are trying to keep the rabbits. We know very well that rabbits did advance too fast in this State when they were introduced from South Australia. But the fence is doing a good job in keeping emus and dingoes out. It keeps back the dingoes, although not 100 per cent., because I have seen some of them jump the No. 1 Fence. For years, we had a pastoral property along the No. 2 fence and I have seen them jump it.

Hon. D. Brand: What about emus?

Mr. O'BRIEN: Sometimes they fall over the fence. A tall one will get over and the birds do a lot of damage to the fence. Nevertheless, I consider the fence is doing a good job, and so are the men who are looking after it. I express sincere thanks to the Vermin Board for the work being done in combating dingoes.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [3.40]: It is not my intention to delay the Committee for any length of time, but there are one or two points I would like to mention. One applies directly to my own area; but it may also have application to others, and I think the Minister could give some thought to it. I refer to the matter of land surveys.

We all know there is a very acute shortage of surveyors—land surveyors, road surveyors and others. In my district there have been a number of road deviations and truncations, necessitating in some instances the purchase of land from adjoining settlers. One or two may have involved resumptions. We have heard a lot about resumptions in the last week or so, and particularly about delays in compensating owners of land resumed.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that in the Darling Range area the Main Roads Department surveyors have made deviations of some of the roads, involving comparatively small areas belonging to neighbouring landholders who are anxious that the matter should be finalised. The local road board is also anxious to have the matter completed. Unfortunately this cannot be done until the land is surveyed for the Lands Department.

At one time the board engaged a private surveyor to do such work, but it incurred the wrath of the Lands Department for so doing, and has since been trying to negotiate with the department to have these surveys made to delineate the extent of the resumptions or land purchases. Quite a number of cases have been held up and the board has written to the Lands

Department. In one letter which was received, it was advised to go ahead and engage a private surveyor to do the work, and that it would be reimbursed by the department.

Then, apparently, there was some hitch in this policy; and, for several months, there has been no finalisation of the proposal. Consequently the board would like to know whether it is at liberty to engage a surveyor at the department's expense. This perhaps may relate only to my area. At the same time, other areas may be involved. I feel that it is likely other districts may also be affected, and I ask the Minister if he will give some attention to this aspect.

The difficulty of arranging for wheat exports was mentioned by the member for Moore. There are difficulties in exporting other primary produce. I wish to refer to fruit, and particularly to stone fruit. Practically all the export stone fruit goes to South-East Asian countries, mainly Malaya, and it is almost impossible to cope with the demand for the export requirements of those places. This year the position is going to be more difficult because, due to the very wet weather in the later part of winter and the spring, fungus diseases have been prevalent in the orchards. In addition, many orchards have been hit by hailstorms which have so marked the fruit as to render it almost unfit for export. So, this season is going to be one of great difficulty for the export growers and for those people who are engaged in arranging the export trade.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.3 p.m.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [4.3]: There is one matter I wish to bring to the notice of the Minister for Agriculture. I am disappointed that he did not when he was introducing his departmental estimates, lay some emphasis on loans to be granted to dairy farmers who are on undeveloped properties.

The Minister for Agriculture: I thought I was speaking long enough when I went to 1.10 a.m. this morning.

Mr. MANNING: This question has been exercising the minds of many of the dairy farmers for a long time and there is now an element of urgency creeping in. I thought the Minister for Agriculture was fully aware of the urgency of this problem and the anxiety expressed by some farmers to secure financial assistance to develop their properties so that they can be brought up to an economic stage.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am aware of it. I was the fellow who started this idea, if it is any news to you.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: How far are you getting?

The Minister for Agriculture: I am not getting very far with your man in the Eastern States.

The **CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member for Harvey will address the Chair.

Mr. MANNING: I was hoping that this would be my speech! Although I know the Minister has given a great deal of thought to this matter, my complaint was that he did not give us any information about it when introducing his Estimates. Perhaps, if he replies to the debate, he will refer to it more fully then.

However, the point is that many farmers are anxious to obtain some financial assistance to increase the development of their holdings and it has been suggested that the way for this to be done is by means of Government assistance. I urge the Minister to do something about the matter at an early date. Many suggestions have been put forward. I understood the Minister was going to appoint a committee to make some investigations into the matter to ascertain what could be done in the way of making finance available to these men and how it could be distributed. I would like to know whether that committee has been appointed—

The Minister for Agriculture: It has been.

Mr. MANNING: —and what it has achieved up to date. Dairy farmers on the properties I have mentioned are anxious to know when the Government will be in a position to receive applications for such assistance. Therefore, I hope the Minister will give us some information on this subject and will have a closer look at it in the near future.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [4.8]: On this Vote I desire to refer to only two matters. I wish to make a brief reference to the work that is being performed by the Agriculture Protection Board. I was going to ask the Minister what activities are taking place in the department at present in regard to the spreading of myxomatosis. It appears that, because of the early February rains and the abnormal seasonal conditions we have had this year, there has been a rapid spread of myxomatosis and rabbit numbers have been very greatly decreased. I understand that in some districts the rabbits have almost been wiped out.

It is strange, however, that in the South-West districts, where there is plenty of water and mosquitoes, this virus has not yet got a hold. Despite the fact that a continuous war is being waged against the rabbit, it is extremely difficult to keep the numbers down in those parts. As the Minister knows, because of the vigilant work by the officers of his department, foot-rot in sheep has been greatly reduced and in some districts has been almost eliminated. I pay a tribute to the officers

of the department who have been so hard-working and who have co-operated with the farmers so enthusiastically to get rid of that disease which has caused heavy losses amongst sheep.

When we consider the question of the fight against the rabbit, I know that the inspectors of the department have been active and that numerous prosecutions have taken place. I do not suggest that prosecutions should not be made where the land-owner is defiant, is careless, or does not carry out the instructions of the inspector. Nevertheless, I know that the large number of prosecutions are creating great bitterness in the farming community.

I was wondering if we could not approach the problem in a more practical way. I know of some farmers who have been fined up to £20 for not laying poison. Does not the Minister think that it would be more practical for work to be carried out on the farmer's property and the cost charged against him? I do not want the Minister to think—as I know he will not—that I am trying to relieve the farmer of his obligations and not for one moment do I advocate that he should not carry out the instructions of the department. Reverting to the subject of the spread of myxomatosis, I would be glad if the Minister could tell me if any teams will be operating in the South-West in the near future so that myxomatosis can be spread and, also, in what districts they will work.

While I must confess I have not had any practical experience with poison 1080, I think it has been used in the Minister's own district with excellent results. Farmers in that area have told me that it is the most effective poison that has yet been used. I know that questions have been asked about this poison and suggestions have been made that farmers should be allowed to use it themselves. South Australia has been instanced as a place where it can be bought by farmers and used by them.

I know that the department has carried out work with poison 1080 on a number of properties in the South-West. Perhaps the Minister can tell us whether it will be made available to farmers for use by themselves and whether they will be able to purchase it. The farmers in South Australia are no more intelligent than are those in this State and I think consideration should be given to the release of it to farmers in Western Australia.

Next I come to the question of bush fires. On this subject also many questions have been asked in both Houses of Parliament during the session as to what steps will be taken to guard against bush fires breaking out this season. Without doubt it is the most prolific season we have had in this State as far as the growth of pasture is concerned. Should a fire get

away in many agricultural districts, I believe that the heaviest damage ever recorded would result.

So it appears that this year we will have to take even greater care against bush fires than we have done in previous years. The Minister should ensure that the Bush Fires Board will co-operate closely with the Railway Department. Probably, as commonsense men, they are already doing so. Whilst we hear it said in this Chamber that not all fires are caused by sparks from railway engines and that sometimes the Railway Department is blamed for the outbreak of fires when it should not be, the indisputable fact remains that many fires have been caused by sparks from railway engines.

Mr. May: What is the proportion of fires caused by locomotives and those of unknown origin?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am not disputing the fact that many fires are not caused by the railways. Some of the fires for which the Railway Department is blamed have been started through other causes. I know an injustice has been done to the railways. However, we know that the locomotives are a source of fire hazard. Because of that, the closest co-operation should exist between the Bush Fire Control Board and the Railway Department. Some time ago in this House I heard the member for Collie saying, as he now says, that the railways were always blamed for causing fires but that certain farmers had not taken the precautions they should have to guard against the fires. I think he is right in that regard.

The fact however, is that no matter what precautions are taken by the farmer against fires caused by locomotives, sometimes they cannot prevent sparks from reaching the middle of paddocks. Take the strong easterly winds which prevail in the summer months: A spark from a locomotive can be carried by them a great distance. It is surprising the distance that sparks can be so carried. I myself have seen a fire start in the middle of a paddock which was a long way from a railway line.

Mr. May: Will you take particular notice this summer of the fire breaks created by farmers on properties along the main road between here and Pinjarra?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know that it is compulsory for farmers to plough fire breaks. The road boards see to that. Owners are prosecuted if they do not plough fire breaks and take the necessary precautions. Farmers with properties adjacent to railway lines not only plough firebreaks but burn them back a considerable distance from the line.

Mr. May: I have seen that done.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Despite that precaution, fires still occur. This is due to the strong easterly winds which

carry sparks great distances. In my district, as in others, because of the late winter, the grass is still green and there is no prospect of burning an effective fire-break at the present time. I am aware there are provisions in the Bush Fires Act to allow owners to get an extension of time for burning off when it is justified. I do not think that we can stress too vigorously the danger that can arise from bush fires this season and the steps that should be taken to guard against them.

Reference to Government assistance to the dairying industry was mentioned by the member for Harvey. When the cry went up some time ago about the very difficult position of the dairy farmers, there was without doubt much alarm among butterfat producers. I am glad to learn that some increase has taken place in the price of butterfats since that cry went up. The necessity still remains to assist dairy farmers in undeveloped areas. I hope that the Minister will be able to fulfill his promise that the required help will be given, although there is no certainty that any assistance will be received from the Commonwealth Government. Most of us were under the impression when the Minister made the assertion that no further assistance would be received from the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have never broken a promise yet.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: It is very nice to hear the Minister say that.

The Minister for Agriculture: You cannot say that I have broken one.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am not saying the Minister has on this occasion. He belongs to a Government that has broken its promises.

The Minister for Agriculture: That will take a lot of proving.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I can give a very long list of the broken promises, because I have the Premier's policy speech with me. I suppose that I will not be permitted to speak on it at present.

The CHAIRMAN: Not unless it is relevant to agriculture.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I can refer to railway freights and water rates because they are relevant to agriculture. There is to be no increase in railway freights or water rates.

The Minister for Railways: Do not spoil a really good speech.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am glad the Minister for Railways is interested.

The Minister for Railways: You were doing very well by keeping to agriculture.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Railway Department is very much concerned with the remarks that I have made. I

give this credit to the Minister for Railways—not that I want to throw compliments about—that whenever I have brought any matter relating to bush fires caused by locomotives to his notice, he has shown a very practical interest. There is quite a lot more I could say about agriculture, but I shall not delay the Committee very much longer.

On the subject of research farms I, like other members, very much appreciate the valuable work that is being done. I would like to see more of them established. Under this Vote the subject of research farms is relevant to the North-West. In regard to agricultural extension, there is an urgent need for the establishment of research stations in the North-West. Grasses are being developed that will prove to be of great value to that region, and they will make a very great difference to the carrying capacity of stations. Everything possible should be done to try to spread their growth and to bring in other types of grasses suitable for that part of the State.

I have already mentioned the subject of vermin, but another problem that faces the farmer is noxious weeds. Unfortunately they are on the increase, and, like vermin, are costly to control. Here again I pay tribute to the Agricultural Department for the work it is doing and the practical advice it is giving to farmers to cope with noxious weeds. One weed in particular I would refer to is cape tulip. In some districts that weed is very widely established and has taken over possession of the pastures. It would be an unfortunate circumstance to allow it to spread to other districts. The hormone sprays being used appear to be effective. The Department of Agriculture is certainly doing good work in this regard.

Once again—and I regret the Minister for Railways is not in his seat at present—this weed can be found growing along the railway lines. It is of little use prosecuting farmers and land-owners for not dealing with this pest unless the Railway Department takes equally effective measures for control. It has been proved that noxious weeds have spread from the railway lines to private property. That is all I have to say and I shall be glad if the Minister will give some information on the matters I have raised.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [3.25]: Relating to the agricultural policy of the Government, I notice that the report of the Royal Commissioner published recently recommends steps similar to those recommended by the member for Fremantle some time ago. Previously when I moved that Potato Distributors Ltd. should be disbanded, I was unfortunately defeated. Now that the Royal Commissioner who has inquired into the matter has stated that Potato Distributors Ltd. was an incubus

on the industry, and the sooner its agreement with the board was cancelled, the better it would be for the industry and the consumer, something should be done.

The consumer is the one I wish to look after and the Royal Commissioner has said in a few words that it would be better for the consumer if that company was disbanded. He went on to say—

I have no hesitation therefore in saying that whatever usefulness the company ever served, has long since disappeared, and that immediate steps should be taken to disband it.

I trust that the Minister will take notice of this statement and disband the company as soon as possible. That recommendation was made some six years ago by the select committee which was appointed, but the Government at that time, the members of which are now the Opposition, did not put that recommendation into effect.

The year before last I again took up this matter, but again I was defeated. Now that the Royal Commissioner has made the same recommendation, there should be no hesitation in carrying out what he has said because he has no interest in the business and his opinion is unbiased.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS AND AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [4.28]:

I am very grateful for the contributions made by members this year to the debate on this Vote. Those matters that I shall not deal with this afternoon will be attended to in exactly the same way as in other years; that is, all speeches made on the subjects which come under my jurisdiction will receive the closest scrutiny, firstly, in my office and then later on by the department concerned. That is the only way to get any satisfactory progress because quite often the Minister, who is dependent entirely on the professional viewpoint of his departmental officers, misses many of the points raised by the members who have detailed knowledge of the matters.

During his speech, the member for Moore brought up the subject of the wheat industry, as I had expected. I was interested in listening to what he had to say. I would point out that the Commonwealth Government and all the States are responsible for an outlook—one might call it an outlook rather than a policy—to ensure some sort of stability, both locally and overseas, for the grower. Arising out of that, we developed between us a three-year stabilisation plan which I had to confess on a number of occasions was not worth the paper it was written on.

However, it has brought us to a stage where overseas buyers are so selective in their purchases from Australia that we are going to find it increasingly difficult

to support a policy that encourages increased production and means, in the absence of suitable markets, increased storage and probably the production ultimately of wheat of an inferior quality that will have to be sold somewhere. I agree that it is not a reasonable proposition that any Government should be put into the position of having to bolster up a system of wheat production not based on the realities of present-day markets. Although the Government has, so far, contributed to the arrangement with C.B.H. and growers to ensure some security of storage for the crop, I would be very reluctant indeed to recommend to the Government anything involving financial reponsibility for storage at the present time. I regard it as a wheat growers' responsibility, though not entirely, because it is also the responsibility of the marketing authority.

We know enough of marketing trends so that every sensible grower should understand what he has to do, and he ought to know what should be done today. It is not long since C.B.H. went to the trouble of sending some of its officers to 25 different wheat growing districts to explain precisely the wheat position. On top of that, we have the wheat section of the Farmers' Union, which has also been very active in that direction. While farmers are crying out for a lead from the State or from the Commonwealth, I consider that they have already been told enough to know what they ought to do, in their own interests. Here we have a situation where something like 75,000,000 bushels of wheat are stored, and we also have emergency storage to take a further 10,000,000 bushels.

Mr. Ackland: The Government has not contributed to that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Not in cash, but it has in kind. It has given every possible assistance to C.B.H.

Mr. Ackland: I thought you were trying to take credit for the Government.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Anything I do in that direction will be firmly established and indisputable. I think C.B.H. will agree with me when I say that it has received the utmost co-operation from the Government during the last three years in all its troubles, and it has had plenty of them in connection with storage and marketing. Nobody can deny that, least of all the member for Moore, who is familiar with the background.

I think we ought to be realistic. I believe we are reaching the stage where we ought not to plant any crop unless there is a reasonable assurance of a satisfactory market for it. The position has deteriorated so far that I say advisedly that, although growers are receiving 9s. 6d. a bushel which, in all the circumstances, is a very generous first payment, I should not be surprised if, before the end of next

week, the international price for wheat for the first time in the history of this agreement falls below the home consumption price. According to the agreement, this would mean an automatic reduction in the home consumption price to that level, though not lower than the cost of production, which has been raised to 13s. 1d. a bushel.

Almost daily I am in close contact with reviews of the wheat situation, and I repeat that I would be very much surprised if the overseas price of wheat in the next few days is not lower than the home consumption price. If that situation develops, would be for us to keep on growing wheat with the idea of foisting the responsibility on somebody else's shoulders to store it in the hope of disposing of it profitably at some time in the future.

I felt so keenly about this matter, as well as about the tobacco marketing situation, that I endeavoured to get a special meeting of the Agricultural Council before Christmas, but have been refused by the Commonwealth because of the Federal election campaign. There would be no State Minister attending this conference who would be engaged in an election at that time, and the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture has been returned unopposed, so there was every opportunity, in my view, to tackle this problem so that the Commonwealth and States might agree upon something and thus leave no doubt in the minds of growers what the authorities think of the problem.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: During an election, you would not like to be pulled out to attend a conference.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The conference need not have lasted more than one day. We in Western Australia would have the greatest distance to travel to attend the conference and the whole trip could be done in three days.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Federal Minister would have had his electioneering itinerary made out.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But this is a most important matter, and we should not have to wait until the new year to decide upon a lead, as the hon. member expressed it.

Mr. Court: Do not you think there will be reluctance to curtail acreages until the main countries with wheat surpluses declare the maximum world market for wheat? It must be possible to determine the potential market and beyond that, production is uneconomic.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We are living in an age, not only in regard to wheat but also other products, when we shall have to take an international view and determine which countries are best suited for the production of

certain commodities, and allow them to produce them. In believing that, I may be an idealist, but I do think that eventually we shall need to have some sort of world government whose responsibility it will be to ensure producers a fair and equitable return for the labour required of them and for the uplifting of the people generally in every country.

We have been depending upon the law of supply and demand which, when examined closely, is found to be a most frightful thing, because it does much harm to large sections of the people all the time. Some regulation is necessary. Wheat is a commodity that will eventually have to be regulated, and this, I think, will apply also to dairy produce and various other commodities required in the world on a large scale.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What about secondary industries?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It might apply to them also, such as our getting table knives from Germany, and there are other countries that are in a position to supply cotton better than anyone else and so on. It is all a matter of commonsense. The power behind Governments in regard to the motive for profit is permitted to disturb nations, and we, by our stupidity, permit this instead of taking a realistic view of the situation in the interests of the people. This indicates to some extent that the problem before us is a world one and one that must be tackled on that basis.

Parts of the wheat-growing areas of Canada have an arrangement whereby some of the best farmers maintain their farms while they themselves live in cities and towns. They grow wheat of a certain quality and can organise man and machine power in such a way that they are in a position to flood the market, provided nature does not interfere with the season. This is a serious matter, from our point of view because, although we do not grow so much wheat in volume, we do grow a big percentage on the basis of wheat for export, and consequently anything that affects this traffic must interfere greatly with the economy of the State.

The hon. member mentioned poison 1080, which is recognised as the most effective means of keeping down, or even eradicating, vermin. I think the hon. member stated that the department would not release the poison. Let me make the position quite clear. If it is thought that the South Australian people are getting a better and cheaper deal out of the use of 1080 on an individual basis, they are making a big mistake. By our combined efforts and by purchasing large quantities in bulk, we have been able to organise men and machinery to take things on a face, as it were, and our costs are lower than

those in South Australia. I have no personal objection to our farmers using this poison. The only objections have come from the Public Health Department which in the past has been adamant regarding making this poison available to individuals. Recently a deputation waited on me and, I think the Minister for Health also, and I had no hesitation in stating the position regarding the release of this poison to individuals.

This is not going to interfere in any way with the work being undertaken by the department. As I stated in answer to a question, our aim is to obtain complete coverage of the 24 vermin districts with the use of this poison, in addition to using myxomatosis, in which method the Leader of the Opposition is interested. While that work is going on continuously, we are adding to the labour and machinery required, and so we shall be able to encourage farmers to engage in the destruction of isolated pockets of vermin with poison 1080. I repeat that we have nearly reached the stage where that will be possible.

I assure the Leader of the Opposition that myxomatosis is not to be discarded. One can see it having great effect in certain parts of the State in the control of vermin, although in my own electorate it seems of very little value. Where myxomatosis is effective it will be used and elsewhere we will use 1080 and so there will be a continuous effort in all vermin-infested parts of the State until we have overcome the problem. Without taking credit from anyone, I say that I have known of no time when there has been so much driving force behind the Vermin Board for the destruction of this type of pest than at present. Everyone concerned seems to have become educated to the need for drastic action and all are pulling their weight. I believe that in a year or two we shall have solved the problem.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I hope you are right.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The price of £120 per mile for the No. 2 rabbitproof fence was not arrived at by the department or its officers—

Mr. Ackland: Some of it is worth that much.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I know it is. The fence was valued by two independent people and that was the price which they thought it would be reasonable to ask farmers to pay. There is a feeling that farmers along the fence would oppose the purchase of it at that price, less any damage to certain portions for which there would be a rebate, but such is not the case. Of 177 no less than 60 are in favour. Thirty of them have already paid in cash at £130 per mile and the balance are paying it off on terms.

There is nothing unanimous about the objection from the farmer's point of view. The others have held a gun at the Government's head and say they will pay £65 and not a penny more—not the £80 which the member for Moore thought a fair price—less rebate for damaged portions, so the Government's position will be understood. I am reaching the conclusion that it would pay the Government handsomely to clip that wire off at ground level—it would cost about £30 per mile—and re-erect it in the emu fence which will require the expenditure of a large sum of money in the near future. That would utilize this existing fence to the best advantage and the new fence could be built much cheaper in that than in any other way. We offered the No. 2 rabbitproof fence to the adjacent farmers as we wanted to assist them, but unless the attitude of some is more reasonable than it is at present, we shall dismantle the fence and in that way save a lot of money.

During their contributions to the debate, the member for Blackwood, the member for Harvey and the Leader of the Opposition wanted to know the Government's plans to aid the dairying industry. As I said in "The West Australian" the other day, I am bitterly disappointed that the Commonwealth Government has not seen fit to share some of the cost and responsibility for this industry, which no one can say is entirely State in character as it spreads throughout the Commonwealth. We had this advantage in making our approach to the Commonwealth Government, that we had a survey especially taken on behalf of the State and it clearly showed up the disabilities of our dairy farmers as against their counterparts in the other States of the Commonwealth.

There was, and is, an urgent reason why this State should be allowed to continue with a scheme which in the long run—on the basis of five or ten years—might be firmly established in such manner as to enable the farmers concerned to receive their income from something like 10,000 lb. of butterfat, which is today considered the desirable return to keep a farmer and his family and pay the ordinary running expenses of a dairy farm. We made it perfectly clear that this Government is interested in the industry and said we felt the Commonwealth should also be interested as it was just as responsible as any other Government in this regard.

I have attended agricultural council meetings over the last two years and I say that the Commonwealth was responsible, even before I became Minister for Agriculture, through the five-year target which it set and which included a tremendous increase of butterfat and wholemilk production, together with all the by-products of the cow, throughout Australia. The Commonwealth must have known that here, lacking the advantages of rich soil

that is possessed by States such as Victoria, we would have an urgent problem, but it was not prepared to do anything about it.

When the present Leader of the Opposition was Premier he made a somewhat smaller attempt than ours to grant assistance to the industry but even when he asked the Commonwealth to provide £50,000 to enable the State to purchase tractors to assist the industry, his request was refused. Without fear of contradiction, I say that the present Commonwealth Liberal Government is not interested in the dairying industry or it would have demonstrated its interest both when the Leader of the Opposition was in power here and now.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is it not providing about £14,000,000 per year to help the dairying industry?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Not as far as I know. It does provide a fair amount in subsidies.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: About £14,000,000 last year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would be far better to spend that amount on developing an industry so that within a reasonably short space of time subsidies would become unnecessary than continually to tax the people to bolster up an industry that has proved, on the present basis, to be uneconomic.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Would greater production make subsidies unnecessary?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Not necessarily. But in conjunction with the plan we included in this £2,500,000 project, it would. We envisaged a reduction of the area per cow from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 acres and that would be a reduction in the cost of butterfat. This Government in putting the scheme forward was sincere, so much so that it said that if the Commonwealth failed us in this matter, we would go to the length of our physical and financial capacity to assist the industry.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What you do will be the test of your sincerity.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is only two days since I received from the Premier the letter from the Prime Minister. It is usual to allow some time to give consideration as to what should be done—

Mr. Hearman: You had months in which to give the matter consideration. Prior to the Bunbury by-election, you had the matter in mind.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am waiting to find out what money the Treasurer can make available. It is to be clearly understood that the contribution which the State Government can make will be far short of what could have been

done had the Commonwealth joined us in a scheme of some £2,500,000 on a fifty-fifty basis.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Will you still find £1,250,000?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We will find all we can, and that is more than any previous Government did in this regard. There is no doubt about the sincerity of our intentions.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We will see what you do.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. We will not be so foolish as to begin something and then allow the Leader of the Opposition to show us where we failed. That will be the day—when he can catch up with us!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You made many promises. We will wait and see.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Leader of the Opposition will not have to wait long to see this.

Mr. McCulloch: Will you be disappointed if they do find the money?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: No.

Hon. D. Brand: I know somebody who will be surprised if they find it.

Mr. McCulloch: The member for Greenough!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Find what—oil?

Hon. D. Brand: The money, and you will be surprised also.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Do not be silly!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Where have you got it all tucked away?

Hon. D. Brand: Will the Minister for Housing retain the trust funds?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have never said in connection with this scheme that we had a certain sum of money available. We said we would assist the industry to the limit of our financial capacity, and that is what we will do.

Mr. Hearman: You were going to win the by-election on this.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is all right.

Hon. D. Brand: And the Upper House by-elections also.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is all right. We did not think we had to contend with a pin-up boy down there.

Mr. Hearman: That is an insult to the electors of the South-West Province.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We all congratulate the new member for Bunbury. We are sincere in that and only regret that he tied himself up with the ridiculous party with which he is sitting.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: He would not have anything to do with the Evatt crowd.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was interested in what the member for Toodyay said about the dried fruits industry, and I think there is room for some agreement with them in his fear about stabilisation, if it comes and Western Australia is forced to take part in it. I will have that angle of his speech examined closely, although I do not recall his saying that was the opinion of the growers in this State on that question. If they are opposed to the idea of an overall stabilisation scheme, I fancy they could not be compelled to take part in it, but I would like to know more about it. I will have the hon. member's speech examined and see what can be done along the lines he suggested.

Hon. L. Thorn: Would you advise members to purchase a bottle of light wine with their dinner to-night?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That would suit me. I would not mind restaurants in this State having the authority to serve light wines with meals. I have never been niggardly about supporting anything which would enable liquid refreshments to be served under decent conditions, whether it be at airport terminals or anywhere else. I think the value of a man's freedom lies more in the restraint he is prepared to exercise on himself in regard to drink.

Hon. L. Thorn: Definitely!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think we in this State are just as far behind other countries of the world in some of our ideas as we are in men's fashions. It is said that we are two years behind the world's fashions and I am inclined to think that a lot of our ideas are just as far behind. In all the continental countries it is the daily practice to drink light wines with meals—more wine than water is drunk with meals—and as far as I am concerned, if the hon. member can get round the Minister for Justice in this regard, I would be prepared to support him. I have told the Minister for Justice that, as a result of a deputation some time ago, I have no objection to the idea. I thank members for their contributions to the debate.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What do you think about Potato Distributors Ltd.?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not going to be trapped into saying anything about that at this stage because I have not read the report. I noticed that the hon. member took only a few extracts from it; he did not read the whole report.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They were pretty good extracts.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I want to read the whole report before I commit myself in regard to it. Apparently the hon. member thinks that by turning over a couple of pages and picking out two or three recommendations, I should definitely promise something at this stage. He is making a mistake about that.

Hon. D. Brand: Tell us something about onions.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In regard to the marketing of potatoes, my ideas are the same today as they always have been. If we do not have Potato Distributors Ltd. operating between the producer and the consumer, we must have someone else to take their place.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You have someone else between them now.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If it were the responsibility of the board, it would have to employ just as many men as Potato Distributors Ltd. employ now. When one bears in mind that the total cost of distribution and marketing of potatoes in this State, under the control of the board, is less than 2½ per cent., I do not think there is anything to complain about. There are about 150 pages in the report and I shall defer my judgment on the issues until a later date. The hon. member picked out only a few extracts.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He definitely said it should be disbanded.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope members are satisfied with the summary that I have given of the department's activities. This Government has done a good deal in endeavouring to improve the facilities made available to farmers throughout the State. No matter what branch of agriculture may be mentioned, close attention has been given to it to improve the service it renders. Previously departmental officers were forced to live in isolated areas of the State; they were expected to take their wives with them and in many cases the housing conditions were bad. To a large extent, that position will be overcome in the future because we have commenced a scheme under which up-to-date premises and good homes will be provided for officers in the various zones throughout the State. If we have done nothing else, then at least we have done something in that direction.

Finally, I think that the monument to the Government, if there is one at all, will be the £300,000 building which is to be erected in South Perth. All the laboratory work and departmental work will eventually be concentrated in that building. At present hundreds of officers are scattered throughout six different places in the metropolitan area. When people come down from the country to visit them, it is difficult to know where to look for

their offices. No facilities are provided and in many offices there are no chairs for people to sit on when they are interviewing officers. This state of affairs has been in existence for years, but now we have started the provision of what will ultimately prove to be the headquarters of the whole of the Agricultural Department in this State.

It will begin with two or three large wings for animal laboratory work and all the necessary administrative sections. Later on I think it will be possible to extend that until eventually we have a large block of buildings in good grounds and this will enable officers to work under modern conditions which will be a credit to Western Australia.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Rural & Industries Bank, £5; Agriculture, £598,508; College of Agriculture, £51,079; Agriculture Protection Board, £25,509; Bush Fires Board, £10,802—agreed to.

Vote—Police, £1,369,331:

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [5.8]: This is such an important department in the affairs of the State, and the welfare of the community, that I think it warrants some few comments from me as Minister. The estimated expenditure of £1,428,331 for police services for the current financial year—this total includes £59,000 provided in the Estimates for police services in the North-West—provides for an increase of £137,423, salaries having increased by an amount of £108,667, due to marginal increases. There is also an increase in the contingencies vote of £28,756 over the amount required last year.

The wireless service is being expanded to cover all the district offices throughout the State with the exception of Broome, and obsolete equipment is being replaced by more modern apparatus. Approval has been given for the construction of a new launch to replace the "Cygnets" at a cost of £2,500. This launch, at the present rate of construction, should be available about the middle of January.

Animal plants in the North-West and Kimberley Divisions at four stations are being replaced by four wheel drive motor-vehicles. In addition to the primary services of providing police protection throughout the State, the department is also charged with the administration and control of traffic in the metropolitan area, the administration of the Weights and Measures Act, the Firearms and Guns Act, the Licensing Act, and the inspection of liquors.

The authorised strength of the Police Force at the 30th June, 1955, was 975, and the actual strength was 964. Since then the force has been brought up to full strength of 975 and we have a waiting

list of some 50 men who have been approved as suitable recruits. As vacancies occur, they will be engaged and we have given authority to the Commissioner of Police, during the first six months of the new year, to increase the strength to a maximum of 1,000.

To offset the increased expenditure necessary for the department, it is estimated that revenue receivable will be increased to an amount of £235,000 as against £220,570 received in the year ended the 30th June, 1955. The figures quoted provide for all of the police services throughout the State including the North-West.

I think the favourable position, so far as the staff is concerned—where we have 50 approved and waiting applicants for the force—is due mainly to the fact that members of the Police Force have had an increase in their pay. Their rate is based largely upon the Queensland award and there is not the slightest doubt that until this increase was granted quite recently, our Police Force was the most underpaid body of police in Australia.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Why are they based on the Queensland award?

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE: That has been the position for a number of years. The size of the State, the conditions under which the force works, and so on are all similar to those applying in Queensland and it appears that that is the basis for the adoption of the Queensland award. But under that award conditions of pay were improved and members of the Queensland Police Force were granted an increase some time ago. Since that time men in our own Police Force have been granted an increase. Because the force was so underpaid we were constantly losing recruits. They would be sent to a school for three months and within 12 months of their graduation a considerable percentage of them would leave to take more attractive jobs offering outside. We lost them because of the poor wages they were being paid.

Hon. L. Thorn: When did the police get their last increase?

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE: I should say about three months ago.

Hon. L. Thorn: When we were in office we gave them a substantial increase—the average for Australia.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE: That may be so, but as the hon. member will agree it is 2½ years since his Government was in office and since then tremendous increases in the cost of living have taken place and, correspondingly, wages for employment outside the force have increased also.

Hon. L. Thorn: I agree.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I am satisfied that the big drift from the force was due—at least 75 per cent. of it—to the fact that our men were underpaid as compared with workers outside. Approximately 80 men who had resigned over the last two years have made application to rejoin the Police Force because of the better conditions now offering.

The commissioner has written such a comprehensive report with regard to the activities of the department that it is not necessary for me to go into it in detail. But I would like to deal with a few aspects of the activities of the force and the first that comes to mind is that during the last twelve months we have lost three valuable officers because of violent deaths.

The first was Constable Gray who lost his life through doing an act of kindness to a young constable. He was having some difficulty with his horse at Claremont and it reared and fell on top of him. He lingered and lay in a coma for 10 months before he died. Constable McManus, at Northampton, in the course of his duty, was brutally murdered and we extend our heartfelt sympathy to his widow and child. In addition, Constable Mills in the wheat district, also in the course of his duty, lost his life. These men were a great loss to the force. Each one of them had been an officer for a number of years and had established his value both to the force and the community. Constable Mills was a single man and we extend to his parents our heartfelt sympathy.

We have had numerous requests concerning the establishment of new police stations in country areas. After traveling around and inspecting these various places, I appreciate that the stations are really warranted. It is not so much a matter of providing the personnel, but of providing the dwelling, the police station and the appendages required for such an establishment. The one that I feel is in greatest need of attention is at Mt. Barker.

There is an unfortunate history attached to that police station. Some six years ago the work was approved and tenders were called, but no tenders were received. Tenders were then called again and one tender was received and accepted. But because of the difficulty experienced in obtaining workmen and materials, the contractor asked to be released from the obligation of his contract. The estimated cost when tenders were originally called was in the vicinity of £6,000 or £7,000. For precisely the same type of police station today the quote is nearer £17,500.

It was one of the most deplorable setups that I ever saw. The dwelling occupied by the sergeant was in a dilapidated condition. There was a lock-up that consisted of one cell. What they did when they had two persons of opposite sexes to cater for, it was difficult for me to work out. I understand a difficulty did arise on one occasion and the sergeant in charge

put two men and one woman in one cell for the night. He got into serious trouble over that. There was no electric light in the place.

In a very short time I had the premises renovated and the electricity was extended to it. This made conditions somewhat better, but it is a poor set-up for a district as large as Mt. Barker. As members know the Rocky Gully area is adjacent to Mt. Barker. Of all the country police stations I would say that the one at Mt. Barker ought to be put on the top of the list for consideration, and I would certainly take such action if I were Minister for another 12 months. It has been in second or third position for the last 12 months because of the drastic cut in loan funds, and it does not look as though we will be able to find money to go ahead with the project.

I do not think there is any doubt about the value of having a good type of police constable or sergeant in the district. I refer, of course, to the value to the community. The policeman concerned has a number of duties to perform outside of maintaining law and order. In many districts he is the registrar of births, deaths and marriages; he is the mining registrar and keeps an agency for the bank. Indeed, he performs a multitude of duties for other Government departments.

If he is the correct type of man—we endeavour to obtain the correct type of man and we do so in 99 out of 100 cases—he is looked up to and respected by the community. Apart from keeping law and order he is a guide, philosopher and friend to everyone. The fact that there is a man in uniform around proves a deterrent to those who are inclined to treat the rights of other citizens lightly; and, after all, the function of the police is not a punitive one; it is not to punish people after the commission of an offence, but to prevent a crime from taking place.

Within the last 12 months new police stations with quarters attached were completed at Bulfinch and Medina; there were others at Wyndham and at Bayswater. These are modern stations and compare favourably with those in various country areas. In addition, there are police stations on the point of completion at Wembley and Scarborough; these are also most modern and up to date.

If members wish to see a model type of police station, they ought to view that which faces the railway station at Bayswater. Not only are better facilities provided for the public who transact business there, but there is also up-to-date accommodation for the staff, together with much improved accommodation for persons who find themselves obliged to occupy the cells for any length of time. Extensive additions are contemplated at the Victoria Park police station and the Commissioner of Police and his officers feel that this will

relieve the congestion at the traffic office in James-st. A block of land has been purchased and certain moneys have been expended for the purpose of establishing a branch of the Traffic Branch at Victoria Park. Extensive facilities will be provided there for the handling of traffic matters for districts as far afield as Armadale. In addition to the ordinary work of the Police Department.

I cannot over-emphasise the congestion that exists in the Traffic Branch at James-st. This has been so for years, and I would say that no body of clerical workers in Western Australia is operating under worse conditions than those applying to the officers of the Traffic Branch. With the completion of the State Insurance Office building, it is proposed to shift the Factories and Shops Branch from the building which is now occupied by the Traffic Branch. That will give some relief—though I do not think the relief will be sufficient—to the completely congested state of the clerical staff in those offices.

There are no such things as amenities provided there and I think, without doubt, that worse conditions do not prevail anywhere else in Western Australia for clerical workers. Traffic is constantly increasing and the volume of work that must be done is also increasing. The road patrol section has been moved from those offices and are now housed in premises that have been rented in Hay-st. West. I think we are paying in the vicinity of £25 a week for the accommodation to house the road patrol section.

It is not a question of relieving the congestion, but a recognition of the fact that it must be relieved, or else we will not be able to cope with the constantly increasing volume of work which is due to the rapid increase in the number of motor-vehicles on the road. The Crown Law Department is constantly agitating for the return of the Perth police court building and sooner or later it will issue an ultimatum for the ballistic section and the C.I.B. to vacate those quarters. Whichever Government is returned as a result of the elections next year, I would say its most important task will be to relieve the congestion in the offices at James-st.

I would like to make a brief comment on the various functions that the police have to control. I do not suppose there are many citizens in Western Australia who realise just what is done and supervised in their interests by the various branches of the Police Force. I would like to pay a particular tribute to the women police. They have directed particular attention to women and girls and they continue to give satisfactory service. They have assisted the C.I.B. in many cases and have given attention to many lost and found children. Apart from this they have also given guidance to many girls and have looked after their general welfare.

On many occasions when there has been domestic discord between husband and wife, the women police have gone out at the request of the parties concerned and more often than not have brought about a reunion by giving advice and generally discussing the problems such people have. They are a most diplomatic and useful branch of the Police Force and I have nothing but admiration for the work they perform. During the course of their patrols it is necessary for them to visit hotels and wine saloons where, on occasions they find under-age girls drinking. This has generally resulted in prosecutions against the girls concerned and others who may have supplied them with liquor.

There is another section of the Police Force which, though not coming under its jurisdiction, is still a valuable adjunct. I refer to the Police and Citizens Boys' Club Federation which is doing such good work among the young people of the community. By this means juvenile delinquency has been reduced to a great extent. There are 18 clubs affiliated with the Police Boys' Clubs Federation and they are located from one end of the State to the other. A club is now being formed as far north as Carnarvon.

Some 12 months ago I had the privilege of meeting and having a long conversation with Mr. Delaney, the Commissioner of Police in New South Wales. The main theme of our conversation was the formation and operation of the Police Boys' Clubs. He told me that in the Woolloomooloo district in Sydney where juvenile delinquency had been very prevalent, the inauguration of police boys' clubs there had reduced the incidence of delinquency by about 75 per cent.

They are in a fortunate position in New South Wales inasmuch as they have really wealthy people there who make bequests to any movement of this kind. The Police Boy's Club in Sydney alone has property and assets worth £500,000. That is in striking contrast to the results of an appeal which we made here while Mr. Delaney was in this State and gave a most informative address in connection with the police and citizens boys' clubs in Sydney. We made an appeal for £45,000 to establish headquarters in Aberdeen-st., where we have a block of land. We made an appeal to the wealthy citizens of Perth, not to give us money but to take out debentures in denominations of £10. The result was that we received something like £3,250, which I thought was very poor, considering the amount of good that is done by these clubs.

I have taken quite an interest in the formation and running of the clubs, and I have nothing but the highest praise for the work done. In the metropolitan area there are five police sergeants exclusively employed in running clubs; and I invite any member to visit those clubs and see for himself what fine work is being

carried out, and the implicit faith and good fellowship existing between the police officers in charge and the boys under their care.

It is certain, I feel, that if the people generally could only realise what the Police and Citizens Boys' Clubs are doing, there would be a greater interest taken in them. I emphasise the word "citizens" because by far the larger number of those on the committees managing the clubs are citizens. They spend much of their time on the work. I have been to federation committee meetings which have lasted till midnight, and those associated with the movement spend quite a lot of time working for it.

One can go to social functions and find women relatives of the boys also putting in a good deal of time and donating food-stuffs and so on. If people generally only realised what was done in this direction they would take a greater interest in the movement, and would be prepared to assist it financially to a much greater extent than has been the case in the past.

Taken by and large, we have a particularly good Police Force in this State. It is true that, as with all large bodies of men, we sometimes find black sheep. But once the commissioner or his inspectors catch up with any unprofessional conduct which is considered to be prejudicial or unfavourable to the prestige of the force, there is no doubt about the fate meted out to the offenders; they are immediately put out of the force. As a whole, I think that the police are a body of men who are respected by the community. As a result of their wonderful handling of large crowds during Her Majesty's visit, their prestige rose considerably, although it was already high prior to that visit.

I have been proud to be associated with the police, and I think they do a particularly good job in the interests of the people of this State. But, like all those who are in a position in which they can tell other people what they have to do, they meet with a certain amount of resentment from others. Nevertheless, the large percentage of citizens realise the excellent services being performed by the police, not only in the detection of crime but also in its prevention, and in many other ways.

The police lecture to schoolchildren in conjunction with the National Safety Council. Unfortunately, there are still parents who hold the policeman up to their children as a big bad wolf. If the youngsters do anything wrong, the parents threaten to call a policeman to deal with them. That is a completely wrong approach. Parents should teach their children that the policeman is their friend; and that if they lose their way or get into trouble of some kind, he is the first one they should approach with a view to re-

vealing their predicament or difficulty and obtaining guidance and protection, because he will give them advice and look after them.

Mr. Court: I think that the more frequent attendance of policemen at schools is achieving that result.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I was saying that the fact that the police go to schools, principally in connection with National Safety Council matters, brings about a feeling of confidence in the minds of the children, and a realisation that the policeman is not some big bad wolf who will deal out only punishment, but is there to look after their welfare. If parents would only say, "When you get into difficulty, go to a policeman," it would be better. I know that some parents say, "The policeman will catch you," or, "I will tell the policeman on you if you do anything wrong."

Next I would like to refer to the efficiency of the Police Force with regard to crime. It is well known that there are few major crimes in this State that go undetected. The way in which offenders are apprehended promptly is something I wonder at. A particularly bad crime is committed, such as the cracking of a safe or its theft, and there appear to be no clues. Yet, inside a few days the C.I.B. has traced the offenders and has them in custody. Not 1 per cent. of major crimes is undetected in this State. I am certainly pleased to be associated with the Police Force. Its members have done a good job and I am sure they will continue to do so.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [5.37]: I can only largely agree with what the Minister has said. I do not think the general public appreciates the service which the Police Force renders. Police officers work under restraints not suffered by ordinary citizens. They are subject to discipline, and quite often are not able to select the location where they will work. As far as possible, the commissioner calls for volunteers for vacancies in different parts of the State. But if suitable arrangements cannot be made, orders are issued, and the person who is told to go to such and such a place must do so.

Even in private life, a policeman has to keep up a certain standard. He is not allowed the liberty of an ordinary individual. As long as an ordinary person does his work well and faithfully, he is free to enjoy his leisure in whatever way he likes.

Mr. May: In what way are the police restrained?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I could mention many, but I did not want to go into that aspect because I do not think it would be quite right. For instance, if an ordinary citizen gets a bit cheery—

The Minister for Police: No one takes any notice.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No. But if a policeman starts to talk a bit out of his turn, the moment he does so the whole district comments on it. There are many other matters I could go into, but it would be wiser not to do so. A policeman has to set an example, not only when he is on duty, but when he is off duty. I have heard it said that a policeman is always on duty, and must be prepared to exercise his office at any time during the 24 hours of the day.

Mr. Lawrence: You are purely insinuating.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, I am not. He must exercise his office. He is a member of a disciplined force. On occasions he has many unpleasant jobs to perform. He has to deal with people who are not in their ordinary senses, and with those who are hurt physically, and he has to face conditions that are very objectionable. For those reasons we should be sympathetic towards the officers.

There is another thing. The Police Force, being a disciplined body, takes a lot. Other bodies of workers in the community who had to suffer such disadvantages would be very much more vocal about what they were suffering and what they were doing for the community and what they should get.

Mr. McCulloch: You think that discipline is a disadvantage?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, I mean that we should be sympathetic to these men, and that they are entitled to good conditions because they do not enjoy the ordinary liberties experienced by the majority of citizens. From the very beginning, and as they climb higher and higher, they often have to suffer silently in a way that no other organised body of workers would. Others would be much more vocal.

I agree that their quarters are not reasonable. If any other body of industrial workers were so affected, there would be factories and shops inspectors making inquiries, and 101 people saying that it was not fair.

The Minister for Police: There would be industrial trouble.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I agree. I do not know whether the Minister, during his term of office, has occasionally felt as I did when I occupied that position—that the Government sometimes forgets the services these people render to the community. We know that hospitals are a first charge on our finances. We know that schools are an urgent necessity and that housing and public buildings are needed. But sometimes I wonder whether justice is done to these men in respect of the accommodation provided for them.

There is a big disadvantage they suffer. If they are ordered to go to some place, it is no excuse to say, "I am sorry but there is no place for my wife and children and nowhere I can stay." They have to go. Admittedly, the commissioner does his best for them, but I think the day will come when we will have to provide much more housing accommodation for these officers that is the rule at present. The day is past when houses were built merely for letting purposes. A person cannot go to town and get accommodation.

Another urgent need that could be attended to is the establishment of a school with accommodation. Young trainees who come from the country have to find board and lodgings in the city, and the accommodation they get is not always satisfactory. At one time, the department had a good barracks in James-st., but they had to be taken over for the ordinary purposes of the Police Force, and the trainee policemen had to find accommodation wherever they could in the city. When we have an intensive school such as this is—it does not last many months and the young men have a lot to learn—the people attending it should live together in the same way as recruits do in the army. They should be housed in proper barracks where they could do their training together, and where they would be available at all times for training purposes.

The Police Department has a fine block of land at Herdsman Lake, and I hope that some day good training barracks will be erected there. I think the police are carrying out duties that could be more fittingly done by others. I do not like to see a young constable walking along the street putting chalk marks on motor tyres.

Mr. May: Especially if they are yours.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes. I believe that is beneath his status, and I would like to see the duty surrendered to the City Council. I do not think that the parking of cars is regarded as a crime, although we know it is a breach of regulations.

The Treasurer: It never was regarded as a crime.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I made that statement only because the police usually deal with matters of crime.

The Treasurer: And with many others.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so, but this is a duty that could well be surrendered. Many of the office duties could be more suitably performed by other people. Then again, I feel that many of the office duties in the Police Force could be performed by officers who are past the retiring age. We know that members of a Police Force have to be young and active, but there are many duties that have to be carried out that could be performed by those who have reached the retiring age which, I think, is 60 years.

Mr. Yates: Would they still be able to earn as serving members of the Police Force, and draw superannuation?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No.

Mr. Yates: Well, they will not work.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If they want to retire, they can; but they could be given the option because the remuneration they would receive would be much more than they would draw by way of superannuation. The Minister for Police has a difficult job to perform because his requests never appear to have quite the same urgency as those of the other Ministers. Therefore, I sympathise with him, and I hope that whoever occupies the position next year will get a slightly more sympathetic hearing from the Treasurer than has been given in the past.

MR. LAWRENCE (South Fremantle) [5.50]: I agree with the member for Mt. Lawley that something further could be done to better the conditions of members of the Police Force. An idea of the duties that our constabulary must carry on, no matter what their rank, could well be given to members and to the public, but there are some things that the hon. member mentioned with which I definitely disagree. I can remember that when the member for Mt. Lawley was Minister for Police, members of the force had to walk down High-st., Fremantle, on freezing winter days—the wind blows strongly along there—without greatcoats. The Minister refused an increase of 10s. to allow these men to have that necessary requirement.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not think that would be correct.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I challenge the hon. member on it, and we can have a battle about it afterwards. Schools, houses, etc., are urgent requirements, so the hon. member said, and that may be so. I support his statement that we should do something about housing the Police Force properly. I realise that unless a police officer accepts a transfer, he cannot get promotion, and if he does not get promotion, then someone else rises to the top.

Mr. May: That applies to the railways, too.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, and I also disagree with that. I think the principle is wrong, and something should be done about it. I fully agree with the member for Mt. Lawley in his suggestion there.

Mr. McCulloch: That is unusual.

Mr. LAWRENCE: It is not illogical.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I must be right sometimes.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, now and again, but seldom. I feel that some action should be taken along the lines suggested by the

hon. member. I appeal to the Minister to have this matter investigated by some committee or other.

Mr. Yates: Are the police headquarters adequate at Fremantle?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Definitely not. Years ago, in South Perth, Sergeant Douperouzel was stationed there, and he was one of the best custodians of the law that we could possibly wish to have. He was most co-operative when we held our Waterside Workers' Federation (Fremantle Branch) picnics at the Zoo, because he provided every facility to see that no tragedy occurred by way of accident or anything else. When having a chat with him afterwards, I found that he had been evicted by the Minister for Police from the police station at South Perth. I do not know whether the member for South Perth, knows of this.

Mr. Yates: I know the full facts.

Mr. LAWRENCE: He was evicted because he was transferred, and that is the point raised by the member for Mt. Lawley.

Mr. Yates: It was a nasty case all round.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, it was; but nevertheless he had a house of his own which he had let.

The Minister for Police: How long ago did this happen?

Mr. LAWRENCE: In 1950, I would say.

The Minister for Police: Oh, that is all right.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, it was before the present Labour Government took office. This Government would not have allowed that to happen. I feel I must support the member for Mt. Lawley in some of his submissions, but I say to him that, while he was Minister for Police, he did not do too much for them, and I also say to him that the force today, because of the administration and the methods employed by the present Government, is much better situated than it was in his time.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [5.57]: I am surprised to hear the remarks of the member for South Fremantle regarding the member for Mt. Lawley when he was Minister for Police, because after all, although he was Minister for Police, most of the conditions of the Police Force came under the Minister for Labour.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He was harder than the member for Mt. Lawley.

Hon. L. THORN: I do not think so. The member for Fremantle mentioned the matter of policemen walking down High-st., and said that the member for Mt. Lawley would not grant them an extra 10s. for a greatcoat. One would think they were walking down High-st., perishing, which, of course, is ridiculous.

Mr. Lawrence: No, it is not.

Hon. L. THORN: Yes, it is.

Mr. Lawrence: You never walk, but drive.

Hon. L. THORN: A policeman can always put on a little extra clothing—a cardigan or something—under his tunic; and the big macintosh he wears is just as warm as a greatcoat. So we can dispense with that. I maintain that our Police Force is treated as well as any in the Commonwealth. Its members are given every consideration and I think that if the member for South Fremantle made inquiries, he would find a list as long as his arm of applicants who are waiting to get into the force because of the improvement in conditions over the last ten years.

Mr. Lawrence: Why do you not direct that question to the Minister?

Hon. L. THORN: One would think our Police Force was not properly treated, but it is. When I was Minister for Labour, a log of claims was presented by the then commissioner, Mr. Doyle, for my consideration. We spent days on it together to give them the best terms and conditions possible. Of course, the Minister for Police was in the picture, too; he knew all about it and he had given it consideration, but, after all, the Minister for Labour had, and still has, the final say on the log.

Our method, when dealing with the working conditions for our various workers—nurses, police and others—was, and I would say still is, to consider the log presented to us. I know I did that, and I am sure the present Minister for Labour does, too. We then ascertained the conditions ruling in the other States, and, we generally arrived at conditions as near as possible to those that would give our workers the average conditions ruling in Australia.

Mr. Lawrence: How can they be the same?

Hon. L. THORN: I said "average." In New South Wales there may be a grade higher and in Queensland there may be a grade lower and in Victoria a grade higher, and so on. The margin is only slight. The members of our Police Force, however, get the average, and sometimes a little better than the average. Therefore, it is of no use anybody saying that the members of the Police Force in this State are not given every consideration so far as their working conditions are concerned. I know that the McLarty-Watts Government and the present Government have always sought to have a contented Police Force. That is why I interjected and asked the Minister when the working conditions in the Police Force were last reviewed.

When I was Minister the men were granted a substantial increase in their pay. We also gave the plainclothes men two civilian suits per year instead of one. I

know that Ministers in the future will always endeavour to keep the Police Force in this State contented. We know it is wise to keep its members in that frame of mind because then we have a choice of selection among applicants. Today I know there is an excellent choice of selection offering. There is a list of names as long as one's arm of men waiting to get into the Police Force.

Mr. May: There are also many resignations.

Hon. L. THORN: It takes all sorts and types to make a Police Force, just as it takes all sorts and types to make up a community. Some are thin-skinned should they happen to be reprimanded by an inspector or, on the other hand, they may become discontented with the conditions and they get out. In most cases such men do not take kindly to discipline.

The Minister for Police: They do not like week-end or night work.

Hon. L. THORN: The same applies in all walks of life. Discipline is all right if one is prepared to stand up to it. However, there are some people in our community who cannot take it. When a man enters the Police Force and takes his oath of allegiance, he knows what he has to do and the conditions to be observed.

Mr. Yates: There is more behind the story of the resignations than just that.

Hon. L. THORN: I know, but I am not going into that aspect. After all is said and done, when dissatisfaction among any large body of men is reported, the story is generally exaggerated. In an organisation such as the Police Force one always hears criticism of the commissioner or the inspectors, and in such instances one must always make allowances.

The Treasurer: You hear that in the army, too.

Hon. L. THORN: Of course one does. Therefore, when one discovers a man in the Police Force who has a personal grudge, I think it is well left alone. Of course, if any complaint lodged is serious enough, the only way to deal with it is to have an inquiry. However, if it is only a question of discipline, the matter should not be taken as far as that. As the Minister has said, many men retire from the Police Force because they do not like week-end work and, also, they see better opportunities offering outside.

Mr. Lawrence: Some are chucked out.

Hon. L. THORN: Some have to get out. I have never heard of anyone being chucked out. I have heard of many that have had to get out, but generally there is a good reason. I know of some policemen who took a man behind the Freemasons' Hotel at Fremantle and garrotted him.

Mr. Lawrence: Yes, and many years elapsed before ever you or your Government took any action on that.

Hon. L. THORN: On that case?

Mr. Lawrence: I know the particular men who were involved, too.

Hon. L. THORN: The hon. member has hold of the wrong end of the stick.

The Treasurer: What is the difference between dismissal and being chucked out?

Hon. L. THORN: One is orderly and the other is disorderly.

Mr. Lawrence: These fellows were very disorderly and they were chucked out.

Hon. L. THORN: I have the highest regard for the Police Force and I am sure that the object of any Government is to keep it contented. A nephew of mine recently retired from the Police Force because he considered he could make more money by purchasing a truck for the purpose of taking on cartage contracts. So there are many and varied reasons why these young men retire from the force. The fact that the Police Force is enjoying excellent conditions today is borne out by the large list of names of men who are anxious to join the force.

Mr. Lawrence: Did you say—

Hon. L. THORN: Just a moment! I never interrupt when the hon. member is making a speech.

Mr. Lawrence: Yes, you do.

Hon. L. THORN: If their conditions are such that they warrant further consideration, I know that it will be given by the proper authorities. I know that the policemen who were doing a perish whilst walking down High-st.—

Mr. Yates: Are still alive.

Hon. L. THORN: Yes, they are still alive.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [6.8]: Probably I will not have the opportunity to bring this matter forward at any future time, and as this one point, which appears on page 8 of the report by the Commissioner of Police, is abominable, I wish to raise it now. It appears in the report under the heading of "Lunacy" and it reads—

One hundred and twenty-four cases of unsound mind were brought before the courts.

I consider it is a terrible thing that a person suffering from some mental disease can be brought before a court and convicted. Such a disease should not be classified as being any worse than mumps or measles.

Mr. Lawrence: Or being a member of the L.C.L.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Why should such a person receive this treatment when he is afflicted with unsound mind?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You go down to Fremantle and see some of the cases there.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Surely some other steps could be taken to assist these people rather than to take them before a court and convict them. Some institution could be established to which these people could be committed or they could enter voluntarily on a temporary basis in an endeavour to restore their minds to normal. This is one matter which any Government, irrespective of party, should investigate.

A person suffering from a mental disease should not be placed in a category different from that in which a person suffering from some other disease is placed. No distinction should be made between the two. Most members in the Chamber will agree with me when I say it is a bad principle to have a person subjected to such treatment purely because he is unfortunate enough to be suffering from a mental disease. There are one or two other items in the report on which I intended to speak but I do not want to delay the Committee. However, I did not think that I would have the opportunity again to refer to this item, and I hope the Minister will take some cognisance of my remarks.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [6.11]: There is one aspect of a policeman's work on which I would like to comment. I refer to the work performed in country towns. In many of these places where a court sits, the sergeant-in-charge is also the acting clerk of courts. In several of the larger country towns the volume of this work is increasing rapidly, brought about, of course, by an expanding population. The Minister for Police could well study this particular aspect with a view to the Minister for Justice being induced to establish court-houses in such country towns, each with a full time clerk of courts in attendance.

The duties of a clerk of courts call for special qualifications and it is not every policeman that is suited for such work. At Harvey, for instance, the volume of the court work is very great indeed and it occupies practically all the time of the police sergeant in charge. Although in this instance the sergeant is well qualified to do this work, I have noticed that when a relief sergeant is appointed it takes him some time to become familiar with the work.

Mr. Lawrence: Is it not a fact that they are progressively taught such work while in the metropolitan area?

Mr. MANNING: I have no doubt that in the course of their duties policemen learn something of this work, but where it is

extremely heavy I think it justifies the appointment of a full time clerk of courts. In country towns where the population is increasing, the work could be carried out by a full time clerk of courts and in such places as Harvey, where the electoral work is performed in the Bunbury office, such work could be handed over to the clerk of courts, if one was appointed to Harvey. Therefore, I ask the Minister to investigate this particular aspect of a policeman's duties because such work is not the responsibility of a policeman stationed in a country town.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported till a later stage of the sitting.

(Continued on page 2253.)

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, Hospitals Act Amendment.
- 2, Albany Harbour Board Act Amendment.
Without amendment.
- 3, Fertilisers Act Amendment.
With amendments.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of five amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; Mr. Ross Hutchinson in charge of the Bill.

No. 1, Clause 3, page 3—Delete the words "or visiting" in line 5.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

I undertook to have this amendment made in another place, so there should be no objection to it now.

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

No. 2, Clause 3, page 3—Delete the words "and thirty minutes after" in line 21.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The same remarks apply to this amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3, Clause 9, page 5—Delete the word "twenty" in line 7 and substitute the word "seventy."

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This merely corrects a printer's error.

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

No. 4, Clause 9, page 5—Insert after the word "three" in line 9 the words "of Sub-section (2)".

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This amendment arose out of an omission of the words referred to. If they are left out of the clause, it will be meaningless.

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

No. 5, Clause 10, page 5—Delete the words "and thirty minutes after" in lines 31 and 32.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This amendment is consequential on amendment No. 2 which has already been agreed to.

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

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

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading—Defeated.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall) [7.40] in moving the second reading said: I regret the lateness in bringing this measure down. It is like a baby born with blistered feet, and has been marking time for a long while in another place, but has now reached us. I submit the Bill for the consideration of members.

It seeks to amend Section 50 of the Licensing Act, which section provides that every house for which a publican's general licence, or a hotel licence, a wayside-house licence or an Australian beer and wine licence has been granted shall provide at least two sitting rooms and two sleeping rooms, ready and fit for public accommodation. In addition to that, it shall provide stabling and provender sufficient for six horses. The question of providing stabling and provender for six horses, whether they be political ones or otherwise, is immaterial.

The object of the measure is to amend the other part of that section and provides that the Licensing Court shall have discretionary power on an application from a licensee to declare premises referred to in that section apply, to be a non-residential establishment. In that event, the licensee shall not be obliged to provide residential accommodation. I wish to stress that the power is purely a discretionary one. Until a recent amendment was made to the Act

the court had no discretion respecting the issuing of licences; but a precedent having been set, it is felt competent now to set another.

The court, upon application from a licensee, would examine the position and all the relevant details, make an assessment of the accommodation needs of the particular area and then arrive at a decision based on its inquiries. Where an application for such exemption is granted, the additional licence fee upon the granting of the exemption, which amounts to £150 per annum, is paid. This additional fee is not to be regarded as a general licensing item of revenue, but it shall be paid to a special account. From this account the court will have power to make payments to other hotels which are required to provide accommodation. By this means, such licence fees could offset some of the losses entailed by hotels having to provide accommodation.

The increase of registered clubs, particularly in country areas, cannot be denied. During the last few years the increase has been considerable and with the increase in club licences it is quite obvious to everyone that the trading available to hotels has been reduced appreciably. Licensed clubs have certain advantages not enjoyed by hotels. They trade for longer hours, and in the country, anyhow, they are not required to provide any accommodation.

The advantage enjoyed by licensed clubs, coupled with increasing overheads of hotels, have caused the profits derived by country hotelkeepers to be reduced. This Bill in that small way seeks to redress such a disadvantage. As I have pointed out, it will not be by any means obligatory on the court to exercise this discretion, and the fact that it is a discretionary power would afford the requisite safeguard. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [7.45]: The member for Mt. Marshall has presented a very clear case, but I have had a little experience of hotel keeping and in a State like Western Australia the difficulty of getting accommodation by the travelling public and the tourists is always a problem. If we allow this Bill to pass, the effect will be to reduce the available accommodation. The provision of accommodation, particularly in some parts of the State, is very important and we should not absolve any licensee from this obligation merely on the payment of a small fee of £150 as against the comparable expense to a licensee having to provide such accommodation.

When a licensee has to employ a cook, housemaids, waitresses and laundresses, it is an expensive matter and licensees find it difficult to balance the budget. If I were running a fairly good hotel, I would be quite satisfied to pay an extra fee of

£1,200, £1,500 or even £2,000 to be permitted to make the premises non-residential and to conduct the bar trade only. To pass the Bill would be a step in the wrong direction from the point of view of the travelling public and of tourists.

I can appreciate the attitude of Mr. Baxter, who introduced the Bill in another place, which doubtless arises out of his experience in the trade. In my opinion, the court has dealt very fairly with licensees in Kalgoorlie. If there is any influx of people for race meetings and such like fixtures, the accommodation is available, and help can be employed. Admittedly, it is difficult to get suitable help. If one does secure a good cook, somebody else takes him or her.

Personally, I am fearful of permitting the court to depart from the provisions of Section 50 of the Act. In Perth and Fremantle the holders of publicans' general licences have to comply with the Act and provide at least 12 bedrooms and two parlours. A wayside house has to provide two bedrooms and two parlours. For a publicans general licence outside the metropolitan area, I think the requirement is six bedrooms. Those conditions are very reasonable having in mind the requirements of the travelling public, but under this Bill, these hotels could become merely beer houses.

Regardless of the experience of Mr. Baxter, we should not accept this measure, because I repeat that we must have consideration for the travelling public and the tourists, and already it is hard enough to get accommodation in some places. In my opinion, the number of rooms required in the metropolitan area should be increased to 24, and there should be a proportionate increase in hotels in the large country towns. I entirely disagree with the idea of making these hotels non-residential and hope the Bill will be defeated.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [7.50]: I agree with the Minister for Justice. During the last few days we have granted the court discretion in regard to wayside licences that it did not previously possess.

MR. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member kindly speak up, so that I can hear him?

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Certainly. We have given the court the power to grant a wayside licence under any conditions that it deems fit. The only limitation in that case as regards accommodation is to provide two bedrooms and two sitting-rooms.

The Minister for Justice: Nothing in the way of accommodation has been taken away.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, but the court has been empowered to grant a wayside licence where it considers that the extra accommodation is not necessary for

the service of the community. Previously the court's power was limited because it could only grant a wayside licence if the premises were situated more than 10 miles from a townsite having fewer than 100 people. That is a wide discretion and we should not go further. Therefore I cannot support the Bill.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [7.52]: I am of opinion that licensees are already well provided for under the existing Act. We have various kinds of licences set out in a list running down to the letter "P" from which licensees may make a choice and surely they can choose a suitable one out of that lot. I consider that they are adequately provided for, and for this reason I am opposed to the Bill.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall—in reply) [7.53] When amendments are proposed to the Licensing Act, they do not seem to receive a very cordial reception in this House. I recall one measure a few sessions ago and it got the axe where the chicken got it. As regards this Bill, the powers are discretionary with the court, and for that reason I undertook to introduce the measure. The court would not exercise that discretionary power lightly.

I agree with what the Minister has said in refutation of my argument. The question of accommodation in the city is crying aloud for rectification. However, I leave the House to decide the fate of the Bill. May I say that, in my opinion, the time for making a complete overhaul of the Licensing Act is long overdue, and whatever party may occupy the Treasury benches next year, I hope it will put such a measure at the top of the list. The question of trading hours, too, is one that needs to be carefully explored because I cannot see why clubs should enjoy certain conditions that some licensed houses do not have.

Question put and negatived.

Bill defeated.

BILL—FERTILISERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 6, page 6—Delete all the words in line 17 and substitute the words "in a package unless such package"

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Some matters that now seem to be important were overlooked by me and my advisers. The Bill deals with the selling of any quantity of fertiliser unless sold

in a package which is conspicuously marked or to which is attached a label conspicuously marked with the registered name of the fertiliser and a copy of the registered brand; and where the package contains at least 28 lb. of fertiliser, unless the package is conspicuously marked or has a label attached.

The Council has pointed out that if we restrict the quantity to 28lb., it will be an imposition on fertiliser firms who sell some 6,000,000 separate bags of fertiliser in a year, because every one of them would have to be conspicuously marked and have a label attached with a brand and particulars of the chemical contents. It is not difficult to imagine that the time will not be far distant when superphosphate will be handled in bulk, and so the provision in the Bill in its present form would be ridiculous. In all those quantities of fertiliser over 1 cwt. the effect of the amendment will be that an invoice only will be required instead of individual markings on the bags. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2. Clause 6, page 6—Delete the words "at least twenty-eight pounds" in line 23 and substitute the words "less than one hundredweight".

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 81, page 7—Insert a paragraph after paragraph (a) to stand as paragraph (b) as follows:—

By adding after paragraph (b) of Subsection (2) the following words:—

"Provided that in the case of packages of one hundredweight and over"

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move —

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 4. Clause 8, page 7—Insert after the figure "(2)" in line 29 the following:—

and substituting the following:—

(c) where any of the specified or other ingredients referred to in paragraph (f) of Subsection (1) of Section seven of this Act are present in the fertiliser, particulars of the minimum percentages referred to in that paragraph;

(d) where the fertiliser is lime or other neutraliser, the minimum neutralising value referred to in paragraph (h) of Subsection (1) of Section seven of this Act; and

- (e) where the fertiliser is gypsum, the minimum calcium content expressed as calcium oxide (CaO) and as crystallised calcium sulphate ($\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) referred to in paragraph (ha) of Section seven of this Act.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It will now be necessary, having passed the previous three amendments, to have a detailed statement on the invoice for any large amount of fertiliser and it will be necessary also to accept this amendment, which has relation to the invoice and the details to be included thereon. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1955-56.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Medical, £2,739,586:

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nuisen—Eyre) [8.7]: These Estimates are important and would be more important had we sufficient money to do all the work that urgently requires to be done. However, I feel that with the finance that has been available, the department and the Government have done a very good job.

The cost of maintaining our hospitals is increasing rapidly, the estimate for this year being £2,739,586 as compared with an expenditure in 1954-55 of £2,414,410. One of the major reasons for the increase is that the rate of pay for nurses has been increased considerably. The shortage of trained nursing staff in country hospitals is acute and steps are being taken with a view to alleviating this situation. A short term solution is difficult as there is a world-wide shortage.

In addition to an intensive advertising campaign, the system of offering bursaries to girls who are willing to undertake to train as nurses is gaining momentum, but this scheme cannot produce trained nurses in less than four years. A new Government central school of nursing has been completed in Colin-st., West Perth, and will be officially opened in December.

The shortage of hospital accommodation, particularly in the metropolitan area and certain country areas, is causing concern, and this position cannot be relieved until loan funds are available. As far as funds have permitted, a programme of improvement of buildings and equipment has been undertaken in country hospitals. Work

needs to be done on our North-West hospitals. The most urgent need is a new midwifery ward at the Wyndham hospital, which it is hoped will be commenced shortly.

Four or five months ago, in company with the Assistant Under Secretary of the Medical Department and the Under Secretary of the Crown Law Department, I had a trip through the North-West and saw for myself the condition of the hospitals at Roebourne, Wyndham, Nullagine, Port Hedland, Broome, Wittenoom Gorge, Derby and Hall's Creek. I believe we would require about £500,000 to put all those hospitals on a reasonable working basis. The programme which I have in mind is to be worked out on a four or five-year plan to do what is absolutely essential work on the hospitals in the North.

These centres are so isolated that, although the people are fortunate in having very good doctors, it is still at times necessary for patients to come to larger centres or the metropolitan area for treatment and it is my intention, if the Treasurer is able to find the money, that help should be given to the payment of fares in urgent cases. I think it is an idea worthy of consideration. A completely new hospital and quarters were erected for the Australian Inland Mission at Hall's Creek, and a new hospital at Meekatharra was completed and opened in September this year.

Mr. O'Brien: It is a very good job, too.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is true. Although Meekatharra has not a big population, it is the centre of a very large area and there is practically no other hospital within 200 miles.

Mr. Sewell: It was built by Geraldton workmen.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and it is a great credit to their workmanship. A tender has been let for the construction for the Commonwealth of a 200-bed chest hospital at Hollywood. A new maternity hospital, which is nearing completion at Kwinana, will be officially opened next month. To avoid the closure of another private hospital, it was necessary to purchase St. Helen's hospital in East Fremantle, and this has now been leased so that its services may continue.

A new midwifery ward is in course of construction at the Collie hospital, and a contract has been let for major additions at the Bunbury hospital. I do not know that Collie would have got that hospital except that its member made himself such a nuisance that we thought it best to give him something that was really required.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Has he any opposition?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not think so, and, in any case, it would not be effective.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: How do you justify this preferential treatment?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If I were guilty of preferential treatment, I would by now have had a good hospital at Esperance. For years I have endeavoured, so far unsuccessfully, to have something done in that regard. I notice, however, that when my friends opposite were in power, they had their own ideas in that regard.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, what about the Pinjarra hospital?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What about the position at Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Consideration has been given to that and the new 50-bed hospital will be built as soon as possible. So far, a commencement has been held up as the negotiations to date have not suited the Fremantle council, but we hope to have that aspect settled shortly. Plans have been prepared for additions to the Manjimup hospital and, subject to finance being available, it is hoped to call tenders in the near future. Plans are also being prepared for a new regional hospital at Albany, and for major additions to the Infectious Diseases Hospital, but finance must be provided before these works can proceed.

A regional hospital at Bunbury is another matter of high priority and plans are in progress for a regional hospital at Geraldton. I repeat that there is great need for further beds in the Fremantle area, in addition to major improvements to the existing Fremantle hospital. Major additions to the King Edward Memorial Hospital and the Perth Dental Hospital are urgently needed. I was rather surprised, after seeing the condition of the hospital, that my predecessor in office had not done something for the Manjimup people. They certainly deserved it and something should have been done before this Government took office. Plans are being prepared for a new regional hospital at Albany, also for major additions to the Infectious Diseases Hospital, but finance must be provided before these works can proceed.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: At Albany?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Are you doing anything about Bunbury and Geraldton?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Bunbury is on a high priority and we are spending a lot of money there.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Which one will you start first?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have to give a good deal of consideration to it.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Which one are you starting first?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Wait a moment! As far as Geraldton is concerned, plans are in progress. Levelling of the site for a regional hospital is now being considered by the Principal Architect; that is a town which badly needs a regional hospital and the member for Geraldton has been on my wheel for some time. But we cannot do anything just now because we have not the money. The same applies to Bunbury. Probably they are on an equal basis but it will be a matter of departmental judgment as to which will be built first or, if we can get the money we will probably start two at the same time.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What about Albany?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As I have said—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They will have to wait a while.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It has more or less been started because the foundations are in. Albany is a very deserving town, but then I do not consider it is any more deserving than the other places I mentioned. However, I think the accommodation position is more acute at Albany than at any other town in Western Australia.

Mr. Ackland: Are you asking all these towns to find some of the money, like you did in my electorate?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. They have found a good deal of the money for additions and improvement of old hospitals. But if we built a new hospital at Dalwallinu, or any other place, probably it would not be necessary for the people to contribute. For new blocks and improvements to hospitals, the Lotteries Commission assists, and we expect the people to do something in regard to it as well.

Mr. Ackland: You have asked the people of Moora and Dalwallinu to find quite a lot of the money.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The same applied to Bunbury and Albany, in regard to improvements, and the same to Geraldton. All towns are treated on the same basis; there is no differentiation in regard to the improvement of old hospitals.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You would not ask them to contribute anything towards a new hospital, which would cost £750,000.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is so.

Hon. V. Doney: Do they ask for assistance for hospitals in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, as far as improvements are concerned.

Hon. V. Doney: In Perth?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not in Perth. There are no small hospitals here. The hon. member is referring to the Royal Perth Hospital. That is not a Perth hospital but one which deals with people from all over the State.

Hon. V. Doney: Is that the only hospital in the metropolitan area where all the expenses are paid?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: What does the hon. member mean by paying all the expenses?

Hon. V. Doney: The Minister knows the expenses I mean—debts, as they come along.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We pay for the staff and doctors, and similar requirements, in all the hospitals in the State. No hospital makes a contribution in that direction. It is only when hospitals want innovations or improvements that it is necessary, in some cases, to ask the local people to assist.

There is a great need for additional beds in the Fremantle area, in addition to major improvements to the existing Fremantle hospital. Major additions to the King Edward Memorial Hospital and the Perth Dental Hospital are needed. As members will see, the Government has many proposals for additional and improved hospital accommodation and facilities, but lack of sufficient loan funds is our main difficulty. If we had a lot of money we could satisfy everybody because there is nothing that pleases me more than to be able to please others. Hospitalisation is necessary but to do all that was necessary, including the mental hospitals of Western Australia, would require at least £12,000,000 or £14,000,000. So members can see that a vast sum of money is required because of the increase in population and the lack of money in the past.

The mental hospitals in Western Australia, bad and all as they are, are not in such a poor condition as those in the Eastern States. As regards the Sunset aged men's home, work has been commenced on the establishment of a new laundry and boilerhouse. During October, the new hospital ward at the Mt. Henry home, which has accommodation for 104 persons, was opened. The capital cost will be borne by the Lotteries Commission, but the maintenance cost will be a State responsibility.

At this fine home we have accommodation for 371 people, but there is a pressing need for hospital beds. Earlier in the year the department opened a new ward to accommodate approximately 100 patients, so that in 1955 the accommodation at the home has been increased by 200 beds. I think the Mt. Henry home would be equal to any old women's home

in Australia. The accommodation available there would be worth £20 to £25 a week at any hotel, and any elderly person who goes there is lucky indeed.

I wish at this stage to pay a tribute to Mr. J. J. Kenneally. He had an obsession in regard to old people and he was really the instigator of that home. It is indeed a monument to him and I am glad to say that the present Lotteries Commission is following in his footsteps. The tribute should be paid not only to J. J. Kenneally but also to his colleagues. However, he was really the leader.

Next I wish to deal with the Health Estimates. An important function of a Public Health Department is to establish close relations with the public in health matters, and to act as an educating agency in the promotion of social health. This requires a considerable publicity organisation with expenditure on additional staff and publicity costs.

A recent example was the successful exhibition at the Royal Show which has since been displayed very successfully at Bunbury. Arrangements are being made to show it at other centres in the country, starting at Kalgoorlie next week. An amount of £12,000 has been included in this year's Estimates to cover the costs of health education.

This is an innovation as far as Western Australia is concerned and I think it will pay dividends. When I came back from the Eastern States, I wrote a minute to the Treasurer in regard to it, and he readily agreed to make a sum of £12,000 available. The scheme will help to educate not only the adults of this State but also the children in regard to the careless use of matches, the danger of fire, and so on. A similar scheme is in operation in Queensland and I hope it will prevent many accidents occurring. It will point out to mothers the danger of leaving poison, hot water, kerosene and so on within reach of children. It will also be useful in educating children to be careful.

There is an establishment of 14 dentists for the school dental service and they are used mainly in country areas. Every endeavour is made to provide a general dental service for isolated districts such as the North-West and the Murchison. Because of the short supply of dentists, age limits for the treatment of school-children have at present to be imposed at the larger country centres because there are not sufficient dental officers to attend all children.

However, it is hoped to increase the dental staff later when more dentists are available. The present Government has already agreed to award eight bursaries a year for five years to students who are willing to undertake a university course in dental science. On graduation these students will be directed to the school

dental service or the dental hospital as required, and will be employed by the Government for a stated number of years before being allowed to engage in private practice.

There has been a scarcity of dentists and there has been a good deal of dental work which the department and the Government would like to see carried out but, unfortunately, we have not had sufficient dentists to send to the North. However, every effort is being made to overcome the difficulty and the Government has now agreed to award eight bursaries a year for five years to students who are willing to undertake a university course in dental science. We are hopeful that this will overcome the acute shortage and be of assistance to people in the outback parts of the State.

Production of the Salk vaccine is being undertaken by the Commonwealth Government and its distribution and the inoculation of the public will be the responsibility of the State Government. I have approved of the setting up of an organisation to ensure this when the vaccine is in production. At present the indications are that the vaccine will be available early next year.

In regard to trachoma, ophthalmic surveys have continued in various parts of the State throughout the past year, including the Kimberleys, Eastern Goldfields and the Murchison. At present a survey in the south-eastern division of the State is under way. Trachoma was very prevalent in the North, and many natives over 55 years of age were blind as a result of it. Professor Ida Mann is a highly qualified person and she has done a wonderful job in this direction. There is no danger if treatment is given in the early stages but the position was so bad that even white children in the schools were suffering from it; but now I am glad to say that, apart from a few elderly people and those already blind, the progress of the disease has been arrested.

With regard to mental hospitals, the most important need is the construction of a new hospital to relieve the overcrowding at Claremont and to cater for increasing demands for beds because of increased population. Negotiations are proceeding for the purchase of a site at Guildford, and it is hoped that finality will be reached at an early date. We have examined a number of sites, and the most suitable is the one at Guildford. The Premier and departmental officers have had a look at it and they are satisfied that it is an ideal spot.

The Commonwealth Government contributes one-third while we provide two-thirds of the finance for mental hospitals. It is not much but it is something, and we hope to assist the mental hospitals in this way. As I said before, bad as our mental

hospitals are in this State, they are not nearly so bad as they are in the Eastern States.

The recent purchase by the Government of a home at Redcliffe on a site of four and a half acres is a step in the right direction. It will be used for the care of mentally incurable children and will relieve the parents to some considerable extent. That will be something that no other State has got; it will be something that we have initiated in Western Australia and should help the poor mothers. There are quite a number of mothers known to me in the country who have never really had a holiday. Some of their children, aged 10, 11 and 12 years are mentally incurable. They can bring their children to this home for three or four months where they will be looked after well and the mothers can have a short holiday.

As members know, a mother becomes more attached to the poor unfortunate child who is mentally ill. Mental illness is very similar to physical illness, the only difference being that one is ill at the top and the other might be a case of a sore foot. Renovations, repairs and additions will be undertaken to the building at Redcliffe to enable it to function as a home for this purpose.

Last year I mentioned the necessity for the construction of a new ward at Whitby Falls. Plans and specifications have been completed and tenders, which will close in December, will be called for the construction of this ward. The Commonwealth Government has agreed to reimburse the State to the extent of £1 for every £2 spent on capital works directed towards the provision of additional accommodation for mental patients, but unfortunately our capacity to undertake work is limited by restrictions on loan funds.

The drive against tuberculosis continues with satisfactory results. The compulsory mass radiography programme is continuing in the metropolitan area at the rate of 100,000 x-ray films a year. New x-ray equipment has been purchased to enable the recommencement of country surveys.

Work commenced on the construction of the 200 bed chest hospital at Hollywood at the beginning of the year, and the extensions to the Perth Chest Clinic were opened in September.

Dealing next with the Crown Law Offices Vote, which stands at £437,974, I present the following statement with reference to that Vote:—

The revenue expected to be derived from all sources, viz., probate, law courts, departmental—Crown law, land titles and Public Trust—is estimated at £1,457,000, as compared with the actual revenue of £1,492,623 received during the year 1954-55.

The estimate is £35,623 less than the revenue received for the previous financial year. The following statement shows the expected increases and decreases under the respective headings, when compared with the collections for that year:—

	Collection 1954-55.	Estimate 1955-56.	In- crease	De- crease.
	£	£	£	£
Probate Duty	1,062,082	1,050,000		12,082
Law Courts	275,323	251,000		24,323
Departmental—				
Crown Law	25,785	26,000	215	
Land Titles	72,893	70,000		2,893
Public Trust	56,540	60,000	3,460	
	1,492,623	1,457,000	3,675	39,298

Probate duty—estimate, £1,050,000:

Last year's collections under this heading amounted to £1,062,082. This was £12,082 above the estimate for that period. The number and values of estates being handled indicates that £1,050,000 should be collected this year.

Law courts—estimate, £251,000:

Last year's collections were £275,323. The decrease in the estimate compared with the actual collections is due to the commencement of operations of the Betting Control Act. It is anticipated that this will cause a reduction in the revenue from fines.

Departmental—Crown law—estimate, £26,000:

The estimate is £215 more than last year's collections. Details of the various items are as follows:—

	Collections 1954-55.	Estimate 1955-56.
	£	£
Public trust—unclaimed moneys ...	10,803	7,000
Local court—unclaimed moneys ...	264	204
Bankruptcy—unclaimed moneys ...	39	537
Legal costs and services ...	8,576	12,650
Commonwealth Savings Bank commissions ...	1,973	2,000
Bankruptcy services ...	750	750
Supreme Court—unclaimed moneys	27	10
High Court—services of State Officials ...	210	210
Taxation—services of State Officials	200	200
State Housing Commission—Com- missions ...	1,776	1,800
Telephone recoups from officers ...	487	200
Sale of confiscated articles ...	168	100
Miscellaneous ...	453	339
	25,785	26,000

Land Titles Office—estimate, £70,000:

Restrictions on finance are expected to cause a reduction in the number of transactions passing through the office.

Public Trust Office—estimate, £60,000:

Last year £56,540 was collected which was £3,460 above the estimate. £60,000 should be collected this year.

I know the figures that I have presented are not of much value as they are, but my idea is to get them published in "Hansard" to enable members who are interested to scrutinise them, should they wish to do so.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [8.40]: I listened with a great deal of interest to the Minister for Health while he was introducing his Estimates. The resume he gave us of the activities of the Health Department throughout the State was most interesting.

Mr. O'Brien: And very creditable.

Mr. SEWELL: As the member for Murchison says, they were very creditable. With the continual progress made in this State, we find it difficult to keep up with our hospitalisation, and I do not think it is necessary for me to impress on members the need that exists to provide the required hospitals for our people. We are reasonably favoured in my district as far as hospitals are concerned. The Government hospital is certainly an old one but we are fortunate in having an excellent staff at the institution. As members will appreciate, this has made a great difference to it.

This year the Public Works Department has done a great deal towards reconditioning the hospital and giving it a face-lift. We are also fortunate in our private hospital, but that does not lessen the need for a regional hospital being established in that area, particularly when one considers the distance of Geraldton from the metropolitan area. It is most important that steps in that direction be taken as soon as possible. The Minister has told us tonight—and he has told me on other occasions—that the plans for levelling the site for the regional hospital are at present in the hands of the Chief Architect. He is to go into the pros and cons of the position after which an effort will be made to find the money to start the work.

It is estimated that it will cost in the vicinity of £1,000,000 to build a regional hospital. The district to be served by such a hospital is very large, but with the establishment of a hospital of that nature we would naturally obtain the services of various types of specialists as obtains in the metropolitan area, and this would save country folk having to travel long distances for treatment. We understand that a start will be made to build the new regional hospital in the Geraldton district.

The only other hospital in my district is in Northampton and this has had its ups and downs. It is a country hospital and is giving good service at present. The Minister knows the trouble we had in getting a doctor for that hospital, and our thanks are due to him and to the Agent General, Mr. Dimmitt, for securing the services of a doctor in England. This has been very much appreciated, and now

that the hospital has the services of a doctor it will, of course, provide a good service to the district.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont) [8.44]: I wish to make a point in regard to the Crown Law Offices Vote. I have heard recently that the Minister for Justice intends to overhaul the Criminal Code. Some of the items embodied in that code have been placed in our Standing Orders for the benefit of members. Recent happenings in Eastern Australia, both in Federal and State politics will be recalled. Members will remember the Bankstown case and the cry that was raised throughout Australia that the privilege enjoyed by Parliament of committing citizens to prison for trying to intimidate members of Parliament should be done away with, and that action should be taken through the courts.

In view of what happened on that occasion, I would draw attention to the wording of our Criminal Code, which has been incorporated in our Standing Orders. The portion that particularly interests me is as follows:

Any person who attempts, directly or indirectly, by fraud, or by threats or intimidation of any kind, to influence a member of either House of Parliament in his vote, opinion, judgment, or action is guilty of a crime and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for seven years.

That is a very powerful threat to hold over the people of this country. It was included in our Standing Orders in 1913, before the first world war, and in the days of the horse and buggy. I think there must have been a different viewpoint in those days. So much protection was afforded to members of Parliament that if anybody tried to induce them to take certain action in the House, he would be liable to seven years' imprisonment. That is surely a much heavier penalty than was ever contemplated in regard to the Bankstown case where, in spite of the hue and cry, only three months' imprisonment was imposed.

Since 1913 great political parties have arisen in this country—and all over the world—which have terrific power. I do not know the inside machinations of parties; but from what one reads in the Press, it would appear that even if a member of Parliament crossed the floor of a House to vote in a certain direction opposed to his party's principles, he could be threatened with loss of endorsement at the ensuing election. That comes definitely into the picture under the part of the Criminal Code to which I have made reference.

The time has come when we must recognise facts, and realise that we have moved from the horse and buggy days when a member of Parliament was a person of consequence who had to be protected; and whose speeches counted for

something; and when one member could influence another by his eloquence. We know that today great parties have arisen, and there is a different situation from that which prevailed in earlier days. I do not know the facts from inside information—no one listens at keyholes to learn these things!—but if the story that the Press tells us is correct, then in these days, when there is a division on some matter, members have apparently to toe the line and vote in a certain direction; and if they do not, they are threatened with loss of endorsement at the next election, or some other threat is made to influence them. That means that this provision to which I have referred is being ignored.

I am not complaining about the rise of big parties. That may be the only way, under our democratic system, of getting results. It may be analogous to the position on a football field where there must be two sides, and the members of the teams cannot play as individuals and cannot run away with the ball, but must work for their respective sides. The time has come when these great political party machines have considerable power over their members. We know that Independents have probably gone out of existence.

The Minister for Justice: What Standing Order did you quote?

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: It was an extract from the Criminal Code and appears at page 210 of the latest edition of our Standing Orders. If we feel that the great party machines of today constitute an evolution that had to occur, I think we must also face the fact that this provision needs to be very much modified, or that we will have to make an exemption in the case of persons serving in those party machines.

It is something like the days when we had benefit of clergy and when, if a man could read or write—particularly if he could write—he would not be hung, but would escape punishment. If a person is elected to the executive of a big party, he should be exempt from this provision and have absolute freedom of action in this connection. I certainly think that consideration should be given by the incoming Government to some alteration being made in this provision.

At this stage of our evolution it seems to me that the big parties are doing a great thing for Australia. They are saving unnecessary effort, and they are beginning to create huge organs in the sense that they have appointed expert economists and other people to study all sorts of facts and provide us with a lot of information which is of assistance in the Government of the country. That is all to the good.

However, I can visualise a final situation in which there will be a return to the electors and they will govern the country.

When we have improved the existing situation and electrical transmission has been improved, eventually the day will come when people will be able to sit in their armchairs in front of their television sets and indicate to their member as to what they think of any particular matter. But those days have not yet come and party machines have every justification for seeking protection from the application of drastic criminal laws.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.52]: I cannot let this Vote go by without saying a few words. At the outset, I am disappointed at the treatment meted out to Fremantle in connection with its hospital. I hope I am not going to have a repetition of the long wait I had in regard to the high school. It took about 25 years to get something done in that connection! I have been crying out for a long time for the establishment of this hospital at Fremantle.

It seems that the main job in the present building is to push patients out as quickly as possible—before they are really fit to leave—in order that more serious cases may be admitted. That should not be so. The Health Vote is the most important on the Estimates because the health of the community is a most important matter. Portion of the existing Fremantle hospital is nearly 100 years old, and it is years since anything was done to it. It is time that the department shook itself up and did something about this matter.

Of course, it is no good Ministers trying to tell us that they have not been able to obtain land. The Fremantle City Council has been chasing the department with a view to giving it some land—not selling it but giving it—as a quid pro quo in exchange for another bit of land in Fremantle. The Minister in Mr. Stiffold's time spoke to him on this matter on two or three occasions with a view to urging him to get a move on and secure the land. However, the land has not been obtained; and if the department does not make a quick move, it will not get it because it will be sold to someone else.

The Fremantle City Council is to be congratulated on the way it has handed out land to various organisations to enable them to build, and has sold valuable land to industries at £1 per acre to enable them to become established in that district. When the present mayor suggested that that should be done, he was laughed at and told that he would not get industries established there. But he did so at £1 an acre. The land for the hospital has been inspected by the Minister for Health, The Minister for Lands was also invited to look at it, and I think he found it was a valuable block. When the Minister for Housing went to have a look at the base flats, we took him also to look at this land.

That 40-acre block is waiting for the department to take it over in exchange for another piece of land in the district. No money will be required to be spent by the Treasury, and it is time the department got on with the job. The hospital board is very worried because it has to send patients from the hospital before they are fit to go. But that has to be done in order that others who are more seriously ill may be admitted. I wish to quote a letter that was sent to me by the administrator of the hospital. It is as follows:—

Dear Sir,

At the recent meeting of the Fremantle Hospital Board of Management, I was directed to bring to your notice the fact that there is a present shortage of 130 hospital beds in the area served by the hospital. It is understood that this area embraces the Municipalities of Fremantle, East Fremantle, North Fremantle, Cottesloe, Claremont and the Fremantle, Melville, Mosman Park and Peppermint Grove Roads Boards.

The shortage of beds has caused a drastic reduction in the normal period which would be spent by patients in hospital, with the result that their treatment has suffered accordingly and the period of incapacitation has possibly been lengthened. The rapid turnover of patients has been occasioned by the great demand for beds, which has made it necessary to discharge patients prematurely in order to make way for the admission of acute cases. The urgency of the matter can well be illustrated by way of comparison between the average stay in days of patients in this hospital and at Royal Perth Hospital.

	Year 1952-53	Year 1953-54	Year 1954-55
Royal Perth Hospital (General)	17.21	16.95	18.05
Fremantle Hospital	12.15	10.68	10.27

This means, in effect, that the period spent by a patient in this hospital is approximately half the time spent in Royal Perth Hospital.

For this reason, the members of the board seek your assistance in securing the proposed Hilton Park hospital site (approximately 40 acres) and for the early erection of a 50 bed hospital thereon. Although the Hilton Park site has been approved by the Minister for Health, the Under Secretary, Department of Public Health, the Commissioner of Public Health, the Principal Architect and others, negotiations have been conducted for some time without finality. The securing of this site is essential

before consideration can be given to preparing plans for the erection of a hospital.

As the Hospital Requirements Committee of the State Health Council considers that a 50 bed hospital at Hilton Park should have priority over a 50 bed hospital at Kwinana, it is earnestly requested that you endeavour to have a 50 bed hospital erected in the near future on the Hilton Park site. The object of this 50 bed hospital and ancillary services is that it will become an integral portion of the ultimate Hilton Park hospital which would eventually contain up to 500 beds. The wards and nurses' quarters of the 50 bed hospital could be of solid construction and ancillary services such as kitchen, laundry, etc., could be of a temporary structure. Details of this nature could be the subject of discussion in the near future. For the present it is necessary that—

- (a) the site at Hilton Park be secured for hospital purposes;
- (b) finance be arranged and plans prepared for a 50 bed hospital.

This letter has been forwarded to all members of Parliament in the Fremantle hospital area, and it is hoped that by the combined efforts of the members some immediate action will be forthcoming to guard and protect the health of the population in the Fremantle hospital area.

That letter, which was signed by the administrator Mr. J. Scrymgeour, sets out the case pretty well. I do not intend to keep the Committee very long, but I do appeal to the Minister again. The present hospital in Fremantle is not only inadequate but is a disgrace to the city. I trust the Minister will get a move on and have his officers secure the land of which I have spoken. We have been chasing him for months and months, and he will not take it for practically nothing. No cash will be required. I hope that he will get busy and see whether the new Under Secretary will do something more than Mr. Stitfold did. That gentleman was communicated with time after time, but nothing was done.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Homes, £281,417; Public Health, £312,040; Tuberculosis, £524,195; Mental Hospitals and Inebriates, £771,575—agreed to.

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £437,974.

Item—Witnesses and jurors, Supreme Court and Court of Petty Sessions, £15,000.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Our method of taking and recording evidence is most expensive. It is done in longhand and it is very slow. This means that the fees of the jurors and witnesses are increased.

They will be an extra £1,500 this year. It is time the evidence was taken down, as it is in South Australia and other parts of the world, direct on to typewriters. In those places they have silent typewriters and expert operators. I think I read in the paper a while ago that one of our magistrates was trying out this system. I commend the idea to the Minister.

Item—Poor persons legal assistance, £200.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: This is a very small amount. We pay hundreds of thousands of pounds so that people may get the best medical advice when they cannot afford to pay for it themselves. I think more will have to be done so that everyone can get the best legal advice. The sum provided on the Estimates is a miserable one. I hope that a better scheme will be evolved so that more assistance can be given. Some people may need good legal advice. The Treasurer has the advantage of having the Solicitor General to give him all the advice he wants, but what will be the position next year? He may not have him at his beck and call.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Consideration has been given to the first point raised by the hon. member, and we have tried out a machine. I think it will be a good innovation. If I come back next year, I will give the second point further consideration. I have had a look at the position in South Australia, but I have not had time to go into it properly. If we are in office next year, further consideration will be given to it.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Licensing, £7,286; Arbitration Court, £22,024—agreed to.

Vote—State Housing Commission, £5:

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND FORESTS (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [9.6]: I think the portfolios covered by the Minister for Housing and Forests are somewhat singular in that the various instrumentalities under his control are virtually self-supporting. The State Housing Commission finances its own operations, there being merely a token figure so as to enable the Vote to be debated. The same is true of the Forests Department, apart from the administrative officers and incidental expenses; whilst the State trading concerns—the State Brick Works and the State Saw Mills—again are examples of Government instrumentalities that finance themselves.

In the matter of forests, my feeling is, and it has been for many years, that insufficient is known of the work that is carried out, and its importance. I feel that is because timber is so slow growing by comparison with other crops, and also because we have been accustomed to an adequate supply. For these reasons we

have not a full appreciation of the department's work. As indicated several evenings ago, the position at the moment is reasonably well in hand, but because of the slow growth of timber it is necessary to plan and order development now to cater for a situation likely to arise 25 or 50 years hence, or at some period even beyond that. Western Australia is more fortunately placed than is any other State.

Perhaps to some extent we deceive ourselves in the matter of timber supplies, because at the present moment between 20 and 25 per cent. of the sawn timber requirements of Western Australia are drawn from private property. As will be appreciated, timber so drawn is a diminishing asset until ultimately there will be no timber, or practically none, drawn from private estates.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That must be disappearing pretty rapidly, too, because of the price being received for it.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: That is so, and that, of course, contrasts with an ordered forests policy under which the annual increment, or, shall I say, interest on the investment, only is used. That is to say, if a certain volume—at present in the vicinity of 800,000 loads a year—is taken from our forests, then there should be at least that amount of increase in our timber supplies by natural growth. If there is only that volume, then, of course, no provision is being made for an increase in population, and accordingly, an increased demand.

The growth of timber is far more important to the State than is generally realised. In my opinion, trees are fundamental to the existence of a community. Apart altogether from supplying the wants of the people—whether timber in some processed or manufactured form, or in the more common form of sawn timber for constructional purposes—the growth of timber plays a most important part in making any country livable. If there is an over-cutting of natural growth, or even an over-stocking of our lands, then we can contemplate even dire tragedy.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What do you mean by over-stocking?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Over-stocking with cattle, sheep or other flocks. I have already said in this Chamber that North Africa, now a vast sandy desert, was at one time covered with timber which, perhaps, could be compared to some extent with the timber growing in our eastern and northern Goldfields. However, owing to too many herds and the wanton destruction of the timber, uncontrolled bush fires and the rest, that vast area was desecrated.

Timber is necessary apart, I repeat, from its commercial uses, from an aesthetic point of view. It is important to provide

shade for stock. By the removal of trees, shrubs, bushes and, ultimately, all grasses, the balance of nature is interfered with. At some time during that process the soil is loosened, wind erosion commences and water erosion can have a most damaging effect; and then there is the problem of salinity. If members have travelled about the rural areas of Western Australia they will have seen examples of many thousands of acres having been rendered worthless.

In other cases the topsoil is rapidly disappearing, and in others—I have in mind particularly an estate west of Beverley—the fields have been rendered practically unworkable, from an agricultural point of view, because they are cut by water-courses that are grand canyons in miniature. In addition, timber is necessary for the insurance of a pure water supply. Many approaches are made to the Forests Department, and indeed other departments, for the release of land for the purpose of settlement and the people seeking the land—in many cases members of Parliament on their own behalf—are most vociferous in their complaints against the authorities that are holding back development.

There is a misconception that land is not being used to the full advantage unless it is cleared for the purpose of growing crops or for the pasturing of stock. It has been estimated that on a given area, in certain parts of our forest country, by retaining our natural timber in perpetuity, it will keep as many people settled on the land as it would if the land were made available for farming purposes. That is taking into account the employees of the Forests Department who are engaged in the many activities that I need not enumerate, concurrently, almost, with the activities of the saw mills and all the employees that are engaged in their operations.

There are many places in Western Australia where it is still possible to develop land for agricultural purposes, but it is a somewhat confined area that is still available to the State to retain and grow timber to make some provision for the future by means of encouraging the growth of successive crops. As I indicated at an earlier stage, it is my desire, if I am still occupying the position of Minister for Forests, to organise a trip by members of Parliament so that they may see some of the work performed by the Forests Department and also, if possible, to witness some of the effects of the foolish policy that has, in practice, been followed in the past.

There is no need for me to refer to some of the beautiful timber that was slaughtered in the Pemberton-Northcliffe area, and in other places and which was growing on land that subsequently proved to be not particularly suitable for farming operations. Little holdings were developed at

a terrific cost and at a far greater cost, so far as the sacrifice of the forests was concerned.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are referring to the karri?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Yes. Today karri is far more acceptable to the markets than it has been for many years.

Hon. D. Brand: What would bring that about?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: A shortage of timber, I suppose.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: At present there is no shortage of timber, but, on the contrary, there is a surplus.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: There is a world shortage.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: That is not the position in Western Australia. Some two years ago a timber utilisation committee was constituted and steps have been taken by it to encourage various persons, whether they be architects, building contractors or others, to appreciate that there are other timbers in Western Australia, apart from jarrah, that can be used for commercial purposes. For instance, the State Housing Commission is using a considerable quantity of karri and timber other than jarrah, in the erection of its homes. This timber is being used for roofing, flooring and so on.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Even the red gum or marri is being used.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: As to that comment, I would point out that I have placed an order with the State Saw Mills for timber to be supplied for the erection of one prototype home to be built entirely of marri, or red gum, as it is more commonly known.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is that at Dwellingup?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: No, in the metropolitan area so that it can be something of an exhibit to demonstrate to the sceptic that marri can indeed be profitably used.

Mr. Court: What is the main objection to it by builders at present?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Mere prejudice, I would say. For some reason or other, it has always had to be jarrah for building purposes and also if it had the slightest blemish to indicate that it might interfere with the strength of the timber, it was unacceptable. Generally speaking, it is difficult to obtain marri that is perfectly clean. It can be milled in the lower forestry belt, particularly at the stage where it is young and has vigorous growth, but generally speaking it has gum veins in it.

Mr. Wild: Is marri impervious to white ants?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Yes, apart from the sap-wood on the outside. I am informed that marri has the major attributes of both jarrah and karri. There are, of course, other timbers that can be profitably used.

As for pine plantations, in which the member for Nedlands has evinced not a little interest, the situation is somewhat disappointing because we should perhaps be planting 5,000 acres per year, but over the past few years since we commenced to recover from the effects of the war, there has been an average, perhaps, of only 1,500 acres planted. However, it is considered that the Forests Department, by pruning in other directions, could plant 2,000 acres a year. It is purely a question of funds being made available. This factor, of course, is also tied up with a lack of appreciation by the public as to what timber really is and what work is being performed by the Forests Department.

It is for that reason that Governments—perhaps only naturally—are reluctant to devote any considerable amount of loan moneys to forestry purposes because in the mind of the average individual money thus spent is regarded as being lost because there is nothing to show for it and he prefers to see the money spent on something more concrete, such as houses, schools, hospitals and so on. If they have a timber conscience, it must be an inducement to Treasurers in the future to devote a greater proportion of loan moneys for forestry purposes.

I am naturally pleased that, during the time I have been Minister for Forests, there have been great increases in the number of areas dedicated as State forests. Further areas have been recommended by an interdepartmental committee and investigation is being undertaken in respect of some additional 400,000 acres. However, I am a little disappointed about pine plantations, but, apropos of that, it may not be as great a tragedy as is generally thought because, as might be expected, the introduction of a type of tree from another part of the world in itself means that a great deal of experimentation is involved.

In the vicinity of Busselton, for instance, huge areas were planted with pines but that work has virtually ceased because there are some grave doubts in the minds of the technical officers of the Forests Department as to whether it is a worthwhile and economic proposition to plant them there. However, in the district of Harvey, some additional land has been acquired and it is felt that pine plantations can be established there with every prospect of their proving to be an economic success.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That is between Harvey and the coast?

Mr. Owen: Is that on the coastal plain or in the hills?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Yes, on the plain. A reference to the metropolitan regional plan will disclose that any areas in close proximity to those set aside for woodlands will be planted with pines in the future. I hope and trust that the same mistake will not be made as was made earlier by not anticipating the rapid expansion of the metropolitan area, such as occurred when pines were planted in Mt. Lawley and South Perth where houses and services of all types have had to go round considerable estates because of the position of the two plantations I have referred to. It has now been decided that the pines will have to be removed before they reach maturity and already some action is being taken in that respect.

Hon. D. Brand: In respect to those pine forests coming to maturity, we have just about reached that stage where the timber will be made available. Has it been ascertained whether it compares favourably with pine trees grown in other countries?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Yes, quite favourably. In the pine plantations near Mundaring Weir there are some pines which compare favourably with pines grown in other parts of the world. The height and girth of those pines are absolutely astounding.

Mr. Court: What about when that timber is sawn? Is there not a degree of twisting and warping? Or can that be attributed to the fact that the timber is immature?

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I should say it is on account of the latter reason, because a great proportion of the timber harvested in Western Australia is what is called thinnings, which is the immature stand. In addition, of course, to areas which are being acquired that has happened—and it will continue to happen at an accelerated rate—in the pine plantations in the metropolitan area. I think that is all that need be said at this stage in regard to timber, bearing in mind also the stage that this Parliament has reached.

So far as housing is concerned, and speaking now in my capacity as Minister for Housing, the experience has been one of new records being created only to be subsequently broken and this is, of course, a most pleasing feature.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That has happened all over Australia.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No, it has not. Western Australia is now to the forefront with respect to housing.

Hon. D. Brand: It always has been.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No, that is not so.

Hon. D. Brand: Yes, it is.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In the 12 months ended the 30th June last, more than 9,000 homes were completed in Western Australia, 4,000 by the State Housing Commission and the balance by private contractors. The figure of approximately 9,200 was more than the number of homes erected in South Australia. Speaking from memory, it was almost as many as were built by Queensland, which is a considerably larger State than ours, reckoned by population. In any event, the number of houses built in Western Australia in the last 12 months, on a per capita basis, was far more than that built in any other State.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: South Australia did not have the lag after the war that we had; it went on building.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That may be so. Of course, some of the other States have pretty terrific lags, even now. New South Wales, for instance, measured by the date of application, is up to about 1946, whereas Western Australia—I think it can be reasonably said—is abreast of the times.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Would you say the housing problem in Western Australia is solved?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I should say, at this stage, still with several months to go, that it has been virtually solved, and I think that statement can be well and truly proved if any member desires that I go further into the question at a later stage. During the last 12 months, the Housing Commission spent almost £12,000,000 upon the development of estates and the construction of houses which reached an all-time record total of 4,066. Of that number, in round figures, 2,000 were rental homes, 1,100 were war service homes, and 800 were homes erected under the State Housing Act, previously known as workers' homes, and slightly more than 100 were built as the balance of operations carried out at Kwinana. So it will be seen that almost 50 per cent. of the activities of the State Housing Commission were directed to providing homes for purchase.

That fact is not generally appreciated. It is thought that the Housing Commission in this State is erecting homes for rental purposes only. Of course, the number of homes under the State Housing Act, the exact figure being 798, is many times in excess of anything previously achieved in the history of Western Australia. Altogether, since the end of the war the Housing Commission has completed 21,000 homes. Might I say that nearly 10,000 of them were built during the regime of this Government.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Of course, it was much easier during the last three years. You had the bricks and cement which we did not have when we came into office.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I hope the Leader of the Opposition does not want to be argumentative about this.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I want credit to be given where it is due.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The effort required direction, drive and other factors, reference to which it is just as well for me to omit: The Housing Commission last year collected more than £1,000,000 in rents, from which it will be appreciated that there is a pretty big business going on at the State Housing Commission. In addition, there were collections totalling almost £2,000,000 by way of deposits and instalments from persons buying their own homes. So the activities of the State Housing Commission are big business in every respect. It is a very popular place. In the last 12 months, more than 5,000 applications for homes were lodged with the Housing Commission. Approximately 10,000 approaches were made to the Housing Commission each week.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That does not sound as if the housing shortage has been solved.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It demonstrates that the Leader of the Opposition knows very little about the matter when he speaks on those lines. For instance, the Housing Advisory Bureau which was opened a little over 18 months ago, has been consulted by many thousands of people for advice, including a member of this Chamber who sits on the other side of the House. He has no housing problem but he desires a new dwelling for himself. He could inspect the plans and obtain four sets and specifications for £8 8s., as against the best part of £100 if they had been prepared by an architect. He could receive all sorts of advice in a hundred and one directions. That service encourages people to do something for themselves. People go in to the commission to pay money. A person might go in during six months on 12 or 15 occasions, depending on how persistent he is. It is certainly no measure of the number of valid outstanding applications in existence.

The position has been reached where any person suffering real hardship can be provided with a house immediately. There is a shorter waiting period for workers' homes than ever before. Occupants are moving into those home within 18 months of lodging applications. In prewar days there was a waiting period of from 18 months to two years before the application was processed, and therefore two years or more from the date of the application before people got the homes. Today, I repeat, the period is 18 months. In the sales of Commonwealth-State rental homes under the new system agreed to by the Commonwealth and effected by this Parliament, Western Australia is leading every other State in the number of persons who apply and finalise documents

in connection with purchases. When the tempo of building eases off, as it must, for several reasons, then greater attention will be paid to developing a sales drive to encourage people to purchase the homes they are living in on a rental basis.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That is a good move.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It will cost money to appoint officers who will be charged with the responsibility of going around and explaining how easy it is to acquire homes on that basis. I repeat that it took two years, to my knowledge, of pressing by the States before the Commonwealth Government finally agreed to the sale of these homes on terms. Previously, all the purchase money for the homes had to be found.

As the State was not in a position to finance people who were tenants, or who were using money for the construction of new homes, very few sales were made, although far more sales did take place in Western Australia per capita than in any other State. I remember there were 1,500 sales effected in Australia when only 99 were effected in Victoria. That will give some idea of what has been done in Western Australia. I pursue that aspect no further because there were certain reasons for it.

It is regrettable that in Western Australia at present building contractors are looking for work, although there is no shortage of building tradesmen in any category. All of the components to erect homes, be they bricks, timber, cement or terra cotta tiles, cement, asbestos sheeting, or fittings for homes, are available. Just when we have reached that stage, which no doubt my predecessor dreamed of and hoped would arrive—if not today then tomorrow; in any event, as soon as possible—where a perfect situation had been attained, that was the moment when the axe fell, so far as funds were concerned, on the State Housing Commission and on the private builder. I fear that before many months have passed there will be a severe recession in building activities in Western Australia.

Within the last 48 hours, when I was in conversation with some captains of industry, if I might so term them, they forecast that there will be a falling off of at least 50 per cent. in the present level of home building. I am informed that at Brisbane & Wunderlich's new factory at Caversham, millions of terra cotta tiles, which cannot be disposed of are stacked all over the property. I do not want to pursue that line further because overall it is a dismal picture.

Because people are unable to obtain finance from banking institutions, whether they really desire homes for themselves or merely want a change, they find it impossible to proceed to satisfy their wishes.

Very many applications have been lodged with the State Housing Commission as an insurance policy. It has been agreed, and I say this without any political bias, that this arose as a result of the uncertainty of the rents and tenancies legislation. Just about every person renting premises lodged an application with the State Housing Commission so that they would have a claim staked in case their landlords gave them notice.

Of course, notices were not given in all cases and many of the applications lodged did not really mean anything to the overall position. In spite of that overall position, I emphasise that more than 4,000 homes were completed by the State Housing Commission in the last financial year. An even greater number will be completed in the calendar year ending the 31st December, 1955. A survey has been undertaken by the Housing Commission which indicates that there is outstanding somewhere in the vicinity of 4,000 applicants who have a housing need. From this it will be seen that to satisfy these needs will necessitate a 12-months building programme.

Having got as close as that, no one can seriously suggest that we have a real housing problem in Western Australia. By comparison with what I have stated regarding homes built under the State Housing Act for purchase, a different situation exists for war service homes. There was a far shorter waiting period in Western Australia than anywhere else in the Commonwealth; it was down to from six to eight months. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth Government has thrown a spanner in the works and has asked this State to mark time until the other States have caught up. Of course, the Housing Commission is only an agent for the Commonwealth and it has no control over the position, although representations can be made.

Mr. Court: The Commonwealth has given you some relief ahead of the other States.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Only to the extent of 40 new contracts.

Mr. Court: I cannot follow the reasoning.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Of course, the member for Nedlands does not understand the ramifications of the war service homes scheme. The balance of the money will be for the discharge of mortgages; in other words, to give applicants easier conditions under the war service homes scheme than they can obtain from outside sources for the purchase of existing homes.

Mr. Court: That has satisfied those war service applicants' demands?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is so. The decision of the Commonwealth Government has meant that, instead of letting contracts for 1,100 homes, as the

commission did for the year ended the 30th June, 1955, it is permitted to let contracts for only 550 for the current financial year, and very many of them not until May or June next year so that no money will be spent in respect of them. I consider that was a trick on the part of the Commonwealth Government, which could easily say, "We authorised the construction of 5,000 houses this financial year, but none of them can be started until the 30th June." Therefore the Commonwealth authorities could make good fellows of themselves by announcing the 5,000 homes programme and yet not handle an expenditure of one penny.

Mr. Court: I do not think they have done that.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: They have to this extent: Apart from the 40 additional contracts, because of this second thought, the Commonwealth has said that no more contracts for war service homes may be let until May or June of next year.

Mr. Court: But we are still better off in that respect than all the other States.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That may be so, because we have the capacity to do the work. I read the speech of the Commonwealth Minister when he was introducing the Estimates and he said in effect—

It would not serve any purpose to make additional funds available because they would be swallowed up by extra costs. The building trades are saturated and could not undertake any more work.

That might be true of Melbourne and Sydney, but it is not true of this State. We could make use of another million or two for the building of war service homes in this State.

There are many interesting particulars that could be given, but in view of the hour I do not intend to mention them. During the year homes were built in 70 different country centres and 735 homes were erected in country towns. That may create an impression that there is a bias in favour of the metropolitan area and that country districts are being neglected, but it would not be possible for anyone legitimately to give examples of the position in the country that would reflect adversely, taking into account the current housing programme.

The member for Vasse raised several issues the other night. He said that housing had never been worse in his district than it was at present. He quoted three towns, Capel being one of them, and I gave him the answer by way of interjection. In Capel one application has been lodged in the last ten years and it was lodged only a fortnight ago. I do not know what the hon. member expected should be done in that case, whether he thought that a house should be built and should stand idle for 10 years waiting

for this individual to come along and then, when he changed his employment, that it should be again unoccupied. He also mentioned Busselton as the second of the towns. There are 19 homes under construction there at the moment and four more contracts to be let, which is a greater building programme than Busselton has ever had before. There has been a concentration of building in that centre because, when I became Minister for Housing, there was not a single building lot on the books of the Commission for that town, and land had to be acquired. Now that this has been finalised, the programme is being proceeded with rapidly, and by the time these homes are completed at the 30th June, there should be no housing problem in that town.

The third town he mentioned was Margaret River. What is the position there? There is one rental home under construction and there is one application by a man with a family. There happen to be two from two two-unit families, but when a check is made, one will probably be found to have left the town. Of war service homes, one is under construction and there is one applicant for a home. Under the State Housing Act, there are three applications, but no homes are being built under that Act. These are probably duplications of the other applications.

Extreme difficulty was experienced in selling the last house available at Margaret River. No local resident desired to purchase it and it was subsequently sold to a Kalgoorlie resident who had transferred to that town. Thus for political reasons, which may be all right on the stump at Busselton, the hon. member said that housing there was never worse than it is at the moment. If members have followed the information submitted by the departmental officers they will be able to judge just how reliable he was in his statement. I do not want to see houses built in places where there is no demand for them. I may have something to say presently in respect to the demand for houses in country centres.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You do not think that if there were houses people would be attracted.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I could quote almost from memory 20 different towns where we are experiencing the greatest difficulty in getting rid of the houses. In some towns they have been vacant for months and months waiting for people to occupy them. I have no fault to find with the idea of attracting people to the country, but if there is no inquiry or demand for houses, it would be foolish to erect homes there if they are required elsewhere immediately.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It is more economical to build them where they are required.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes. Since the war, there has been a concentration on country districts, and wisely so, too. But we cannot supply all the requirements of country towns twice over. When we have met the demand, it needs only a small programme to satisfy ordinary expansion.

Something interesting has occurred regarding building operations owing to the fact that notwithstanding the increase in the basic wage, in margins, and in the cost of most materials used in building a house, tender prices are falling and falling rapidly.

Mr. Court: That is peculiar to this State.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I believe it is. In one or two of the other States, there is a slight tendency in that direction, but nothing approaching what is happening here.

Mr. Court: Building costs in the Eastern States have risen rapidly in the last twelve months.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Some three months ago, I issued an instruction to the commission not to let a contract for the erection of a timber-framed or brick home costing more than £2,500 without reference to me. The commission has been able to let hundreds of contracts without any difficulty, and we are reaching the stage where it is possible to build houses for less than £2,000.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is the work being put into them?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: They are being built under the same supervision as always. These are homes with tiled roofs, concrete paths, cyclone fences, stainless steel sinks, sewerage or septic system and everything that goes into a modern home. Houses can be built today for many hundreds of pounds cheaper than they could twelve months ago. This may be due to the fact that there is a scramble for work because so little is offering in the way of commencing new buildings. The jobs that were in hand have been finished and there are no new ones coming along. While there is a good deal of industrial and commercial building—the figures for 1954 show that £28,000,000 was spent on buildings in this State—£21,000,000 was on housing, so that house construction absorbs most of the workers and funds available. Therefore, a falling off in home building has a severe effect upon all those associated with the building trade.

Because of the easing of the situation, it has been possible to erect homes for small unit families. At the moment, there are many hundreds of homes being built under different schemes for such families. Some are in the Wandana Flats in Subiaco, but in every new suburb being developed—I

am speaking now particularly of the metropolitan area—at least a percentage of the homes is being built for two-unit families with a particular bias in favour of pensioners.

Quite a number of one-bedroom homes have been built for people whom one might describe as being beyond the family-producing stage and they would not require extensions to their homes. A married couple of 50 years of age with the family off their hands would not require more than one bedroom, and these houses have been made available under the State Housing Act. These homes have sold like hot cakes although a couple of the local authorities seemed to think there was something wrong with them. I took representatives of a deputation that waited on me to protest to have a look at these homes. They had not seen them, but when they had they were quite satisfied with the structures.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Where are those homes?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Brentwood, Innaloo, Greenmount, Bentley Park and so on.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Are they under the McNess scheme?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No, under the State Housing Act, and all of them have been sold. Accommodation was found for 616 evictees during the 12 months—that is, people evicted by order of the court. Action is being taken to close down the camps by stages. As people move from them each month, a certain number are set aside to be sold, demolished and removed. Thus there is a gradual process of eliminating these most unsatisfactory camps that have been with us a little too long.

The first move made by the commission for slum clearance was at Fremantle in connection with the Base Flats where there were 38 families and 60 children. It was the most shocking place I had ever seen in my life. I was invited to go there by the member for Fremantle, and although I had not long been a Minister, I did not hesitate to make a decision without consulting officers of the department. All those people were transferred to other quarters. When that work was completed it was decided to continue operations at the evictee camps, and it is hoped that in time we shall accelerate the rate until every one of the ex-Army camps and evictee homes has been eliminated.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I take it there are very few evictions now.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: They are so commonplace that they are no longer news. The Housing Commission has found accommodation for 616 evicted families in the last 12 months and evictions are continuing at the same rate.

Mr. Court: That is less than the pre-war rate.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: My memory does not go back that far in this regard. I am merely indicating another job done by the commission. The commission has been criticised for deciding to erect homes for native families and placing them amongst those sold or rented to white families. Some 70 native families have been so placed, in the metropolitan area, at Fremantle, at Eden Hill near Bassendean, at Carlisle, Bentley Park and other places that I cannot recall to mind at the moment. It is true that there have been some failures, but of the 70 families only about 10 have not measured up.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What do you do with them?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There is only one course to take because usually, hand in hand with their poor standards, there is a failure to pay.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Do you evict them?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Do you make any other provision for them?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No. They must fend for themselves as they have done all their lives. This is an experiment and the majority of these families have turned out trumps. It would amaze members to enter some of these homes and see people who have come from bush humpies living as civilised white people do, although they have never previously used electricity or had a bathroom, or a kitchen stove and sink, together with all the other amenities of such homes. In many of the areas, the other residents have been most appreciative of what has been done by the Housing Commission in conjunction with the Department of Native Affairs. They have entered into the spirit of the thing, doing their utmost to help these people, although many do not require help. A start has been made, and it will be continued.

The Government will not give way to the prejudices of members of local authorities. For over 100 years we have done nothing in the way of housing of these dark people, but now a start has been made. We are as careful as possible in selecting them but I repeat, that overall, the experiment has been a remarkable success. If any member is doubtful, I will be pleased to take him personally to inspect any one of the four or five of these places that have been erected at Eden Hill near Bassendean.

These homes are clean and although the people have never had the chance before, they are decent citizens. Even in the case of those who do not measure up entirely to the standard required, we are giving a chance and prospect to the children which they would never have had

if they had continued to live in humpies and hovels in the bush outside some country town or on the verge of the metropolitan area.

Members are no doubt aware of the many activities of the State Housing Commission which have been announced from time to time. The commission has found that the legislation passed last year to allow for second mortgages has proved very popular, and I wish we had more funds in order to assist more of these people. In addition many who have got bogged down have been helped.

By that I mean, as an example, a man who had a block of land and several hundred pounds and approached one of the banking institutions for assistance, following which it accepted his plans and said that provided the building was decently constructed it would give him an advance of £1,500 when the dwelling was plate high. By sacrificing his week-ends and working hard, he got the job to that stage but then the bank told him that, owing to credit restrictions, he could not be helped.

That man, like many others, was just about reduced to tears and probably felt like cutting his throat, but the Housing Commission came to the rescue as it has done in many such instances. No publicity has been given to that action as we did not want to be swamped with applications but many cases have come to our notice from time to time and, without regard to date or priority, they have been helped. I repeat that overall the housing problem can be said virtually to have been solved. Anyone with doubts in that respect can gauge the position by viewing the papers and returns submitted to me every week. An average of about 10 or 15 people in the metropolitan area are rejecting houses every week because they do not like the design or the colour.

A man working at Belmont was offered a house but said it was not sufficiently convenient to his work. Another, last week, was offered the type 25A brick house—which the member for Dale might recognise—at Manning Park, but did not like the design. At present many people are rejecting homes on the most trivial pretexts, and that is indicative of the situation. In addition to that, as I have said, if any family is in any way really in difficult circumstances it will be found a house immediately and scores of them are being provided with homes every month.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What would happen to the applicant who rejected the house at Manning Park?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The policy is that if a person rejects a home without reasonable excuse, his application is deferred for 12 months, when a second offer is made. If that offer is rejected again without reasonable excuse, his name is removed from the priority list and he must lodge a fresh application. If his

circumstances had changed and he could demonstrate that he had anything like a decent excuse for the rejection, he would not be disqualified but would probably be offered another home the following week if one was completed in the area which he favoured and which was convenient to his employment.

These things indicate that there is no longer a housing problem. Whereas yesterday housing was a major matter of discussion with questions, motions and speeches on the Address-in-reply and the Estimates debate, general and otherwise, there has been virtually a complete silence on the subject in both Houses for the past 12 months or so.

Mr. Roberts: I have three applications in Bunbury.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is so. There is a greater programme now in Bunbury than ever before, and, in addition to the tremendous number of houses announced to the Premier in Bunbury a few weeks ago, it has been decided to build an additional 20 houses there.

Mr. Roberts: Will they be completed this financial year?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, Bunbury will have almost 100 houses completed by the end of the financial year. Members used to be calling at the commission every day of the week, seeking houses, but now they are simply casual visitors there. I am not making political capital out of this but I think we are all thankful for the present position and I am certain that Western Australia is in advance of the other States as regards housing.

I would not be pressing for the abolition of slums and getting rid of the emergency camps if I thought that there were any people living under such great hardship that those places would seem better to them than nothing at all. I am thankful that the Government throughout its period of office has not been responsible for the erection of any temporary dwellings, all its structures being permanent ones faithfully built and providing all the usual amenities. I leave it at that and commend the Vote to the Committee.

MR. WILD (Dale) [10.12]: I will touch briefly on the question of forests before proceeding to deal with housing matters. I join with the Minister in deploring the small amount of money made available by the Treasurer in the last two or three years for pine planting in Western Australia. A Royal Commission some six or seven years ago told us that the most we could expect to take out of our existing forests would be about 800,000 loads per annum. We have been drawing something like 900,000 loads per annum, which indicates that if we continue at that rate it will be only a matter of

years before our timber resources will have vanished so that posterity will have none of our hardwood timber whatever.

Some years ago the Forests Department decided to follow in a small way the pattern of South Australia by planting pine forests. I repeat that it is regrettable that in recent years Treasurers of various Governments have seen fit to cut down the funds available for pine planting. On two occasions during visits to South Australia as Minister for Forests, I spent some time in Mt. Gambier and elsewhere looking at the pine plantations. On both occasions I came away aware that the problem could be tackled in such a way that in time posterity might refer to us—if we followed the right course—as the long-sighted people of the early twentieth century.

When I lived in South Australia 25 years ago, the planting of pines was just being undertaken in the south-east of the State and one member of Parliament, a Minister who decided it was necessary to plant the pines, lost his seat. However, the pine plantations have proved a godsend to that State which has now reached the stage of being able to export pine. I do not know whether members realise that 1,000 acres of pines, on reaching maturity at about 55 years will produce in perpetuity more timber than can be cut by the largest mill in Western Australia, and that means about 50 loads in the square per day.

It does not sound much when one talks of 1,000 acres because that is only the average sized wheat farm in the State. But 1,000 acres of pines planted 55 years ago, thinned, dressed with super, and looked after over the years, would produce sufficient timber, in perpetuity, to keep a 50-load per day mill going. So Treasurers of the future, in the interests of Western Australia, and because of the increasing demand for timber and the fact that we have made such inroads into our hard-to-get jarrah forests, should see that a reasonable sum of money is made available for the purpose of pine planting.

Turning now to housing, I was pleased to hear the Minister say this evening that the housing problem had been solved, because I want to remind him that over the past two or three years we have heard him say the same thing on previous occasions. I admit that he denied it, but I was perfectly convinced when I left the State Housing Commission, in 1953, that we had reached the crest of the wave. As I often used to say to the then Premier, my Leader, we had reached the stage—it had just commenced in 1953 although, from memory, I think it started in late 1952—where people were becoming choosy.

I was informed by the chairman of the commission, at that stage, that people were getting selective. I went to see what happened in reverse. On Saturday morning,

I heard, as the Minister just told us, people knocking back houses. I was therefore not astounded, on looking through the report, at the astronomical figures of rejections. The report, which was laid on the Table of the House the day before yesterday, states that of 2,725 rental homes available last year to 3,802 applicants, 1,077 refused homes offered upon one ground or another. That means, virtually, that one in every three offered a home said that he did not want it because he did not like the look of it, he wanted to live in some other suburb, it did not suit him or for some other reason.

That proves, without a doubt, that the housing problem has well and truly been solved. Only last week I was looking at "The West Australian" to let column, as I have done over the years since I left the State Housing Commission, and on Friday, the 4th November, 40 places were advertised as being to let and on Saturday there were 42. I know that some members may say, "Yes, but the rents would be high." Of course, some of them were high, but they varied from £2 15s.—I realise that there were not many for as low as that—up to £5 5s., £6 6s. and £7 7s. a week. But it does prove conclusively that apart from the State Housing Commission having its houses knocked back, there are plenty of houses, built by private enterprise, available for rental purposes.

The object of the McLarty-Watts Government was to endeavour to provide materials so that people could build houses for themselves and it comes as no surprise to me, knowing how the materials position was improving in 1952-53, to hear of the position we have now reached; it was absolutely inevitable. If there is a clamouring crowd of people at the State Housing Commission, and there is a restriction on building materials, all the wishful thinking in the world will not provide houses.

But if there is an adequate supply of bricks, timber, cement, and hardware coming from the Eastern States or overseas, sufficient to supply the requirements of the State Housing Commission and to make a pool of materials available for outside contractors, it is only a matter of time before the individualism of the Australian will show itself and houses will spring up all over the place. Virtually, that is what has happened. But I do quarrel with the Minister on two or three counts. I have had a look at some of the housing estates and while, at this stage, I do not like the position of Brentwood for reasons which I have stated before in this Chamber, I will not stress the matter this evening because it is the last occasion that I will be discussing housing this session. The people in the homes there have done a great deal of work.

From the information I have been able to obtain, the homes at Brentwood are workers' homes and after looking around the estate I found that many of the tenants, who have occupied the houses for only two or three months, have done a lot of work in planting lawns and gardens. Members of the Opposition have always believed in the principle of home ownership and when one looks around an estate like that, one realises just what can be done.

Personally, I was pleasantly surprised, when I visited there last Sunday week, to see what had been done within such a short period. But I do quarrel with the Minister in regard to Maniana. I know that he came out with a fanfare of trumpets when the housing estate was established at Maniana, and we had great arguments here in regard to the land resumptions that occurred at that time. I shall leave that issue for a moment and concentrate on the type of house that has been built in the suburb. I say, without fear of contradiction, that it will be one of the worst slum areas in Western Australia.

Mr. Jamieson: Ridiculous rubbish!

Mr. WILD: It is not. Unfortunately, we have the suburb already established and when one looks at Maniana and sees that in some cases there are six and seven houses to the acre one realises what the position will be in the future. I know that in England the position is worse and our present Town Planning Commissioner will say that that sort of thing is common in England. I know it is, but it is not so much the number of houses to the acre, as the type of houses and the rents being charged for them that will be the trouble in the future. I would like members to go inside these houses and have a look at them.

I know that the Minister will say that when there was a conference of Housing Ministers held in this State, those gentlemen were taken to Maniana and they lauded it. Of course they did. They said so in the Press; but I put it to the Minister that if he visited South Australia or New South Wales, and was taken to any of their housing estates, would he be so rude as to say he did not like the look of them? Obviously, as a gentleman, he would say that it was very nice and I have no doubt that these Ministers did think it was very nice.

But when one looks at the duplex houses which have two bedrooms, one of 12 ft. x 10 ft. 6 in. and one of 14 ft. x 10 ft. 6 in., one can realise the position. When a double bed and the ordinary wardrobes are placed in the larger of the two rooms—and the one I saw had a cot in it as well—it is impossible for anybody to swing a cat. In addition, there is a dining-room-kitchen combined. There is no open fireplace and

the people just sit by a little stove. Very nice! But for that they pay £3 0s. 6d. a week rent.

About four years ago, when I was Minister for Housing, two motions were moved in one session criticising me as Minister for Housing. I was kicked to death because, in the difficult times through which we were passing, our Government purchased Austrian houses, erected them in this State and let them for a rental of £3 4s. a week. Members said how small they were and how terrific the rents were. They said that no one could afford to pay that much, and yet here we have houses the rents for which are almost the same. I do not know the squareage of the houses at Maniana, but I would say, after looking through the two-bedroomed dwellings, that, square by square, they are smaller than the Austrian houses brought here five or six years ago. Yet the rent is comparable with the terrific rents that I was accused of charging three or four years ago!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What did you say the rents at Willagee used to be?

Mr. WILD: I think it was £3 4s. a week; but, as the hon. member knows, that was subsequently subsidised by the Government to the tune of 10s. a week and so I presume the tenants are paying only £2 14s. That was the standard rent for those houses when I was at the State Housing Commission.

The Minister for Housing: During your time you charged £3 4s. to £3 12s.

Mr. WILD: Is that so? I remember that at Willagee, initially, we charged £3 4s. While I have no doubt the Minister wanted to build as many houses as possible, particularly as he had all the materials made available for him and especially as he had so much money, I think some recognition should be given to the previous Government. Members know that during our regime we never had any more than £3,750,000 for housing in any one financial year. Last year the present Minister for Housing had the same figure and this financial year the sum has been increased to £5,000,000.

We must also bear in mind that he has dipped into the future, for how much this year it is hard to assess. Last year on his own admission, the figure was something in the order of £1,225,000. Of course, that had to be repaid when the money became available this financial year. So I worked it out that if he started off this financial year with about £3,750,000, by the time the commitments, which he mentioned in answer to a question, had been taken from it he had, at the 1st October, under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement, only £865,817 left. Despite that, goodness knows how many houses he has told us he is going to build with the balance this

financial year, and he had only, approximately, £865,000 available at the 1st October last.

He has just told the member for Bunbury that he will have an extra 20 houses and the Premier told the electors down there, I believe, that he would build 50. The only question in regard to deferred payments which I have been able to have satisfactorily answered, is that one contract has been let for 150 houses. So one has to look into the crystal ball to find out how much the Minister has dipped into the funds to be able to carry on with his building programme. Whichever Government is in power next year will find itself in a sorry old pickle, because somebody will have to face up to the fact that the building industry must virtually cease for some months of the year.

This evening the Minister mentioned that people in the building trade were being put off. I can quite understand that. He told me in answer to a question two or three weeks ago, that of 170 contractors, 120 have already been told that there is no more work available. I have no doubt that the Minister does not need to be told that plenty of building tradesmen are already out of work. In the last two or three weeks I have had no less than half a dozen men call at my back door. Most of them have been carpenters who live in the vicinity of Kenwick.

Mr. Lawrence: Why did not they come to your front door?

Mr. WILD: They might have done so. At least they came to the house. That indicates that the building industry had been thrown into semi-panic because most of the money has been spent in the first few months of this financial year. In view of the fact that he has now admitted that we have caught up with the housing problem, the Minister must have seen some months ago that this was coming. He is far from being a fool.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That is a compliment.

The Minister for Housing: It is a statement of fact.

Mr. WILD: Would it not have been better for him to say, "We are going to continue building a good standard house?" I am not decrying the precut houses at all. I think they are good in certain circumstances. On the Minister's own admission, 120 teams of workmen have been put off and are tendering for other buildings. When a small builder gets a team together, it is a balanced team. He has perhaps a couple of bricklayers, one or two carpenters, a plasterer and so on. He generally wants to hold his team. When the team is broken up, he has difficulty in getting together the right type of men he wants.

I noticed in the paper the other day that Mr. Henley, of the Carpenters' Union, was complaining of the number of tradesmen who were out of work. Like everybody else, he started to blame the Commonwealth for lack of money. We must bear in mind that never before have we had so much money in Western Australia as we have had this last financial year. But in a matter of the first few months of the financial year—and the Minister himself admitted this—he is going to throw all these fellows to the wind. So whichever Government may be returned, the Minister for Housing will find himself in bother. Not only will he have an empty bin, but he will have to replace a considerable sum of money from the funds of the next financial year in order to get himself out of the mess that he will be in.

There has been, I admit, a desire on the part of the Minister to get top figures and to be able to say, "I have better figures than I had before and far more than the previous Government had." That is all right as far as it goes. Members may recall, however, that I said in this Chamber some time ago—and it applies equally well now—that with the material we have available in Western Australia it would be difficult to build any more than 8,000 houses in any one year.

We know it has been exceeded this year; the Minister says it has gone to 9,000. Bearing in mind the fact that it is between 8,000 to 9,000 and knowing there is a certain amount of money to spend, would it not have been better to say, "We have plenty of land in Western Australia. Let us build houses on decent $\frac{1}{4}$ acre blocks and build them to a standard that they have been built for the State Housing Commission until the last 12 months?"

I do want to compliment the State Housing Commission on the report it has produced. I do not suppose members have had much opportunity to study it, but it is necessary under statute for the Housing Commission to present its annual report to Parliament. This year it is without doubt far better than anything we have had before.

The Minister for Housing: That is only a rough one; we will have the printed copy shortly.

Mr. WILD: It is an excellent report and it is one from which anyone who wishes to debate housing can get a clear picture as to what has been going on in the past few months.

[Hon. A. J. Rodoreda took the Chair.]

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [10.35]: I want to comment only on matters relative to the forestry estimates and points raised in the Minister's speech. Through questions, and following some remarks I made

on the Loan Estimates on the 17th November, the Minister commented on a report in respect to the anticipated deficiency of timber in this State in 1980. I have studied the answers he gave to questions and also his comments in reply to myself when dealing with the Loan Estimates. Whilst I can appreciate the significance of what he said, there are some features of the present position which I cannot quite understand.

With the Minister, I agree that there is a very poor appreciation of what the timber problem involves. I have very clearly in mind that the chairman of directors of one of Australia's biggest and greatest timber concerns today, which is selling and handling more timber than ever before in its history, was warned by his grandfather to keep out of timber because within 30 years it would be completely replaced by steel and other products. Of course, we know that people are using more timber today than ever before, in spite of the advances made in steel, pre-stressed concrete, masonite, etc., and the plastic materials that have been introduced.

Therefore we can assume that in 50 or 100 years' time from now, there will be a demand for timber throughout the world. Whether in this country or in other parts of the world, we find countries embarking on major schemes of forestry in order to anticipate the demand. The Minister did say that as a result of some reappraisal, the Conservator of Forests has expressed the opinion that the permissible cut for the State can be raised from 800,000 loads a year to 900,000 loads. That is, of course, in hardwoods, I presume.

The Minister for Forests: Yes.

Mr. COURT: That to my mind does not reconcile the situation with the problem that has been very clearly explained, allowing for the population movement and increased usage up to 1980. I do not know why the year 1980 was picked for the purpose of the article—the Minister knows to what I am referring—but I suppose it was as good a date as any other. The thing that is foremost in my mind is that if in the year 1979 somebody says, "Next year—in 1980—we are going to have a terrific shortage of timber," there is nothing we can do about it, except buy it from another country and transport it here, possibly at prohibitive cost, always on the assumption that we will not have discovered some alternative materials.

As I see it, the proposition is that if we are going to solve the problem and avoid a deficiency, and excessive imports, by any given year, be it 1980 or 2000—something has to be done in the year 1955, or 1956 or 1957 and so on, because timber is not something the growth of which we can unduly hasten, and the very least one could expect would be a lapse of 25 years before the result of any action taken today could be felt.

Mr. Lawrence: What about in 1945 when your Government was in office?

Mr. COURT: I do not think that interjection is relevant to the proposition I am putting forward. I would like the Minister to give me an answer to that when he replies. If the situation is not in hand now, and the Minister is in the position that he is not able to get from his Government, because of finance or for some other reason, a policy which will ensure that by 1980 the problem of deficiency of timber or excess imports might not arise, I feel the Committee should know. We could all perhaps do something in the next year or two to stir up public opinion in this matter and lend our weight, for what it is worth, to assist a proposition whereby adequate action can be taken now.

Naturally, I realise that Governments like to do things that will capture the imagination of the people today and not in 25 years' time. It is logical to assume that the Premier or Treasurer today will not be the Premier or Treasurer in 25 years' time. He is a realist and will do things which people can appreciate in the immediate future. There are some things which the Government must do and in which the Opposition must assist in order to provide a long-term benefit in forestry matters.

Unless the Government and the Opposition lend their weight together and take a long-term and realistic view of the problem, little can be achieved. When he replies I hope the Minister will give us his views on the problem and tell us that what is foreshadowed for 25 years hence will not arise because of action being taken today. Alternatively, we should be told whether it will arise and the action taken to overcome it. We should not lose sight of the fact that the problem of Western Australia in respect of timber for 1980 or 2000 will be the problem of Australia, because we will be expanding, the other States will be expanding and they will all be wanting increased supplies of raw materials, including timber.

There are only two other points to which I wish to refer. Firstly, there is an item shown as timber royalties which are estimated to produce £812,200 as against last year's yield of £563,702. It would appear there has been a considerable increase in the amount of royalties to be received from an increased volume of timber or alternatively an increase in the rate of royalty per load. I would appreciate from the Minister information as to whether it is one or either, or some of both. I raise that point now because I presume that when we get on to items, I will not be able to bring it forward because it is not an item on the Estimates. I have lost my notes for the moment but there is something else I want to speak on.

Point of Order.

Hon. C. F. J. North: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman: Are you to be addressed as the Acting Speaker or rather, the Acting Chairman?

The Chairman: Does the hon. member insist on a ruling?

Hon. C. F. J. North: No.

Committee Resumed.

Mr. COURT: The other point I wanted to raise was whether the possibility of the private development of forests on a major scale has been explored by the Government. I cannot imagine there is an abundance of local private capital for the development of forests, be they hardwood or softwood; but surely if we explored the possibilities abroad, we would find somebody sufficiently interested in the future of the world supply of timber and the supply of timber to this country to undertake the provision of the necessary finance to make this a commercial proposition. The Minister will have information on the New Zealand experience and will be able to tell us whether that has been an economic proposition and an attractive investment.

If one reads the published accounts of firms like Whakatane Forests, it gives one the impression that, after a rather trying and discouraging initial experience, they have come good in a big way, with the result that they have proved to be a satisfactory investment. If that can be done there, surely something could be done in this State, in spite of the different climatic and geographical conditions. I suggest it is worth exploring. It would need to be something done on a big scale to attract people with the necessary financial backing to invest in a long-term project, the initial results of which would not be realised for about 30 years.

MR. JAMIESON (Canning) [10.47]: It had not been my intention to say anything on this Vote until I heard the remarks of the member for Dale.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It is a pity you changed your mind!

Mr. JAMIESON: It is a pity the remarks of the hon. member caused me to change it. Some of his statements were far from correct; and again he has conveniently left the Chamber.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Rubbish!

Mr. JAMIESON: He knew I was about to rise when the member for Nedlands got the call. His remarks about the possibility of Maniana becoming a slum centre were quite without foundation. The only parallel he could draw would be something that the South Australian Housing Trust established in 1937. Rosewater Gardens, in

South Australia, where there are duplex houses on a small location under a housing scheme, is still a very pleasant suburb; and there is no reason why Maniana cannot be maintained as such.

Probably the accommodation there is not of the type that everybody would like or would have built if he were undertaking to have it erected privately. But that is a matter of taste for the individual; and when people require shelter such as the Housing Commission is providing, their main needs is for some reasonably clean accommodation where they can live comfortably and without interference from their fellow beings. Their home needs to be their castle. Irrespective of the fact that these homes are not built on the standard quarter-acre block referred to by the member for Dale, I feel that Maniana is a worth-while settlement to have achieved in such a short space of time.

Probably that was the main thing that worried the hon. member—that something of this kind had been achieved in such a very short time; and it provided an eye-opener of what could be done if a person put his shoulder to the wheel and tried to relieve a position such as that which prevailed during the time when the hon. member was in the Ministry.

There are many features that have to be watched in such a settlement, and it is only by watching the position carefully that the settlement can be kept nice. At present, the standard of the gardens is comparable with that of those in any other housing suburb which has been established in such a short time. The hon. member mentioned that he was pleased with the progress made in the gardens at Brentwood, but the gardens at Maniana would compare very favourably.

Provided careful consideration is given to the placing of other amenities there—and it would appear that the people are very community-minded, because they have various establishments under way even at this early stage—no one will be able to cast any slur on that suburb any more than on any other suburb established by the Housing Commission. Many of them, as we are aware, in the Belmont-Rivervale area, while they are of the old standard, grille-type lay-out of housing settlement, are not so pleasant to look at, because of the areas that people are involved in looking after in the standard quarter-acre blocks; and one or two in a street makes the whole street look rather ugly.

I suggest that when small blocks have to be looked after, some compulsion might be indulged in by the Housing Commission to make sure that they are kept clean and tidy. When it is a much bigger proposition, people cannot very well be compelled to spend time on these requirements, for various reasons. Some just do not like gardening; others are too lazy. But we

will get that sort of person in whatever housing is provided. This project is quite a good experiment, and we will see how it goes.

With regard to the duplex type of house, in South Australia the buildings are of brick; but many are rendered and painted with a resin-base paint, which makes the cost of their upkeep the same as that of an asbestos timber-frame dwelling. I contend that any condemnation of this project at Maniana is unwarranted. So far as the rooms are concerned, with modernistic furniture, they do not need to be nearly as big as used to be the custom. In those in which I have been at Maniana, the arranging of the furniture and other necessities of the home has generally been quite easily accomplished. I see nothing wrong with the homes. It is true that they are very plain, but a most pleasant part of the settlement is the contrast in colour used in painting residences so as to get away from the possibility of tedious duplication in any street.

We should watch this suburb carefully and consider the possibility of establishing others like it where transport is convenient and other facilities can be established. The member for Dale has not given the project proper consideration, and did not take time to see how it developed before he voiced his condemnation.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [10.54]: I want to draw the Minister's attention to a question I asked the other evening about the new houses that are being provided at Dwellingup as a result of the transfer of the Holyoake mill to that centre. The Minister informed me that it was proposed to erect 20 houses to accommodate the employees from Holyoake. I asked him if those houses would be provided with septic systems. I think that my district road board now insists that where a new house is being erected it must be provided with such a system. If that applies—as I think it does—to all other houses in the district, it most certainly should apply to any buildings erected by the Government, no matter what department is concerned.

While I know that water is essential, I am not quite sure what the position would be in regard to an adequate water supply in that district. The Minister said consideration was being given to the matter, and I would ask him now to use his utmost endeavours to see that septic systems are provided. We all know the other sanitary system that is used is one of the crudest arrangements we have, and is a half-century behind the times, if not a century. It makes all the difference to living conditions in those areas if septic systems can be provided. So, before the programme goes too far, I hope the Minister will give special attention to this request.

The question of housing seems to be always before us by way of questions and discussions, and I do not want to say much about it on this occasion. But I was somewhat alarmed to hear the Minister say there was such a recession in the building trade.

(Mr. J. Hegney resumed the Chair.)

The Minister for Housing: Not yet; it is on its way.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is alarming, in view of the fact that the building trade is probably—apart from primary industry—the largest employer in the State. We know what its ramifications are, through the timber mills and the brickworks; and hundreds—perhaps thousands—of employees are given employment as a result of the activities of the building trade. If we face a recession in that industry, we shall be in for a difficult time.

It was also stated by the Minister that £1,000,000 was being collected each year from Commonwealth-State housing tenants. That is a tremendous amount of money, and I wonder how much it costs to collect it. Another colossal sum must be involved in the maintenance of those homes. In the interests of the homeowner or the tenant, and of the Government, we should do everything possible to encourage people to purchase their homes and own them.

According to the Minister, a drive is to be made shortly to induce these people to buy their homes, and they will be told on what reasonable terms they can be purchased. I think those are the words he used. I feel that it would be in the best interests of the Commonwealth and the State that we should endeavour to sell these homes on the most reasonable terms and at the cheapest possible rate. There is no doubt that deterioration sets in during the years. Many of the buildings were hurriedly erected, and there must be a heavy cost in maintenance.

Mr. McCulloch: A lot of people would rather pay rent.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not know that that is so.

Mr. McCulloch: On the Goldfields today, they prefer to pay rent.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: There we have a shifting population that does not feel inclined to settle in one spot, and would rather pay rent, but I would say the ordinary person would sooner own his own home. I wish I could think the Minister was right when he told us that the housing position in Western Australia had been solved. I cannot help but feel that despite this building recession which he says is likely to arise, the demand for houses will still continue. If what he says is anywhere near the truth, I would think

there would be a considerable demand in the future, so that the position will be far from solved.

I was sorry the member for Vasse was not in his seat when the Minister replied to what that member had to say. I was surprised to hear the figures quoted for a district such as Vasse. The indications are that there is practically no demand for houses in that area at all. I cannot think that is the position in a town like Busselton. Tremendous growth is being made in other seaside towns, and there is great building activity, too. The Minister told us that 15 houses will meet the requirements of Busselton for the—

The Minister for Housing: No; 23 for the next 12 months.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is eight additional houses.

The Minister for Housing: That is up to the 30th June.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I cannot think that can be the position in a town like Busselton. I think he said that at Capel there had been one application over a lengthy period. I have made these remarks in regard to Vasse so that the member for the district, who was out of the Chamber at the time, would have some knowledge of what the Minister said in regard to the district he represents.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [11.31]: The Minister tonight mentioned the disturbing feature of war service homes finance in this State, and he gave facts and figures concerning the reduction in the allocation of funds from the Commonwealth. We should be fair about this matter and not blame the Commonwealth so much as, perhaps, the director of war service homes in Australia, Mr. Lucas. As members know, the allocation of funds for the building of war service homes throughout Australia comes from Federal revenue and not from loan funds or other sources. It comes only from the revenue received by the Commonwealth Government, and out of that revenue the sum of £30,000,000 is allocated proportionately to the States. The proportion is made up on a formula submitted by the Federal section of the war service homes division, of which Mr. Lucas is the director.

The allocation of funds to Western Australia, on the £30,000,000 basic figure, is just over £4,000,000, using round figures. Out of the blue, during this year, the director withheld £800,000 of that allocation, although he had issued instructions to the deputy director here to carry on with the normal programme of war service homes building as well as all the other ramifications of war service homes, such as the lifting of mortgages and the purchasing of second-hand homes for applicants. I do not mind that at all, but

I do mind the blame being placed, intentionally, on the shoulders of the officers of the State Housing Commission, when I feel the blame should be entirely on the shoulders of the director himself.

During the past several years I have attended fortnightly meetings of the war service homes committee of the R.S.L. The senior man of the war service homes division in this State attends those meetings and from time to time we are given facts and figures. They are not secret because they can be supplied by the Minister. These facts and figures are supplied to the committee so that it can keep in touch with the trend of war service homes activities in this State. Each year we have received the information that the director has allocated funds on the same basis as was set down for the previous year; that is, if the amount had been £30,000,000 our allocation would be the same.

Yet at the Federal Congress, when this matter was raised, Mr. Lucas stated, "W.A. put itself into the soup in connection with over-spending." The Minister will agree that there has been no over-spending in this State in any one year. There could be over-spending from month to month, because when we deal with a big machine it is impossible to spend the exact amount or to within £1,000 or £10,000 as the case may be, because a certain group of homes might not be completed on time, and another group might be finished more quickly than was anticipated, in which case funds would have to be made available to the builders. There might be much heavier spending this June than in the previous month, but it is adjusted over the year, and at the end of each twelve-monthly period, if each of the States spends its allocation, then the director would receive from each State a return showing it had spent that amount, or close to it.

Last year or the year before we had the spectacle of the director approaching this State and imploring it to spend £200,000 in four weeks. It was just impossible. That period was the last four weeks of the financial year, and this State could spend only £40,000 of the amount; and it wired back to that effect, I believe. That was the position in which the director found himself through being so cautious and not spending all the war service homes funds throughout Australia. He finished with a surplus.

To be fair to any Government: Would it increase an allocation of funds to a certain branch if the branch had not spent what was given to it in the previous 12 months? Of course not. By his over-cautiousness in the spending of money from revenue, which is recoverable, he has cut the allocation of war service homes funds in Australia to a lower level than

before. The talk of the Minister that we have reached saturation point does not bear investigation.

The Minister for Housing: That is the Commonwealth Minister you are referring to.

Mr. YATES: Yes. Facts and figures have proved that not only this State but Queensland, too, could far exceed the present building programme if more funds were made available. In this State we have the peculiar position of having caught up with a lot of our back work in the building of war service homes. So quick and so good has the programme been that we have found ourselves in the position of being able to give war service homes to applicants in a very short space of time. I say that the director did not like that situation because New South Wales or Victoria might have complained about it. So, he placed the whole of the Commonwealth on the same waiting period.

First, it was nine months and then it drifted to ten months, and at the present an applicant cannot get a war service home under 15 months or even longer because of his direction to the States. The position in Western Australia because of that, is that part of the recession in the building of homes in this State, mentioned by the Minister, has been caused by the long waiting period for war service homes, the taking away of the £800,000, and the withdrawing from us of the right to build a further 500 or 600 homes. The building of that many homes in a year means that a lot more tradesmen would be employed over the whole period. If the programme had been gradually tapered off to the end of the year, that would not have been possible. To go from 120 a month, down to 20 a month, means that a lot of men must be put on the unemployment market.

The Minister for Housing: It is now down to nil per month.

Mr. YATES: Yes. Unfortunately these men seek employment elsewhere. They might get other employment doing only jobbing work, so that when further homes can be built we cannot get them back, and that is where we are losing out. If funds were made available to us to go into an extended programme in regard to war service homes or Commonwealth-State housing homes, we would find we would have to scratch around to get these tradesmen back. That is one of the difficult situations facing us today.

Personally, I believe that a full investigation is warranted because of the Press statements that have been made; because of telegrams that have been sent to this State by the Federal Minister; and also because of the director throwing the whole of the onus on to the war service homes division in this State. In all fairness to the staff of the war service homes section in this State, a full investigation

should be made, and not by the director. It is quite easy for the director in Canberra to tell the Minister that the fault lies in Western Australia without Western Australia having the right to reply.

From the tone of the telegram that came recently, stating that he had approved of £300,000 to help us out of a difficult period, but still stressing in the telegram that it was the fault of Western Australia that we found ourselves in this position, it seems as though he is giving us something out of his own pocket when the truth is that he still retains £500,000 that rightfully belongs to us. He further states that next year we will be paid £300,000 short to make up for what he is giving us this month. I think, therefore, that a full investigation is warranted in order to find out whose fault it is that this position has arisen.

I have the greatest faith in the administrative officers of the war service division in this State. I have had dealings with them over a period of many years and I know that the system adopted here to control the building of war service homes cannot be equalled anywhere in the Commonwealth, and that the best type of war service homes in Australia are built in Western Australia, and at the cheapest price. I personally told the director that we were today receiving up to nine tenders for a job. He seemed quite surprised. It was not until I returned to Perth that I learned that he had checked on me, because he sent a wire to find out the correct position. What I had said was true. Some six, eight or nine tenders were coming in for different jobs; and they were all independent tenders from outside builders with the prices ranging from £2,200 to about £2,900.

The Minister for Housing: Previously it was 12 months before we got perhaps even one or two tenders.

Mr. YATES: That shows that building has reached its peak and we are beginning to slide back a little. This has resulted in a surplus of building tradesmen on the labour market and of building contractors, because they want the work to keep their men employed, tendering for war service homes whereas they did not tender in previous years. As far as the applicant for a war service home is concerned, that is a happy state of affairs because a cheaper house can now be built for him which might make his weekly payments less.

Mr. May: Is not the Commonwealth still concerned about re-establishing men in civilian life by providing them with war service homes? The Commonwealth has got right away from that principle.

Mr. YATES: Not in the allocation of war service homes.

Mr. May: A man cannot get a war service home in this State under 15 months.

Mr. YATES: That is because of this longer waiting period that I mentioned. The director of the war service homes division in Canberra issued instructions to all States that the waiting period would be of a certain length. It was found that under certain conditions, applicants for war service homes who desired to build their own homes, would be advanced £2,750 by the war service homes division, with the applicant being obliged to find the balance.

However, an applicant found that, having submitted his application and being told that his house would be ready for occupation in nine months, he placed the finance required in the care of the war service homes division of the State Housing Commission. But, after having done that, he was told that he would have to wait for 15 months or longer before he could take possession of his home. As a result, some of the applicants concerned took out a mortgage from an outside body or applied to certain of these financial companies for the necessary money.

The R.S.L. despatched telegrams to each of the States in the Commonwealth to ascertain what interest was being charged by these financial institutions and it was discovered that the rate ranged between 7 and 15 per cent. and that the average rate was between 10 and 12 per cent. which was far in excess of the interest rate charged by the war service homes division itself. Therefore, this was an added burden on the individual applicant because he found himself in the position of having to find a further £150 to meet his interest charge before he was able to complete his house, purely as a result of the waiting period being extended.

This extended waiting period is not warranted in Western Australia because we have sufficient tradesmen and contractors to tender for the task and ample building materials for the work to be undertaken. We could build many more homes in this State if the necessary finance were made available. However, some of the other States are not so fortunate. But why should the applicants for war service homes in Western Australia have to wait for the same period as applies in the other States? That is farcical and is not fair to the ex-servicemen who are waiting for homes.

Mr. May: What reason did the director, Mr. Lucas, give for that?

Mr. YATES: His reasons were that he was afraid of the criticism that would be levelled against him because applicants for war services homes in this State needed to wait only three months before taking possession of their houses whereas applicants in the other States were required to wait for a much longer period. So, rather than have this criticism levelled against him, he issued instructions to all States that the extended waiting period should apply in this State as it did in

other States. At the end of that time the other States might be a little further advanced with their home building programme and more finance might be made available to them because Western Australia would not need so much.

Mr. May: Are the other States on the same basis as Western Australia?

Mr. YATES: Increased allocations were granted to New South Wales. According to the figures issued for the last three months of the financial year, that State will not be able to complete its programme and unfortunately it will have to hand some of the money back because it will be 500 homes down at the end of 12 months, which represents quite a substantial amount of money. That is purely because it is not able to proceed with all the work. As a result, in Western Australia we have many tradesmen out of work because of that policy. Therefore, a complete investigation into the position is warranted because the fault in this State seems to lie with the administration of the war service homes division under the direction of the Commonwealth director, Mr. Lucas.

Mr. May: Has the R.S.L. taken any action in that regard?

Mr. YATES: A meeting was held a few weeks ago and all the Commonwealth members in this State, representing both parties, attended. As a result, several of these members sent letters of protest to the Commonwealth Minister on the taking away of the finance from Western Australia. It was because of the pressure from not only these members but also from the R.S.L. housing committee, from the war service homes division in this State, backed by the State Minister for Housing, that this £300,000 was finally made available.

Mr. May: And did the R.S.L. send any letter of protest?

Mr. YATES: Yes, the R.S.L. protested strongly at its Federal congress when Mr. Lucas addressed it and gave his reasons for taking away the finance from Western Australia.

The Minister for Housing: The R.S.L. president who was over here recently also sent a message from this State.

Mr. YATES: Yes, Sir George Holland sent a telegram to Canberra whilst he was here and as a result of all this pressure, £300,000 of the sum taken away from us has been transferred back. However, we were also told that we would lose it again in the next financial year and that is definitely not fair. I do not agree with Mr. Lucas when he says that Western Australia should be placed on the same footing as any other State. If we can play our part in a national scheme, we should not be held up merely because other States are lagging behind. Our part of the scheme should be completed

and then all the balance of funds from that part, after it is completed, should be given to the rest of the States in the Commonwealth.

That is the proper way to complete a national scheme. The most important point has been overlooked, and that is that the £30,000,000 allocated by the Commonwealth to finance this scheme is not a gift. It is a gilt-edged investment as far as the Commonwealth is concerned because the advancing of that money represents a loan to the ex-servicemen on which interest is charged. The Commonwealth receives that £30,000,000 for nothing, plus interest, because it comes out of revenue. Last year, the sum of over £17,000,000 was paid back by ex-servicemen in Australia by way of interest payments and also by paying back some of the capital they owed. Out of that £12,000,000, £5,000,000 went to the national sinking fund and the balance went back into revenue.

The R.S.L. congress this year asked that that £30,000,000 be increased to £40,000,000 and the representatives of the various States that attended the congress said that each of the States could do with extra money to complete their housing programmes in the next 12 months or in the next two or three years. If Mr. Lucas let his head go to the extent of granting another £5,000,000, the Commonwealth would have nothing to lose. That money comes out of revenue and next year it will allocate less. But whilst Mr. Lucas keeps to the maximum figure, there is no necessity for the allocation to be increased.

Mr. May: What does the Commonwealth Minister think about that?

Mr. YATES: I have not spoken to him about it, but the hon. member knows that most Ministers have to work hand in glove with their departmental heads. If they approach the Minister with a scheme that has been closely investigated by their expert officers, the Minister approves of it.

Mr. May: Does the Minister condone it?

Mr. YATES: I do not know whether he is condoning it. I am not sure that he knows the full story. I feel that he believes Mr. Lucas when he says that Western Australia is to blame. But I know that that is not true.

Mr. O'Brien: Let us hope not!

Mr. YATES: I would say that the blame mostly lies with the director, Mr. Lucas, in issuing instructions to Western Australia from time to time and then, half way through the year, finding that his programme is going topsy-turvy, putting the blame on to a particular State. I think in that regard he has made a great mistake. However, there has been so much publicity on this matter that I consider a full inquiry should be instituted into the war service homes division

in this State in connection with the spending of moneys from the Commonwealth Government and that that investigation should be made by a competent outside authority. We have no authority to do that in this State. The Minister for Housing in Western Australia administers only the funds.

Mr. May: He is only the agent for the Commonwealth.

Mr. YATES: Yes, he is the agent for the Commonwealth and a direction can only come from the Commonwealth itself for the holding of such an inquiry. Nevertheless, I think a protest should be lodged with the Commonwealth Government to the effect that we, in Western Australia, are not happy with the position and that a full investigation should be made into it.

Mr. May: Could not the R.S.L. arrange a deputation to wait upon the Prime Minister when he arrives here on Monday?

Mr. YATES: The Prime Minister is not the Minister actually concerned with this matter.

Mr. May: Do not you think that he should be told about it?

Mr. YATES: I have no doubt that he is acquainted with the position.

The Minister for Housing: As a matter of fact, the building congress in this State has asked the Prime Minister to make an inquiry into the position next year.

Mr. YATES: In connection with war service homes?

The Minister for Housing: Yes.

Mr. YATES: Whatever action is taken either through the Minister or through this House, it should be done in the near future so that a full investigation into these matters that have been raised by the R.S.L. at its Federal congress by the State representative of the R.S.L. in this State and by many other people, especially the ex-servicemen themselves, who are being penalised. In increasing numbers these men are losing hope because of the loss of money they are experiencing as a result of being subjected to waiting for their homes for a longer period than is necessary.

Many of them have signed the contracts for the building of their homes and then have been told overnight that they cannot occupy them until a further 15 months have elapsed. The R.S.L. investigated the case of one man who signed up for his home with the war service division in this State, following which something occurred with the contractor. The war service homes division called for fresh tenders and because there was a difference of £3 in the tenders they went into a lot of red tape over the matter and the result was, because of this delay, the applicant was denied the right to go on with the building of his home.

Whilst all this was going on, the man had sold his Commonwealth stock and had placed all that money in the hands of the war service homes division upon which money he received no interest and he has now been informed that the waiting period has been extended from anything up to 15 months. Many such instances have occurred in the last few weeks and where it is all going to end no one knows. So the position in regard to war service homes in Western Australia is not very satisfactory. It is not the fault of the war service homes division itself but it is due to the instructions that have emanated from the authority in Canberra.

The director of war service homes, Mr. Lucas, who promised to come here last year to go into the whole question of war service homes, did not make the trip because he said the Minister would not release him and that he had other important things to do. He will be coming in the new year and the Minister should come with him. An independent inquiry should take place to find out who is at fault so as to close the door and prevent the same thing happening again.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [11.31]: I understand that during the time I was in the lobby attending to parliamentary duties as Opposition Whip—and I have been a Whip of the Government or Opposition in this Chamber for the past seven years—an attack was made by the Minister for Housing on my statement. Every member must know that the Whip has to listen to requests from members to be absent from the House. I was in consultation with the Government Whip who laughed heartily just now when I mentioned I was engaged on duties in the lobby associated with my position as Whip.

According to what I have been told by members of the Government that while I was negotiating with some of the Government supporters to arrange for their absence from the House for the rest of the sitting, the Minister for Housing made an attack on what I said in this Chamber relating to the question of housing during the debate on the Estimates. All I have to say is that if the Minister can satisfy the demand of the electors of Vasse during the next two months, I shall withdraw the statement I made last evening.

I hope that the Minister will see that a house is provided for Mrs. F. R. Mawson, who was living on a camping ground at Busselton. The file number is 5032/47. I hope that the Minister will accommodate Mr. R. Sharp, of 26, Bussell Highway, Busselton. This is the letter addressed to Mr. Sharp by the Housing Commission dated the 5th August, 1955—

The commission regrets to note your present housing difficulties and strongly urges you to endeavour to

obtain alternative accommodation privately, or, on the other hand, give consideration to the purchase of a block on which you might erect a modest dwelling capable of expansion.

Mr. Ronald Francis O'Brien, of Busselton, with a wife and four children, the eldest being nine years of age, is in need of a house, also Mr. E. C. Longbottom, of Busselton.

Mr. O'Brien: Did O'Brien get a house?

Mr. BOVELL: The member for Murchison might be able to assist me in this matter. Admittedly, the last case is a two-unit family. The file no. is 3366/5. In all these cases, I have made representations over many months past to the Housing Commission. There is also the case of Mr. A. C. Banting, and the file number is 622/55. I have selected these cases at random.

Hon. D. Brand: Which indicates how far the housing problem has been overcome.

Mr. BOVELL: With regard to Capel, there have not been many applications lodged. In reply to the first application from a town in an important primary producing area, this was what the commission said in a letter addressed to the secretary of the Capel Road Board, re David McKenzie—

I have for reply your letter of the 23rd ultimo which accompanied an application from Mr. McKenzie. Unfortunately, the commission has no building programme for Capel, but the application has been registered and should houses be erected there at any time the application will be considered.

Therefore, the Housing Commission is not interested in Capel, but I would point out that Capel is as important or more important than the metropolitan area, for, were it not for the rural centres, there would be no metropolitan area. This is the letter which the Capel Road Board wrote to me dated the 25th October, 1955—

The board foreman applied to the Housing Commission for a rental home in Capel and his application was supported by the board. For your information I enclose herewith a copy of the commission's reply and I would mention that our chairman and Mr. Brockman, a member of the road board, discussed the matter with an officer of the commission and were told that even if there were sufficient applications for houses in the town of Capel it was unlikely that any would be built here. I am directed to ask if you could give this matter your support in an endeavour to have the policy of the commission relaxed somewhat in the case of small country towns. My chairman feels very strongly about this matter and he

contends that this policy does not encourage people to live and work in the country.

The Minister well knows the position of Mr. and Mrs. Hollis. I have discussed it with him before. I believe that a solution is in sight. It has been necessary for Mr. Hollis to provide funds for the purchase of a home and not a rental home. With regard to the houses that were recently built by the Government at Busselton, I want to protest against the fact that within half a mile of a timber mill producing good quality jarrah, imported houses of pine wood have been sent to Busselton.

The timber workers themselves have strongly protested against the action of the Housing Commission in sending them into an area which is surrounded by timber mills and able to supply jarrah. I have spoken on the housing position in the general Estimates. I do not know what the Minister said in speaking on the Vote, but from information given to me by members in the lobby, and because the Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that the Minister had made some comments about my remarks in the general debate on the Estimates, I repeat again that if the Minister will satisfy the demand of the electors I represent by the 14th February, 1956, I shall withdraw the statement which I made last evening. That statement was that the Premier said in his policy speech that Labour pledged itself to overcome the housing shortage completely in the next three years. That was made in January, 1953, and is recorded in "Hansard" of the 11th August, 1953.

The Minister for Education: What are you complaining about?

The Treasurer: To fulfil that pledge, according to you we have to build one house at Capel!

Mr. BOVELL: I have not mentioned the position at Margaret River. I have an application from Mr. K. Bevan of that district. I trust the Minister will include that case also. These are some of the housing problems in my electorate, and if the Minister can solve them by February next I will say that the Government has completely, as far as I am concerned, solved the housing problem. But it has not solved the problem as yet.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND FORESTS (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth—in reply) [11.40]: I can well understand the member for Vasse getting as excited as he did. He made the extreme statement the other evening that the housing position was worse in his electorate today than ever before.

Mr. Bovell: I said that I had more housing problems than I have had before.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Having made his speech, I would be obliged if the member for Vasse will allow me to make mine.

Mr. Bovell: Keep to the truth and I shall not interject.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The member for Vasse can rely on me to tell the truth. I have here for his edification—

Mr. Bovell: I ditched you on the law, and you know it.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: When I became Minister, I inherited the situation under which there was not a single block owned by the Housing Commission in the township of Busselton.

Mr. Bovell: Because, as I have told you, the local council conducted a housing scheme of its own.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The hon. member knows the reason for it. It was necessary to acquire land and subdivide it for the purpose of erecting homes. Nineteen are under construction at present and a further four are being added to the programme, which means that a total of 23 houses will be built in this financial year in the comparatively small township of Busselton, a greater number than has ever previously been built there in a year.

All that is needed is for the member for Vasse to be a little bit more patient and he will find that the great majority of those who have approached him will have houses provided for them. He made reference to some pine house erected in Busselton. He should be the one to talk about those houses! The position is that those were Simms-Cooke houses imported from Great Britain and they were purchased by the Government which he supported.

Mr. Bovell: Then send them somewhere else. It is wasting freight to send them down to Busselton.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: They were sent by his Government down to the Bunbury-Busselton district. As the components were lying there in bundles and had been for years—

Mr. Bovell: Not in Busselton.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: For goodness sake shut up! The interjections are becoming intolerable. The member for Vasse knows that he has not a leg to stand on. I suspect from his attitude here that—

Mr. Bovell: I want to see a few houses built for the people there.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: —he has not been attending to parliamentary business in the corridors, but was a little further down the passage. If he is not content to listen to me—and I guarantee I scored a bull's eye—I suggest he return to the place from whence he came. These

houses were purchased and deposited in that district by the McLarty-Watts Government. The components were lying there in bundles and had been paid for. The Housing Commission took them over for the purpose of providing houses and accommodation for the people in that district. That is the reason why they were erected.

The components cost £1,000 or more for each house and have been lying in sheds where they have been stored for years. With regard to Capel, apparently the State Housing Commission is not interested in it, according to the member for Vasse. Within the last few weeks one person made application for a house, being the first person in Capel to apply in the last 10 years.

The member for Vasse has such a distorted version of things that he wonders why that person has not a house to live in. If he hangs his case on such examples, that will give an idea of the housing problem, judging by the fact that there had been no application before. It would require only this man to go to some other township and he would find that the Housing Commission would have a home on its hands because there have been no inquiries.

At Margaret River there is one rental home under construction and one outstanding application of more than two units and there are only three applications of two units. The usual experience is that there is a wastage of 50 per cent. This shows that there is not much of a housing problem there. As to war service homes there is one under construction and one applicant. Under the State Housing Act there are three applications, which are probably duplications of those I quoted earlier. There is this note—

Extreme difficulty was experienced in selling the last house. No local resident desired to purchase it and it was satisfactorily sold to a Kalgoorlie resident.

That is the position at Margaret River and it shows that the member for Vasse was talking mere twaddle.

Mr Bovell: Rubbish!

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: He is concerned because the Premier in his policy speech undertook that the housing problem would be solved in three years. We have had the admission from the member for Dale this evening that the housing problem has been solved. Hon. L. Craig, M.L.C., on the 14th September stated, "The housing position is better today than it was before the war".

The Minister for Education: He is a fair judge.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes. The Leader of the Opposition was a little concerned about the situation in the country districts and expressed amazement

that it was difficult to dispose of houses there. A peculiar state of affairs has prevailed recently. If members visit the commission office they will find something quite new and novel, but it is an exact copy of the printed document I have in my hand—

Denmark, four-roomed house with verandah available immediately, rent £2 10s.

Pithara, four-roomed house available immediately, rent £2 15s. 6d.

Ardath, four-roomed house available immediately, rent £2 16s.

Boddington, four-roomed house available immediately, rent £2 14s.

Those are not all. At Denmark there are two houses under construction at the moment. They are being built because the ex-chairman of the commission, Mr. Brownlie, and I were waited on by the local authority which prevailed upon us to have a couple of extra houses built in that township, and they are now nearing completion. At the moment there is not a single outstanding application there, but there is a house that has been vacant for months. It has been advertised in the Press and the local authority has been asked to find someone to take it. The local saw mills have been asked whether any of its men need it; the Rural & Industries Bank and the R.S.L. have been invited to interest themselves in it. In a few weeks there will be three homes vacant in Denmark, and I have asked the member for Albany to do something about it.

The position at Augusta has been disposed of and I pass now to Balingup. Recently there were two homes, one of which was sold to a single person who intended to get married, and the other is still available. Recently difficulty has been experienced in getting sufficient applications for homes under construction at Narrogin. Kellerberrin has also proved difficult, a total of 10 applicants having been contacted to allocate three homes, the last remaining home, being allocated to an applicant submitted by the clerk of courts. There was no application at all but an officer asked someone to take it over. Difficulty is also being experienced at Bruce Rock, Boddington, Corrigin, Merredin, Morawa, Mingenew and Pingelly. In regard to Pingelly, it took four months to find a suitable applicant for the last home.

Reverting to Denmark, one house has been vacant since July of this year and no one can be found to occupy it. In Northcliffe a house became vacant in August, 1953, and remained so until April, 1954. One at Ardath was vacant from March to May to this year and it was then occupied only after advertising. This applies to many country towns, but I shall not list them all. At Broomehill, the commission has two houses and no outstanding applications; at Nungarin, three houses and no

outstanding applications; at Tammin, seven houses and no outstanding applications; at Toodyay there were 13 houses and two outstanding applications. I have before me 20 or 30 of these instances which show the position in the country districts.

It is not necessary to deal with the metropolitan area because of the admissions both in this Chamber and in the Legislative Council that the housing problem has either been solved or is better than it was before the war. I have figures to show that there are more houses per head of population today than there have been at any time since 1911. The position of housing has improved, receded, and improved again. Since the present Government took office, the number of houses per 1,000 of population has increased tremendously, and the position has never been so satisfactory.

There will always be people who require homes so long as the State is developing and the population increasing. How could the Housing Commission embark upon a programme to build several thousand houses a year unless it was assured that there would be people prepared to occupy them after they have been completed?

The member for South Perth complained about the attitude of the director of war service homes who himself and through his Minister, including a Western Australian Minister in the Federal Parliament, have been accusing and abusing the State Housing Commission for having exceeded the speed limit, and that therefore any adverse condition in which applicants have found themselves was attributable to the action of the State Housing Commission. Here are the facts. These are extracts from letters written by the director himself. On the 27th May he informed the commission that as the funds to be made available for the current financial year would not be known until August, our programme for the present must be based on the programme that had been in operation for the year (1954-55) and directed thus—

You should therefore organise so that the programme for 1955-56 shall be exactly the same as was the programme accomplished for 1954-55.

On the 6th June he repeated that instruction, and accordingly the commission prepared a draft programme for letting 1,020 contracts for the year, which was the same as for the previous year. Another letter was received from the Commonwealth dated the 23rd August, in which the director drew our attention to his instructions of the 27th May. I emphasise that this letter was dated the 23rd August, 1955. It read—

Until such time as we know what funds will be available for war service homes in 1955-56, it will be necessary for each State to ensure that the present programme is exactly the same as the programme accomplished for 1954-55.

That is exactly what the commission did, and, lo and behold, along comes the director and instead of our being allowed to let contracts for 1,022 we can let contracts for no more than 550 this year. There is no need for an inquiry. All that is needed is for anyone to see the file to realise that any upset or embarrassment caused to ex-servicemen or to the building industry have been caused by the instructions of that responsible officer.

In connection with the recession in the building industry, which the Leader of the Opposition deplored, as I do, I wish to make myself perfectly plain. Certain people in my office two days ago expressed the opinion that we could expect by June of next year to have about 50 per cent. of what is in operation at present. My own estimate is that there would probably be something in the vicinity of 20 per cent. recession in employment. As there are more than 10,000 men directly employed in the building industry, it means that a couple of thousand of them will be out of a job and indirectly there would be another 10,000 affected.

Mr. Court: That does not necessarily follow.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: We cannot have it both ways. There was a gentleman in my office this morning, who told me that because of the tightness of jobs, more work was being done per man, which means that if the aggregate of work is falling off and the men are working harder, fewer would be employed and there would be more unemployment.

Mr. Court: The big builders are committed for the next two years.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: While this debate has been in progress, members have been entering and leaving the Chamber and they have not heard all that has been said so that I am compelled to repeat some facts that I mentioned earlier. I pointed out that for the year 1954, £28,000,000 worth of buildings were completed in this State and, of that total, £21,000,000 represented houses. Therefore, if housing is falling off, it will have a greater and worse effect than a dwindling of activity in industrial building. Large industrial construction these days does require not so many fully-trained tradesmen but semi-skilled or unskilled men.

Reference was made by the Leader of the Opposition to the cost of rent collection. This is no greater but as a matter of fact it is less per unit today than it was several years ago, because the vacant blocks have been built on. There is an element in the rental charged that provides for administrative costs. In this State, the collection of rent is done on the basis of door-to-door collecting, which ensures that the money will be paid, and also enables the officer every fortnight to keep an eye upon the way in which people are looking after

the houses. As the member for Greenough and the member for Dale would know, there is a percentage of the charge for rent available for the purpose of meeting maintenance costs. There is a considerable amount in the fund and vast sums are paid in every year to keep the funds in a solvent position.

Hon. D. Brand: Have you any idea how much is in the fund?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: To venture a guess, I should say between £150,000 and £200,000, and that a sum of approximately £150,000 is being paid into the fund every year. The Leader of the Opposition was concerned about septic tanks, and I agree that if there is an adequate water supply at Dwellingup, that facility should be provided. If not, it might be possible to install a hygienic type of closet which works admirably with only a few pints of water per week.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: There is a town water scheme.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In that case, no doubt a septic system would be the best. The member for Dale complimented the Housing Commission on its report, but I notice, incidentally, that when he has compliments, they are made to the Housing Commission while, if he finds fault, it is with the Minister. There is a distinction there, but I have no apologies to make, so he can have it either way. I am only too happy to accept what he has to say for the purpose of analysis and not necessarily of agreement.

I was pleased to have his acknowledgment that the housing problem had been solved; not completely as yet, but in the course of the next few months I think it will be found that we are right on top of the position and the number of needs cases has revealed approximately 4,000 which, on the current rate, is 12 months of the building programme, and as long as we are only 12 months behind, I think we can say we are abreast of the position. I could not understand his observation, in regard to workers' homes, that this was the policy of the Opposition.

It might have been the policy, but on paper only, as the present Government has built more homes for purchase than all Governments in the previous 25 years put together. While it may have been the policy of the Liberal Party to erect homes for purchase, it certainly did not give effect to that policy. There could not be any talk of lack of funds as those were the days when the Government could not spend all its money and not once during the time of the McLarty-Watts Government were all the Housing Commission funds spent.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You know the reason.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There were quite a few reasons.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: An acute lack of labour and materials of every kind.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Perhaps, but not only in connection with housing but ordinary loan funds also the same applies, and if the Liberal Party was so keen about home ownership, it could have built fewer rental homes and more purchase homes.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: No.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The fact is it built very few of them indeed.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We had to cater for the most urgent need.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There is a peculiar mixture on that side of the Chamber, because we heard the member for Vasse talking about a client in Busselton and bemoaning the fact that he had been asked to find a humble deposit for a purchase home. I was criticised by the hon. member because the applicant had been rejected for a rental home—

Mr. Bovell: I did not criticise—

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: All we could do was to offer him a house for which he would have to find some funds, but his weekly payment would be less than he would pay as rent for a house. In regard to those whose services have been terminated in connection with pre-cutting of houses. I would point out that that policy was a wonderful innovation, particularly as far as country districts were concerned, and latterly, because of the speed and flexibility it allowed us to increase momentum in the metropolitan area. But there were many critics of it, particularly the building contractors and the building trades workers.

In additions to that, the tendering is so favourable at the present moment that it is now a better proposition to build houses by calling tenders than to erect them under the pre-cutting system, and I speak particularly of the metropolitan area. This action, which enables clerks or anyone else to assemble houses like a meccano set operation, will no doubt mean that the work will be done by building tradesmen, which will make the contractors and the trade unions happy. It is a change of policy, and that is all.

Mr. Court: There was some criticism from the unions about the method of having these prefabs erected.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is so, and it is a change of policy, that instead of whatever number of these people were involved assembling pre-cut houses being on the job and the building tradesmen out of a job, the position is now reversed and that is how it should be, particularly as the change is a payable one

The member for Dale had something to say about Maniana, but I will make no apologies for it.

Maniana is a community of 300 dwellings, completed in 31 working weeks by one building contractor, and was the fastest building job in Australia. He says they are six or seven to the acre, and that could be so, but, as the member for Canning mentioned, if one goes around the middle and working class suburbs where there are larger blocks of land, one finds a complete wilderness behind the houses. The fact is that they do not need so much land. If they look after such an area, gardening, clipping and so on, and have no relaxation at all. It is far more practical and sensible to have the smaller areas. That is the trend throughout the Commonwealth today and our technical advisers suggest that it is right and proper. The member for Dale said Maniana would be the worst slum in the State.

Mr. Wild: I said it will be.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: These are places faithfully constructed. They are timber-framed asbestos homes with tiled roofs. They have either timber or cyclone front gates. They have picket fences around them; they are equipped with rotary clothes hoists. They have a front verandah and a combined kitchen-livingroom. They all have two bedrooms and some of them also have a louvred sleep-out. Each has a bathroom and laundry, and they have septic systems installed. In what way are they inferior to any other timber-framed house?

There may be some criticism of the combined kitchen-living room, but my humble experience in many homes is that the lounge or dining-room is generally one part of the house that is seldom entered. The conception of Maniana was evolved at the time when evictions were taking place, and here was a way, through mass production, to provide many families with homes of a decent standard of construction—homes which could be erected quickly—and so I say the criticism is palpably wrong, and particularly from one who was associated with the shocking little evictee cottages.

Mr. Wild: Were not the circumstances very different five years ago?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: More people were being evicted per week or per month during the term of the present Government than when the McLarty-Watts Government was in office, because at that time there was protective legislation. I do not want to go over that argument again because we had it once and the figures were stated.

Mr. Wild: Were there as many people coming into Western Australia in 1955 as there were in the previous years?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Probably not, but nothing was done by the previous Government to meet the situation. This Government has housed all those needing homes—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What do you mean by saying nothing was done?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: When I assumed office, the priority date was 1948, and we also had to deal with those who came in in subsequent years as well as those who were not found accommodation by the previous Government.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We found accommodation for 26,000 or 27,000 people.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am speaking of all the immigrants who came in, and people who applied before the war broke out. The member for Dale talks about the rentals at Maniana. They vary from £2 14s. per week to £3 1s. 6d. for what is virtually a three-bedroom house, and there is no apology to be made for them. Let us examine the Austrian houses. I do not suppose too many members know it, but it was my unpleasant responsibility to have to load the conventional houses built of local materials by up to £200 per house, increasing the cost to the tenants who accordingly have to pay 5s. more than they otherwise would have, to offset the outrageous cost of those imported homes.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The position there could not have been as bad as you thought, as you did not have a Royal Commission in regard to it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There were two very close inquiries made by the Auditor General. However, I do not want to be distracted in that regard. The member for Dale was talking about Maniana and said it had the ingredients of a slum, but I repeat that there is absolutely no reason for that statement. The shocking little evictee cottages were such that nobody could be proud of them.

Mr. Wild: They were built in very difficult times.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, but they were mighty rotten dwellings.

Mr. Wild: Nobody has denied that.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am pleased with that admission. Then there were the E-type cottages, with the lavatory door and the front door side by side. The member for Dale did not even know about that until I brought the plans here and showed them to him. I say there is nothing wrong with the houses we have built. They are all permanent homes with 1955 amenities.

Mr. Wild: I made the statement that Maniana will be a slum—

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It is not right. We have had statements that we are building a shantytown at Brentwood, but I will guarantee that when more

gardens and lawns are developed there, that will be one of the prettiest suburbs developed by the Housing Commission.

Mr. Wild: I did not criticise it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No, but others have. Various things have been said in the last 48 hours about Wandana, that it would be a rabbit warren, a slum, and all sorts of things. That structure when completed shortly, will be one that can be pointed to with pride by the citizens of this State. Ask the tenants. Refer to the member for Subiaco. I hope she does not mind my saying this, but she has the proud distinction, notwithstanding her previous utterances, of having made more appeals to me and to the State Housing Commission to accommodate people in those flats than has any other member of the State Parliament. The people who are in those flats have formed an organisation—

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: These were people evicted in Subiaco.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No, they were not evictees.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: Their houses were condemned.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I have a list for reference of the circumstances of each of those recommended by the hon. member. Notwithstanding what she and others have said, I invite her to call on those people and ask them what they think of the flats.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: They say it is a doll's house and so little that there is no place to go.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: They say nothing of the sort. I have spoken to practically every one of them and they have expressed appreciation of having got places like that for £3 4s. per week. In the last week, I have inspected similar flats that were not of half the standard. I have inspected flats completed within the last couple of months, for which the rental is £4 15s. and £5 10s. per week. Wandana has everything and when it is completed and all the amenities provided, the people there will be probably the most fortunate of any who enjoy flat life and who are accommodated by the State Housing Commission.

I am pleased that after a lapse of 18 months or so we have reached the stage where once again we have had some debate on housing, and I am pleased that we have had that while there are still several months to run. I am glad to have had an acknowledgment in both Houses of this Parliament from members of the Opposition that, in conformity with the Premier's policy speech, the housing problem has been solved.

Personal Explanation.

Mr. Bovell: On a point of explanation, Mr. Chairman, during the course of the Minister's speech he insinuated that I was not negotiating with various members. I want to inform the Chamber that during the course of his speech I discussed matters with the member for Fremantle, the member for Collie (the Government Whip), the Minister for Lands, the member for Toodyay and the member for Avon Valley in the members' room opposite the Chamber. On coming out, I was informed by the member for Hannans that I was being attacked, virtually. The Minister made some nasty insinuations but I would like to advise members that today it has been necessary, by negotiation between the Government Whip and myself, to arrange pairs for the member for Albany, the member for Blackwood, the member for Nedlands, the member for Gascoyne, the member for Roe, the member for Kataning, the member for Subiaco, the member for Wembley Beaches, the member for Avon Valley—

The Treasurer: There will not be anybody left in a minute.

Mr. Bovell: —and the member for Toodyay. Admittedly, the member for Blackwood and the member for Nedlands are here at the moment, as are other members. But during the course of this session those members have been absent from the Chamber and it has been necessary for the Government Whip and myself to negotiate for their absence. As the Premier reminded me when I was Government Whip, it is the Opposition that grants pairs; and so it is. Without the co-operation of the Opposition there would not be any pairs.

The Chairman: I think the hon. member has made his explanation.

Mr. Bovell: I do not like the Minister insinuating that I was down the corridor, in some other occupation not in connection with my parliamentary duties. If the Minister would only keep his mind clean and not descend to the sewer we would get on much better.

The Minister for Housing: I accept your apology.

[Committee Resumed.]

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Forests, £356,432—agreed to.

Vote—Mines, £392,049:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn) [12.18 a.m.]: I can appreciate your feelings, Mr. Chairman, and I can think of more entertaining occupations at 12.18 in the morning than introducing departmental estimates.

The Treasurer: What would they be?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I leave that to the Treasurer's discretion. I wish to deal briefly, firstly, with some of the activities of the Mines Department, and it is pleasing that in the mining industry gold production is maintaining a somewhat even keel in comparison with other post-war years. The production for 1954 was 850,540 fine oz. valued at £13,313,000.

Unfortunately in the year under review the figures have fallen slightly, mainly due to Big Bell going out of existence. I know that all members join with me in expressing regret at the fact that Big Bell is no longer working. But as against that I think we are entering upon a new era in regard to production on the Yilgarn, and figures from that area will more than compensate, by the end of this financial year, for the passing of Big Bell.

At present the department has a drilling programme which has been the source of a good deal of favourable comment from those engaged in the search for gold. At present there are six drills operating in various parts of the State. There is one at Pilbara, two in the Murchison, one at Cue, one at Day Dawn, two in the Yilgarn area, one in the north and one in the south and the other is at Collie.

The deepest hole that has been drilled up to the present, is at Day Dawn and this should rejuvenate some of the districts where gold production has almost ceased. At the old Great Fingal mine, the Government is working on a £ for £ basis with a local company which is keen to open up this great producer of the past. The target area which we hope to intercept is roughly at the 4,500ft. horizon.

It is quite difficult drilling this area because, owing to the nature of the country, it is necessary to stand off for some considerable distance. The hole is being put in on a flat incline and it is difficult to maintain the trajectory. At present it is at the 1,150ft. level and they are proceeding to drill ahead, to use an oil term.

In the South Yilgarn an option has been taken over one of the mines known as Edward's Find. There, too, they are proceeding to drill ahead on a £ for £ basis with a company which will eventually establish itself on a sound basis in Western Australia. The hole that was put down went to 950ft. and a very good intersection with most interesting values has been encountered roughly 600ft. below the present deepest workings. This mine has had a very creditable history and has been a sound producer in the past. We are hopeful, having struck a fine body of ore at a greatly increased depth of 900-odd feet, that the future of this area will be bright.

In regard to State batteries, of course in times of comparative prosperity the mining industry suffers somewhat in that many of its erstwhile prospectors are engaged by

the mining companies and are working for wages rather than prospecting. During that period the State mills suffer. The amount of ore that is normally broken by small syndicates and prospectors throughout the auriferous parts of the State is not brought in to the same degree and so the batteries work intermittently and their out-turn is largely affected by that circumstance.

But the battery at Menzies, which commenced its operations on the 1st January this year, had an excellent run and there is no doubt in my mind that the establishment of a mill at a centre where prospectors have had to struggle to get their ore treated after having broken it, is undoubtedly a great attraction. The out-turn at Menzies in the short period during which it has been operating is the treatment of 3,828 tons for 2,047 fine oz. This has been recovered from an area which was practically dormant, so far as production was concerned, prior to the establishment of the mill. Many prospectors were hoping that something would happen and did very little until such time as the mill started operations.

The effect of it has been excellent and if the same inducement can be given to other parts of the State, where valuable auriferous areas are known to exist, I feel that the result could be equally as good as that at Menzies. The mill at Northampton has also had an excellent run. It was established on the 1st January, 1954, 12 months before the battery at Menzies, and up to the present time, 6,537 tons of lead ore has been treated at the Northampton mill.

The operations of the North Yilgarn—or, to be exact, the operations of Great Western Consolidated at Bullfinch—are proceeding satisfactorily and, in fact, the operations of the company throughout the whole of the Yilgarn are such that on present indications the Yilgarn field could easily take its place and rank next to the Golden Mile within the next decade. That is a great achievement for a district which has been regarded as one in which the horizon of gold contact did not extend below 500 ft. The work carried out by Great Western Consolidated has been proved in the Bullfinch area to a depth of roughly 1,800 ft. and there is every indication that the values extend beyond that horizon and preparation has been made, I understand, to continue the main shaft to 2,400ft. during the course of the first six months of next year.

It is a great achievement in a district, when the geological knowledge and past experience has been that there were no occurrences of gold below the 500ft. level. With the number of low-grade propositions that are in the Yilgarn, some types of ore bodies quite medium in value and large in quantity will enhance, to a great extent, a district that has been struggling for some time.

Inquiries in connection with the future of the Sons of Gwalia mine—one of the oldest mines that has been in operation for, roughly, 60 years—show that recurrences have taken place at various levels and geologists have found them tremendously interesting. There have been times when values have receded almost to the point of becoming uneconomical. And then with a few hundred feet having been traversed, values have again become quite good, and the mine has been rejuvenated on many occasions during its long life. The Government has found it necessary to assist materially this mine to enable it to bring about new development and to help it overcome what might be termed a blind spot.

It is proposed finally to mechanise this undertaking, renew some of its plant, and provide better amenities for the employees. The Government is finding £150,000 in an endeavour to put this mine on its feet once again. There is no doubt in my mind that this advance of money will achieve the desired result and we will have that great show producing for many years to come.

I would now like to touch on the search for oil. The oil search in Western Australia is perhaps entering its most interesting stage in the history of present operations. There is an intensive search being conducted by Wapet of a very large tract of country in this State. It has its forces dispersed in almost every part of the area held. The amount of geological, geophysical and seismic work being carried out must be seen to be believed. It is to the everlasting credit of those concerned that they are conducting such an intensive campaign in their search for oil in this State.

There has been some recent comment regarding the new No. 9 bore which has been put down in the Rough Range area. Members will recall that for quite a long period from the finding of oil in No. 1 Rough Range a number of disappointing holes were put down with no further sign of oil existing in the next seven or eight holes sunk. The company then appreciated that there was some divergence geologically in the matter of seismic interpretations that they were achieving, so they set about what is known as a group seismic examination.

They naturally commenced at the successful position in an endeavour to find out the characteristics of that particular spot. They also continued with some form of examination seismographically in a number of other places. The intense search went on in an area adjacent to Rough Range No. 1 with the result that several other promising areas have been located and what is now known as No. 9 bore hole is being put down. It is the accuracy and correlation of the information and its relationship to the successful hole at the other point that have given some indication of what is happening.

The department continues to have a very successful period in relation to mining schools. The schools at Kalgoorlie and Norseman are always kept up to numerical strength and the standard that is attained by students coming from Kalgoorlie, as all members know, is something of which we can be very proud. The reports we receive from all parts of the world in regard to the ability and ground work given at the Kalgoorlie gold mines make us very happy. The School of Mines at Bullfinch is also achieving a useful purpose and is being availed of by the comparatively small population. So we find that progress is continuous in that area.

In the matter of geological surveys, we have been experiencing quite a deal of frustration because of the shortage of geologists. It is increasingly difficult to find suitable geologists for the staff of the department because of the great activity in this State in the search for oil. For the past three years we have been extremely short and much of the geological work we would like to have carried out has had to go by the board.

The latest applications we called, however, lead us to believe that we may achieve results, if the numbers are any indication, in the near future. We would then be able to undertake some of the geological work that is lagging considerably at present. There is much geological work to be done by the Government in many parts, particularly as it relates to water supplies. I hope it will be possible to attack this problem before very long. As most members know, the Mines Department is called upon to advise about water positions and to undertake some of the mechanical work necessary.

I would now like to refer to coal production. Today, of course, the main problem is the strong competition from other fuels. Coupled with that competition is also the fact that high production costs are making it difficult to maintain the coal figures we have known in the past few years. The present capacity of the existing mines is such that production is slightly ahead of the market. The production up to the end of October, 1953, was 757,858 tons. That leaves us still two months of production, but the figures will not reach anything near the proportion we enjoyed last year when 1,090,000 tons of coal were broken and consumed from Collie.

There is no doubt in my mind that the industry can rejuvenate itself. It is a matter of appreciating all the factors that go to make up this great south-western town. The production from Collie can be maintained providing we can knit together the many loose ends that have become evident in the industry over a period of years. I feel that while the industry must be rationalised to requirements, it will remain an important one for many years.

During the year we had a visit to this State from representatives of the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. These conferences are held in the various States from time to time, and the one held in this State this year was very successful. As a matter of fact, several hundred engineers and mining men from all over the State and also from many parts of the world were present at the conference here. A great amount of valuable work was achieved. During their stay the deliberations on which they were engaged were wide and varied and had a tremendous application to the mining industry.

The opportunity was taken to disperse these people to various parts of the State in order that they would have first-hand knowledge of much of what was taking place. A fair amount of time was expended on the Golden Mile, and they visited Bullfinch in numbers. Kwinana occupied some of their time and they also went to Exmouth and Wundowie. It was very pleasing indeed to have received some of the nice things that were conveyed to us on their return to their respective States.

One final word, and that is that a short time ago members dealt with a small Bill which related to a search for nickel when extra territory was authorised to that which the Mines Department was in a position to grant. I am pleased to say that the company that was interested in it and on whose behalf the legislation was introduced, has since gone on with the proposition. Those associated with the project have indicated the area in which they will be commencing work in a very short time on the eastern border of Western Australia. This company will be operating on an international basis.

I would now like to touch on the Department of Industrial Development of which I am the ministerial head. The manufacturing industries continued to be active during the year despite the situation arising from the fresh inflationary tendency and the tightening up of credit. A very pleasing feature of industrial development during the past 12 months has been the continuing tendency to establish industries away from the centre of the city. We find that during this period Tomlinsons has moved out to Welshpool in some of its operations. Bergers has gone to Scarborough and Joyce Bros. to Hilton Park.

From a small decentralisation point of view these moves are only following the pattern of other States; but they are nevertheless to be commended in Western Australia. As the State expands, we find all too freely that available land which should be reserved for domestic purposes is being alienated, or has been alienated in the past for industry in a somewhat higgledy-piggledy fashion. It is pleasing to find that some of the suburbs in more

recent years are growing up purely industrial, or almost purely industrial. There is a lot to commend moves of that kind. I feel that they will result in much better working conditions, promote more efficiency, and certainly leave a much better outlook from an employment point of view.

Official statistics available to 1953-54 disclose a total number of factories in Western Australia of 3,523, an increase of 99 over the previous year. The average employment over the last year was 47,459, an increase of 2,271 persons. Most of the increase was in the metropolitan area where, I am sorry to say, 75 per cent. of those engaged in industrial work generally are employed. We would be very much happier if we could continue this decentralisation move much further afield than the precincts of the city. I think we realise that decentralisation in a practical application is much harder to bring into effect than to discuss and advance as an ideal. If this State could have its industrial factories and works dispersed to many parts we would have tremendous scope and opportunity for progress.

Salaries and wages paid for the past 12 months totalled £31,590,000. The net value of production increased to £55,000,000. During the year quite a number of notable new manufacturing concerns opened. The State continues to expand its industrial development at a reasonable rate. During the period, Arcus Nickel Products went into business, and the firm is producing a refrigerator and its own sealed unit in this State. The porcelain enamelling plant at Metters was also opened. This plant is a very modern and efficient one, and is turning out a product which is equal to anything in Australia and could take its place alongside much of the imported porcelain ware.

The Bergers group with its colourful contribution from the paint point of view will, I think, play an important part. The Albany Superphosphate Co. is getting into quite fair production figures. Lindberg Foster Hart Pty. Ltd. is also manufacturing refrigerators and its own sealed unit. One is led to believe that, with two major refrigerator companies in the State, the number of refrigerators that will be built here will not leave much opportunity for imports of that type.

[Mr. Moir took the Chair.]

Mr. Court: You quoted those figures of wages paid, as £31,000,000 and the total production value at £55,000,000. Have you had an opportunity to examine the relative proportions of those figures compared with world standard? It appears that the salaries proportion is a bit high.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: No; I have not had that opportunity. Another factory that was

opened during the early part of the year, and in which modern artistic and attractive furniture is now being built is that of Steel Furniture Pty. Ltd.; and many other smaller concerns have come into existence during the 12 months.

On the 1st January, the major undertaking that came into operation was that of Kwinana Oil Refinery. It went on stream on the 1st February. Cockburn Cement Co., too, has a plant that has completed during the year and it has commenced production. Broken Hill Pty. is proceeding with the construction of a rolling mill and plans to produce next year.

The Department of Industrial Development, in common with very many of the traders of this State, has for some time been deeply concerned about the lack of appreciation in many parts of this State concerning our own locally-made goods, and the percentage of imports from other States of lines that are produced in Western Australia. That percentage has reached an alarming figure. Three different organisations have combined with the department in an endeavour to popularise Western Australian products.

We have conducted what might be called a "Purchase More W.A. Manufactured Goods" campaign; and the various manufacturing concerns have entered in a lively manner into the idea of promoting sales on a far better basis than has prevailed in the past. We have had a radio campaign running for some time, and opportunity has been taken to make displays of purely Western Australian goods on many occasions. Exhibitions of all kinds have been held in an endeavour to bring about a greater interest in Western Australian goods. A number of shows have been visited and goods have been exhibited from local manufacturers.

Mr. Lawrence: On a point of order, Mr. Acting Chairman. I cannot hear what the Minister is saying because the member for Blackwood is nattering down here.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I quite agree with the hon. member.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! What is going on here? I can hear the member for Blackwood clearly from the Chair, and I would ask him to keep silent while the Minister is introducing his Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: We have had very pleasing comments from many of the nine or 10 centres which were visited, and at which exhibitions were staged; and we will in all probability extend the operations of the scheme in the coming year. There will be more displays. This is having some effect, and we find that sales of local products are moving upwards; and

most notably is that perceptible with regard to the manufacturing concerns which undertook this campaign in conjunction with the department and which feel that they are achieving some result. They are breaking ground that apparently was a little difficult in the past, and are getting their products into more homes. There is a greater demand and more inquiry. The advertising campaign is undoubtedly having some effect.

Several questions have been asked recently regarding the land at Kwinana. During the year the Government agreed to the creation of an industrial area down there; and after some delay, occasioned by the need to plan the area and formulate by-laws, it is now in process of being gazetted. Industries will then be able to purchase sites and develop in that locality. The Government holds several hundred acres of land adjacent to the refinery and B.H.P. for the location of major industry associated with oil and steel. The first such industry may be Tube Makers of Australia Pty. Ltd. which has been offered a suitable site on Storey-rd.

I would point out that while there have been inquiries from some organisations concerning land at Kwinana, there has not been anything of a firm basis apart from Stewarts & Lloyds who have undertaken certain major works in that area to be spread over a period of years. But the interest shown, in the main, has been of a cursory nature, and has not been followed up by anything concrete. Although the department has endeavoured throughout the period to pin down some of these industries to an answer, up to the present I think the attitude being adopted is mainly one of wait and see.

Hon. D. Brand: When did Stewarts & Lloyds first approach you?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I would not know.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It was in 1952. That is, British Tubes, which is the same as Stewarts & Lloyds. What is holding that up?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I think the firm is not ready to go on and is not keen to finalise the matter. It has had the land for a long time. It is a very desirable block and would be admirably suited for the type of manufacture the company desires to carry on. That is one of the great difficulties in an area in which a limited amount of land is available—to make certain that the industry to be established is more or less closely related to the two main industries already there. There are a number of industries that could with advantage establish themselves adjacent to the existing concerns.

Mr. Lawrence: Would you say it was up to Stewarts & Lloyds now?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes. The Government has continued its policy, in regard to finance, of granting assistance to industry where it seemed desirable to extend present capacity or establish new industry, and where for certain reasons capital was not available from normal sources. I think it will be understood, when I say, "not available from normal sources", that the bank credit available for a number of years is no longer as easy to come by; and when somebody wants to start in business, it is Government finance or Government-guaranteed money which gives him the opportunity to do so. Very few are able to carry on their commitments and commence new business without some application to the Government for either financial or technical assistance. Quite a number of these people want help in one way or another.

Five concerns were assisted during the year, involving a liability of £91,100. Ten guarantees involving £173,283 were relieved during the year, without loss to the State, and four were cancelled involving the loss of £21,894. It is satisfactory to find that some of these guarantees are wiped off. It is pleasing to realise that the assistance rendered has been of such a nature that a commencement has been possible, and that from that period there is every likelihood that the concerns will be able to float along on their own finance. The industries assisted financially include the following types:—Production of implement handles; engineering; textiles; fertiliser; bricks; meat; flax; whaling; fishing; electrical goods; foundry; coalmining and power production.

So it will be seen that the State is continuing to foster a wide variety of manufactures. Some of these industries were commenced during the previous Government's regime and the assistance has been rendered more or less on a continuing basis. On the technical side of the department, the research section is engaged in the investigation, on a pilot plant scale, of industrial problems. It is particularly interested in investigating the commercial possibilities of new production utilising the State's natural resources.

In collaboration with the Government's chemical laboratories, a pilot plant has been built to produce coke from Collie coal. Initial runs through this plant have yielded excellent coke briquettes, and it is considered that they will be suitable for the foundry and chemical industry. It now remains to select optimum operating

conditions, check suitability of various coals and assess the economics of a commercial plant. At present, the plant, although much larger than a normal pilot plant, has been having teething troubles, and while success is gradually coming to it, the time is not quite ripe to state authentically that commercial production with an enlarged plant would be possible.

The department, since the war, has devoted much time and energy to increasing the supply of building materials, and it is pleasing to note that there is now no real shortage of any basic material. The Leader of the Opposition will be pleased about this because he said that the shortage of various materials had reduced the potential of his building operations. Bricks, tiles, cement, asbestos-cement products and fibrous plaster products have all had a record production during 1954-55. It will be seen that the department has been able to render a tremendous amount of assistance, as it has done in the past, and that assistance has been appreciated by industry generally.

Turning to fishing, the industry has continued to expand. The better type of craft employed in the industry now has helped to bring about the working of new grounds and the extension of old ones beyond the limits that were possible with the smaller craft. I have a comparison here which, although consisting of only a few figures, is well worth recording, because it will give members an idea of the increase that has taken place. The following are the licence figures:—

	1964	1955
Professional Fishermen	£ 1,069	£ 1,141
Fishing Boats	618	878
Value of Boats	985,862	1,045,060
Value of Gear	260,000	274,000

The department has seven patrol vessels, four of which are fully engaged in connection with the crayfishing industry. The "Lancelin," which is the main investigational boat, is on research work.

It is interesting to know that we have achieved all-time high figures in regard to the fish take for the past 12 months. The comparison with the previous 12 months makes interesting reading. There have been one or two slight decreases, but there have been major increases in other sections. The comparative figures for commercial production are as follows:—

Twelve Months ended.	Fish.	Crayfish.	Prawns.	Crabs.	Total.	Approximate Value.
	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	£
30-6-54	10,080,274	9,223,519	45,305	16,477	19,365,575	1,445,000
30-6-55	9,401,533	10,906,561	25,978	18,585	20,352,657	1,500,000

In commenting on the above table, I would point out that the prawn position has been one of fluctuating fortunes over a period of years—mostly descending fortunes. There has been a slight recession in the price of crayfish tails sold on the American market, so that although the poundage was higher, the monetary return was slightly lower. The figures relating to the export of crayfish tails make interesting reading:—

1953.

2,911,333 lb. valued at \$2,183,500.

1954.

3,307,353 lb. valued at \$2,480,500.

The whaling figures are as under:—

1954.

1,320 valued at £A1,287,000.

1955.

1,120 valued at £A1,155,000.

Members will notice that the number of whales decreased by 200 in the last 12 months. The International Whaling Commission decrees the number of whales to be taken in any given area. Unfortunately, the quota for this State was reduced by 200 although I believe that the average size of the whales taken in these waters showed a decrease of only 3 inches over an average length of 34 feet. A matter of a 3-inch decrease in the size of such whales does not look to me as though they are being fished out.

The pearl-shell production has shown an interesting upward movement and I think this is largely to be attributed to the Japanese operations. There is no doubt in the minds of those people who are interested in the recovery of pearl-shell that there is no more capable diver and technician than the Japanese who comes here and engages in this work. The production figures are:—

1953.

449 tons valued at £284,000.

1954.

558 tons valued at £358,000.

The total approximate value of production from the fishing industry for 1954 amounted to £3,054,000. I mentioned a while ago that prawns were on the decrease. The department has been conducting a thorough research programme in regard to the incidence of prawns in other parts of the State and for the past few years it has been engaged in a survey in the Exmouth Gulf area. Some very encouraging results have been obtained and they have come about mostly in the winter period.

This year, for the first time, the "Lancelin," with officers of the C.S.I.R.O. on board, commenced operations during the early part of the summer period and, we are hoping that we will be able more authoritatively to look forward to some advance

in that area in the near future. It is interesting to know that the prawns of Exmouth Gulf are a terrific size—a length of 9 or 10 inches being quite common.

During the past few years, a great deal of interest has been shown by many farmers throughout the State in regard to trout acclimatisation in dams. In some cases, the results have been most enlightening and encouraging. It appears that, given sufficient depth of water with sufficient coolness, the trout numbers can be increased greatly. Some months ago, an invitation was received from the fisheries branch of the C.S.I.R.O. to send one of our younger men to a school to be held in Indonesia to investigate trout acclimatisation. As the greater part of the expenses were to be met by the Commonwealth, the cost to this State was very slight, and one of our younger officers was sent to attend that school.

Although investigations have been made into crayfish by a specially appointed committee, it has found it exceedingly difficult to achieve similar results in recurring years. The C.S.I.R.O. has been busy making extensive investigations, and it was hoping that before long some definite decision could be reached in regard to white crayfish.

I now wish to deal with only one other department under my jurisdiction, namely, the Tourist Bureau. The Leader of the Opposition, the member for Claremont and the member for Vasse have always taken a keen and lively interest in the activities of the Tourist Bureau in this State. I am sure that the member for Bunbury will also become interested in this work. The tourist industry is a sort of Cinderella as far as finance is concerned, although each succeeding Treasurer has been a little more generous. I think tourism is of great advantage in assisting any State or nation to advance.

There is no doubt in my mind that, given the necessary finance to encourage people from the Eastern States and overseas to visit this State, great advances could be made with the tourist industry in a State such as ours. During the latter part of the winter, the first conference of tourist directors was held in Perth. With the exception of Queensland, a representative from every State, and also one from New Zealand, attended that conference. After its business had been concluded, the representatives were taken to see some of our tourist attractions, particularly in the South-West, and there is no doubt they were greatly impressed with what they saw. It was pointed out to them that greater progress could be made but the limiting factors were, firstly, finance, secondly, lack of accommodation, and thirdly, the bad condition of some of the roads that led to our more beautiful, but less frequented, scenic spots.

A conference such as that held in Perth proved to be a great opportunity for an exchange of views to assist us to find out how far we were lagging behind other States in regard to tourism. The Tourist Bureau has shown creditable progress during this year. From the figures issued during the last few months, there is every indication that its records of past years will be broken at the end of this financial year. The collections by the Tourist Bureau totalled £275,000 odd, an increase of £26,000 over the collections for the previous year, or 11.6 per cent. That is a most creditable performance, and it gives some indication of the great degree of interest that is shown in this State by people from the Eastern States and overseas.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Tourist Bureau will continue to expand more rapidly. I have been asked what the Tourist Bureau earns in the way of commission. In 1954-55, £13,500 odd was earned as compared with a total of £12,000 in the previous year. During the past few years we have established branches of the Tourist Bureau in Melbourne and Sydney, and both of them have expanded greatly. It is unfortunate that we cannot establish a branch in South Australia, principally because the South Australian Tourist Bureau is unable to grant us sufficient accommodation. That State has been very co-operative in many other ways but it has been unable to assist us in this direction.

I might point out that I am giving merely a racy description of this department's activities. Many tours have been arranged for parties that are visiting this State from other parts of the Commonwealth, but unfortunately it has sometimes been found that a full tour cannot be conducted because some people have not been able to arrive at the given time. Our greatest difficulty is to obtain sufficient reservations on the Commonwealth railways and on railways in other States far enough ahead to allow these people to be formed into groups for the conducting of such tours. The Commonwealth railways say that the State is partly to blame because it does not book far enough ahead.

The Minister for Railways: That is not true as far as this State is concerned.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I hope that that is so. However, I have been led to understand that some of the other States are a little difficult in this regard. There is one point I feel will be of interest to the member for Bunbury and also the member for Vasse. For their information, the subsidies that are being paid to the tourist branches in Geraldton, Bunbury and Albany are to be increased from £500 to £750. These subsidies are granted on the basis of 10s. for every £1 collected locally. Last year, both Geraldton and Bunbury

took the opportunity of using this subsidy, but Albany, once again, only drew £75 from the department. That is a shocking state of affairs in a district that can offer so much to tourists. The authorities in that town should be sitting on the doorstep of the Government so that they might receive that £500 because it would prove to be of great assistance in developing the tourist trade in their town.

Hon. D. Brand: When is the Government going to increase the subsidy from £500 to £750? In this coming year?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Do not be inquisitive! The Government also intends to grant that subsidy increase to Busselton.

Mr. Bovell: We are just commencing the establishment of a tourist bureau branch.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: There are many aspects I would like to deal with, but in view of the late hour I will leave them until some other time.

Progress reported till a later stage of the sitting.

(Continued on page 2294.)

BILL—LOAN, £11,604,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the further amendment made by the Assembly to the Council's amendment No. 3.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 6, page 3—Delete all words in paragraph (c) after the word "deleting" in line 32 and substitute the words "the words 'one year' being the last two words in the section and substituting the words 'six months.'"

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: This amendment relates to the right of appeal against punishment by an employee who has not served the initial period. Section 77 of the Act permits of appeals by permanent employees, but defines a permanent

employee as one who has given 12 months' service. There is no logic in that provision. The Bill provides that irrespective of the period of service the employee shall have the right of appeal against any punishment inflicted by the commission. That is a principle of British justice.

If a British subject comes to Australia he does not have to serve a probationary period of 12 months before he is entitled to appeal against any punishment that might be inflicted on him by law. There is no initial service under the Public Service Act, nor under the Police Act. It is true that the provision relating to initial service has been in the Railways Act for many years. Since the three-man commission came into being in recent years punishments have been meted out to employees with less than 12 months' service, which on the surface did not appear to be just and the men concerned were prevented from making appeals.

I have discussed this matter with the Railway Commissioners and their only objection to the amendment is that it might result in a large influx of appeals, but I cannot see that employees with less than 12 months' service will be any more likely to appeal on frivolous grounds than employees with over 12 months' service. Section 83 of the Act does not provide that the cost of hearing an appeal may be levied against the appellant if in the opinion of the Appeal Board the appeal was made on frivolous grounds. That section provides that the cost shall be awarded against the appellant. I do not agree to the amendment of the Legislative Council to reduce the initial period of service to six months instead of the existing 12 months. Whilst that is an attempt to meet this Chamber halfway, the injustice of retaining any initial period is still in existence and is, in my opinion, a violation of British justice. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of Hon. A. F. Watts, Mr. Norton and the Minister for Railways drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendment.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Returned from the Council with a schedule of 12 amendments.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2, page 2, line 20—Delete the passage commencing with the word "except" in line 20 and ending with the word "apply" in line 25.

No. 2. Clause 2, page 3, line 9—Delete "(e)" and substitute "(d)."

No. 3. Clause 2, page 3, line 9—Delete the passage commencing with the word "or" in line 9 and ending with the word "section" in line 13.

No. 4. Clause 2, page 4, line 36—Delete subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (d) commencing on page 4, line 36, and ending with the word "paragraph" on page 5, line 36.

No. 5. Clause 2, page 6, line 18—Delete the words "or where no appeal to the court has been lodged or if such an appeal has been lodged it has been dismissed" in lines 18, 19 and 20.

No. 6. Clause 7, page 16—After the word "period" in line 24, insert the bracketed words:—

(whether it has expired or not).

No. 7. Clause 8, page 17—After the word "made" in line 27 add a new subsection as follows:—

(3) As soon as practicable after making such offer (but subject to all the other provisions of this Act) the respondent shall on application by the claimant pay to the claimant, as and by way of an advance or interim payment on account of the compensation, an amount equivalent to two-thirds of the amount of the offer and such payment may be so received and retained by the claimant without prejudice to his rights under Section forty-seven or any other provision of this Act.

No. 8. Clause 11, page 18—In line 13 substitute the word "the" for the word "a."

No. 9. Clause 15, page 25, line 21—Add after paragraph (c) the following paragraph to stand as paragraph (d):—

(d) by substituting for the proviso to paragraph (a) the following proviso:—

Provided that where any building or other improvements have been made on such land after the sixtieth consecutive day preceding the date of the gazetting of the notice of the taking or resumption but before the date of the gazetting of that notice, or, in the case of a railway or other work authorised by a special Act, after the first day of January or the first day of July, as the case may be, last preceding the first day of the session as aforesaid, but before the date of the gazetting

of the notice of the taking or resumption, the value of those buildings or improvements shall be allowed, not exceeding their actual cost.

No. 10. Clause 15—Insert the following paragraph after paragraph (d):—

(e) By inserting after paragraph (a) the following paragraph:—

(aa) The loss or damage, if any, sustained by the claimant by reason of—

- (i) removal expenses; or
- (ii) disruption and reinstatement of a business; or
- (iii) the discontinuance of building works in progress at the date when such land is taken or resumed and the termination of building contracts in consequence thereof; or
- (iv) architect's fees or quantity surveyor's fees actually incurred by the claimant in respect to proposed buildings or improvements which cannot be commenced or continued in consequence of the taking or resumption of such land; or
- (v) any other facts which the respondent or the court considers it just to take into account having regard to the circumstances of each case.

No. 11. Clause 21, page 30—Delete all the words after the word "by" in line 4 and insert in lieu thereof the words:—

substituting for the passage "shall be entitled to a fee for every day upon which he attends a sitting of the court" in lines one and two, the passage, "who is a member of the compensation court shall be entitled to a fee."

No. 12. Clause 22.—Delete all words in paragraph (c) after the word "by" in line 15 and substitute the words "repealing subsection (2)."

On motion by the Minister for Works, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1955-56.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting; Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—*Mines*, £392,049 (partly considered):

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [1.47 a.m.]: Of the four departments introduced by the Minister at this late hour, there is a little I wish to say about three of them. As to the Department of Industrial Development, it is quite clear that there has been considerably less industrial development in the last three years than there was in the preceding three years.

Regarding the Fisheries Department, the attitude towards net fishing on certain parts of the south coast, and particularly some in my electorate, is one that, in my view and the view of many of my constituents, is entirely unsatisfactory. This is a matter that will have to be taken up with the Minister and his department pretty strongly in the near future in order that some remedial measure, if possible, may be taken so as to give a better chance to the people who desire to fish in the waters of the south coast for commercial purposes.

As to the Tourist Department, I am of opinion that the time has arrived when some definite action should be taken to attract to this State persons who are prepared to take in hand the matter of providing accommodation and amenities that tourists find in other parts of the world. I am convinced that the provision of suitable hotel accommodation likely to attract tourists from abroad appears to be something that people in this State, either from lack of experience or lack of the necessary funds, are unable to cope with.

There must be persons with both capital and the necessary know-how who, if the tourist attractions were brought before their notice, would be prepared to take action to provide these facilities so that tourists may be attracted here from other parts of the world. It is not so very long ago since I was introduced to an American citizen who was paying a visit to the State and was possessed of a reasonable sum which by many people would have been regarded as a fortune. He had had considerable experience of tourist accommodation and management on the east coast of the United States and had set his mind on the acquisition of a hotel in this State. He endeavoured to acquire one particular licensed premises, only to find that the proprietors were quite unwilling to sell at anything that he could regard as a reasonable figure; in fact, no figure seemed to attract them at all. This gentleman had set his mind on these premises, because, to his mind they were so situated that they presented enormous opportunities to a person with progressive ideas, one who was accustomed to dealing with tourists who were prepared to pay well for accommodation if it was offered to them.

That type of accommodation is remarkably rare in Western Australia, particularly at tourist and holiday resorts. However, when he found that he could not

acquire the premises, and realising the problems he would face if he sought to obtain a licence for premises elsewhere, which would not have the position that he had taken a great fancy to, he left Western Australia. So, it appears to me that some intensive organisation will have to take place and inquiries made outside of the State, and perhaps outside of Australia, if we are to develop this worth-while traffic which would bring tourists not only from other parts of Australia, but other parts of the world, to this State. They would probably provide the substantial funds which are necessary to assist in maintaining our resources overseas.

I do not think we have, up to the present, made any realistic effort in this regard. It is true that during the war period and for some considerable time thereafter there were so many difficulties in the way it was undesirable to express such a view as I am now putting forward. But those times are now rapidly changing and if the statement made by the Minister for Housing this evening is to be believed, then the problems which restrained past Governments in their activities in this direction appear now to be substantially at an end.

Therefore, I suggest that the time has come to consider bringing in these people, who, I am sure, are most anxious to come here with the necessary capital and know how to run tourist resorts and run hotel amenities thereat in a manner likely to attract the better class of tourist—those with more funds to leave in Western Australia to our financial advantage than we have been able to get in the past.

The last matter I wish to refer to is the ingenuity of the Minister for Mines in answering questions evasively. Yesterday, I asked him this question—

Has he noticed allegations in the Press that despite the difference in price, there is actually no difference in the two grades of petrol now offered to the public?

He answered the question by saying—

Yes.

I point out that one of the persons who virtually made such an allegation as the one referred to in the question, as reported in the Press of a week ago, was the Rt. Hon. Dr. Evatt, the Leader of the Opposition in the Federal House who is reported as saying—

The motorist was asked to pay an extra 3d. for so-called "super" petrol but the Minister for Supply had replied that it made no difference in the performance of the ordinary car.

I am not in the slightest degree interested in the welfare of the people who supply, in a wholesale manner, motor spirit to the people in this State, but I hope that I am a believer in fair play. Obviously not only I, but also the Minister, as is apparent from his answer to the question, has seen these allegations; and if they

are correct I would say that in Western Australia alone they would amount to the taking improperly from the public of a sum of not less than £175,000 per annum because I find that the estimated consumption of petrol, excluding aeroplane spirit, in Western Australia for a year is 56,000,000 gallons.

If we make a conservative estimate and say that out of that quantity the motorist is likely to purchase only 25 per cent., it would mean that he would buy 14,000,000 gallons which, at 3d. per gallon, would amount to £175,000. If what has been said about these oil companies is not true, they are being improperly and unfairly defamed, and I have no desire to see that state of affairs continue. If, on the other hand, it is true, then the public are likely to have, unfairly and improperly, taken from them the substantial sum of money I have mentioned.

Therefore it becomes the duty of the members of this Chamber, especially when the allegations that I refer to have been supported by the public man I have named, to ascertain the true position, so that either the unfair allegation against the companies can be removed or, alternatively, that the community and the purchasers of motor spirits might be protected. With that object in view, I asked the Minister for Mines a second question—

In order to establish the untruth or otherwise of these allegations, will he make early arrangement for an analyst from his or some other department, to acquire samples of both grades and report thereon?

The third question was—

Whatever the result of such analyses, will he make the report public?

He answered in these terms—

The matter has been discussed by a Government technical oil committee, and I am advised that the only practical results could be obtained by conducting an exhaustive trial under closely comparable conditions. It is apparently claimed that there is a difference in the octane rating of the two petrols and to determine octane rating requires a specialised type of engine, and there is, I believe only one of these, privately owned, in the State.

Nowhere did the Minister answer my question. He did not say whether he was prepared to get an officer from his department or some other place to investigate this situation, nor did he say that if the investigation took place, he was prepared to make it public in order, on the one hand, that the companies might be cleared of the defamatory statement or, on the other hand, that the public might know exactly where they stood. All he did was to tell me that it was claimed that there

was a difference in the octane rating, which I knew already, and that so far as he knew there was only one of the engines required owned in this State, and that privately owned.

I should have imagined that a responsible Minister, in such circumstances as I have discussed, would have taken the opportunity immediately of going about the business in a practical way. He would have taken steps as rapidly as possible to ascertain just what was the position and if there was only one machine, privately owned, in Western Australia, in all probability it would be owned by an airline company, as it has to do testing of this kind nearly every day, I am informed. It should not have been impossible for him to acquire the use of it through his department, for the purpose of making the necessary inquiry.

But I suggest it was not necessary to go to anything that was privately owned, because I am informed, on the most reliable authority, that in the possession of the Commonwealth Government, in its air force, there are quite a number of these machines which are used regularly in ascertaining just what is the octane rating of the fuel used in various types of planes. If that is so, I have not the slightest doubt that, in a matter of this kind, he would have received the co-operation of the R.A.A.F. in making the inquiry, or at least, anyhow, he might have said he would make the attempt so that this situation could be cleared up one way or the other. So I appeal to him now to take some definite action in regard to this question, let us have an answer to it, and give the public the facts. Let us tell them, "Either you have been incorrectly informed and there is a distinct difference, as many of us believe, in the fuels as supplied to you at the higher price, and you are not being deprived of an extra 3d. for no value," or, alternatively, "That is not so and the community is being, in short, taken down."

Let us have the matter cleared up. I trust the Minister will take that attitude now, after the points I have made in regard to this matter, and will do what I believe is the right thing, either by the companies or by the community—it does not matter which to me. I only want to see justice done to whoever should have it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn—in reply) [2.5 a.m.]: The member for Stirling apparently finds that too many late sittings do not agree with him. He started off on the wrong foot in regard to industrial development and commenced by saying that the three years of review that the Minister gave did not hold a candle to the previous three years. He was entirely wrong. At no stage did I say anything about three years. I gave one year only,

and if he had been listening to my remarks, he would have known they referred to one year only, 1954-55.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I was in my seat and listening, but I am entitled to say that the three years were not comparable with the previous three. I am not concerned about what the Minister limited his remarks to, but about the three years.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: There was no justification for that comment. The hon. member skated over the subject very quickly. The second subject that he attempted to deal with, in similar fashion, was fisheries. At no time in the past has he come near the department in regard to matters pertaining to fishing in his electorate.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I heard about it only last Saturday.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It has taken the hon. member a long time to find out that there was something really wrong.

Hon. A. F. Watts: You do not know in what part of my district it is.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: All the hon. member did was to make a complaint with no detail and, as far as I am concerned, without justification. I am surprised at him resorting to that type of criticism. He then proceeded, in a bad-tempered way, which does not become him, to the question of hotel accommodation. In my remarks, I said one of the chief factors keeping the tourist trade back in this State, as in many other parts of Australia, was lack of accommodation. I heard the Leader of the Opposition speak on the same subject on his return from England. He said he did not know the answer, and the hon. member does not and I do not, and if the gentleman was here a few months ago with all this capital, it should not have taken five minutes for the hon. member to make contact between him and the department, and we would have been very quick to foster something in the nature of what has been spoken of.

Hon. A. F. Watts: If he could not get what he wanted, what was the use of going to the Minister?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It rather flatters me when the hon. member tells me the answers I gave to his questions were evasive, as any pretence I have of being able to evade answering questions is something I learned from him during his term of office. Again, there was little justification for what he said and the manner in which he said it. He could easily have got the information from whatever section was capable of giving it. There is no relationship between petrol and the Mines Department. I endeavoured to give him a reply to the question he directed

to me in the only possible way. I made the inquiry in the quarter from which I thought I could get the information.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Did not you have a Government analyst?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I had nothing available to me at the time with which to be able to get the answer.

Mr. Yates: The Minister is putting up a very weak case.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is better than the case of the Leader of the Country Party, because what he put to me did not concern my department.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The department can actually handle it. It should be sent to the Government Analyst.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. In the replies to the questions I said that that was as far as I knew and that that was all the information I could obtain.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Twopence a pound!

Mr. Lawrence: Order!

Point of Order.

Mr. Yates: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, how long has the member for South Fremantle had authority to call the Committee to order?

Mr. Lawrence: I can call order whenever I like! Whenever I cannot hear the Minister for Mines because the member for Stirling and the member for South Perth are interjecting all the time, I will call order. How can I hear the person who is speaking unless I do call order?

The Chairman: Order! The Minister for Mines is speaking.

Mr. Lawrence: I am asking you a question, Sir. I cannot hear the Minister for Mines.

The Chairman: According to Standing Orders the member for South Fremantle is quite entitled, if he cannot hear any member of the Committee, in asking that he be permitted to hear what is being said. Although he has no right to call the Committee to order, if he cannot hear he should call the Chairman's attention to that fact so that he can call the Committee to order.

Committee Resumed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In conclusion, all I want to say is that I answered the question to the best of my ability and not in an evasive manner as the hon. member seems to think.

The Treasurer: Would not the C.I.S.R.O. be the best organisation to test that?

Hon. A. F. Watts: The Mines Department has analysts and they should be able to advise what should be done. If the

Minister for Mines would take some interest in the matter I would be very pleased, but to date he has taken no interest in it whatsoever.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The only answer I can give to that is to say that apparently the hon. member has a great deal more information than has the Minister.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Department of Industrial Development, £162,468; Fisheries, £50,718; Tourist Bureau, £33,010; North-West, £1,525,061; Harbour and Light and Jetties, £173,229; Supply and Shipping, £8,090.

Public Utilities:

Votes—Country Areas Water Supply Schemes, £689,000; Other Hydraulic Undertakings Chargeable to Revenue, £545,402; Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department, £950,350; State Abattoirs and Saleyards, £139,268—agreed to.

Vote—Railways, £14,750,000:

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [2.15]: It is rather unfortunate that the Estimates of such an important department of the State should be left until this early hour of the morning. However, I understand that arrangements have been made for breakfast, so I think I may be able adequately to deal with the various activities of this department. The railways budget for 1955-56 is as follows:—

	£
Expenditure	14,750,000
Revenue	12,750,000
Deficiency	2,000,000
Interest	1,650,000
Loss to Treasury	3,650,000

Last year's estimates and the actual revenue and expenditure were:—

	Estimate £	Actual £	Difference £
Expenditure	14,500,000	14,498,985	— 3,015
Revenue	12,350,000	12,469,693	+ 119,693
Deficiency	2,147,000	2,027,292	— 119,708
Interest	1,250,000	1,413,947	+ 163,947
Loss to Treasury	3,397,000	3,441,239	+ 44,239

The actual revenue and expenditure last year closely followed the Budget, the only item worthy of mention being a recoup of £161,306 from General Loan Fund to Consolidated Revenue Fund for the rehabilitation of fully depreciated assets. This amount was included in last year's revenue and will not appear again this year. The interest bill was £163,947 more than the Budget provided, due to a greater increase in capital than was anticipated. The expenditure forecast for the ensuing year is £14,750,000. This is £253,015 more than the actual amount spent last year and represents an increase of less than 2 per cent.

Taking each item in the expenditure schedule individually, they are as follows:—

Item 1.—Railways Commission, Secretary's, Industrial, Accounts and Audit—Expenditure last year £269,721; estimate for 1955-56, £270,600; increase £879.

As with the other branches of the Railway Department, increased rates of pay operated retrospectively for officers in these branches for six months of last year. These increases will now be effective for the full 12 months. The payroll for the Accounts and Audit Branch is expected to be some £15,000 less than last year with the installation of electronic tabulating machines, and there is a prospect of a further reduction as the equipment becomes fully operative.

Item 2.—Transportation—Expenditure last year, £3,103,740, estimate 1955-56, £3,210,000; increase £106,296.

The estimate for this branch follows closely on last year's actual expenditure, plus allowance for salary and wage increases granted during 1954-55. An additional £16,000 will be incurred on tarpaulins, stationery and printing, including a reprint of the Book of Rules, which will cost £15,000 more. To cope with the more frequent train services, additional signalmen are required to man signal cabins between Perth and East Perth, and this will cost a further £6,000. Paid leave for staff will cost £13,000 more. A saving in guards' and conductors' wages is expected.

Mr. O'Brien: Mr. Chairman, will you please call the Committee to order? I cannot hear what the Minister is saying.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask that the conversation cease immediately so that members may hear a little of the Railway Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that I am not getting any more pleasure out of this than any other hon. member.

Item 3.—Motive Power: Expenditure last year, £5,030,958; estimate 1955-56, £4,718,000; decrease £312,958.

The decrease in expenditure for this section is due mainly to the substitution of diesel-electric for steam traction. Expenditure on steam power is expected to be £567,000 less than last year. The savings are in—

	£
Coal	389,000
Water	22,000
Repairs	121,000
Lubricating	8,000
Running sheds	27,000

On the other hand, the steadily increasing number of diesel locomotives will bring about increases of £218,000 made up as follows:—

	£
Diesel fuel	155,000
Repairs	14,000
Lubrication	11,000
Running sheds	25,000
Railcar repairs	13,000

The wages bill for drivers and firemen will be £39,000 less, but it is proposed to clear as much annual and long service leave as possible, and this will incur an additional expenditure of £30,000.

Item 4. Refreshment Services—Expenditure last year £257,507; estimate 1955-56 £240,100, decrease £17,507.

In the interests of economy and efficiency, consideration is being given to transferring the headquarters of this section from its present location at Welshpool to new premises in Lord-st., East Perth. The cessation of the "Australind" buffet service and dining car meals on the "Westland" and on the Kalgoorlie expresses except at the Perth end, will result in decreased expenditure.

Item 5. Road Services—Expenditure last year £165,716; estimate 1955-56 £172,000; increase £6,284.

Very little change is expected in the activities of this section, and expenditure should follow closely on last year's actual disbursements. The increase of £6,000 is accounted for by a reduction in credits to this section.

Item 6. Mechanical — Expenditure last year £1,561,423; estimate 1955-56 £1,681,000, increase £119,577.

The number of wagons waiting for workshops attention is embarrassing to traffic working, and the commission hopes to attain the output necessary for the cycle of repairs laid down. Wagon repairs are therefore expected to cost £175,000 more this year than last. The increase in the number of railcars now in service will mean higher repair costs to the extent of an additional £37,000 this year. Expenditure on steam locomotive repairs is expected to be £107,000 less and on diesel locomotives £16,000 less, the reason for the latter being the purchase of spare engines last year.

Item 7. Civil Engineering—Expenditure last year £2,401,984; estimate 1955-56 £2,592,400; increase £190,416.

Last year's expenditure was £113,000 less than the printed estimate as the strength of trackmen did not improve as was anticipated. The prospect of reaching the required cadre of 2,000 men is brighter this

year, and the estimate has been prepared accordingly. It is also proposed to procure additional make-up ballast for various sections and proceed with the programme for making up banks and scrub-rolling. This work will be done mainly by outside contract.

Item 8. Stores—Expenditure last year £181,856; estimate 1955-56 £201,200; increase £19,344.

This branch is still in the process of taking over depot stores in country districts, and increased expenditure on this account is unavoidable. Credits last year were £7,000 more than budgeted for this year.

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

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Of the general charges (items 10 to 15) workers' compensation is expected to cost £7,581 less than last year, payroll tax will increase £11,968 with the larger payrolls, and depreciation will increase by £128,407 due to the increase in new assets. An increase of £7,890 is also expected in the minor items listed under item 15.

Dealing with the revenue side, the forecast for 1955-56 is £12,750,000, which is £280,307 more than the actual collections last year. The wheat position is obscure, and can be affected by daily events. The Railway Department is in close touch with Co-operative Bulk Handling and the Australian Wheat Board. A small increase has been budgeted for in livestock traffic. On the other hand, coaching revenue is buoyant and an increase on last year is forecast. There has been a slight improvement in country passenger traffic recently, and this is expected to continue, but by far the greatest improvement is on the suburban lines, where patronage is steadily increasing.

The railcars which were acquired for the introduction of the new suburban rail services in November last have proved ideal, and have found favour with the travelling public. More cars are now urgently needed to meet the demand, and open tenders for a further 10 are now before Cabinet. It is the intention, in due course, to eliminate all steam passenger trains from suburban services.

There are now 51 diesel locomotives in service throughout the State, comprising three jetty shunters, 18 branch line shunters and 30 main line. With these engines, the programme for dieselisation is proceeding. For some time now trains on the Eastern Goldfields railway, including the "Westland" and Kalgoorlie express, have been hauled by diesel locomotives. As from the 3rd July, 1955, diesel traction took over all passenger and goods trains north of Northam to Mullewa and beyond, and the Albany express was also hauled by diesel locomotives from this date. Early

in October it is hoped to have diesels hauling G.S.R. main line perishable and goods trains.

Of the 24 "V" class heavy steam locomotives ordered from Beyer Peacock of England, the makers of the "W" class, seven are now in service hauling heavy coal trains from Collie. The arrival of the remaining 17 of these locomotives, together with the balance of 18 main line diesel locomotives, will complete the orders given overseas for new locomotive stock.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Tramways, £1,150,000; Ferries, £16,100; State Batteries, £142,217; Cave House including caves of the South-West, etc., £46,680; Medina Hotel, £44,940—agreed to.

This concluded the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

The House resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): I move—

That towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1956, a sum not exceeding £39,974,440 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

STATE TRADING CONCERNS ESTIMATES, 1955-56.

Tabling of Estimates.

The TREASURER: I present a copy of the State Trading Concerns Estimates for the year ending the 30th June, 1956, and move—

That these papers be laid on the Table of the House.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the State Trading Concerns for the year ending the 30th June, 1956, now considered, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Divisions—State Engineering Works, £606,000; State Hotels, £218,169; State Brick Works, £463,978; State Saw Mills, £2,500,000; West Australian Meat Exports, £424,934; Wyndham Freezing Works, £983,070; State Shipping Service, £1,563,635—agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.*Message.*

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

First Reading.

Introduced by the Treasurer and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [2.35 a.m.] in moving the second reading said: This is the Appropriation Bill which each session follows the approval of the Revenue Estimates and Loan Estimates. The purposes of the measure are clearly set out in the clauses and in the accompanying schedules. Two Supply Bills have been passed during the session which together granted £24,500,000 from Consolidated Revenue Fund, £7,000,000 from General Loan Fund and £1,500,000 from the public account for Advance to Treasurer. The amounts to be authorised by this Bill are £39,974,440 from Consolidated Revenue Fund, £14,525,000 from the General Loan Fund and £3,500,000 from the public account for Advance to Treasurer. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [2.37 a.m.]: This is the Appropriation Bill which affords the last opportunity members will have to address themselves to the Chamber on any financial matters to which they might wish to make reference or indeed to any other matter. I could not help but think tonight what an unsatisfactory wind-up we are having to this session. At 20 minutes to 3 o'clock in the morning, we are considering what is a most vital Bill. I am aware that the items of expenditure, both revenue and loan, have been considered, or should have been considered, during the general discussion on the Estimates, but I was struck tonight more than ever before by what I would class as almost a don't-care attitude amongst members.

I do not wonder at this; we have been kept here on three successive nights and we have been asked to consider what should be the most important matters affecting the State. Ministers tonight have introduced their Revenue Estimates at very considerable length and surely it was not expected that members could grasp all that they said; nor could they be expected intelligently to offer criticism regarding them.

Personally, I would wish that the general public could be here tonight to witness the end of this Parliament. I have never known one to end in a more unsatisfactory manner; and I have never known an end

of a session or of a Parliament to be taken less seriously than this one. I make this protest, and I hope that other members who feel as I do will have something to say about it. I do not think the position is such that this session should end as it is. The Government knew what legislation it intended to go on with, and it knew what time was at its disposal to deal with it. If we look at the notice paper we find that a large number of Bills have been dropped, some of them regarded by the Government as being amongst its most important legislation. In the circumstances I cannot congratulate the Treasurer, in his capacity as Premier, on the way he has handled the business of the House; and I should not think he would feel very pleased about it. We have not been told what legislation would be dropped. We have just gone on until the session has come to its end. During the past few weeks, the political situation in this State has been unsatisfactory, and because of that, I would ask the Premier to tell members when he intends to hold an election.

Mr. Bovell: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think we have a right to have this information.

The Minister for Housing: Why?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Because of the present unsatisfactory set-up, politically.

Mr. Bovell: Because the Government has not a majority.

The Minister for Housing: In what way?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: As the member for Vasse has said, the Premier has not a majority.

The Minister for Housing: It appears that you have not one or you would have done something about it.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The fact is that the Premier has not a majority on the floor of the House, and we have the most extraordinary position in Western Australia of a Government still going on in spite of the fact that it has not a majority and, on account of not having a majority, dropping some of the legislation which it regards as being of a most important nature. Surely if we are to have what we call democratic government, to which members on the Government side so frequently refer, the position should be altered. Is it democratic or satisfactory to continue as we are today? I think we owe it to the electors to get to the country as early as possible.

The Minister for Education: Get to bed!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I say to the Premier that in view of the circumstances which exist in this Parliament he should indicate when an election will be held, and I would suggest to him that early in February should be the proper time.

The Minister for Education: December 17th would be better!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I suggest to the Premier that early February would be the proper time. I do not think he is justified in retaining office in the present circumstances. If the country decides that he or his Government should continue to occupy the Treasury bench, we can have no quarrel about that, but we should be given the earliest possible opportunity to go to the country and tell the people what the present position is. When the Premier does go before the electors, I think that on this occasion he should be most particular that he gives the country the facts. We have heard tonight from one Minister—the Minister for Housing—of a recession which he predicts in the building trade. I thought that Minister was rather pessimistic about the future. We know from the Treasurer's own statements that the finances of the State are in a bad way. I doubt if they have ever been worse.

The Treasurer: They were worse in 1952.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: They were nothing of the sort.

The Treasurer: My word, they were!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Treasurer has indicated from time to time that the State is facing a most difficult period financially. So, I do not think the Government has any right to continue in office, still making commitments which someone else will have to face up to, the Treasurer knowing all the time that he is overdrawn by something like £2,000,000 in London, has an overdraft of £2,000,000 overdrawn, that some of his loan funds—I think, housing—are well over £1,000,000 and his Loan Estimates are more than £1,000,000—and so it goes on.

On a previous occasion, the Treasurer accused me of reckless finance. I am perfectly certain that there has never been more reckless finance, from the manner in which this Government has handled the finances of the country, than we have just experienced. The sooner the people know the facts, the better. The Treasurer referred to the state of the finances when I left office, or when my Government left office. We are not so much concerned about the past as we are about the future, and the Treasurer should keep that well in mind. We have carried on, but everyone in the State should be concerned about the future. From what I can learn of the financial aspect, the future is not too bright.

I have heard the Treasurer continually criticising the Commonwealth Government about the treatment he has received from it and making that his excuse for not doing this, that and the other. The people of Western Australia in the next few days will have an opportunity to say whether they approve or otherwise of the manner

in which the present Commonwealth Government has treated us. So, again I ask the Treasurer to name the election date. I think that owing to the political set-up it is his duty to inform us when the election will take place; and it should take place as early as possible.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [2.49 a.m.): Irrespective of the state of the State's finances, and irrespective of whether the Government has made grievous errors or has administered the affairs of the State badly in the last few months, the fact does remain that it is in a position which is entirely unprecedented in the annals of parliamentary government in this State. I do not know of any similar circumstance.

The Minister for Education: What about when you closed Parliament in September, 1950, and had no majority?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The situation then was quite different, because at that time the party which the hon. gentleman has the privilege of leading—I refer to the Premier—had but 23 members in this House. Irrespective of all those questions, because I do not propose to go into them at this stage even had I the time, I think there is justification for the request of the Leader of the Opposition that, in the circumstances, the Premier should inform us of the date he proposes to advise His Excellency the Governor-in-Executive Council that the election should take place. I feel that he must decide that in his own mind, and possibly more than in his own mind, and that the people of Western Australia are entitled to know when it is, as early as possible.

I do not think that if I were in the Premier's place I would hesitate at this stage to make an announcement. I feel it is the proper thing in the circumstances that it should be done before this House adjourns and I hope the Premier will agree with me because there is not much justification for leaving the matter in a state of uncertainty. Obviously I would say the election will be taking place before the maximum time which it could be allowed to hang on. I think the Premier would prefer to know with certainty what is the verdict of the people of this State, rather than to leave the question in the somewhat uncertain position in which it appears to be at present.

So the position, as I sum it up, is that it is a reasonable and proper thing for us to be told now what is the intention of the Government in this regard, so that everyone may have it clearly placed before him and that the public may know where they are and so that the necessary preparations may be made by all concerned. Without stressing any other subject or raising any other point in regard to this matter, I support the request made to the Premier, perhaps on rather different grounds but with, I think, sufficient justification.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [2.53 a.m.]: I appreciate very much the reasonable approach of the member for Stirling to this matter. I would say, in reply to him, that the Government was elected originally for what is generally regarded as a three-year term of office, but to which period there is a certain amount of latitude. Our Government was officially sworn in on the 23rd February, 1953, and so it will conclude a three-year term of office on the 23rd February, 1956. The Government has not yet made a decision about the date of the election, but I should think that it would be somewhere about the 23rd February, 1956.

The Government, after the Bunbury by-election, met Parliament in the usual way, as was inescapable and I do not say that to suggest that the Government did something very courageous, special or wonderful. However, Parliament was in session and we came to Parliament on the Tuesday following the Bunbury by-election. We have met Parliament in the normal way every sitting day since then and no effort has been made even to declare that the Government has lost the confidence of the House, let alone any motion to that effect being carried against the Government.

Therefore the Government, quite logically and fairly, concludes that it still retains the confidence of the House. In that situation the Government is entitled, I think, to remain in office for the three-year period to which it was elected by the people in February, 1953. It seems clear, does it not, that if the Government had lost the confidence of the majority of the members of the House, drastic action would have been taken in this House to make that fact obvious and to declare it?

As there has been no such declaration by the House and, indeed, no attempt by the House to make such a declaration, the Government is surely entitled to arrive at the conclusion that it retains the confidence of the House and to proceed on that basis. I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition, who made a very bitter speech, that some of the statements he made had no relationship to the facts at all. He said, for instance, that there had never been a more unsatisfactory ending to a session of Parliament than the one we are experiencing on this occasion.

Any member who has been here for a number of years could remember much more unsatisfactory endings, some of which took place when the Leader of the Opposition was Leader of the House and Premier of the State. He also suggested that it was not right and proper for a Government to remain in office unless it had a majority of its own members. I am sure his colleagues will remember clearly that the present Leader of the Opposition remained as Premier of Western Australia

only because he was able to rely upon the support of two Independents who were in this Parliament during the period to which I refer.

So, obviously the Leader of the Opposition either has an extremely bad memory—and I do not find him guilty in that direction—or he has standards of approach to situations of this kind which alter drastically when he is Leader of the Opposition as compared with when he is Premier of the State and Leader of the House. I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that he, together with the member for Stirling, made a joint written approach to the Government only a short time ago, not suggesting and not demanding either, but stating that the general election for the Legislative Assembly should be held on the 14th January of next year.

The Government has given some consideration to that date and our conclusions so far are that that date would be inconvenient and unsuitable. However, that date has not been completely wiped out and is still on the agenda of Cabinet for further consideration. However, and finally, I would say that because the Government was elected for three years, taking office officially on the 23rd February, 1953, and because the Government has continued to retain the confidence of this House, it is entitled, in my judgment, to continue in office for the three year period in question.

I think the election will be held around about that date in February, the Saturday which would approximately be the 23rd February. It is a thought, or an idea, and members of Cabinet will, in the reasonably near future, look seriously at the matter and make a decision. When the decision is made it will be communicated to the public through the normal channels. I think I could even go so far as to say that I would communicate it direct and personally to the member for Stirling, before it is published, and despite the bitterness which the Leader of the Opposition displayed this evening, which is most unusual for him, I would do the same towards him.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree with the amendment made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and that the managers for the Assembly be Hon. A. F. Watts, Mr. Norton and the mover.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of 14 amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Housing in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 3, page 3—Delete all words commencing with the word "which" in line 24 down to and including the word "development" in line 26 and substitute the following:—"for which immediately prior to the coming into operation of the order, a permit or permits, if any, required under this or any other Act authorising the development to be carried out had been obtained and were current."

No. 2. Clause 3, page 3—Delete the word "once" in line 30 and substitute the words "three times."

No. 3. Clause 3, page 4—After the word "order" in line 21 insert the words, "or any claim for compensation."

No. 4. Clause 3, page 4—After the word "extended" in line 30 insert the words "with or without qualification."

No. 5. Clause 3, page 5—Delete the words "as is" in line 4 and substitute the words "and subject to such qualifications or conditions as are."

No. 6. Clause 3, Page 6—Insert before the word "suspend" in line 26 the following passage "subject to the provisions of paragraph (b) of Subsection (1) of this section."

No. 7. Clause 3, page 7—Delete the word "thirty" in line 10 and insert the word "sixty."

No. 8. Clause 3, page 9—Delete the word "notwithstanding" in line 22 and substitute the words "subject to."

No. 9. Clause 3, page 9—Delete the word "once" in line 34 and substitute the words "three times."

No. 10. Clause 3, page 10—After the word "region" in line 20 insert the words "or for loss arising from any other cause."

No. 11. Clause 3, page 10—Delete the words "permission for the carrying out of any" in lines 25 and 26 and substitute the words "an application made pursuant to the order for permission to carry out."

No. 12. Clause 3, page 10—Delete the word "any" in line 29 and substitute the word "the."

No. 13. Clause 3, page 11—Delete all the words from and including the word "if" in line 7 down to and including the word "received" in line 16.

No. 14. Clause 3, page 11—After the word "Governor" in line 24 insert the words "or shall at the request of the claimant."

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think I should explain that there has been the closest consultation between the members of all parties on this Bill. I am informed that none of the matters in dispute between the two Chambers went to a division. Generally speaking, the purpose of the amendments is to resolve a few doubts in order to make for greater clarification. I have no intention of raising objection to any of the amendments made by the Legislative Council and if the Committee is agreeable, I suggest that they be dealt with as a whole.

The Premier: I have no objection, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Very well.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I move—

That amendments Nos. 1 to 14 inclusive made by the Council be agreed to.

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

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

Sitting suspended from 3.17 a.m. to 4.8 a.m.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.*Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendment insisted upon by the Council, and had appointed Hon. C. H. Simpson, Hon. L. A. Logan and the Chief Secretary as managers for the Council, the conference to take place in the Chief Secretary's room forthwith.

Sitting suspended from 4.10 to 5.10 a.m.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.*Conference Managers' Report.*

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have to report that the conference managers have arrived at a compromise. The report of the managers is as follows:—

That Clause 3 of the Bill be deleted.

That the Legislative Council's amendment be amended by striking out the word "six" in the last line thereof and inserting in lieu the word "three".

It was pointed out at the conference that because of the amendment made by the Council to Clause 3, which deals with Section 52 of the principal Act, it would be necessary to delete Clause 3 as it would not make sense. The intention of the Bill was to delete the provision for 12 months representing the initial service that an employee would have to have before being entitled to appeal against punishment. The Council suggested six months and as a compromise we have further reduced it to three months. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

CLOSE OF SESSION.*Complimentary Remarks.*

The PREMIER: As the session of Parliament has proceeded, some of us have longed for the time when the session would end. This probably applies more to Ministers and maybe the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party than to others, but when the time has arrived for the winding up of the session, we feel regretful that the end has been reached and members are about to disperse in various directions.

No matter how warm a session may become, there is always building up amongst members a feeling of personal friendship, a feeling of greater understanding and greater respect for the opinions of others, even when those opinions are not our own.

Although some of us have longed for the time when the session would end, now that we have reached that stage we feel regretful at the need for bidding each other farewell, more particularly in respect of three members for whom it will be permanent, whilst in respect of two others it will be farewell for at least a period.

In that regard, I would first of all say farewell to the member for Williams-Narrogin, or perhaps it should be goodbye in the parliamentary sense, because the hon. member is retiring from Parliament and consequently after today will not sit in the House as a member. The hon. member has been with us for many years; I have not checked how many, but that does not matter. What does matter is that he has won the respect and admiration of us all. He has always conducted himself in the highest way and maintained lofty standards of conduct. During his period of service, he has been an outstanding member in every way. We have valued his presence and friendship, and we wish him and his wife all possible happiness in the future. We feel sure that he will continue to take an interest in the proceedings of this House and to entertain for us the high regard and friendship that we feel for him.

Unfortunately, the member for Subiaco is not in her place at present, but we would say as much to her as to the member for Williams-Narrogin. The hon. member has achieved a great deal for a woman in politics, inasmuch as she has been a member for many years and rose to the rank of Cabinet Minister. That was an achievement of a high order, and I ask the Leader of the Opposition to convey to her our regrets on her retirement from Parliament and our best wishes for future health and happiness.

To the member for Hannans, I would say on behalf of Ministers as well as members on this side, and I should think for all members, how much we regret that circumstances are causing him to retire. We know that it would be his wish to remain with us, but circumstances have developed that make this impossible. He is still young enough to come again, and should things develop in the right way, we would look forward to giving him a hearty welcome back. Mr. McCulloch has been a very solid member. His contributions to the debates have not been frequent, but they have been full of commonsense and, in addition, we have valued his keen Scottish sense of humour. So to him also we say farewell. We could hope that it will be a short farewell, and we wish him and his good wife the very best for the future.

To you, Mr. Speaker, I tender many thanks for your commonsense control of the affairs of the House. When we were breaking up last year, I said that you had managed the affairs of the House with a

tolerance from your point of view and from ours that had paid great dividends. I believe that your tolerance was responsible for saving a great deal of time that would have been lost had you been very strict and severe in applying the Standing Orders to us. We thank you sincerely for your consideration and congratulate you upon the order and decorum that has characterised the House under your Speakership.

To the Leader of the Opposition I express my appreciation for his co-operation. Almost invariably we have been on the very best of terms. There has been a frank and friendly understanding between us and, for the consideration he has shown me and other Ministers, I thank him. To the Leader of the Country Party, I repeat what I have already said of the Leader of the Opposition. To all members of the House, I express my thanks and appreciation, not only for their consideration towards me and other members of the Government in the difficulties that face Ministers from time to time, but also for the thought and attention they have given to the business of the House.

After all is said and done, the business of the House is the business of the State, and the business of the people of the State. Every member, irrespective of his party affiliations, has, I am sure, conscientiously applied himself to the business that has come up from time to time and, according to his lights, has voiced his thoughts and recorded his decisions in what he considered the best interests and progress of the State.

To the clerks, to all members of the staff, to the "Hansard" reporters, to the policeman in the gallery, who has kept the public in order when they have come in my best thanks; to the one member of the public, a female, who is present with us at 5.20 this morning, my very sincere thanks for honouring us with her presence. I think I have covered everyone. We have the representatives of the Press and the Australian Broadcasting Commission in the gallery. There are times when we think that they have not given us adequate coverage, but when all is said and done, they only report the proceedings in this place; the decision as to what shall be published in the papers, or broadcast over the air, is in the hands of other people. I am sure that those who have reported the parliamentary debates have tried to give us adequate coverage, and we thank them for that.

In conclusion, I convey to you, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Ministers and all members on this side of the House, our very best wishes to yourself and your wife and members of your family for a cheerful Christmas and peaceful New Year. I convey that message also to all those people enumerated by me in my complimentary remarks.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY: I join with the Premier in the good wishes he has extended to you and your family, Mr. Speaker, and also express my appreciation of the manner in which you have carried out your duties during the time you have occupied your present position. The Premier has mentioned all those who serve us in Parliament. Without going over them again, I too, join with him in expressing appreciation of their services which have been rendered always cheerfully and willingly. I join in expressing our good wishes to them for a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Like the Premier, I regret that some members have decided to retire from parliamentary life. I have had a very long association with the member for Subiaco and I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of her loyal support and the valuable service she has rendered not only to me but to the country. She has been an outstanding personality. As the Premier pointed out, she was the first woman in this State to attain Cabinet rank and she is well known in all parts of the State as a very hard worker. She certainly set out to do what she thought was best for the State. I understand she is going to England and perhaps to other parts of the world, and I hope she will have a pleasant trip. I am sure she will leave with the good wishes of us all.

I would now like to make some reference to the member for Narrogin. He was in Parliament when I first entered the House about 26 years ago, and it is true that he will leave this Chamber with the respect and affection of all of us. The hon. member has put duty first and, no matter what hours we sat, he would always be in his place in the Chamber. I would class him as a good sitter; a term I have heard applied to members. The hon. member is rarely out of his place, and that has been the case over the 25 or 26 years I have known him. Every member will agree, I am sure, when I say that he will relinquish his parliamentary duties without leaving behind him a single enemy. That not only applies to this Parliament but to those other many Parliaments with which he has been associated. I, too, wish the hon. member and Mrs. Doney good health in the future. I hope they will have a long and happy life together. No doubt the hon. member will come and see us from time to time and mind you, Mr. Speaker, we shall always be pleased to see him!

The member for Hannans is also leaving Parliament. The Premier said he may be back again; and it is possible that may be so. He, too, has earned our respect. We have our political differences but personally the hon. member leaves us with good will. He has proved himself a conscientious member and has expressed himself in a forthright manner. There is no doubt he served his constituency well and

adopted a broad State outlook. I would express to him and his family all good wishes for the future.

Reference was made to myself. Politics, of course, creates its differences, but not personal enmity, and that has been characteristic of the Parliament of Western Australia for many years.

Mr. Lawrence: Hear hear!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Whilst we have our differences, I am glad there is no personal ill-will, which we know prevails in other Parliaments. So, Mr. Speaker, I would again thank you and those associated with you, and extend my good wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all members of the House. I want to express my appreciation also to my colleagues on this side of the House for their help during the session, and for the work they have done to assist me.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I wish to extend to you, Mr. Speaker, and all those that serve under you and around you in all parts of the House, my felicitations for the coming festive season and the New Year. My thanks for all that has been done for us by each and every one of the staff during the life of this Parliament, as indeed in the years I have been here.

I subscribe to the remarks of the Premier concerning the manner in which you, Mr. Speaker, have conducted the business of the House, and that applies also to your Chairman of Committees and his deputies. I say frankly that I shall miss my colleague and friend from Narrogin very much. He has sat next to me in various parts of the House for about 14 years and I have become used to receiving his advice and assistance in various ways over that period. If I am here, as I hope to be, when the next Parliament assembles, it will be hard to realise that he is not with us. I subscribe to what other speakers have said, wishing him and his wife long life, contentment and happiness, as I do also the member for Subiaco, who has done a great job for the State and will deserve well for the remaining span of her life. I trust she will have a pleasant journey to England and return. I wish the same to the member for Narrogin, because I believe he and his wife are contemplating a similar excursion.

Personally, I am sorry the redistribution of seats and other things have deposed the member for Hannans, who has done nothing to deserve it. I hope the future will hold bright prospects for him in some other sphere while he is not in this House. If he returns and I am here, I will join in the welcome to him.

To those who sit behind me I extend cordial thanks for their help and encouragement during the year, as I do to all those who have similarly treated me and I do not except members opposite. We have had our differences but in the many

Parliaments I have attended this has been a friendly and well-conducted deliberative body which I think is the best basis for our democracy. With these remarks sincerely intended, I once again extend to all those I have mentioned best wishes for the coming season.

Hon. V. DONEY: I realise that it is not going to be easy to respond to what the Leader of the Country Party, the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier have said. I am thankful for the manner in which references have been made to the changes which will shortly take place in the personnel of this Chamber. I wish particularly to thank the Premier for his extremely kind remarks and I want members to know that he and I have known one another and been on friendly terms for 27 years. The Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Country Party and the member for Toodyay and I have known each other for many years. I am sorry the member for Toodyay is not present as I would like to have mentioned some happenings in which he took a part.

I go from this Parliament leaving behind me not a single enemy on either side of the House, and I have always hoped it would finish that way. If during the past year or so I have not joined in the debate as was my earlier habit, it is because I have acted on instructions from the doctor who cares for me now and again.

The quality of the work done by the Clerks of this House is better now than ever in the past. Never before has their work been so good or so quickly performed. Many men have made reference to the same thing and I thought, while I was on my feet, I may as well pass that compliment on to them. I would say to the ladies and men who comprise what are known as the "Hansard" staff that they are the best "Hansard" group that we have ever had. The older members here will easily be able to cast their minds back to the time when previous men, who are no longer with us, were on the staff. We had a deuce of a job, on many occasions to decipher the work that they brought down to us. We have not suffered in that way for many years now, and I say that because the matter has never been mentioned before and it strikes me that I might as well mention it now.

I have taken a little more time than I thought I would and I hope I will be pardoned for it. I shall pop in every now and again to see all my friends and to ensure that they are doing their work in a proper fashion; if they do not do so, I shall speak to them severely and, most probably, they will kick me out and tell me not to come back again.

Mr. McCULLOCH: I shall not keep members too long from their breakfasts but I would like to express my thanks for the remarks that have been passed by

the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party. I knew quite well that political life was insecure and that as this sort of thing has happened to others before my time, it could happen to me as well. However, the seven years that I have spent in this House have been quite happy. As the Leader of the Country Party mentioned, at times one would think there was a war on but feelings which are expressed soon change. After all, politicians who are on opposite sides are inclined to get into hots, but I have not seen much of that sort of thing in this Chamber. While I have been here I have tried to do my best but I think that the hardest-worked men would be the "Hansard" reporters who have had the job of trying to interpret what I have said. Of course, I have always been helpful and used the pen when the opportunity arose. I thank the three gentlemen who expressed their feelings in regard to me and while I do not say that I am glad I am not returning to politics, I will see the journey out in some way.

Mr. SPEAKER: On behalf of that body of men which, for the want of a better term, I might describe as the officers of the Assembly, and in that I include members of the "Hansard" staff, I desire to thank speakers for their kindly expressions. I personally think that we are fortunate as a Parliament to have the services of these competent, helpful and very co-operative officers. We should sincerely congratulate ourselves on the calibre of the people who minister to our wants in this Assembly.

I thank members for their kindly references to me, but any Speaker in any Parliament would be fortunate indeed to have an Assembly of this nature to control. Most of the success of Speakers in

this Parliament is due mainly to the co-operation of members themselves. I do not know how I would be able to get on if a really serious uproar developed, because I have not had to contend with one. In my experience, I do not know of a Speaker who has had to contend with an uproar in this Chamber.

It is more than probable that whatever may happen within the next few months, this could quite easily be the last time I shall sit in this Chair as Speaker. This is not in the nature of a swan song, but, unless conditions alter considerably, I do not think I would be interested. It has been an interesting experience for the last three years and it is pleasing to note that members have been so kindly disposed towards me. It has been a good experience, but I think I would rather be, for the want of a better term, among the hurly-burly of politics, on the floor of the House. Again I wish to thank members for their kindly references to me and members of the staff.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Further Message.

Message from the Council received and read, notifying that it had agreed to the conference managers' report.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed by Mr. Speaker.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.40 a.m. (Saturday).