

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 4th August, 1954.

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It is anomalous that there should be no necessity for a reprint when an amendment is made to the Code by a Bill of a private member, and an absolute necessity for a reprint of the Code when the Bill is introduced following the recommendation of the Chief Justice. As a matter of fact, whether or not a reprint is desirable should depend upon the nature and extent of the amendments made.

Again, the procedure prescribed by the Statutes Compilation Act is very cumbersome compared with that under the Amendments Incorporation Act, 1938. Mr. Justice Wolff has intimated that he would have no objection to a reprint under the Amendments Incorporation Act, 1938, instead of the Statutes Compilation Act, 1905. As members will be aware, there is already power under the 1938 Act, as well as under the Reprinting of Acts Authorisation Act, 1953, for the reprinting of statutes whenever the Minister for Justice thinks fit.

Now that the system of binding reprinted Acts is firmly established, it is undesirable to revert to the old practice of binding reprints or compilations with a sessional volume of statutes, as required by the Statutes Compilation Act. In view of these arguments, I trust that members will agree to the repeal of Section 63. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.2 p.m.*

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

## QUESTIONS.

### FREMANTLE RAILWAY BRIDGE.

*As to Committee's Report on Site.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

When does he hope to receive the report of the committee appointed to investigate the siting of the railway bridge over the river at Fremantle?

The **MINISTER** replied:

The report has been received.

### COCKBURN SOUND.

*(a) As to Establishment of Commercial Harbour.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

What investigation has been made into the possibility of establishing a commercial harbour north of the B.H.P. site?

The **MINISTER** replied:

Investigations to date have been confined to the takings of detailed soundings. These soundings have covered an area spreading north some 6,000 feet from the B.H.P. site and extending out in a general westerly direction to deep water in the sound. Soundings also cover a possible shipping approach route from the Woodman's Point area in the north.

*(b) As to Construction of Naval Berths, etc.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

Will he press the naval authorities to construct berthing and slipping facilities in Cockburn Sound, in order that the berth now occupied by naval units in Fremantle harbour may be made available to general shipping?

The MINISTER replied:

Representations have been made with this end in view.

**NATIVE WELFARE.**

*As to Departmental Expenditure.*

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) Will he inform the House what was the total expenditure of all kinds of the Department of Native Affairs for the financial years ended the 30th June, 1952; the 30th June, 1953; the 30th June, 1954?

(2) In supplying this information, will he indicate the respective headings under which this expenditure was incurred?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The 30th June, 1952—£186,465.

The 30th June, 1953—£196,122.

The 30th June, 1954—£278,978.

(2) As under—

Head of Expenditure.	Year ended 30th June, 1952.	Year ended 30th June, 1953.	Year ended 30th June, 1954.
	£	£	£
Salaries and Wages .....	53,381	49,681	46,832
Administration .....	20,375	16,954	13,428
Missions .....	45,908	62,970	82,360
Institutional Relief .....	43,898	32,861	36,994
Education .....	854	841	17,106
Medical and Health .....	9,803	14,126	48,443
General Relief .....	10,194	17,798	19,902
Native Reserves .....	1,089	893	3,913
Totals .....	£186,465	£196,122	£278,978

**DAIRY MACHINERY.**

*As to Fatality and Inspections.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Was a young girl killed by dairy machinery on Friday, the 30th July?

(2) If the Act covered dairy machinery, would the machine concerned have been regarded as safe?

(3) Does not the relative Act in Victoria cover dairy machinery?

(4) Is not the protection of life and limb more important than objections to inspection?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) This was Press-reported, and the department has asked the local police authorities for a full report.

(2) The department has no information of the type, etc. of the machinery concerned.

(3) As far as is known to the department, machinery in Victoria is under divided control. Boilers come under the Mines Department, while factories and lifts come under a scaffolding Act. We have no knowledge of an Act operative there in regard to machinery of the type affected by the accident.

(4) The department has never objected to inspections. Parliament exempted this class of machinery when the inspection Act was before it, and therefore the department has no jurisdiction.

**CRABS.**

*As to Swan River Population.*

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Fisheries:

(1) Is it known now why the crabs failed in the Swan River last summer?

(2) Are the prospects any better for 1954-55?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The relative scarcity of the blue manna crab in the Swan River during the 1953-54 summer was not altogether expected. The normal habitat of this creature is in the marine zone, in onshore waters off the coast, but numbers do enter the estuaries at such times as the salinity approximates that in outside waters. During the winter, the salt water in the estuaries is overlain by large bodies of fresh water, with the result that the former becomes stagnant, a condition which is evidently unattractive to crabs, as the bulk of the population then migrates to the freer, more saline, waters outside. When the winter rains are abnormally heavy or prolonged, the stagnant condition of the underlying salt water in the estuaries may persist well into the summer, and at such times the estuarine population of crabs is considerably reduced.

The 1953 winter was not abnormal, although the rains finished rather early. Except for one or two small pockets in the vicinity of Applecross, no stagnancy was observed in the salt waters of the Swan after Christmas, and that is why the scarcity of crabs was unexpected. No work on the biology or life history of the swimming crab has been undertaken in Western Australia, nor, indeed, has much been done anywhere in the world. All that can be said, therefore, is that conditions were apparently not suitable for good natural reproduction in the offshore waters in which spawning takes place.

The same set of circumstances appeared to apply also to the waters off Mandurah, by reason of the fact that crabs were equally scarce in Peel Inlet last summer. At Bunbury the story was just the reverse. There crabs were present in almost pest

proportions, which suggests that the conditions in the waters lying off Bunbury were ideal for natural reproduction. There is a possibility, of course, that for some obscure reason there was a wholesale migration of brood crabs to the Bunbury area, where conditions were evidently more attractive. However, in the absence of any scientific investigations of this creature—and having regard to more important investigational work needed in relation to our fisheries, no such research can be undertaken in the foreseeable future—what happens to the crabs at sea and in the estuaries can only be surmised.

(2) If the rains during the current winter persist until late in spring, as has happened before, there should be comparatively few crabs in the river next summer. If the rains finish early, the occurrence of crabs should be normal, subject, of course, to the intangibles mentioned in my reply to question No. (1).

#### FARM MACHINERY AND VEHICLES.

##### *As to Cause of Accidents and Deaths.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

The Commonwealth statistical report "Demography" lists as a cause of death (Class XVII-175(a)) "Accidents from Farm Machinery and Vehicles."

- (1) Can he say how many deaths have been listed under this heading in Western Australia, for each of the last four years?
- (2) Of these deaths, how many were of children under 15 years.
- (3) Are figures compiled to show how many non-fatal accidents requiring hospitalisation occurred under this heading—
  - (a) to adults;
  - (b) to children under 14 years?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

- (1) 1950—2.  
1951—7.  
1952—4.  
1953—3.
- (2) 1950—Information not available.  
1951—2.  
1952—1.  
1953—None.
- (3) No.

#### BUS SHELTERS.

##### *As to Alternative Proposal.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Referring to his answers to my questions of Wednesday last, does he not consider that the suggested number of bus shelters in St. George's Terrace if erected, will tend to increase traffic problems in that thoroughfare, as well as being unsightly?

(2) In any event, would it not be better to have omnibuses either through-routed from one side of the city to the other, or alternatively arranged to depart from a bus station or starting place suitably situated out of St. George's Terrace or Adelaide Terrace?

(3) Has this last-mentioned alternative been given recent consideration, and, if not, will he consider it?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The type of shelter envisaged is one which will provide protection against inclement weather but which will not create any greater obstruction than the existing queues of waiting passengers. The aim would be to design a shelter which would not be unsightly but which would meet the position until bus stations or other permanent arrangements can be instituted. Any small imperfections in the aesthetic effect are considered to be well outweighed by the need for protection for waiting passengers.

(2) Through-routing of omnibuses has been considered but is not regarded as offering a solution of the problem of shelter for intending passengers. The alternative of bus stations has been, and still is, under consideration, but there are many obstacles involved and a final decision cannot be made until after examination of metropolitan town planning proposals being prepared by the Government's adviser, Professor Stephenson.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

#### WAGON TIMBER CONSTRUCTION CO.

##### *As to Departmental File re Formation.*

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Does any file belonging to his department contain any reference to the formation of a company known as Wagon Timber Construction Co.?

(2) Was any comment made by the Director of Industrial Development in regard to the company's formation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) I am unaware that any file does exist.

(2) I do not know whether the Director of Industrial Development has made any statement or not; but if the hon. member puts his question on the notice paper, I shall endeavour to have made available whatever information there is.

#### ROADS.

##### *As to North Coastal Highway.*

Mr. NORTON (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Did he read a small paragraph in today's "Daily News" headed "Jolt for Cooker," which states that the corrugations were so bad on the North Coastal

Highway near Carnarvon that they put the axle on an army cooker out of alignment?

(2) Did he see a photograph on page 2 of the same paper depicting the bad state of this road on the Wooramel Plains?

(3) Will he take immediate steps to have necessary work done on the North Coastal Highway to bring it up to a reasonable state of repair?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) No.

(3) I will have the matter investigated and, if necessary, action will be taken.

#### AGED WOMEN.

##### *As to Accommodation.*

Mr. YATES (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

Because of the many hundreds of elderly women awaiting admission to the Mt. Henry Home, and because some of them are in dire circumstances and cannot be housed, would the Minister consider calling together the heads of the various religious denominations to see whether it would be possible for them to devise some scheme whereby these elderly people could be housed temporarily until such time as the Government can make accommodation for them?

The MINISTER replied:

I shall be only too pleased to give consideration to the hon. member's request.

#### BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Health Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Health.
- 2, Bush Fires.
- 3, Land Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

#### BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

#### MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

##### *To Disallow Overwidth Vehicles and Loads Regulation.*

Debate resumed from the 21st July on the following motion by Hon. A. F. Watts:—

That regulation 203F made under the Traffic Act, 1919-1953, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 23rd April, 1954, laid on the Table of the House on the 22nd June, 1954, be and is hereby disallowed.

**THE MINISTER FOR POLICE** (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [4.47]: Similar action to that proposed by the motion was taken in another place, and, from a reading of the discussion that occurred there, I am satisfied that those who were

seeking the disallowance of the regulation did not understand its purport. But upon reading the comments made by the member for Stirling, I am satisfied he does know exactly what the purport of it is, and I am rather surprised, therefore, that he should want the regulation disallowed. While admitting that it does not meet or overcome the whole of the difficulties associated with the moving of farmers' implements, particularly, upon public highways, it does at least give an easement.

I cannot understand why a move should be made to disallow the regulation. After the real purport of it was explained to members in another place, I understand that the proposal there to disallow it was not continued. The position briefly is that Section 46 of the Traffic Act provides for an increase of from 7 ft. 6 in. to 8 ft., and stipulates that 8 ft. shall be the maximum width of any vehicle, except with special permission. The Act of 1950, by Section 46A, provides for certain vehicles and farming implements which were brought under the definition of "vehicle", and it states that they shall be permitted to travel on public highways under certain circumstances, namely, with the permission of the Minister given on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police under such special circumstances and conditions as may be set out in the permit and vehicles having a greater overall width, including the load, than 8 ft. may be licensed and driven on any road.

This section was amended in 1953 to provide for a vehicle to be driven, used or towed on any road, because it was found that whilst the Act provided for a vehicle to be towed, it did not provide for certain other means by which such vehicles can be shifted. Some of them can move under their own power. I am quite prepared to admit that the section of the Act does not properly meet the position. The short distance movement, particularly of farming implements, involves a cumbersome procedure; nevertheless, unless some restraint and restriction is placed on such movements, they can be highly dangerous.

I can visualise a farming implement, some 12ft. in width being towed or driven under its own power along a public highway in a country district for the purpose mentioned by the member for Stirling. Just ahead could be a sharp curve where a motorist would be quite within his rights in travelling at a speed of 50 miles an hour in a car. Suddenly that person finds that almost the whole of the road is taken up with this farming vehicle. He crashes into the machine, probably wrecking his own car and the farming machine and causing injury to himself, his passengers, if any, and the person driving the other vehicle.

Personally, I do not think anyone could contemplate that permission would be granted for the movement of these vehicles

without some kind of restraint. Without taking the regulation into consideration, the present position is that if a person wishes to take a farming implement over a width of 8ft. along a public highway, he must obtain the permission of the Minister, upon the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police. All the regulation does is to ease that position and make it possible for the local authority to issue a permit for the purpose. I admit that it does not fully meet the position and does not overcome all the difficulties. Nevertheless it is an easement of the present restrictions, and that is why I wondered at the hon. member wanting to have the regulation disallowed.

While I am not permitted to anticipate legislation, I may say that we intend to make some alteration in connection with this matter under an amending Bill which will be brought down to cover various aspects regarding the control of traffic. However, I do not think that legislation will give farmers the right to move over-width farming implements indiscriminately along public highways; there will have to be some supervision in that regard. It is easy to say that a farmer might have to travel along a public highway for only a quarter of a mile, if he has property on both sides of the road. But even in that distance, a serious accident could occur unless some supervision were exercised.

The permits now issued by the Minister, upon the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, do not apply for only one day; they are valid for a period of six months. If the local authorities, as envisaged in the regulation, are authorised to issue these permits, which last for a period of six months, it largely overcomes any objection which the farming community could raise. When moving his motion, the hon. member portrayed the picture of a farmer, wishing to move one of his vehicles from one side of the road to the other, having to contact the local authority perhaps 30 or 40 miles away in order to obtain a permit. Then, having performed the work in that paddock, he would have to obtain another permit for the transfer of his farming implement. That is not the case, because the permits remain in force for six months.

At the beginning of the seeding season a farmer could go to the local authority—or even write to it for that matter—and obtain his permit to shift a vehicle along the public highway. Having completed his ploughing, or fallowing, as the case might be, he could move his vehicle for the completion of the seeding operations, to any of his other paddocks. He would be permitted to drive or tow the implement along a public highway so long as he complied with the conditions set out on the permit, which would contain restrictions and precautions for the protection of other traffic. In view of that, I do not think

any great hardship is occasioned and I cannot agree with the expressed opinion that the farmer should have a right to take over-width vehicles, taking up to 12ft. of the 16ft of the average country highway, along the road, without some kind of restriction or precaution being taken.

I am indifferent as to whether the regulation is disallowed or not. But if members think that the permission of the Minister—that is, the Minister for Local Government and not the Minister for Police—upon the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, is the better procedure, then I am quite happy if they agree to the motion. However, the regulation eases the position and provides that the Commissioner of Police may delegate his authority to a local governing body to issue these permits. In that way, instead of people having to send to Perth to get the Minister's permission, they can apply to their own local authority and obtain permits which last for six months. That period covers the seeding or harvesting season.

In my opinion, the motion should be withdrawn and, if I may be permitted to foreshadow future legislation, I would advise members that the position will be covered further by an amending Bill. At present, even under the provisions of the regulation, local authorities are not permitted to authorise the movement of any farming implement which is over 10 ft. in width. The regulation refers only to those vehicles or farming implements whose width is between 8 and 10 ft.—that is over 8 and up to 10 ft. Today many implements are over 10 ft. in width, but even the regulation does not allow a local authority to give permission for the movement of such vehicles. The proposal which will come before the House later on will give a local governing body the authority to issue permits for the removal of vehicles or farming implements up to any width. All necessary precautions that must be taken will be listed on the permits as a safeguard to other users of our highways.

So I suggest the matter be left as it is. It is an improvement on the present position. It does not meet the full requirements, but, as I say, I am quite indifferent whether the regulation is disallowed or not. I believe that in the interests of many people, particularly those who move vehicles or implements of a width not in excess of 10 ft., the regulation should remain, particularly as we propose to give the local authority complete control to issue permits for vehicles or farming implements of any width.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [5.0]: I have listened with a good deal of interest to the remarks of the Minister for Police with regard to this motion. My view of the position that will arise if this regulation

is disallowed, or if new legislation as foreshadowed by the Minister came into force, is that in neither case is it likely that the law will be strictly enforced.

The Minister for Police: A person could be prosecuted if caught doing this without a permit.

Mr. PERKINS: Farming has been carried on for a very long time in Australia and other parts of the world, and presumably there has been no special legislation covering such a position. I cannot recollect any serious accidents, although no doubt some have occurred, as a result of wide machinery being moved along roads. Of course, most people who move wide machinery about realise that it is a hazardous job, and they naturally take as many precautions as possible. If such precautions are taken in doing an act which might be somewhat dangerous, then the risk would be very greatly minimised.

In my experience the greatest danger in moving machinery about occurs when the light is poor, or when agricultural implements are moved at dusk. Under those conditions it is possible that a motorist might not see the machinery being moved. That is the time of the greatest hazard, but in broad daylight it seems extraordinary that a motorist should fail to see something so big as an average agricultural machine proceeding along a road.

The Minister said that a motorist might be going around a blind corner at such a speed that he was unable to pull up in time, and might run into a machine. My reply is that if the motorist does run into such a machine under those conditions, he can run into anything else on the road if he is permitted to travel at high speed around corners. What would be the position if there were sheep on the road? A motorist has no licence to run into stock travelling along a road, or even when the stock is under the control of some responsible person.

The Minister for Police: That has nothing whatever to do with the case.

Mr. PERKINS: I submit it has something to do with it. The Minister quoted a case where a motorist might be travelling so fast around a blind corner that he could not pull up in time to avoid running into a farming machine. I ask him what would be the position if there were sheep around that blind corner? Does the Minister think that the motorist is justified in running into the sheep?

The Minister for Police: What would happen if a tree fell over the road, taking the case a bit further?

Mr. PERKINS: That is another hazard. The instance quoted is not a good one.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you want to increase the hazards on roads?

Mr. PERKINS: I submit that the risk is not so great as the Minister would have us believe, because I consider that most motorists travelling on country roads realise that similar hazards do exist.

The Minister for Police: Do you think that farmers should be given the right to move vehicles without permission?

Mr. PERKINS: I would ask the Minister to listen to my argument as I listened to his. Most motorists travelling on country roads realise that these hazards do exist, that machinery might be moved along the road, that stock might be straying on the road, and perhaps, as the Minister suggested, a tree might have fallen across the road. Therefore motorists driving at such a speed around corners will be aware of the hazards. There is something to be said for the contention that any motorist on any road must keep to a safe speed so that he can pull up within the distance of his vision.

Mr. McCulloch: You do not honestly believe that motorists do that?

Mr. PERKINS: I do believe it. I, myself, try to practise it. All kinds of extraordinary things happen on roads. One cannot tell when one will be confronted with an emergency or an obstruction on a road.

Hon. J. B. Sieeman: You believe in being alert today and alive tomorrow.

Mr. PERKINS: That is very sound advice. I want to put this point of view to the Minister: The position will not be any worse if this regulation is disallowed than it will be if it comes into force. Whatever we do, the law will not be suitable to meet the situation. If the Minister will look at the matter from a practical point of view, he will realise the impracticability of the position if the regulation is not disallowed and even if he should bring in his proposed amending legislation.

The Minister for Police: This regulation has been in the Act since 1950. Has it taken you four years to wake up to it?

Mr. PERKINS: I was not aware it was in the Act.

The Minister for Police: It is not much credit to you in saying that.

Mr. PERKINS: I would suggest to the Minister that there are very many laws on the statute book that he does not know of. I have no feeling of guilt in saying that I did not know the law on this question. Looking at the matter from a practical viewpoint, the Minister would be well advised to ask his technical officers to give him their opinions.

Personally, I think the position might be left alone so far as ordinary roads are concerned. I think farming implements

might very well be taken out of the definition of vehicles under the Traffic Act except when it relates to main roads. I agree that on main roads motorists can expect a reasonably clear passage, but if motorists anticipate that on ordinary country roads they can drive at a greater speed than will enable them to pull up within the distance of vision, then they will be in trouble and will endanger others.

As regards straying stock, I understand the law is that if a motorist runs into a mob of sheep on the road he is liable for damages. There are restrictions placed from time to time on the movement of stock on main roads. Local authorities have to do that to keep main roads clear, and there is some precedent for adopting a different attitude on such thoroughfares. Primary producers of all kinds are hedged in with all sorts of restrictions. Actually it would be difficult for the most law-abiding primary producer to get by on any day without breaking a Government regulation.

The Minister for Police: This regulation eases the position.

Mr. PERKINS: The point I stress is that it does not ease the position enough. I do not see any good reason for placing more restrictions on primary producers. Admittedly the police in administering the law need some reserve power, and there is something to be said for having a law so that the police will have that reserve power.

On a question like this the law might be made a little more realistic. Those are my reasons for speaking on the motion. Finally, I would ask the Minister to have another look at the position. If by disallowing this regulation we will make the legal position a little bit more ridiculous and farcical than it is, even if the Minister brings in a further amendment to the Act, then perhaps this might be a greater incentive to the Minister to get his technical officers to go into the question further.

On motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

#### MOTION—NORTH-WEST.

*As to Commonwealth Financial Assistance.*

Debate resumed from the 28th July on the following motion by Mr. Ackland:—

That this House expresses its opinion that that portion of the State which lies north of the 26th parallel of latitude is incapable of being fully developed if wholly dependent upon such finance as is only obtainable from State resources.

It therefore requests—

- (a) that a programme for the development of this portion of the State be drawn up by a committee consisting of the Premier (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke,

M.L.A.), the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, K.B.E., M.L.A.) and the Leader of the Country Party (Hon. A. F. Watts, C.M.G., M.L.A.);

- (b) that this committee submit such programme at an interview with the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer;

- (c) that a special Federal grant of £3,000,000 a year or an amount considered necessary for this work for a period of 10 years be requested in order to carry out this vital developmental work.

This House also desires that the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly and asked for its concurrence.

to which the Premier had moved an amendment as follows:—

That in paragraph (a) after the word "that" in line 1, the words "the Government present" be inserted.

The PREMIER: With the permission of the House, I would like to incorporate my amendments into one simplified form. On today's notice paper I have outlined my amendments in one group. They are the same as the amendments which appeared on the notice paper previously and which numbered nine or 10. The first of the series of amendments I moved last Wednesday. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The PREMIER: I now refer to the amendment standing in my name on the notice paper.

Mr. Ackland: Does that include the last clause of the motion setting out that this House also desires that the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly and asked for its concurrence?

The PREMIER: I have no desire to delete that paragraph. If my amendment is carried, some other member can move for the addition of the paragraph. I move an amendment—

That all the words in the motion after the word "that" in line 1 of paragraph (a) be struck out, with a view to inserting other words.  
Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That the following words be inserted in lieu of the words struck out:—

"the Government present a programme for the development of that portion of the State to a committee consisting of the Premier (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, M.L.A.), the Minister for the

North-West (Hon. H. C. Strickland, M.L.C.), the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, K.B.E., M.L.A.), the Leader of the Country Party (Hon. A. F. Watts, C.M.G., M.L.A.) and the Speaker and member for Pilbara (Hon. A. J. Rodoreda, M.L.A.).

(b) That this committee consider the programme as presented to it by the Government and, if thought necessary, amend the programme.

(c) That the committee submit such programme personally at Canberra to the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer.

(d) That a special annual grant of an amount considered necessary for such developmental work be requested for a period of 10 years in order to carry out the programme."

Mr. SPEAKER: I direct the attention of members to Standing Order 335 which reads—

The Speaker will be ex officio a member of Standing Orders Committee, House Committee, Printing Committee and Library Committee, and not liable to be elected on any other unless he thinks fit and the House so desire.

I wish to inform the House that I shall be quite willing to act on the proposed committee.

**HON SIR ROSS McLARTY** (Murray—on amendment) [5.16]: Since I have been a member of this House, a number of motions have been moved similar to the one we are now discussing, and all of them have been moved with the object of trying to advance the welfare of the North. The motion as originally moved by the member for Moore has the same objective. The amendment moved by the Premier has to some extent altered the original motion. However, it will attain the same objective as was envisaged by the member for Moore, namely, to present a policy of development for the portion of the State above the twenty-sixth parallel of latitude and seek Commonwealth assistance to carry it out.

There is general agreement that the development of this huge territory is beyond the resources of the State Government. The member for Moore mentioned a number of instances where the Commonwealth has given help which benefits a number of States and where some hundreds of millions of pounds will eventually be spent. The hon. member proceeded to say that, in his opinion, if money could be made available in those States for projects that are regarded as national works, the same view should be taken by the Commonwealth in relation to the development of our northern areas, and that such works should be

regarded as national works and that Commonwealth finance should be made available to carry them out.

The hon. member, in his motion, suggested that the committee should draw up a programme and present it to the Prime Minister and Federal Treasurer at Canberra. The Premier, by way of his amendment, has suggested that the Government should draw up the programme and submit it to an enlarged committee, which should personally present it in Canberra. I have no objection to that proposal because, as I have stated, it will in the main achieve the objective of the member for Moore.

The suggestion that the committee should personally visit Canberra and present the programme to the Prime Minister is a good one. In previous sessions we have carried resolutions in this House and forwarded them to the Federal Government. We have also written to the Federal Government on various matters, but have not succeeded in getting very far. If we are to take this motion seriously, and if we desire to assist progress in the North and put up some practical proposals, I believe that the suggestion of the member for Moore, supported by the Premier, that the committee should personally interview the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer at Canberra, has much to commend it. I also feel that the visit of such a committee would result in some good. If the committee were able to have a discussion with the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer, and perhaps with some of the other Ministers who would be concerned, I think that we could follow it up and that eventually some good would result.

We know that the North-West has many requirements. Over the many years when I was in office and out of it, I have heard various members from the North, representatives of different parties, advance their views on the subject of northern development. The Government, in presenting its programme to the committee, should let us know what it considers are the most urgent requirements of the North, and the priority of the works to be undertaken. We should also be informed which works the Government considers are the practicable ones and which are the most urgent. If the Commonwealth does agree to provide finance to assist in the development of the North, close co-operation between the Commonwealth and the State as to how the work should be carried out will be necessary.

When the Premier was speaking, he referred to some of the requirements of the North, and amongst them he mentioned transport. As you, Mr. Speaker, realise, there is no question that this is one of the major problems affecting the North, and the member for Gascoyne, the member for Kimberley and other members with a practical knowledge of northern requirements



will agree. During my six years of office, I had considerable experience of the requirements of the North regarding transport generally, but we were always up against difficulties in this respect.

However, as the Premier pointed out, Governments have done what they could to keep down transport costs, and personally I cannot see any justice in comparing the freights on the north-western coast with those on the eastern coast. On the eastern coast there is a very much larger population and very much more freight for ships and, on account of the shorter distances and the larger centres of population, the people there are better able to afford to pay higher freights than are our people on the sparsely populated northern coast.

Transport, of course, is bound up with the construction of roads and communications generally. We are receiving, and for years have received, certain moneys from the proceeds of the petrol tax, and in late years additional money has been made available for the construction of roads in what are termed sparsely populated areas. In connection with the meat plan, additional money was made available for road construction, and I think the district represented by the member for Kimberley has benefited most from that.

However, we have to take into consideration the tremendous mileage that roads cover in the North, the great unoccupied areas they pass through without serving anybody, and then we can visualise the difficulties that have to be faced when contemplating road construction in those parts. Undoubtedly, if the country is to progress, roads must be constructed, and a plan should be put into operation for the 10-year period as suggested by the Premier. We should know what is being planned in the way of road construction generally.

I have dealt with road transport, which will always be an important matter in the North. Now I come to aerial transport. As the northern areas are developed, there will certainly be a greater call for aerial transport. The Premier rightly stated that, in the main, transport by ship would be the cheapest method, but with an increase of population and industries, such as applies in other parts of Australia, there is bound to be a demand for increased aerial transport. Consequently, in any plan of development, we must ensure that provision is made for landing grounds and for more air fields.

In putting up a plan to the Commonwealth, I consider that we should ask that air transport be subsidised. When I was in office I was as sympathetic as the financial position would permit me to be in regard to providing subsidies for perishables airfreighted to the North. When I visited the northern areas I was confronted with the position on a number of occasions,

people complaining that they were unable to get perishables and fresh fruit; and anyone spending a brief time in the North could appreciate that these perishable commodities were essential and that steps should be taken to get them to the people at the lowest possible cost.

Therefore I consider that we should ask for assistance for subsidised aerial transport, and that this should be provided on such a scale as to permit the people of the North to obtain perishables and necessary goods at prices comparable with those ruling in the metropolitan area. Provision should be made to subsidise generously the transport of those who seek medical and dental treatment, and the Commonwealth could also be expected to assist parents of children who have to be transported south to school.

Reference has been made to the shipping position in the North, and here again I stress the fact that freights must be kept down to an economic level. Under present conditions, it cannot be expected that the State ships should pay their way. As I said just now, it is not a fair proposition to compare the freights on our northern coastline with those on the eastern coast of Australia. Increased shipping freights could have a crippling effect on a number of our northern industries.

I was going into some costs in the North only a few days ago and was amazed at the steep increases in those areas. On one station in which I am interested personally the cost per head per sheep is staggering when one considers what it was in days gone by. As members know, sea transport costs are not the only costs of transport in the north of this State. There are long distances involved after the ship reaches port, and the member for Kimberley could tell us how far some goods have to be transported from ship to station in his huge district. I am sure it would run into 200 or 300 miles, in many instances.

Mr. Rhatigan: Up to 350 miles.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That indicates to members just how great transport costs are in those areas. I think this is a matter to which the Government could give consideration when presenting its report to this committee—as to what can be done to assist the North in the matter of transport generally. The Grants Commission, of course, has a knowledge of our losses on State shipping and has taken a sympathetic view over the years in regard to those losses, and has reimbursed us through the grants which it makes available to the State. I repeat that transport is a major problem in the North and when the Government does present its report to the committee, I have no doubt that it will deal with all types of transport—sea, land and air.

Reference was also made to the need for water conservation throughout our northern areas. We know that the North-West,

particularly, is subject to drought. That has always been so in the past and I suppose that, unfortunately, it will continue to be so in the future. It is certainly sound policy to conserve water, where that is possible. I understand that in South Africa—a country which in some respects is comparable with our own and which suffers from water shortages—experiments have been carried out with a view to finding underground supplies of water. Just what information is available in this State in regard to the activities in South Africa I do not know, but I believe it would be well worth while to find out what progress has been made there in that direction.

Not only is water needed on stations in the North but also on stock routes. In that hot country, one cannot get stock to market in fit condition if they have to travel long distances without water. I understand that eight miles is considered a practical distance between water points, and I think that there we have a case to present to the Commonwealth Government, which is already doing something to assist us in the matter of water points on stations in the North and on stock routes there as well. I am not unmindful of the fact that adequate water supplies are a necessity in all our northern towns and that water should be provided at a reasonable rate.

Mention has been made of the need for irrigation, and certain experiments have been carried out on the Ord River. I understand that irrigation is of particular interest to the member who represents Carnarvon and the people there. I, like the Premier, have visited the banana plantations at Carnarvon and have heard of the difficulties which confront growers when they face a dry season and are unable to secure the amount of water necessary to keep the plantations going. I understand that some research work has been done on the Gascoyne River with a view to ascertaining whether a permanent and adequate water supply can be obtained there.

I think that work should continue and, there again, I feel that the Commonwealth could well be asked to assist the State financially. There is a need for all kinds of research work in the North. The Government did purchase some years ago two stations in the North-West; Abydos and Woodstock. Those stations were abandoned by the previous owners on account of drought. I believe that in good seasons they got good results, but they had so many bad seasons that they just could not carry on. Those properties should prove valuable to the North-West from a research point of view, and I would like to learn, later in the session, what is happening there. They are in the electorate of the member for Pilbara, our Speaker, and it would be interesting to know what research is being done on those properties and the results so far achieved.

When travelling through the North, I was greatly impressed by some of the grasses which I saw there and which had not long been introduced into that country. Members representing the North must, of course, know about them. Birdwood and buffel grasses were growing in abundance and the pastoralists told me that they were very useful fodder. On stations such as Abydos and Woodstock where research is being carried out, special attention should be given to plant breeding and the introduction of new grasses. We know what new grasses have done in the southern parts of the State and what a tremendous difference they have made to the carrying capacity of the land and how greatly they have increased its value, not only from a monetary but also from a stockraising point of view. I believe that the most important part of the work on those stations should be research to discover what grasses are suitable to those huge areas of the State and from what countries they could be obtained.

There is also need and scope for much research into stock diseases in the North. Our North-West is certainly much freer from stock diseases than is the Kimberley area. The Kimberleys, of course, have certain diseases of cattle which in the past have caused pastoralists there heavy losses. An immunity has developed over the years, but even now, in view of the way cattle must be handled and shipped and perhaps brought through tick-infested country, there is still always a danger of heavy stock losses.

Not only are there cattle diseases in the Kimberleys but also diseases of horses, which mean heavy losses to pastoralists. Some of that country is free from these diseases of horses but in other parts these infections are very detrimental to horse-breeding. I think we could ask the Commonwealth to give us all the assistance possible in carrying out research work into land and pastoral development and the combating of stock diseases in the North. This should not mean that any heavy impost would be placed upon the Commonwealth Government, because it already has experts in the Northern Territory dealing with the same problems as confront pastoralists in our northern areas. The necessary advice could be obtained and I do not think there would be any difficulty in arranging for Commonwealth experts to visit our northern areas and consult with our State experts in regard to these problems.

Experiments have been made on the Ord River for a number of years, and when I visited the North I had a look at the Ord River Research Station. I was impressed—as was the member for Moore also—by the enthusiasm of the officers at that station, where they were faced with quite a number of difficult problems. No doubt, as time goes by, it will be proved that

certain fodders and grasses can be grown to advantage in the North, but I hope that on the Ord River there will be carried out experiments not only in regard to irrigation problems but also in the matter of breeding plants and grasses suitable for the dry areas.

After all, the country served by irrigation in the North will be a comparatively small part of that huge area, most of which will have still to be carried on under dry pastoral or farming conditions. The need for research into grasses suitable for those areas is great, and work of that kind is of the utmost importance. Reference has been made to the overstocking of properties in the North-West and the Kimberleys, and I believe that has taken place. In the past, the tendency was to overstock and water frontages in particular have been eaten out. But assuming that they had not been overstocked, I would ask: Would they still not have been eaten by kangaroos, which, as we know, have bred in those areas to a tremendous extent? Like sheep and cattle, they eat grass also. Even if we evolved some plan whereby we said, "This station can carry such-and-such a number of cattle or sheep", we would still face the problem of overstocking because of the menace of vermin.

Should the pastoralists be expected to deal with this question themselves or would it be a fair proposition to ask that the Government should do something to assist them in overcoming this difficulty? There is no doubt that the kangaroo in the whole of our northern areas must minimise, to a great extent, the carrying capacity of those stations. Further, the more they are improved with the planting of grasses, the greater the vermin problem will become. The Minister for Lands knows perfectly well that, where the land is improved by top dressing and the planting of grasses, those are the parts that the rabbit attacks and where the greatest amount of damage is done. What applies to the rabbit in these areas, applies to the kangaroo in the northern districts.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We should make another industry out of him.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: If the hon. member could make an industry out of the kangaroo, it would be a good thing for the North.

The Minister for Labour: The Swan Brewery gives £2 10s. a head for young live kangaroos now.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: If that is so, we could probably arrange to have a few sent down.

The Premier: You were supposed to ask: For what purpose?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Is that so? Well, for what purpose?

The Minister for Labour: They want their hops.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is a very considerable contribution to this debate.

The Minister for Lands: A new poison has been produced for the destruction of kangaroos which appears, at the moment, to be giving encouraging results and might eventually solve the problem you have in mind.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is very good and interesting news.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: But, seriously, is there not a good deal of money offering for kangaroo skins?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I understand that there is not much offering for the euro in the North. Ammunition is also very expensive. From time to time we have heard proposals that ammunition should be supplied to pastoralists at a cheap rate. Because it is so expensive, there are not the same number of kangaroo shooters operating as there were. The member of Gascoyne could tell us that kangaroo shooters are not given the same encouragement today as they were in days gone by.

Now I wish to refer to the importance of markets. We know that any country or part of a country always shows great concern over its marketing problems. In the Kimberleys, at any rate, there is a restricted market for the meat or cattle industry. Of course, there are sheep in that area also and I would say there is a restricted market in the North for sheep, too. When I refer to a restricted market, I mean that the only outlet for East Kimberley cattle is the Wyndham Meat Works. There the cattle are bought according to grade. They have to be driven into the meatworks on the hoof, over long distances, and there is no other market offering.

The West Kimberley district is also severely restricted with regard to its market. The producer has available to him the Broome meatworks but nearly every station in the West Kimberleys obtains one shipment of cattle from these areas. This is their best market. However, when the cattle are landed at Robbs Jetty, they have to be slaughtered immediately and, unlike cattle from the southern areas, there is no prospect of their being bought for agistment. If their condition is such that they would not be regarded by the butchers as good cattle for beef, they cannot be bought for agistment purposes.

Mr. Rhatigan: That is because of the pleuro.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes, both pleuro and tick. So we have these restricted markets for all Kimberley cattle but the grower in the West Kimberleys is more favourably placed than the East Kimberley grower because he can get

one shipment of cattle down to the metropolitan market. I do not know how this difficulty can be overcome. I know the dangers that could occur if we allowed tick or pleuro to be spread among the cattle in the southern areas, and I am not suggesting that that should be done. Nevertheless, this is one of the problems which I suggest to the Premier could be considered by the Government on the basis of whether any steps could be taken to expand the stock market in the Kimberleys.

In the course of his speech on the motion, the Premier referred to minerals in the North and he thought that mining development would offer the greatest chance to attract increased population to those areas. I think he is right. In such a huge area surely there would be an excellent prospect of mining developing in quite a number of directions. Towards achieving that goal, I think we should ask that assistance be granted to prospectors. As has been pointed out, this is a great undeveloped tract of country and the prospector—as he has done on the Goldfields—is the man who might be able to do something towards increasing the population in the North. He is the type of person that should be encouraged.

The Government, in presenting its proposals to the committee, should give consideration to ways and means by which the prospector could be helped and to what plans it could present to the Commonwealth Government that would provide encouragement and assistance for prospectors. The large companies in the North that have made a good showing with mining development—and they have had to be large companies with great financial backing—have been the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., at Cockatoo Island, the Blue Asbestos Mining Co. at Wittenoom Gorge and now, of course, the oil companies at Rough Range.

Companies with huge capital are necessary if they are to do anything in a big way in our northern areas. I had a list of the many minerals that have been discovered in the North, and if encouragement were extended to people to prospect in those parts, I am sure that mining development could be greater than it has been in the past. Further, anything that we can do to solve the housing problem in the North and to alleviate the lack of medical services and educational facilities should be done. I repeat that the people and their children in the North are entitled to expect these necessary requirements at a reasonable cost.

I would also suggest to the Premier that when formulating the proposed report to the committee, some consideration should be given to tax concessions. The Leader of the Country Party was successful in having a resolution passed in this House some time ago along those lines. I think

that special consideration should be given to the people who actually live and work in the North.

The Minister for Housing: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: They are developing the country and because they live and work there, they are entitled to receive every encouragement. The expenses they incur when travelling south should be allowed as a deduction from taxation. I support the proposal as outlined by the Premier. I hope the committee will receive a practical programme from the Government for consideration, and I am sure that every thought will be given to it. The Premier has indicated that the Government will be prepared to accept suggestions from the committee.

I hope, and I am sure, that the discussion that has taken place in Parliament will result in something attractive and practical being done for the progress and welfare of the people in our northern areas. I am glad the Premier is going to agree to the motion. Perhaps the member for Moore will move the amendment that the concurrence of the Legislative Council should be obtained.

The Minister for Housing: Not that!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think it should be obtained because we are dealing with this matter from a non-party angle, and as the member for Moore pointed out, it would be well if this motion came from the Parliament of Western Australian as a whole. I commend the member for Moore for bringing the motion before the House. Members representing electorates in the North should not feel aggrieved in any way over his action, and I do not think they will. It is a genuine desire to do something for the North and for the State as a whole.

Members who represent northern constituencies will be able to make some practical contributions to the debate and the result will probably be something worth while for the consideration of the Government and the committee, and it, in turn, will be able to consider the first-hand information obtained from these members as a result of their long years of experience gained in those areas. I have much pleasure in supporting the proposal.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne—on amendment) [5.58]: It is evident from the reply received from the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister to the previous motion passed by this House last year that he will not give favourable consideration to any proposal presented to him to assist the North-West.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I do not think you should say that.

MR. NORTON: If the Leader of the Opposition will wait for a moment he will hear my following remarks. I consider that a different approach should be made

to the Commonwealth Government in regard to this matter, and it should be made from two angles. Firstly, there is the defence angle. Members will have seen articles in the Press, published at the end of last month, on the question of the defence of the North-West, and also the danger which is threatening from those people to the north of Australia who have their eyes on this State and the wealth contained in the northern areas.

From these reports and others that have been made in the past it will be admitted that the North-West at present is most vulnerable. In November, it was stated by the Minister for Defence that, if oil were found, the defence of the North would be undertaken by long-range jet bombers. That being the case, a series of aerodromes and connecting links will have to be developed in the North to serve the bomber squadron. It will readily be realised that large amounts of materials and large numbers of men will have to be transported at short notice from point to point if we are going to service the squadron envisaged. It will also be recognised that many large aerodromes will have to be established in the North. That being so, considerable allocations for such activities should be made from the Commonwealth Defence Estimates.

Last year the Commonwealth budgeted for over £200,000,000 for defence. The greater part of that was used, but there was a surplus. If only portion of that surplus had been set aside for use by the State in conjunction with the Commonwealth, aerodromes and transport facilities could have been established in the North for defence purposes. An item in "The West Australian" of the 30th July mentioned that the Commonwealth Government, in view of developments in the Near East, would be required to find large amounts for defence purposes, and it did not consider that there could be any reduction of that expenditure. If only £500,000—a small sum compared with £200,000,000—were allocated to this State, it would assist us with our defence projects.

The discovery of oil has led to a gambling fever. In that, the State and the Commonwealth will participate to some extent. I mean that the State will have to expend money on roads, and on the strengthening of jetties, in the hope that the companies which are spending large sums in the search for oil in the North will eventually pay a royalty on what is recovered. By way of income tax, the Commonwealth Government will receive a far greater amount of money from those companies than the State, which will obtain only from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. of the gross output. It appears that the Commonwealth Government is still very loth to contribute its share towards developments on which the State has to expend money at present. I consider that the

Commonwealth Government should contribute in proportion to the amount it will receive.

A new road is to be constructed in my electorate from Bullara station to Minilya station. To those who do not know the facts, this might appear to be an excellent proposition for the pastoralists in that area. But when it is analysed properly, it is seen that to all intents and purposes this will be a road to join two oilfields. It will pass through very poor country. It will, I admit, help to service three stations, shortening the distance to Carnarvon by approximately 30 miles. But there are three other stations in the area which this road could service.

If that is to be done, it means that the State Government will have to expend a large amount of money providing spur roads through very sandy country to link the stations with this road. If only portion of the money that will have to be expended on link roads were spent on the existing road, those stations would have a very serviceable thoroughfare and the distance would not be any longer than that to be covered by the proposed new road. That road will involve the State in an expenditure of £11,000 which, in my opinion, would be far better spent on the North Coastal Highway, which is the main artery to all the oilfields in the North-West.

Not only is it the main artery to all the oilfields in the North-West, but it will also be the main artery to all the large aerodromes that would be necessary for servicing any task force that may be sent to the North to defend that area. Therefore, I consider that, in view of the revenue which the Commonwealth Government will derive from oil in proportion to what the State will get, and in view of the defence commitments of the Commonwealth, it should be only too willing and eager to assist the State in a programme that will be to its advantage, both nationally and financially.

In a programme for developing the North, it will be necessary to provide some attractions for men to go there and work. Such attractions are being provided in connection with the oil and other mineral discoveries, but to keep men in those areas, they should be encouraged to take their wives and families there. If we are going to have a contented people in the North, provision must be made for the families to live in the area. To encourage the womenfolk to make their homes there, a number of amenities must immediately be provided, such as hospitals, educational facilities and the like.

The provision of these amenities will cost a considerable amount of money, and we know that at the present time it is difficult to keep pace with the demands being made by the increasing population. Hospitals in the northern area are being used to their maximum capacity, and

many facilities are required to bring the existing hospitals up to a reasonable standard. Though these hospitals may not be large, they all require the expenditure of a certain amount of money and are definitely necessary.

The Minister for Health: Carnarvon has a good hospital.

Mr. NORTON: A very good hospital indeed, but it requires many small items that it lacks today to make the working easier, and the provision of these items would encourage nurses and assistants to remain there longer than they do now. As the Minister is aware, every time a Carnarvon nurse resigns, he has to pay a fare of £25—£12 10s. each way—thus increasing the expense of running the hospital. If the amenities were increased, the staff would remain longer, and the cost of running the hospital would be reduced.

Education is likely to be one of the bugbears for the family man. If a person is domiciled away from one of the main centres, the children in the early stages have to be educated by correspondence. This is a very good service, but members will readily agree that children need more than correspondence instruction. At present, when a child is sent away to school, the absolute minimum, exclusive of fares, that the parents would have to find is £300 a year, and if a working man, a station manager or an overseer, has more than one child, the cost becomes prohibitive. The consequence is that when there is more than one child of school age in the family, the father looks for other employment—employment in one of the centres where the children may be educated at reasonable cost.

In the Gascoyne electorate, there is quite a demand for a hostel to be built at Carnarvon, and I am making a detailed survey of the children, together with their ages, who would attend a school at Carnarvon should satisfactory hostel accommodation be provided. When the survey has been completed, I intend to present the result to the Minister, and I think he will be astounded because I myself am receiving a surprise. I have sent out 48 circulars to various stations and so far have received 20 replies. In only three instances have the parents stated that there would be no children to attend school at Carnarvon.

On one station there were no children. In the second instance, I did not expect to receive a favourable reply, as it would be nearer and more convenient to send the children to Geraldton. In the third instance, there were two children, and I was informed that they would not be sent to Carnarvon. So far, the number of children indicated as likely to attend a school at Carnarvon is 48. Admittedly, all of them are not of school age, the ages ranging from one to 13, but I expect that

by the time the survey has been completed, it will be indicated that over 100 children would use the hostel within the next few years.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. NORTON: Prior to the tea suspension, I was saying how many children would attend school at Carnarvon if a school hostel were provided. In my opinion, this hostel would cater not only for the Carnarvon children, but also for many of those in the Pilbara district. Therefore I consider that this again is another of the ways by which the Federal Government could assist in getting families and population into the North.

When we take families to the North, we must have efficient transportation. Earlier in my speech I referred to transportation for defence purposes. At the present time a person who wishes to take his family to Perth for a holiday is up against the high cost of air transport. If he is lucky enough to get passages on a boat for his family, he can get return fares at a reasonable cost. Air fares are beyond the means of the average man. I consider that the Federal Government would be able to help considerably in this matter either by subsidising the present air fares, and also freights for perishables, or by running a spur of the T.A.A. service.

It is evident that the present company is running right up to its limit. I know of cases where it was asked to deviate a plane a matter of 70 or 80 miles to land at a particular station, but it regretted being unable to do so as the pilots had nearly run out of flying hours, and by deviating the 70 or 80 miles, the pilots would not be able to return with the plane to Perth as pilots but would have to come back as passengers.

During the year I noted an article in the "Northern Times" under the heading "Derby Notes." This appeared on Thursday, the 18th March, 1954, and to give some idea of what is happening in the North, I shall quote this extract—

This is not the first time this summer that we have been without fresh vegetables on the day that they should have arrived. What makes the people more angry than ever, is the fact that when anything is to be off-loaded, the company seems to think that hardware and such are more important than the perishables to deliver. Last week I was at the 'drome when the aircraft was unloaded, and there was a car wheel, and hardware parcels taken off, and we were informed that the perishables were being brought up by the Anson that had just left Geraldton. We finally got them on Friday, about mid-day. When are the agents of the company going to get a little sense and off-load the freight that can keep indefinitely, and give

us our perishables on the freighter which was supposed to be put on the run for that purpose?

This, I consider, shows that the company wants some competition to pull it into gear. An ideal way of providing that competition would be for the Commonwealth Government to establish a spur of the T.A.A. through the North-West. This would give us an opportunity of getting our fares reduced, or perhaps subsidised, and a better service.

As we all know, houses are in great demand all over Western Australia, and in this respect the North-West is not behind the rest of the State. Water in the North plays a great part, not only in production, but also in the lives of the people who live there. If water could be supplied to towns like Shark Bay, where at present the people rely solely on rainwater tanks, the population of those small centres would be greatly augmented and output would be increased. Shark Bay is practically solely a fishing town, and if more water were available there, I have no doubt that the population would quickly grow, with the result that more foodstuffs would be produced for the Perth market.

The damming of rivers is something else which will bring population to the North, and, in addition, it will be responsible for increased production. I have said this many times before, but I repeat again that the Gascoyne River is the life-blood of Carnarvon. Recently, Mr. Ellis, the Government Geologist, visited Carnarvon to make a survey of the river and its potentials. From the limited amount of information he secured, he considered it would be possible, not exactly to dam the river, but to impede the flow of its waters through the river sands and build up the reservoirs which exist on either side of the river, thus greatly increasing the water supply for the district.

Not only did he consider that this would increase the water supply, but that it would tend to reduce the salinity of the river to a large extent. The more water that can be conserved in this river, the more the production there; and the greater the production the greater the wealth, not only of the Gascoyne or the North-West, but of the whole of Australia. There is another method of controlling the water in the Gascoyne, and that is by placing a dam further up the river to impound the water at Rocky Pool. I am not going to say which of these methods would be the more suitable, because I consider the Government should take steps to analyse the position and decide on the best method of water conservation in this area. This would not involve a great deal of expense.

A certain amount of survey work by way of boring, to test the underground strata, would be necessary for a start, as well as the putting of clay ribbons across the Gascoyne. Here again the Commonwealth Government could bear its share of the

cost. Not only do the banana and vegetable growing industries in Carnarvon depend upon the river, but also the whaling industry which produces a large revenue and much overseas credit for this State.

The town of Carnarvon is growing rapidly and is becoming a large centre for the Civil Service. It is already a centre for the Department of Civil Aviation and also for the Main Roads Department. With these departments stationed there, the population is naturally increasing and is, of course, dependent upon the available water supplies. In conclusion, I think the proposed committee should take the view that the whole of the development of the North should be viewed from the defence aspect and that the Commonwealth should be asked to deal with it in that light.

If that were done, I feel that the Commonwealth could easily make available a small portion of its huge defence estimates for the development of our North, which would greatly assist the State Government. I also urge the committee to recommend that the Commonwealth Government take its share of the extra expense which is being thrown on the State in supplying various necessities for the oil companies that are developing the North, as the Commonwealth will be the greatest recipient of revenue from those ventures. I support the motion.

**HON. A. F. WATTS** (Stirling—on amendment) [7.42]: I find no difficulty in subscribing to the motion which is before the House, even in its amended form, because I feel that the circumstances of the northern portion of this State fully warrant our doing anything we can to ensure that the position there is improved. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I know that a number of motions have, in times past, been moved, no doubt having for their objective much the same ends as has the motion moved by the member for Moore.

However, I think I would be justified in saying that that hon. member made a more realistic approach to the problem than was attempted by the movers of the previous motions, because I suggest that if there is one thing that is likely to influence the Commonwealth Government in this matter it is a proposal presented to it in person by representatives of all shades of political opinion in Western Australia and, in those circumstances, with a unanimous voice.

It is, of course, possible that that might fail but it has a much greater chance of success, I suggest, than any other method of approach could possibly have; and so I feel disposed—and I think many other members will—to commend the member for Moore for reviving this question in a broader and, I think, more realistic way than was attempted by those who went before him and who had something of the same sort in mind.

The Commonwealth Government has, by agreement with the States of New South Wales and Victoria, entered into an arrangement for the expenditure of many millions of pounds on what is known as the Snowy River project. As one reads the accounts of what is to go on in that project and the reasons for its establishment, one gathers that quite apart from the increasing development of electricity and irrigation in the States concerned, there is an ever-present belief that this project will make a contribution—if it be required—to the defence of Australia, and that is one of the reasons, quite obviously, why the Commonwealth Government has pledged itself to the raising, on a national basis, of such substantial sums as are mentioned in connection with this matter.

It is surely at least just as important, and in my opinion far more important, that the northern parts of Australia should have consideration given to their being put in a better posture of defence; not perhaps entirely in their own interests but in the interests of other and more thickly populated and further developed areas of this continent. However, despite the fact that there is unquestionably an inhospitable aspect about a great portion of the northern areas in question, I have no doubt whatever that were an enemy of this country to obtain a foothold upon them they would serve very well, with organisation and the expenditure of money, as a base from which to launch most unpleasant attacks upon other portions of this continent.

So if ever there was a time when we ought to approach this matter once more along the lines that are contemplated by this motion, I would suggest it is now, when the Snowy River project is receiving so much consideration and financial support and when other but very much smaller propositions are under contemplation in one or two other parts of Australia. I feel that the motion is a timely one and is calculated to do a considerable amount of good. I trust and believe that this House will carry it unanimously and that when the motion is suitably added to, as the Premier forecast and as indeed the original motion proposed, it will receive the ready assent of another place as well.

The member for Gascoyne referred to a number of matters which presumably, from the tenor of his remarks, he thought should come under this motion. He referred, for example, to the considerable cost of air fares in travelling from the North-West to the southern centres of the State. I note, however, that this motion refers to developmental works and it is on that basis—which, of course, would include public works—that I want to discuss it, for I suggest that some of the things that the member for Gascoyne referred to should be dealt with by the State in the ordinary course of events and could be so dealt with by the State if it were being substantially

assisted in the execution of works, developmental and otherwise, which no doubt will be proposed by the Government and assented to by the Committee if this motion is carried. Obviously, if the Government has not to concern itself entirely with the provision of developmental and public works, it would be in a better position to grapple with other and minor problems, to some of which the member for Gascoyne referred.

However, I agree with him that some of the problems of education would naturally come under the heading of public works; in fact, they might quite reasonably be included in developmental works. But if we bring them under the general heading of works, there will not be any controversy on that subject. I recollect that in about 1949—and it stands to the credit, very substantially I would say, of the then Acting Director of Education, Mr. T. S. Edmondson—proposals were put on foot for the erection of a school and hostel at Hall's Creek. It was never contemplated that it would be possible to congregate at that place more than a very limited number of children. I think the investigation authorised at the time, and made by Mr. Edmondson, provided for something in the vicinity of 24 children, the bulk of them coming from considerable distances from the centre of Hall's Creek.

I believe, as time has gone on and the school and hostel have been completed—they have been completed in the last 12 months because although the work was started in about 1950, its completion, unfortunately, was very slow—there are only 19 children attending the school and accommodated at the hostel run by the Australian Inland Mission. If I understand the position aright, those premises cost at least £50,000, and that is an abnormal burden for the State to bear in respect of the education of 19 children, quite apart from the maintenance of the school and its staffing. But I believe that it is thoroughly and completely justified and, as does the member for Gascoyne, I think that similar propositions elsewhere in the North-West are also justified and are entitled to be regarded by the Commonwealth as of sufficient value to the community, but somewhat beyond the normal capacity of the State, as to justify a contribution towards the capital cost.

We all know, too, that the north of this country, quite apart from any question of oil, is extremely rich in various kinds of minerals, some of them considerable, in fact very great, value, to various industries in the world today. We know that as soon as one starts to attempt to develop these deposits, even if private capital is forthcoming for the purpose, there is a demand for means of communication, for better facilities for transport, for public buildings of one kind and another, for water supplies and so forth. But they do not return to the State exchequer anything commensurate with the amount of work that has



to be done. So it seems to me that there is ample scope for consideration by the Commonwealth of the need for co-operating with the State in this development so that these vast riches, which undoubtedly exist, can be the more easily explored and obtained, to the very great advantage, not so much of Western Australia, but the Commonwealth as a whole, and, in some aspects, of the world outside it.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition refer to the question of research into animal and plant diseases in this country. Here again I think that that is a work which comes within the area of expenditure to which the State might attend. That is the sort of undertaking which is our proper responsibility and could be handled by the State if we were in a position to cope with the major matters of development which, at least for a decade to come, are, to my mind, substantially a national matter and one in which—partly on the ground of defence and partly on the ground that if we are contributing to developmental work in two States there should be a contribution by all States for the same purpose—the Commonwealth should co-operate with us.

From time to time motions have been moved suggesting that the area in Western Australia north of the twenty-sixth parallel should be handed over to the Commonwealth. I have never supported any such proposal, and I would not do so now if it were proposed by anybody. I have not received any great encouragement to support such a proposal by the results that have been obtained in the Northern Territory, which has been under the control of the Commonwealth for a considerable number of years. I believe that it is the duty of the people of Western Australia to grapple with the problems of the whole of this State; but at the same time I do not think we should, under the circumstances to which I have referred, be left to grapple with them on our own. It is a fair proposition that the Commonwealth, which at the present time, anyway, has access to the major reservoirs of money in Australia, should undertake to assist us, and if the case is properly presented on the basis contemplated in this motion and its amendment, we should stand a good chance of having that point of view ultimately subscribed to.

I have no doubt that in the northern part of the State it would be possible to conserve substantial quantities of water. I do not doubt also that the member for Gascoyne is justified in the belief that some 25 or 30 miles from Carnarvon there is a place where as much water could be impounded as in the Mundaring Weir; but I would not venture to say at what price. I have no doubt whatever that it would run into several millions of pounds to do the job properly and to make that water available, in difficult times, to the banana

growers and those engaged in other industries, situated on the banks of the Gascoyne River, that require it. In present circumstances and in view of the comparatively limited number of persons whom it would serve, what hope has the State of being able at any reasonable future time, unaided, to find the necessary millions to undertake this somewhat substantial task? I do not suppose that any Treasurer, unaided, would be able to complete such a work, supposing, as I do, that, from every other point of view, it is a practicable one.

Having observed, in recent times, the places in which it is suggested that this should be done, and having discussed the matter with more people than the member for Gascoyne himself—although I heard all he said on the subject—I am convinced that it should be attempted. However, I do not think it is a proposition for the State to undertake unaided and I would suggest that it is a very reasonable proposition to ask the Commonwealth to assist with this undertaking.

Many years ago, when the late Hon. A. A. M. Coverley was Minister for the North-West, I brought under his notice a proposal that had been submitted to me by an engineer for barraging—I think that is the correct word—certain rivers of the North-West. If I remember aright—although it is many years ago now and I am relying purely on my memory—the Fortescue was one of the rivers mentioned. It was suggested that a series of barrages would be practicable on that river—when it came down it would fill them—that there would be a substantial use for the resultant water, and that it would warrant considerable expenditure.

I do not know what the hon. gentleman did in regard to the matter. If I remember rightly he said he was going to have it looked into, but unfortunately I forgot to press the subject in order to ascertain if he had done so. However, I have no doubt that if that were a practicable proposal—and because of the source from which it came I have no reason to think differently—there are many such proposals that could be contemplated in that area. Nevertheless, once again I am firmly convinced that to ask the State, in present circumstances to accept full responsibility with regard to investigation and erection, would be most unfair and it is a matter to which the Commonwealth Government, both in the interests of defence and of doing the fair thing by the whole of Australia, might readily subscribe.

No doubt there are, in other parts of the North, many other propositions that can be thought of and which could be submitted; for example, public works of one kind or another—some absolutely essential if development by any means at all is to succeed—which can be included in the representations made in respect of this matter. So I do not want the House to accept this

motion merely as some sort of a pious resolution. Whatever may have been the sins of omission or commission of anybody in the last half century in regard to the North-West and the northern portion of Western Australia, I think all of us have come to the conclusion that there must be a combined effort substantially to alter the state of affairs which has existed in that area during recent times.

When I say "the state of affairs," I mean the absence of any substantial increase in its population when increases on a substantial scale are taking place elsewhere; the diminution in many aspects of its production notwithstanding the substantial increase in production in other quarters; the fact that notwithstanding the considerable effort that has been made by various Governments in the past to provide improved means of transport and communication, it is quite obvious that they have not been very successful because it does not require extraordinary weather conditions, over a very long period, to place sections of the communications of the area out of business for a considerable time. That in itself must militate considerably against any possibility of sound and prompt development.

So I want all members to look at this motion as a genuine attempt to co-ordinate our ideas upon this subject; to impress upon the Commonwealth the need for its co-operation; to indicate to it that we do not come as mendicants. We should make it clear that we approach it as representing the people of Western Australia who know the tremendous value that exists in the north-western portion of Western Australia, not only to this State, but also to the Commonwealth as a whole. We should seek to determine that it be placed in a position whereby we can hold it by developing and populating it, and to assert that that can only be done if both the State and the Commonwealth are able, with a greater measure of generosity than they have been able to display in the past, to assist its essential development by public and other works.

I am convinced that it was thoughts such as those that actuated the member for Moore to submit this motion to the House in the form that he did. I feel sure, from the manner in which he has treated it, that the Premier does not seriously dispute that point of view. I do not suggest to the Premier that his proposed amendments are unusual. I think quite the contrary. Were I in his place, speaking for the Government, I would have wanted to do something similar, if not the same. But the Premier has not, as I see it, in moving the amendments destroyed either the spirit or the intention of the motion. Therefore, I am prepared to support the amendment and, when it is incorporated in the motion, to support that also.

**MR. RHATIGAN** (Kimberley—on amendment) [8.11]: Listening to this debate, I noted that some very interesting suggestions have been made which cannot be other than of vital interest to the proposed committee if the motion is carried. I wish to assure the member for Moore that I support his proposition, and if he or any other member moves something along similar lines for the extension of the comprehensive water scheme to his electorate, I shall give him my support in return.

I wish to make a few suggestion pertinent to the motion before the House. First of all, I congratulate the Premier on introducing the amendment to add the Minister for the North-West and the member for Pilbara to the committee. Both have had lifelong experience in the North. The Minister for the North-West has worked in the North in shearing teams for many years and he has also been a banana-planter on the Gascoyne. Therefore, he has had extensive experience of the North. The Speaker has been the member for Pilbara for some 20 years, and prior to that he had a long and practical association with the North. Therefore, the addition of these two men to the committee consisting of the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party will be of great benefit in presenting the case to the Commonwealth Government, if the motion is carried.

For the information of members, I have some figures of the population of the North-West compared with the population of Australia—

Date of Census.	North of Western Australia.	Northern Territory.	Australia.
1901 ....	March 5,527	Dec. 4,673	Dec. 3,824,913
1911 ....	April 6,494	Dec. 3,233	Dec. 4,573,786
1921 ....	April 5,419	Dec. 3,759	Dec. 5,510,944
1933 ....	June 9,934	Dec. 4,827	Dec. 6,656,695
1947 ....	June 6,494	Dec. 10,991	Dec. 7,638,628
1952 ....	Dec. 8,200	Dec. 16,101	Dec. 8,648,735
(estimated)			

Over the period of 51 years, the total increase in population of the North-West was 150.2 per cent., for the Northern Territory the increase was 342.4 per cent., and for Australia, 226.1 per cent. That goes to show that the population has gradually increased in the North and the increase has been brought about, in my opinion, by the establishment of the iron works at Yampi Sound with a population of approximately 150. Then, at Wittenoon Gorge, at the whaling station and at Carnarvon in the banana industry, further increases have been recorded.

Furthermore, I have figures relating to the population in 1905. In the portion of the State north of the 26th parallel, there were six seats in the Assembly and the numbers on the rolls were: Ashburton 42, East Kimberley 90, De Gray 70, Roebourne 128, West Kimberley 145, and Gascoyne 180, a total of 655. So members can see

how the population has varied. The member for Moore said it had dwindled, but, in fact, it has increased slightly. I trust that when this motion is passed and the committee goes to Canberra it will secure better results than did the committee which met the Prime Minister in putting forward a case for taxation concessions. That committee put up a very good case which was worthy of a better fate. I maintain that the northern portion of Australia should receive some consideration in tax exemptions. If financial assistance is forthcoming as a result of this motion, there are many purposes to which it can be applied.

Here I make a few suggestions. We know that the jetties are not all they should be, and that applies also to the railway rolling-stock, hospitals and schools. The extra grant could be utilised in improving these utilities. I would like to see an all-weather road from Derby to Wyndham. There is a so-called all-weather road from Derby to Fitzroy Crossing, but it requires a lot of maintenance. The road from Fitzroy Crossing to Hall's Creek is graded only once a year. The road from Wyndham to Hall's Creek, via Turkey Creek, over which route most of the transport travels, is still in a bad state of repair. Only 46 miles of it has been formed.

In the course of my travels I have been over most of the roads between here and Wyndham. There are very few stations between Shark Bay and the most northern point that I have not been to. The last 80 miles from Turkey Creek to Wyndham is the worst portion of the road from Perth to Wyndham. I say that without fear of contradiction. I hope the Minister for Works will do all in his power to have that road attended to in the shortest possible time. I appreciate that every member is on the Minister's back in order to get roads, but this one, in my opinion, is a work of vital importance. We are more fortunate on the other side of my electorate. I refer to the road extending towards Nicholson station. I understand that the money for that road was granted by special arrangement with the British and Commonwealth Governments under the beef scheme, and when completed, it will be of advantage to the North.

Once again I wish to touch briefly on the subject of education. The Leader of the Country Party spoke about the Hall's Creek school. A census was taken many years ago and at the time there were quite a few children in the district, but owing to lack of educational facilities and the fact that the people did not have the financial resources to send their children south for their education, they had to leave their employment on stations and move into towns so that the children might receive ordinary education. Thus between the time the census was taken and the time the school was built, those people had moved on.

I know of people coming to Perth from the North and accepting employment here and their only reason for leaving is, not on account of the climate, but that they cannot afford to pay for the education of two children of school age. There were two men employed at the Wyndham Meat Works and their only reason for moving south and accepting lower paid jobs was that they could not afford to send their children away for their education. So people move away from the North and accept work down here on the basic wage in order that the children might have an opportunity to receive education.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the lack of markets for the Kimberley pastoralists. That is quite true. However, the Wyndham Meat Works pays a very good price for the cattle it buys; I think the average is £18 or £19 a head.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Nothing like the price that they bring down here.

Mr. RHATIGAN: That is so. The point is that the people in Perth get the cream for their stock. At one stage producers of cattle in the Northern Territory were granted the privilege of freedom from income taxation. What happened? East Kimberley cattle were taken to the Territory and sold there.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And some of the Northern Territory cattle were sent to the Wyndham Meat Works.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Quite so, but that is an instance of where the State lost revenue. I cannot believe that anybody in his sane mind would advocate handing over the northern portion of Western Australia to the Commonwealth, so there is no need to deal at length with that point. We all know how little the Northern Territory has improved in late years since it has been under the control of the Commonwealth, despite the finance at the disposal of the Federal Government. However, some progress has been made in recent months by the placing of agricultural experts in the Territory, and that may prove helpful to the northern part of our State where the conditions are somewhat similar.

I wish to pay a tribute to the pioneers of the North-West, very few of whom—perhaps only one or two—are still living. They were the people who opened up that country and made it productive. The person I object to is the absentee owner who does not even trouble to take a look at his property, but draws the profit and puts very little of it back. When members make a tour of the North-West, they should inspect some of those million-acre properties and see the conditions under which absentee owners ask their managers and families to live. The conditions are an absolute disgrace. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment and the motion.

On motion by Mr. O'Brien, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.27 p.m.*