

BILLS (23)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
- 2, Corneal and Tissue Grafting.
- 3, Local Government.
Introduced by the Minister for Health.
- 4, Criminal Code Amendment.
- 5, Licensing Act Amendment.
- 6, Electoral Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 7, Constitution Acts Amendment.
- 8, Evidence Act Amendment.
- 9, Jury Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Justice.
- 10, State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment.
- 11, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment.
- 12, Factories and Shops Act Amendment.
- 13, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Labour).
- 14, Wheat Marketing Act Continuance.
- 15, Agriculture Protection Board Act Amendment.
- 16, Abattoirs Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.
- 17, Bills of Sale Act Amendment.
- 18, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.
- 19, Gas Undertakings Act Amendment Bill.
- 20, Municipality of Fremantle Act Amendment.
Introduced by Hon. J. B. Sleeman.
- 21, Child Welfare Act Amendment.
Introduced by Mr. Nalder (for Mr. Ackland).
- 22, Electoral Act Amendment (No. 2).
Introduced by Mr. Ross Hutchinson.
- 23, Geraldton Sailors and Soldiers' Memorial Institute Act Amendment.
Introduced by Mr. Sewell.

House adjourned at 5.52 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 28th August, 1956.

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

MOTION—URGENCY.*Unemployment Situation.*

MR. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from the member for Greenough (Hon. D. Brand):—

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I desire your permission to move for the adjournment of the House today to discuss the gravity of the unemployment situation in Western Australia.

The continued Press publicity indicates the growing danger of the problem in this State, with consequent industrial uneasiness, and in order to provide an opportunity for all members to discuss this urgent matter, I sincerely trust that you will agree to the request.

Such suggestions as "picketing" by meetings of unemployed highlight the need of immediate action.

It will be necessary for seven members to rise in their places to support the proposal.

Seven members having risen in their places.

Mr. May: Somebody has woken up at last.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They did not rise like that in 1932 and 1933.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [4.35]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

I do this for the purpose outlined in my letter. Over the past weeks, a great deal of publicity has been given in Western Australia to the growing incidence of unemployment in this State. If we investigate the problem more closely we find that the Government, through the Premier and his Ministers, has been largely responsible for the publicity. Following certain meetings, and publicity given to those meetings, there has been no denial of the gravity of the situation in this State.

With me I have some Press cuttings which I shall read to the House to indicate that over the past weeks there has been a great deal of publicity revealing the urgency of this situation to the Government and to the public. The first extract is headed "300 Jobless Meet Tonkin". This is reported in "The West Australian" of the 15th August and it reads—

Three hundred unemployed men—more than half of them new Australians—met the Minister for Works (Mr. Tonkin) at the Fremantle Trades Hall yesterday. They listened quietly as he explained that his Government had works planned which needed Federal loan money to pay for them. But as soon as he left, they broke into a chant: "We want work."

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Fraser), Messrs. P. R. Lawrence and J. B. Sleeman, Ms.L.A., and representatives from seven unions also attended the 2½ hour meeting.

After Mr. Tonkin left, other speakers agreed that the State Government was doing its best. Finally the meeting decided to send a telegram to the Acting Prime Minister (Sir Arthur Fadden) demanding more loan money.

In "The West Australian" of the 21st August there is a heading "Nine Thousand Look for Jobs" to a report which states—

The number of unemployed increased in Australia by 2,161 to a total of 9,164 between June 30 and July 28. The Minister for Labour (Mr. Holt) said tonight that this total of people receiving unemployment benefits represented about three in every 1,000 of Australian wage and salary earners.

He went on to outline that there were a number of vacancies for employment registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service at the end of June, the total being 28,874.

Mr. Heal: You do not know what types of jobs they were?

Hon. D. BRAND: A cross-heading in the same article reads, "Timber Men Dismissed" and the report goes on to state—

Unemployment continued to increase in the timber industry, the general secretary of the Timberworkers' Union (Mr. H. Sweeney) said yesterday. Mr. Sweeney made a survey of the employment situation in upper South-West timber centres last week.

He said that dismissals or retrenchments among the union's membership of 2,000 totalled about 350. The figures did not cover the closing down of small mill operators.

Then, of course, we have the publicity given to the statements made by the Premier in this Chamber and in other places from time to time. The next extract is headed, "Jobs Hard to Find on the Fields." Mr. Collard was explaining that he was not very happy about the publicity which had been given the matter because he feared that unemployed men would rush to the Goldfields for employment whereas employment was not available and was a great problem there. Then, over the week-end, we get the following in the "Daily News" under the date of the 24th August:—

Jobless Will Picket Airport.

Fremantle unemployed plan to hold a public meeting in Perth to stress their claim for work.

They also intend to picket Guildford Airport when W.A. Federal members return from Canberra.

Hon. L. Thorn: Who put them up to that?

Hon. D. BRAND: I wonder! The article continues—

These decisions were made at a meeting of unemployed in Fremantle Trades Hall today.

The mass meeting is expected to take place next week in Forrest Place, or St. George's Terrace, near Government House.

A suggestion that they should picket the homes of W.A. Federal members was considered inadvisable.

Mr. Hall: Where did you get the information?

Hon. D. BRAND: I have it here in black and white. To continue—

The meeting decided to press for immediate Federal action to provide more public works for the relief of unemployment.

W.A. Federal members are to be asked individually for full support.

Circulars outlining the unemployment position have been printed in Fremantle and will be distributed in Fremantle, Midland Junction and other parts of the metropolitan area.

An appeal is to be made to trade unions for more active support for the drive against unemployment.

Another meeting of unemployed will be held in Fremantle Trades Hall at 10 a.m. Tuesday.

That is today, I suppose. I notice that Mr. Healy plans to be in Fremantle today. The article goes on—

Vegetables have been collected in Fremantle and they will be distributed at Fremantle Trades Hall at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

A number of Italians attended today's meeting. It was suggested by one that English people were being given preference over Italians in the allocation of work.

Then, in "The West Australian" of the 25th August, above the headline, "Workless Men Plan Picketing," appears a picture showing some workers receiving vegetables.

I have outlined only a little of that publicity to emphasise that all of us must become very anxious about this situation which seems to be going on and on and on, and the only move the State Government is making is that of sending wires—or urging somebody else to send wires—to the Commonwealth Government for more money. Whilst all of us would not oppose any plan to obtain more money for Western Australia from the Commonwealth, we feel that the response in the first place should come from the State Government.

In reply to a question which I asked the Premier the other day—after his statement made in this House as to what this Government was doing—he said, "Well, I thought there was work made available for 140 men." That, too, would be appreciated, I feel sure, but the very negative reply and the attitude of the Government itself does not line up with the statements that have been made from time to time in respect of the urgency of this situation.

The Minister for Lands: How can you employ people without money?

Hon. D. BRAND: I have been around the filing rooms and have read through various Eastern States newspapers and little or no publicity has been given on any unemployment position in those States.

Mr. Lawrence: That is because there is none.

Hon. D. BRAND: We feel that this discussion should take place in order that members might air their views and that the Government might have the opportunity of telling us what it has done and what it plans to do apart from sending telegrams

to the Commonwealth Government, which may not supply the money and—what then?

We know that the Premier, at the Loan Council, made a plea based on the problem of unemployment in this State for special assistance and there has been a great deal of confusion as to what actually happened. On his return to this State, the Premier hit the headlines, being reported as saying, "We have it in the bag. There is money coming from the Commonwealth." In fact, the Minister for Works, in replying to a question on drainage, said that £313,000 would be spent on drainage works to relieve the unemployment position in this State. There is nothing definite about this State receiving the money and, furthermore, the funds are tied up. Why mislead the public?

The Minister for Lands: We are not misleading the public.

Hon. D. BRAND: With respect to the money that is coming from the Commonwealth, the Government is misleading the public.

The Minister for Lands: What would you do about it?

Hon. D. BRAND: If we were the Government, we would be doing something about it, but it is a question of what we expect the people on the other side of the House should do about it. A telegram which was received in reply to one which we addressed to the Acting Prime Minister, reads as follows:—

Your telegram special financial assistance to Western Australia stop Loan Council position was that following consideration of unusual difficulties facing Western Australia . . .

And here I am assuming that the unusual difficulties were relating to a greater degree of unemployment in this State as against any other.

Mr. Bovell: Due to maladministration and over-spending of the State Government of Western Australia.

Hon. D. BRAND: The telegram continues—

Other Premiers raised no objection to proposal that the Commonwealth might consider further allocation of loan moneys to Western Australia from own resources stop Premier subsequently put forward figure of four million pounds stop matter has been taken up with Premier in correspondence and by discussion even as recently as last week during his visit to Canberra stop further advice from Premier received this afternoon.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It seems to be all stops.

Hon. D. BRAND: In the light of that interjection, it could quite easily be a Labour telegram. I read that telegram because it is an official communication from

the Acting Prime Minister showing that nothing very definite, so far, has been done about the allocation of money for the relief of unemployment in Western Australia.

Mr. Moir: Shame!

Hon. D. BRAND: As far as I am concerned, I assume that some special assistance will be forthcoming. When the Premier returned to this State, the Minister for Works and others got busy and drew up a works programme which totalled £4,000,000. I wonder if the Premiers of the other States would have been so happy about giving assistance if they had known that there was to be an allocation of £4,000,000, representing special assistance, to meet a works programme in Western Australia. That is kite flying, if ever there was!

The Minister for Works: Better to ask for too much than too little!

Hon. D. BRAND: Quite! And my word, Mr. Speaker, did they not go to it! £4,000,000! I feel that if something practical had been put forward, we might have felt that the request was more sincere than it was.

The Minister for Lands: I do not think you know what you are talking about.

Mr. Nalder: Perhaps it wanted the money to meet the special situation which it faces.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Deputy Leader of the Country Party has suggested that maybe the Government wanted the money to meet the special situation which it faces. We know that the Government, at present, is having to face up to definite payments of, roughly, £2,500,000 and any special assistance from the Commonwealth Government will certainly relieve the position of the Treasury in Western Australia.

Mr. May: Do not forget Kwinana, too! You know what you put us in for there.

Hon. D. BRAND: In replying to that interjection, I think we may all say "Thank God, for Kwinana" because at one stage, when unemployment was rife in other States, Western Australia was in the happy position of being the State which had the least unemployment in the Commonwealth. It was, as the result of the establishment of the Kwinana refinery and other large industries at the time, which were brought about by the efforts of the McLarty-Watts Government —

Mr. Lawrence: And yet 500 carpenters who were on the Kwinana refinery job had to leave this State for South Australia to find employment.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Premier said the other day that unemployment begets unemployment, and I would agree with that. All this talk from high places is a direct stab at the foundation of the confidence of the people generally. It certainly would not create any confidence in the minds of industry, or executives of industry, that

might be looking to Western Australia for the establishment or setting up of an undertaking. On the other hand, there would be created a lack of confidence and there would be a tightening up of money. Apart from that, there would be a cutting down of any developmental programme which might have been envisaged by private enterprise. All over Australia at the present time there is some degree of unemployment, but I believe it should be the responsibility of our leaders to create confidence, and not to try to make political capital out of the situation that has developed in this State.

The Minister for Lands: What are you doing now?

Hon. D. BRAND: They should not refer time and again to the Commonwealth for money in the hope that more and more unemployment will create a social problem for which they can blame the Federal Government. All that they have done has been for political reasons only.

The Minister for Lands: What are you doing this for?

Mr. Bovell: We want you to accept your responsibility.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. D. BRAND: If the Minister for Lands does not understand why I am doing this, I will tell him: It is because I believe that it is the duty of the Opposition to give the Government a prod now and again. We have been far too quiet on this side of the House and it is high time we began to bestir ourselves to a more definite investigation of what the Government is doing. I would like to assure the Government of our continued and close interest, whether it be that of the Country Party or of the Liberal and Country League.

Mr. May: It is about three years too late.

Hon. D. BRAND: I would be inclined to agree with that interjection knowing what both the financial situation and the unemployment problem are today. As the hon. member points out, I think our prodding has been left a bit late.

The Minister for Lands: The public told you what they thought about it a few weeks ago.

Mr. Bovell: What did?

The Minister for Lands: The public.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. D. BRAND: The Premier pointed out that the unemployment situation brings about personal hardship. People have organised themselves and have arranged to distribute vegetables and to do all manner of other things. We, on this side of the House, believe that the State Government could do a great deal more than it is doing at present. We ask: Why

is the unemployment situation in Western Australia proportionately worse than in any other State in the Commonwealth? It is no use the people on the other side saying that proportionately they have not received the amount of money that they should have. We find, in fact, from figures given to the member for Vasse that the total sum of money received from the Commonwealth by the State during the last financial year was £1,873,168 more than the amount received in 1954-55.

Mr. Johnson: What is the value of it?

Hon. D. BRAND: It would have a similar value to the money for which the Government is now asking the Commonwealth for extra assistance. The fact remains that the Government has received more and more over the years that it has been in office, and on this occasion it received, as I said, almost £2,000,000 extra from the various funds which stem from the Commonwealth. Accordingly, it is no use the State Government charging the Commonwealth with not supplying the necessary money. It is no use the Government putting up excuses and saying it is not getting the same amount of money proportionately as the other States as against last year. Western Australia might well be in a better position than the great industrial centres of Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr. Hall: If we got the loan.

Hon. D. BRAND: One would expect, in those other States, an immediate reaction to the economic crisis. We, in Western Australia, are not so highly industrialised; we enjoy a greater degree of primary industry in this State. Yet, in spite of that, we have a record number of unemployed on this occasion—almost a quarter of the figures for the entire Commonwealth. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, that is why I asked you, as a matter of urgency, to give the House an opportunity to debate this question. Members opposite have asked what we would do or suggest. I do not know what can be done immediately because, as a matter of fact, from what I can gather, there is absolutely no money, but only a number of p.n.'s due.

Mr. Bovell: Due to the past overspending and maladministration of the present State Government.

Hon. D. BRAND: My friend on my right has pointed out that some of these problems might easily be the result of past action. As we all know, the problem of unemployment stems from the building trade. In Western Australia, it had its origin in the building trade, and I will leave it to my colleague, the member for Dale, to prove that with figures, because he has made some research into the matter. We believe that because of the overspending by the State Housing Commission, and the fact that it ran out of money and had to chop its activities to a minimum, a great deal of unemployment resulted.

Once a contractor ceases to employ, all related industries have to consider their position. Accordingly, we find in official documents—and I could quote them if you wished, Mr. Speaker—that the greatest degree of unemployment exists in the timber industry, in the cement industry, in the tile industry, the plaster industry and the hardware industry. Therefore I believe, rightly or wrongly, that a good deal of this blame must rest on the shoulders of the Minister for Housing who, in his enthusiasm to build houses hither and thither, overspent his money.

The Minister for Housing: You are getting as low as the member for Dale.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do not talk about low people! The chickens might come home to roost.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Minister for Housing, by his interjection, is endeavouring to put me off my theme.

The Minister for Housing: What theme?

Hon. D. BRAND: I am making the charges; the Minister is the Minister for Housing and it is his responsibility to answer them. I would point out to him, however, that two years ago he had an overdraft, about which the Premier did not know, to the value of about £1,250,000, which the Minister for Works had to share in repaying the following year.

The Minister for Housing: No, he did not.

Hon. D. BRAND: These are the sort of things for which the Minister for Housing must answer. It is of no use his making interjections merely because I charge him politically with things which we know to be true.

The Minister for Housing: You made a filthy insinuation!

Mr. Bovell: That is the Minister's form.

Hon. D. BRAND: It is all due to overspending by the Minister for Housing, and I would say at this stage that I am very sorry he did not build more houses in the country. But the commission, and the Minister, in their efforts to get these houses constructed, built them under a deferred payment scheme and overspent their money. I am sure that the unemployment question in this State is merely a case of chickens coming home to roost.

On the other hand we might have expected the Government earlier on to have made a special effort to retain the interest of industry in Western Australia. When we, as the Government, went out of office, this State enjoyed a great reputation, and people in the Eastern States and overseas were looking to it as being the State of the Commonwealth. But nothing much has been done since.

Mr. May: That was why you went out of office.

Hon. D. BRAND: I admit that a great premium has been placed on the setting up of Kwinana and on the dredging of Cockburn Sound. There is the opportunity for establishing industries at Bunbury, at Albany and to a lesser extent at Geraldton. What large and worth-while industry has been attracted to this State? None, as far as I know. I do know that the executives of certain interests have been over here to investigate the possibility of establishing themselves in Western Australia, but they did not receive any encouragement. It must be noted that one has to go after these people.

The Minister for Police: Have you heard of Vickers joining up with Hoskins?

Hon. D. BRAND: The Premier of South Australia has assumed the personal responsibility of meeting executives of companies from overseas and interstate when they are visiting that State, with the result that South Australia—and I am told this is correct—has one new industry established every month. That is a means to which this Government might have resorted to stem the present unemployment problem—by creating employment through the establishment of new industries in a State which has a great potential.

I do not wish to prolong this debate. I want to say, and I repeat it as often as I can, that the time has come when the Government must cease remarking, "We cannot do this and we cannot do that for lack of loan funds. We will do this when loan funds are available. We will do this when the unemployment relief becomes available." This is the responsibility of the State Government. If members opposite were sitting on this side of the House, they would thrust the responsibility of finding work for the unemployed right where it belongs, that is, on the Government of the day.

The Minister for Lands: You started to tell us a few minutes ago what you would do.

Hon. D. BRAND: That was where the member for Fremantle wanted to place the responsibility when I was the Minister for Works. He wanted to place the responsibility on me for finding work for the few unemployed at the time when loan funds were cut, namely, in 1952. He smiles now because he knows how true that statement is. I would like him to get up and tell us what he thinks the present Government ought to do to relieve a situation which must be worrying him at the present time.

Mr. Lawrence: The position would be worse if you were on this side of the House.

Hon. D. BRAND: That is the hon. member's opinion.

Mr. Lawrence: That is a pretty good opinion.

Hon. D. BRAND: In answer to a question quite recently, the Premier told me that it was intended to spend £800,000—I repeat, £800,000—on Wundowie, the idea being to increase the capacity by installing a second furnace and therefore expanding the output, from 12,000 to 36,000 tons of pig iron per year; and that the sum of £300,000, not the subject of loan funds, was to be spent this year. No one on this side of the House would say, "Don't build that hospital; don't build that school; don't build that police station; don't construct that water supply." But many of us will say, "Don't go ahead with the expenditure at Wundowie". If it means the ultimate expenditure of £1,000,000, which no doubt it will come to by the time the £800,000 has been expended, more inquiries should be made regarding the need for expending that amount, especially when Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. has established itself here and can possibly do much better than Wundowie in the production of iron.

The Minister for Lands: I thought you supported the encouragement of local industries.

Hon. D. BRAND: As I believe this expenditure cannot be justified, let the Government take the £300,000 earmarked for Wundowie and spend it on relief to the unemployed by carrying out the urgent work needed in Belmont where the householders have to walk out of their houses in rubber boots. The member for Beeloo made a good speech in regard to that subject. Let the Government take this £300,000 and spend it out there on the drainage projects which are so vital and necessary. Let the Government deny that—

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Those urgent works would be less costly.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am not going into the pros and cons of whether it is worth while to back and develop the Wundowie project at this stage. Perhaps I shall have more to say on that later on in the session. The fact remains that there is no urgent need to spend £300,000 this year or next year at Wundowie, when the problem of unemployment, which has been referred to by the Ministers and the Premier at every opportunity and therefore must be real and urgent, is in our midst. I challenge the Government to do something about that, take the £300,000 which it has earmarked for Wundowie and spend it on relieving the plight of the unfortunate people referred to.

Mr. May: You little hero!

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.7]: I want to join with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—

MR. SPEAKER: The Speaker has been on his feet for a while. It took the hon. member a long time to get up.

Mr. BOVELL: I join the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in expressing concern with regard to the unemployment position which has grown in recent months in Western Australia. We face the position today where in Australia, with a total population of 9,000,000 of which only 600,000 reside in Western Australia, one quarter of the unemployed in the whole of the Commonwealth is to be found in this State. The State Government cannot dodge its responsibility in regard to this.

What is the position in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland? Those States seem to maintain stability of employment, and only a few unemployed people are found there. But here in Western Australia the unemployment position is growing worse daily. Speaking to the Address-in-reply a few days ago, I quoted figures to show that Western Australia had enjoyed the benefit of receiving more funds last year than any other Government had recorded in the history of the State.

Mr. Johnson: What kind of money was that?

Mr. BOVELL: It is money which is recognised as legal currency throughout Australia today. This year there was a general election in this State and the Government, owing to the circumstances leading up to that election, was very fearful that it was going to be defeated. As a matter of fact, Ministers threw in everything, including the kitchen sink. They built schools, or rather promised schools here, there and everywhere, but mainly in electorates held by Labour members.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would ask the hon. member to resume his seat. The motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is that the House do now adjourn to discuss a matter, the substance of which, to use the same phraseology, is the gravity of the unemployment situation in Western Australia. I would suggest to the hon. member that he cannot discuss the election; he can discuss the question of finance, but not the election. He must confine himself to the subject matter of the motion before the Chair. If he goes outside of that motion, I shall endeavour to show him where he is going wrong.

Mr. BOVELL: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and bow to your ruling. I well recall when I first entered this House that I was told that one could go for so long as the Speaker permitted him. You have courteously informed me that I was exceeding the bounds of the debate on this motion and perhaps there will be another time when I can make some comments on the matter to which I was referring. The position is certainly very alarming in regard to unemployment. The Government has handled the affairs of State with buoyant finances during its past year of office. I know that costs are rising but here again it is the Government's responsibility to endeavour to stop

that trend. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has said, all the Government can think of is to send telegrams using the Commonwealth facilities of the Postmaster General's Department to convey to the Federal Government the fact that Western Australia is suffering extreme unemployment conditions. I can agree with the Government or can see its concern in this matter, but let us not play politics.

The Minister for Lands: What is this motion for?

Mr. BOVELL: This motion is to bring home to this lethargic State Government its responsibility in this matter.

The Minister for Housing: You had that opportunity last week during the Address-in-reply debate.

Mr. BOVELL: In addition to the buoyant finances, the Government has seen fit to increase or impose many charges on the citizens of Western Australia, and I believe that this has some bearing on the unemployment position. I would like to repeat what I said in this Chamber a few nights ago, namely, that the first responsibility of a Government is to lead the way. The Government is, of course, leading the way in imposing increased charges and assisting in the inflationary spiral. It has, since the general election, increased hospital charges, harbour dues, and transport fees. It is proposed, although we cannot get any definite statement, to increase rail freight and fares.

Mr. Norton: What about interest in building?

Mr. BOVELL: I am of the opinion it is a Government's responsibility to spread its finance over the full financial year. The Minister for Housing overspent in his department. If a person spends a month's salary in the first week, he will find himself during the remaining three weeks in a very precarious financial position, and that is what the Minister for Housing has done. He utilised all the funds available to him and, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out, some money which the Minister for Works would have liked to use. Now the repercussions are setting in and we find the buoyancy could not be maintained, and unemployment has resulted. I think, too, that had the Government gone on with its schemes to assist under-developed dairy farmers in this State, as was promised, it would have contributed in some way to the alleviation of unemployment.

The Minister for Lands: Very small.

Mr. BOVELL: I am fully behind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in this motion.

The Minister for Lands: You are always behind.

Mr. BOVELL: Maladministration has brought these circumstances about and I think that is quite evident from the fact

that out of a population of approximately 9,000,000 people, and with only 600,000 in the State of Western Australia, we have in this State one-quarter of the unemployed throughout the whole of Australia. Is not that an indictment of the Government of Western Australia?

This motion, if it does nothing else, even if it is somewhat belated—it is better late than never—will impress on the Government its lethargy in this matter. It is time the Government got down to work and accepted its full measure of the responsibility for the growing unemployment in Western Australia, instead of always accusing the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister for Lands: Political propaganda.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [5.15]: I would not have risen to my feet to join this debate had it not been for the absence on the part of the Government of any attempt to reply. I have been in this House for over twenty years and have seen a considerable number of motions for the adjournment of the House for reasons similar to this, moved on both sides of the House, and I think I am correct in saying I have never known a time when such a motion was moved by a responsible member of the Opposition that a member on the Government benches did not rise to reply.

For my part, I waited for the second member of the Opposition to speak, and I find there has still been no attempt on the other side of the House to make any reply. I suggest to you, Sir, and the Government, that that is a most improper way of handling a motion of this character. I can assume, if I like, that the Government has no reply. If that is the position, well and good: Let them remain seated. On the other hand, if they have any reply which consists of subject matter worth listening to, to contravert some of the statements made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, let us hear them. It is certainly no time for the Government to ignore, as has been done up to this moment, the statements that have been made by the two previous speakers.

Mr. Johnson: There was no value in them.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I have heard, during the course of the 20 years I have been in this Chamber, statements made from the other side of the House on similar motions—some of greater value and some of less value—and they have been replied to with some effect to satisfy the House and the public that the conditions outlined by the mover and those supporting him, were wrong; and I think we are entitled to the same treatment on this occasion. If we do not get it, the strongest exception should be taken today.

Having said that and quoted that particular aspect in the hope that the responsible Minister of the Crown will at least deal as effectively as he can with the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I will pass on and say a few words in support of that last mentioned hon. gentleman. I have subscribed to the view that, at least pending a decision from the Commonwealth as to what it can do, or is prepared to do, in regard to the special allocation which was discussed at the Loan Council, it is the business of the State to do all it can to minimise what unemployment exists in Western Australia.

Personally, I am very doubtful whether some of the figures that have been published as to the number of persons actually unemployed in this State are correct. Unfortunately I have not the means of obtaining reliable information; but they certainly seem to me to be so far in excess of the figures that are quoted by the Social Services Department that it is quite likely there is some exaggeration. Be that as it may, there are still a number of persons who are without employment, and it is not desirable that that number should increase.

I heard in the A.B.C. news last night a statement by the officer in charge of the Social Services Department to the effect that a large number of persons were now prepared to accept work in the rural districts. He mentioned that a considerable number of fares had been advanced in order that people might take advantage of the opportunities for employment which were offering in those districts. I am convinced that there are a number, in addition to those who have already gone to the country, who might find employment in those areas for a long period, provided they were prepared to accept reasonable rates of pay.

Recently I have come across people seeking work in those districts who have insisted on wages considerably in advance of those which would be granted or which have been granted under any award affecting their industry; and, when refused the payment of those wages, they have withdrawn from negotiations with the prospective employer. That just will not do, because the margin in many cases between prices realised and costs of production in some rural districts is decreasing, and there has not been an increase in the tempo of business in rural districts.

Consequently nobody is prepared to provide employment at a figure which is in excess of that which would normally and properly be paid. But if those people are prepared to accept employment at those last-mentioned rates, while I frankly admit there is not unlimited scope, there are still opportunities in the rural districts, as I understand the position.

The Minister for Lands: What is the nature of the work you are speaking of?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Farm work in some cases and work in stores—various kinds of employment in limited quantities. Hitherto, it might be pointed out, it has not been too easy to obtain labour in some industries. I think that local governing bodies have a limited scope for accepting further employees provided that they can claim to be useful in the work they have to do and are prepared to accept the usual rates governing their industries.

Mr. Lawrence: I would like you to give us a list of them.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: It is exceedingly difficult to do that. I can speak of only two or three, but the position there is symptomatic of what prevails with respect to others. Surely it is not my business to conduct an investigation of that character! If there is a necessity for the finding of employment for people, I think that the responsibility is that of the State Government, which has the facilities to ascertain these things. I am certain that were the situation reversed, if I did nothing else, I would be trying to find out the possibilities of providing employment.

Mr. Hall: Would you favour the introduction of fares for people going to the country?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I said that I understood the department was already paying fares in a number of cases, and I have always favoured that procedure which is the system that has been followed over a number of years in various departments. I do not consider that a person whose resources are sadly diminished should be expected to pay immediately the substantial amount required to enable him to travel long distances into the country.

With the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about Wundowie, I must say that I have some sympathy. I know quite a bit about that subject. But this is a question of deciding what comes first. Is it first desirable to reserve £300,000, as the Premier has told us is going to be done, and spend it this year at Wundowie; or is it more desirable, in all the circumstances in which we find ourselves, to take action to resolve, so far as we can, the unemployment which is in our midst? It would not go to the roots of the State's progress if the expenditure of that £300,000 were avoided and the work at Wundowie were not done for another 12 months; but the money could be used to provide work for 2,000 men at an average rate of £15 per week each for 10 weeks. Therefore, in all the circumstances, it would make a considerable contribution for nearly three months to the resolution of this problem. So I suggest that this matter is not a joke. I do not approach it in that light; and I reiterate that the reason I came to my feet to make my remarks was that the Government apparently regards the matter as a joke.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [5.26]: One is entitled to give to a motion the consideration one thinks it is entitled to receive in accordance with its importance. When this motion was moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition as a matter of urgency, I began to wonder whether unemployment had developed in the mind of the member for Greenough overnight.

Hon. D. Brand: No, it had not. He has been well aware of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said nothing about it on the Address-in-reply. He did not speak on the Address-in-reply. There was his opportunity.

Hon. D. Brand: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the matter was so urgent that he was bubbling over with the desire to say something and it has been going on for weeks, why was he silent on the Address-in-reply? So it is idle from the member for Greenough—

Hon. D. Brand: No, it is not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —to come here and plead urgency and talk about his anxiety to see something done about this matter—

Hon. D. Brand: Is it urgent or not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —which has been so grave and which has been worrying him for so long that he could not contain himself, when he allowed the Address-in-reply to go by, day after day, week after week, and uttered not a syllable.

Mr. Bovell: I uttered words about the unemployed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Did the hon. member? I read his speech and I could not find any reference to it.

Mr. Bovell: I did. I said that a quarter of the unemployed in the Commonwealth were in Western Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The members of the Opposition—

Mr. Bovell: You read my speech again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —who spoke before the member for Stirling got up and jumped to a number of assumptions—

Hon. D. Brand: He was following your lead.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —missed their opportunity to inform the House of their views on this question.

Mr. Bovell: I did inform the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Did the hon. member? He said very little about it. His speech was one of the shortest he has delivered in this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To come back to the mover of the motion, who is all het up about this subject, he was able to sit in his place for weeks and not utter a syllable about the question that was worrying him so much.

Mr. Ackland: Do you consider it urgent?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a grave problem.

Mr. Ackland: What are you doing about it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will tell the hon. member, if he will display a little patience—something he has not found it possible to do previously. This situation is not singular to Western Australia although it is worse here at the moment than in any other State. I heard over the air this morning that trouble is likely to occur in Queensland because the Government there is inclined to cut its loan expenditure by as much as £3,000,000. So, one can anticipate serious trouble in that State.

If the situation in Western Australia were the result of inefficiency or maladministration, as the member for Vasse is pleased to call it, on the part of the Western Australian Government, then would the Premiers of the other States have so readily agreed with the Commonwealth that special assistance might be given to this State? Surely they would have taken the opportunity there and then to say, "No, you are in this trouble through your own fault. Get out of it the best way you can."

Hon. D. Brand: No. If the Commonwealth was finding it out of its own resources—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They did not take that line. There was not even a suggestion from the Commonwealth that this State's difficulties were caused by the State.

Hon. D. Brand: That is not what the Premier inferred the other day.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the contrary, it readily recognised that its own policy, because of the economy of Western Australia, could have a much more dire effect here than anywhere else; and, of course, this reduced spending was deliberately planned months ago. It is part of a definite policy to curtail the spending of funds, and if the spending of funds is curtailed, then employment is curtailed because we cannot have it both ways.

This Government was anxious to proceed with the comprehensive water scheme at a far greater rate than the previous Government had done, and at a greater rate than the Government was then doing, and to that end it asked the Prime Minister to make the Commonwealth money, which it had already agreed to find, available more quickly to the State so that the work might be proceeded with faster.

Now I propose to read the Prime Minister's reply to the State's request in proof of the fact that the Commonwealth deliberately planned to slow up expenditure on public works in order to arrest the trend in the Commonwealth's economy. This is the letter, dated the 15th September, 1955, addressed to the Premier and signed, Robert G. Menzies—

Dear Mr. Hawke,

Thank you for your letter of 22nd August expressing your Government's appreciation of the Commonwealth's decision to increase the limit of its present total contribution towards the Comprehensive Water Supply Scheme from £2.15m. to £4m.

You have asked whether the Commonwealth would be prepared later in this financial year to consider increasing its contribution of £681,796 on a pound for pound basis in 1955-56, if the State is able to proceed further with the scheme than would be necessary to attract a Commonwealth contribution of this amount.

When deciding to increase the maximum Commonwealth contribution to the cost of the scheme from £2,150,000 to £4,000,000 my Government gave careful consideration to the manner in which the additional commitment involved was to be discharged. We had to have regard for instance to the Commonwealth's own budgetary problems, to the effect of Government spending—

and this is important—

—on the economy in general, and to other factors affecting general Commonwealth-State financial relations. The outcome of our deliberations was to make the increased contribution subject to the annual limits advised to you in my letter of 8th August. Since then, we have become even more concerned at the problem of maintaining stability in the economy and have to look critically at any proposal for increasing Commonwealth spending. In these circumstances, the Commonwealth cannot agree to provide more than £681,796 this financial year.

Mr. Bovell: You still got more during that financial year than in any other financial year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was available to the hon. member's Government in the same way, if it had been able and prepared to spend as much on the comprehensive water supply scheme as we are, but it was not.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Were the steel and cement available?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They were not, and you know it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They were. The reason why we got that amount of money was because we kept the comprehensive water supply scheme on No. 1 priority and went all out to push on with the scheme. The only reason that we are not pushing on faster now—and the rate is still a very satisfactory one—is because the Commonwealth has deliberately put a brake on us.

Mr. Bovell: How can the Commonwealth put the brake on when you are getting more funds than you ever received before?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Nedlands has not yet spoken to this debate, but I want to remind him, lest he put his foot in it later—

Mr. Court: I think I have a fairly good memory.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I remind him that this policy of curtailing expenditure and reducing public works is one which he advocated.

Mr. Court: Would you give the other side of the story, too?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I will give the hon. member's words. He advocated a dampening down of what he was pleased to call terrific Government expenditure.

Mr. Court: True.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In a further phrase, he advocated "tightening the reins of Government expenditure."

Mr. Court: Also true.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Now, I listened in vain for a single suggestion from the other side as to what ought to be done in this emergency. There was nothing but destructive criticism; not a single idea have we had up to date as to what the Government ought to do in order to provide employment.

Hon. D. Brand: What has the Government done? It is its responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am open to learn, but the only method I know is—

Hon. D. Brand: To send wires to the Commonwealth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —to put the men to work and pay their wages; and to pay the wages of the additional men that are put to work requires money.

Mr. Bovell: You have more money than you ever had before.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have yet to learn how we can put more work in hand and pay more wages to the men who are put on that work without increasing Government expenditure. If there is a way by which it can be done, then I am prepared to accept the suggestion right now.

Mr. Court: There are other forms of employment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Frankly, the Government does not know how to provide more Government work by spending less money. We have not yet learned that trick.

Mr. Bovell: But you have not had less money. I proved that in my Address-in-reply speech.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Nedlands on a previous occasion said there might be a tightening of the reins on expenditure, and he suggested that the Government should divert some of its funds to what he was pleased to call the private sector.

Mr. Court: A very commendable object, too.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, if the Government had surplus funds, but the Government has not enough money to do all the works it wants to carry out.

Mr. Court: I did not suggest your own Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So there is no money that we can divert to the private sector in order to put these idle men to work; and I agree it is important that it be done. We have been seeking money from the various sources. As the hon. member who moved this motion knows, the only source open to the Government for loan money is the Loan Council. So we applied to the Loan Council for more money to provide for more employment.

Mr. Bovell: Of course, there is the matter of judicious spending of the funds at your disposal.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, there is, and in that regard we showed the previous Government a very fine example.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. May: That rocked you!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What about unemployment? We are dealing with that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would remind the member for Greenough that we did not use loan moneys to make a reduction in the price of cement to private users and charge the cost up to Government works. That is not the way to do work more cheaply; that is the way to increase it.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We gave the people cheaper houses.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That had nothing to do with it.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Yes, it had a great deal to do with it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member did not even take the trouble to check whether the people who got the benefit of that reduction in price passed it on to the consumer.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We know very well that they got the benefit.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member does not know and, what is more, nobody else knows because there is no record of it. So it is of no use going off on that tack.

Mr. Bovell: Be generous and give us the benefit of the doubt.

Hon. D. Brand: We ensured the establishment of a bitumen plant at Kwinana which has saved the country £65,000 already.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Greenough has the temerity to chide this Government about deferred payments. If ever there ought to be experts on deferred payment it is the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Greenough.

Hon. D. Brand: Let us have it; go on!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because when they went out of office, it was our responsibility to find the money to pay for these deferred debts.

Hon. D. Brand: How much was it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It ran into millions.

Hon. D. Brand: It did not.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Of course, it did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It ran into millions.

Hon. D. Brand: It did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has the opportunity, which I have not now, of giving us his figures in relation to it. All he need do is read Hansard for 1952 and 1953 and he will see where I asked the then Treasurer a question in regard to it. The Leader of the Opposition, who was then the Treasurer, supplied the information and it is in Hansard in black and white. Now get busy!

Hon. D. Brand: At June of that year you had £226,000 deferred in Britain.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The deferred payments ran into millions.

Hon. D. Brand: They did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They did.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: There were locomotives and railway equipment in Britain.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But they still had to be paid for.

Hon. D. Brand: At the end of the financial year you were able to pay millions off.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But the hon. member's Government placed the orders on deferred payment and we had to pay the debts.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We were in the same position as all the other States in Australia; but we did not do what you did.

Hon. D. Brand: I would not like to follow this Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Now members can see the truth of the whole position. Members opposite are now admitting what they previously denied—that they were experts in deferred payments.

Mr. Bovell: Those payments were honoured within the financial year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, they were not.

Mr. Bovell: Yes, they were.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Minister's Government left us in the shade in regard to deferred payments.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The difference is this—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Treasurer got the money for those payments.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —the Leader of the Opposition created debts and left them for this Government to pay. But we are paying our own and that is the difference.

Hon. D. Brand: You are lucky.

Mr. Bovell: You thought we would have to pay them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the difference and I submit that it is a very vital one.

Mr. Bovell: The people let you down.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is so much easier to defer payments for somebody else to meet; but if one has to meet them oneself, it is not so easy.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I think you realise that now.

Mr. Hearman: If you are still there, you can continue it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would remind the hon. member who has just interjected, about a subject that affects him a little in this regard. Talking about deferred payments and debts to be met, this Government had the legacy of having to provide water supplies for Cranbrook, Mt. Barker and Tambellup because the previous Government committed this Government to doing it and did not leave the money to carry out the work.

Hon. L. Thorn: We were going to do it ourselves but we did not get back.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So members opposite ought to talk about deferred payments! I say they are experts on the subject.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: When you went out of office, you left us many things to carry out.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Did you do them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But we did not leave the hon. member's Government any deferred payments to meet; and that is the difference.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I would not be too sure of that. There was a hefty deficit.

Mr. Bovell: What would have been the position if there had been a change of Government?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was never any danger about that.

Mr. Hearman: Answer the question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To get back to this problem which all Governments will have to face up to, and before very long, too, and in support of my statement that this situation has been created throughout the Commonwealth as the result of deliberate policy, I propose to quote from the monthly summary of Australian conditions, issued by the National Bank of Australasia. I refer members to the issue dated the 9th April.

Hon. D. Brand: I have a later one if you want to read it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is the one which suits my purpose. On page 3 appears the Prime Minister's statement and the question was, "Why spending is too high?" He says—

Objectives and the Government's policy: To come to grips with these problems, overall spending must be brought into stable relationship with the real resources available to us, productivity must be rapidly improved, exports must be expanded, and greater saving stimulated.

Tackling the causes: The pace of attempted national development must be kept within the limits of the real resources available to the nation. In plain language, Government expenditure in such categories as immigration, public works and administration will have to be reduced unless the private section is to be compelled to make all the sacrifices and Governments none.

He goes on—

... a slowing-down in the rate of private and national development is essential if we are to achieve "a sensible period of consolidation."

So, as a result of deliberate policy initiated by the Commonwealth Government, foreshadowed in that letter of September, private spending and Government spending

is being deliberately slowed down. Can that result in anything else but large-scale unemployment?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: But you have never before had so much to spend as a Government.

Mr. Bovell: He will not reply to that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Can it result in anything else but large-scale unemployment? Of course it cannot—

Mr. Andrew: And they know it.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You have received payments in other directions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS:—because the economy of Western Australia differs from the economy of the other States, where they have more secondary industries, and we have felt the result of this financial policy more quickly and more severely than any other State. That fact was recognised by the Loan Council and it is the reason why that body so readily agreed that special assistance would be made available to Western Australia to meet the situation. To show that the Government is playing its part—without additional funds as yet—I will inform the House as to what is being done.

Take my own department, which is the largest employing department, with two branches—architectural and public works. During July this year employment increased substantially over the employment on Government works in this State in June of this year. Here is the position regarding that: A total of 56 more men were employed in July than there were in June. The harbours and rivers branch of the department provided employment for 20 more men at Bunbury, 12 in Perth on the Narrows bridge project, 23 on the Fremantle slipways, and three additional men on the Albany harbour works.

Hon. D. Brand: Any extra in the country?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, Albany is a bit in the country. Employment had been provided at the State Engineering Works and the East Perth workshops to the extent of 34 more men. In connection with the Main Roads Department, the work of which was deliberately stepped up to provide more employment, we have this position: Construction works were providing employment for 1,493 men, the balance being engaged on general maintenance, surveys and local authority works. In the North-West 273 men were employed on day labour. At the end of July the number on the payroll of the department had increased by 280 men on all works as compared with this time last year.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You got over £5,000,000. A tremendous increase!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition cannot have it both ways. He is trying to make a case

about the lack of employment and asks what the Government has done and when I tell him that the Main Roads Department is employing 280 more men now than at this time last year, he comes back and says that we are getting too much money.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I did not say that! I said you are getting much more money now and that you should provide employment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So we are, so what is the Leader of the Opposition complaining about?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But you are not properly apportioning it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope we will hear more about that from the member for Cottesloe and I also hope he will be more logical than he was previously. So, up to date, we have not heard very much to which to reply and I repeat that the hon. member who moved this motion did not take any opportunity to speak on the Supply Bill. He was completely silent then. He was completely silent on the Address-in-reply. That presented two opportunities which he could have taken, at a much earlier stage, to deal with this urgent problem.

Mr. Bovell: Do not let that worry you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not worrying! It is the hon. member who should be worrying.

Hon. D. Brand: I will reply to you at a later stage.

Mr. Bovell: You and your Government should be worrying about the unemployment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It does not need any prompting. I would like—

Mr. Bovell: The Government should—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Would the Minister for Works please resume his seat? I would like to point out to the member for Vasse that interjections, at all times, are disorderly. I have no strong objection to interjections so long as they are relevant, but the hon. member has made three interjections in about three seconds. That is not strictly in accordance with Standing Orders. The hon. member can interject on occasions but he cannot continue making a stream of interjections. I therefore ask him not to follow that line again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To recapitulate that which the Government has done, I would say that it took the first logical step in this direction. It sought more funds with which to put the men to work and, in anticipation of receiving that money, it immediately arranged to pick up 140 additional men. Not a shilling has been received yet in pursuance of the promise that was given. When the Acting Prime Minister indicated that special financial assistance

would be provided for Western Australia, the State Government lost no time in drawing up three schedules of work.

Mr. Wild: Did he actually say that the Commonwealth would provide the money?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So I am informed. In fact, I have heard the statement reported to have been made by the Acting Prime Minister in which he referred to it himself. What is more, I have a copy of it.

Mr. Wild: Are you sure he did not say he would look into the case?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know what he said and so does the hon. member.

Mr. Wild: It is very different, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In pursuance of the statement made, this Government lost no time in drawing up three types of works schedules; one comprising building works only, such as schools, hospitals and houses; one comprising works of large labour-absorption capacity such as sewerage, drainage and water supply and another schedule which was a combination of the two.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The Premier promised he would lay that on the Table of the House today, but he has not done so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was unaware that he had made that promise and no doubt he must have overlooked the matter; but we will honour that promise tomorrow. It is to be expected that a combination of the two schedules would amount to a substantial sum. Members opposite were then critical of the fact that the schedules of works amounted to £4,000,000. Each of the schedules did not amount to £4,000,000 because we indicated to the Commonwealth only the amount of work which we knew we had the resources to carry out.

One cannot say one will carry out £6,000,000 worth of buildings if one knows very well that one has not the draftsmen to prepare the plans and to do all the necessary preliminary work in connection with the works programme. So we were completely practical regarding the question and we submitted only a list of works which we felt sure we would be capable of carrying out. The list of works on all buildings did not amount to £4,000,000 or anything like it. Nor did the list of works on sewerage, drainage and water supplies amount to £4,000,000; but a combination of the two amounted to approximately £4,000,000 and this State is capable of carrying out all that work if the money is made available.

Although the urgency of the work was emphasised and no time was lost in submitting the schedules, a long time has elapsed without any definite word from

the Commonwealth regarding a decision. So the Premier has used the quickest method to get in touch with the Acting Prime Minister to ask for a decision, and we have had an acknowledgment of our request, but still no decision.

Mr. Court: Did not the Premier indicate that each list involved £4,000,000? That is the impression he gave to the House.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Premier may have made a general statement which could have conveyed that idea but this is what the hon. member must keep in mind: The Premier was absent from Perth when the schedules were compiled and submitted and they were submitted by me. He was told, before he left the city, that our idea was that we would compile schedules totalling £4,000,000. No doubt he assumed that the schedules covered £4,000,000 worth of work and, in regard to the schedules embodying both types of work, that is correct. So, if there is any misunderstanding on this question, I hope members will blame me and not the Premier.

Mr. Court: What do the other two schedules amount to roughly?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would not hazard a guess because I do not wish to mislead the hon. member, but from memory I can say they are less than £3,000,000 each. But a combination of them—and in the combination we drop out some works from the A and B schedules—totals approximately £4,000,000, and this State is capable and anxious to carry out that work if the money is forthcoming. If it is not, however, then there are not sufficient funds available in the loan allocation to this State to enable the Government to proceed.

To some extent we have already jeopardised our ability to continue in employment the men already engaged by anticipating in some degree assistance from the Commonwealth—I refer to the putting on of 140 men in connection with which information was supplied to this House a week or two ago. I trust the Commonwealth, after leading the State to believe it would receive some additional financial assistance, will not withhold that assistance. If it does, it will only create still greater difficulties for Western Australia, and make the position of the unemployed far worse than it is—and the Lord only knows it is bad enough! It is a dreadful thing, in my view, to come to a realisation that we are in an economic state today which is not the result of any failure in the seasons, or on the part of our citizens to work, but which has been created by a set of circumstances attendant upon a deliberate financial policy imposed as a result of advice.

Mr. Heal: Hear! hear!

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is not a fact.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the situation with which we have to cope, and the only way in which anybody can cope with it is to spend money; and one cannot spend money one has not got.

Mr. Court: What is the Government's official idea as to the number of unemployed in this State. There is a lot of argument as to the correct number and the types of unemployed.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have figures supplied to me regularly every week by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services—and I notice those figures are rising by approximately 150 per week—indicating the number receiving assistance and the number applying for assistance. There are approximately as many men applying for assistance as there are on it. I am aware of the fact that the Commonwealth office here has informed the Federal Government of the gravity of the situation. There is only one thing to do and that is to provide work, and to provide work one has to have the money. The Leader of the Opposition knows full well the sources from which money can be obtained.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He had one or two places from which he could get a few bob.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is where Governments must look for the funds, and that is where this Government is looking. It is very hopeful and the Premiers have all recognised that there is a special case for Western Australia. I emphasise the fact that there is no doubt whatever that there is a special case for this State—whether it receives relief or not is another matter. There is a special case, however, and the Premiers of all the other States—who are very reluctant to agree to anybody getting more than they are receiving—and the representatives of the Commonwealth agree that the case submitted and the information in their possession show that there is a special case for Western Australia to receive something over and above the ordinary allocation.

If such a special case exists, then we have a right to expect that special provision will be made for it; and we are still waiting for a decision in that connection. We cannot make the decision. We have done all we can in relation to the matter by emphasising the gravity of it and by reminding the Commonwealth that we have not yet heard the result of its consideration of this question, and by reminding the Federal authorities also that we proceeded in anticipation of getting some of this money. Accordingly, if there is anything more that the State Government can do in connection with the matter, I will be glad to hear of it.

That, I think, covers very clearly all the points raised by members of the Opposition with the exception of a very interesting one made by the member for Stirling, one which to some extent cuts across the

motion, because he indicated that there is work available in this State, that there are vacant jobs but that the men have not been going to them.

Hon. D. Brand: That is the responsibility of the State Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Does the hon. member mean to pick men up and take them to the job?

Hon. D. Brand: Of course!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, is it! Men are made aware of these jobs when they register with the Social Services Department; they know the jobs are there—if they are there.

Hon. D. Brand: You said they are there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not say they were there. The member for Stirling said they were there. My remark is, if they are there, then more men are unemployed than need be, and so the position is not as bad as the member for Greenough said.

Hon. D. Brand: Or as the Premier would make out.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Or as Mr. Chamberlain would make out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so, and I hope that it is right.

Hon. D. Brand: So do I.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope there are thousands of jobs available which are to be filled.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I said they were limited in number.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course they are.

Hon. A. F. Watts: But they existed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If this debate does nothing else, I hope it will focus attention on the fact that there are jobs available, waiting to be filled. I hope it will not be very long before they are filled. So far as the Government is concerned, it has more men in its employ than at the same time last year, so it is playing its part. If private employers will endeavour to help in the same way, then we will not have any unemployed in Western Australia.

Mr. Court: Private employers would have helped much more if there had not been so great a scare put up by the State Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have yet to become convinced that hard-headed business men will put their employees off, if they still have need of them, simply because someone has created a scare. This is a question of hard cold fact, and businessmen do not deliberately reduce their profits because somebody attempts to frighten them.

Mr. Court: I think you are much further off the mark than you realise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What I do know is that businessmen have found the source of credit drying up, and have not been able to carry out the works which they intended. That is why they have put men off—because they cannot get the finance. It is part of a deliberate policy to which the banks subscribe to squeeze credit and to reduce the availability of credit so that there must result a contraction of both public and private works.

Mr. Court: If your Government had not made so much fuss about the unemployment position, I am telling you now there would not have been so much unemployment in this State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is your opinion.

Mr. Roberts: That would stop people from spending.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What stops people from spending is their lack of money. I know of no stronger weapon than that.

Mr. Bovell: Advances by private banks have increased by several millions in the last few months; that was reported in "The West Australian" a few days ago.

Mr. Norton: But what about the interest rates on those increases?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We know the actual position is not that at all. It is much harder to obtain credit now through bank accommodation than it was twelve months ago.

Mr. Wild: Despite that, advances have increased.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What does that mean? If it is more selective; it is harder to get. It means that fewer people would be able to get the credit. In other words, it means that fewer borrowers can get credit, and those who do get it, get less than they received formerly. What I have been saying all along is that there is a credit squeeze and a contraction of buying power deliberately imposed, and foreshadowed months ago.

Mr. Wild: Do you deny there is more money out on overdraft now than there was at this time last year?

Mr. Bovell: By millions, as published in the newspapers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no need for me to deny anything, other than to reiterate the statement I have just made, which is true and correct. As a result of that contraction of funds, it is not possible for the would-be home owners to build houses, so there is less building; so builders are out of work; so the manufacturers put men off; and so brick works put men off. And so it continues. If funds had been available, however, more people would have built houses. That cannot be denied. If more people built houses there would be more employment; all round, so it is not difficult to see the:

real reason. The only way we will get out of the trouble is when funds are made available for that purpose. The member for Nedlands knows that if by some mischance war was declared tonight, the unemployment problem would be solved in 24 hours.

Mr. Court: You do not suggest that method.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not suggesting that as a method, but I am showing the hon. member what would happen, as surely as night follows day, and has happened before.

Mr. Wild: Would that not be necessary in the event of war?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: How does that come about? What physical change has taken place in 24 hours to make it possible for a country, which was unable to employ its men the day before, to suddenly find employment for them?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It is natural for one to empty his pockets when a revolver is pointed at his head, but it does not do any good.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it is essential for those of us who have money in our pockets to empty them so as to keep the men employed. If there is money in our pockets to be emptied when the occasion arises, I suggest it has now arisen.

Mr. Wild: Your Government has more money to spend this year than it had last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So I want the source of funds, which would undoubtedly be available for war, to be made available for the present emergency.

Mr. Court: Surely you are not assuming that a war will get us out of our trouble.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's time has expired.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [7.30]: In rising to support the motion, I wish, as did the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, to address my remarks to the question of unemployment. I was interested first in the fact that the Government did not make any immediate reply. It is certainly an unusual procedure and normally, if the Government had a good reply to put forward, it would not hesitate to do so. In fact, however, the Leader of the Country Party succeeded in flushing the Deputy Premier and got him to make some sort of reply, which was a personal attack on the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, suggesting he might have mentioned this matter earlier.

Whatever the merits of that might be, a personal attack on an opponent is not the best kind of logical reply to make in

answer to a case that has been argued against one if one had a sound, logical argument to put forward. A personal attack would have been better at the end of the speech. However, the Deputy Premier chose to open his remarks with something in the nature of a personal attack on the member for Greenough. The simple facts of the matter are that the Commonwealth Government made the action it intended to take quite clear some 12 months or so ago.

Last September the Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Representatives in which he set out his appreciation of the economic difficulties which beset the country and the course his Government proposed to take to endeavour to overcome those difficulties. So there is no question, as far as the State Government is concerned, of not having sufficient warning regarding the course the Commonwealth Government intended to pursue and what the repercussions of that course would be.

We find that although the Commonwealth Government did advocate a policy of the slowing down of the economy and a tighter rein on expenditure, in actual fact, so far as Western Australia is concerned, it was not heeded because in the year 1955-56 the Commonwealth Government provided this State with £2,000,000 more than it made available during the preceding year. So it cannot be argued that the Commonwealth Government actually restricted the finance that was available to this State.

Mr. Hall: What was the money worth?

Mr. HEARMAN: I think, even if that money were worth less and I do not think there was much difference in the one year, the amount extra was £2,000,000. I would point out that if the Government knew of the money it was to get, it should have formulated a policy which would cope with the situation as it was likely to affect this State. The amount of money received by Western Australia on a per capita basis was by far the highest of any State in Australia. In New South Wales it was £21 per head; in Victoria it was £18; Queensland £23; South Australia £28; Tasmania £35 and Western Australia £42. Keeping the amount of £42 per head in mind, the Government of Western Australia had nearly twice as much to spend as the average of £23 for all States. It had more money than ever before; more money than any other Government in Australia, and, indeed, it finished up the year with a greater number of unemployed than any other State in Australia.

The Minister for Lands: You are getting mixed up, are you not?

Mr. HEARMAN: No. Will the Minister deny that his Government had more money and a greater amount per head than did any other State in Australia? Of course he will not.

The Minister for Lands: You are getting mixed up with the money.

Mr. HEARMAN: The point is that the Government was forewarned by the Commonwealth Government as to what the future held; it received more money than any other State, yet has the greatest number of unemployed. The Government has no policy to put forward, yet it ended up the year with a greater number of unemployed than in any other State, to which the Deputy Premier's one answer is: Greater Government employment and more money from the Commonwealth.

Mr. Lapham: What did the Government do wrong?

The Minister for Lands: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. HEARMAN: I know as much as the Minister for Lands. He has unemployment in his electorate, and I will put forward a suggestion for him.

The Minister for Lands: Let's hear it.

Mr. HEARMAN: If the Minister would think a little more on these lines and a little less of sniping the Commonwealth Government, it might mean more money for this State, if his Government attracted sufficient industry and capital here. But it has not done so. At this moment there is a proposition for a large tin mining company to come to this State in quite a big way, and on what the Government does over the next couple of days will depend whether it comes here or not.

Should the Government investigate the proposition submitted to it and act quickly—it will cost some £16,000—there will be started immediately a very extensive system of exploration dealing with Greenbushes tin leases held by Tin and Strategic Minerals Ltd. With Siamese Tin coming here and treating 1,000,000 yards a year, it will provide a lot of employment. It is the sort of employment that would not require a lot of Government expenditure or a lot of skilled men, as the Minister knows, because it is open-cut mining. If companies of that nature could be attracted to this State and thus spend a lot more money here, we could have more men in employment, and the State's balance of trade and Australia's balance of trade would be helped. These are types of enterprise that the Government should encourage.

Hon. D. Brand: I understand there was a chemical company interested in going to Bunbury.

Mr. HEARMAN: I believe there was; but what happened I do not know. But I am informed of the position in this other case.

The Minister for Works: You will be told in due course.

Mr. HEARMAN: I hope the Minister is right. But in the case I have in mind, if the Government is in the position to make up its mind quickly, there is a big prospect of these people coming here. In any event, the exploratory programme envisaged would provide a considerable amount of employment immediately.

The Minister for Lands: Not much.

Mr. HEARMAN: I do not think the Minister knows anything about this.

The Minister for Lands: I know a little about it.

Mr. HEARMAN: I do not think the Minister knows anything at all.

The Minister for Lands: Tell us how many would be employed!

Mr. HEARMAN: Does the Minister suggest that the Government should not encourage enterprises of that nature?

The Minister for Lands: I am suggesting that you tell us how many would be affected.

Mr. HEARMAN: I cannot give the exact figures.

The Minister for Lands: So you do not know anything about it, either!

Mr. HEARMAN: The company would spend hundreds of thousands of pounds here. It would not come here for nothing. Already its chairman of directors, the general manager, and the chief geologist have been on the field; and, as a result of their investigations, they have decided to go ahead, and will do so subject to certain conditions, one of which is that all leases must be under the control of the one company. That is where the hold-up is at the moment. Subject to that condition, which I think is only reasonable and fair, a very considerable drilling programme could be put into effect. The Minister knows the field perfectly well, and tangible results could be produced quickly, as early as at Christmas time.

The Minister for Lands: Are you suggesting that money should be made available as a loan?

Mr. HEARMAN: It could be made available as a loan. The Government has made money available to the present company by way of a bank guarantee, and I understand the relationship with the bank is satisfactory and money advanced in the past has been paid back. This is one tangible opportunity for the Government to show its sincerity in this matter by assisting a show likely to be established here. But it must act quickly. If it requires any further information, I can obtain it.

The Minister for Works: The further information I want is as to where we get the money from.

Mr. HEARMAN: If the position is such that the Government cannot put its hands on £16,000 in a hurry, then we have reached a very low ebb in our State finance. Surely with a goal of this nature, the Government can at least find some means of making the money available for a matter of only a few months!

The Minister for Works: Shall I take it out of the amount set aside for the Bridgetown water supply scheme?

Mr. HEARMAN: I have not suggested that.

The Minister for Works: Would you agree with that?

Mr. HEARMAN: It is not my business to tell the Government how it should organise—

The Minister for Works: Is it so important that you would have the money taken out of the Bridgetown project? Answer that. How important is it?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do you regard water supplies as a No. 1 priority?

Mr. HEARMAN: Water supply is a No. 1 priority, in the Minister's own words.

The Minister for Works: Does the hon. member believe it is important enough to take the money from the Bridgetown scheme? Tell me that!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You need someone to tell you! There is no doubt of that.

Mr. HEARMAN: The Deputy Premier knows perfectly well that the Speaker would not permit a discussion of that nature. The Minister is merely trying to sidetrack me in an effort to get me pulled up by the Speaker. His tactics are not fair. I do not propose to fall for them. The sum of £300,000 has been set aside for Wundowie. It cannot all be spent at once, and £16,000 of it could be used on this project and would be paid back before it was needed for Wundowie.

Mr. Moir: Why cannot they get it from a bank?

The Minister for Lands: The Federal Government stopped them.

Mr. HEARMAN: It may or may not have done so; but I want to know whether the Government is going to do anything in this matter. Money has previously been advanced by the banks under a Government guarantee. I do not know whether the banks no longer want to take Government guarantees. I hope we have not arrived at the stage where the State Treasurer cannot raise money for a short-term loan in a hurry. It is a pretty parlous position if we have reached that stage; and if that is a true statement, the outlook for the unemployed is rather grim.

Hon. A. F. Watts: They have been known to use a bank guarantee for Chamberlain Industries.

Mr. HEARMAN: I believe that is so—and for other projects as well. But I think the banks are getting a bit fed-up with Government guarantees. I am aware that money is particularly tight because of the Government bills that are falling due. Some are falling due this month, and some became due last month. That is another form of Government financing which has led to the present situation wherein the Deputy Premier suggests that £16,000 cannot be found! One of the reasons is that the money has already been spent in previous years. I suggest that the expenditure was not wise, because the projects on which it was expended had far more spent on them than should have been spent; and the question of deferred payments is obviously one that is catching up with the Government and embarrassing it, making its formulation of a policy extremely difficult.

In this matter of unemployment the Government had plenty of warning of what the Federal Government's policy was going to be, and it cannot claim that the Federal Government has been particularly hard on it so far as money is concerned. In fact, I think the Federal Government is quite entitled to take the view that it should look into the question of Western Australia's finances, which ended with a record deficit, despite the fact that a record contribution came from the Commonwealth. In its role of banker, as it were, the Federal Government is entitled to take some steps to ensure that the State Government is handling its finances wisely and well; because, after all, the Federal Government is responsible to the electors for providing this money, and has to view the matter on an Australia-wide basis.

If the Commonwealth Government is to dole out money to any State Government and such Government is to run into problems of this kind without any policy to meet them other than to ask for more money, then the Federal Government is entitled to ask where that State Government is going, and how much additional finance it is entitled to have made available to it for expenditure in this manner.

There is no question that employment is a State matter. The State has the spending of the loan money; and if the fiscal policy of the Commonwealth is such that under the present set-up it will lead to possible unemployment, then obviously the responsibility is on the State Government to reshape its works programme within the scope of the money available, in an endeavour to absorb the extra men that will require jobs.

Personally, I do not think that the idea of just increasing Government employment all the time is the complete answer, or even a good one. I think it is far better to attract private capital, whether it be from outside Australia or from inside, get those investors to establish their projects

in Western Australia, and so provide additional employment through that means. I think that is one matter in which the Government has been singularly unsuccessful during its term of office.

Quite obviously any Government must look ahead and have a clear concept of where it is going. For instance, it so happens that the Government realised that the housing shortage had to be overtaken at the end of the year, as the Minister for Housing was freely predicting last year. It is quite obvious, therefore, that there will have to be some other avenue of employment for those people who have been engaged on housing projects. If the Government cannot look ahead and make some effort to provide the additional opportunities of employment that will be required, then it is falling down on the job.

It is no good waiting for the balloon to go up and then saying, "We must have more money from the Commonwealth." A mock Parliament could run the country that way. Anyone could say, "Give me enough money and I can keep everyone employed." That is no statesmanlike approach.

The Minister for Lands: How do you keep people employed without money?

Mr. HEARMAN: It is not as though the Government is without money. It has more than ever before; and more per head of population than any other Government in Australia.

The Minister for Lands: What about facing the situation now?

Mr. HEARMAN: I do not think the last Loan Council meeting was a disappointment to the Treasurer either. Judging from his remarks, I think he came out of it a lot better than he expected to. In any case, even if there were a restriction as a result of the last Loan Council meeting, quite obviously there is a responsibility upon the Treasurer to foresee these things and shape Government policy accordingly. It is no good just blundering along and hoping things will be all right. The Government must exercise some responsibility in these matters.

Mr. Lapham: You cannot.

Mr. HEARMAN: I know the Government cannot. That is what I am complaining about. I am saying what it should have done. It is not as though it has not had any money, and it is not as though it has no money now.

Mr. Lapham: Where has the Government spent money in avenues it should not have done so?

Mr. HEARMAN: The proposal to spend £300,000 at Wundowie is one case in point. I also mentioned the other night some of the tremendous losses that were sustained on the railways which, I feel, are unjustified and must reflect on the economy of

the whole State. Anything that has a deleterious effect on the economy of the State, must obviously have an effect on the State's solvency and capacity to provide jobs. I think that the Government—and the Minister for Works demonstrated it tonight—has no policy in connection with this matter other than simply to say, "We must have more money than you have ever given us before."

I ask myself, if anything in the nature of a recession sets in throughout Australia, just where is the Government going to land, because obviously the Commonwealth Government will not be able to provide money, at the rate that has been asked for by the State, to relieve unemployment throughout Australia. The sum of £4,000,000 to provide work for 6,000 people! Good heavens, it is completely unrealistic to suggest that the Commonwealth continue on those lines!

Mr. Johnson: Why?

Mr. HEARMAN: I would like to know who is going to pay the taxes to provide the money.

Mr. Johnson: Did not the Commonwealth Government have a surplus of £80,000,000 this year?

Mr. HEARMAN: Would that go very far if it is to be used at this rate? Furthermore, as the hon. member knows, the £80,000,000 is just not stuck in the bank on fixed deposit or anything like that.

Mr. Johnson: It is poured down the drain.

Mr. HEARMAN: It is used to redeem Treasury bills and so forth. It is not just available for this purpose. It has been used to prevent inflation. The redemption of Treasury bills is one of the steps taken to prevent inflation. It is misleading and unfair to the general public for the hon. member to make statements of that nature when he knows perfectly well that the expenditure of that money, on non-productive works, in many cases to provide relief from unemployment, is only going to give another boost to inflation and make the unemployment position still worse.

That sort of irresponsible talk is most unfair to the people principally concerned in this question of unemployment and they are the unemployed themselves. Obviously, the thing to do is to encourage private enterprise to come here and spend its money, instead of which we find all sorts of talk about restrictive practices and of companies making profits, and so on. In fact, just the sort of talk that is likely to discourage people from coming here.

The Minister for Lands: You are faced with the Commonwealth policy that is not encouraging private enterprise today.

Mr. HEARMAN: I do not think that is the case today. Private enterprise wants a sound economy, and anything the Commonwealth Government does to produce that is likely to be in the interests of

encouraging private enterprise. I do not think that private enterprise wants to have any truck with a State Government which is completely irresponsible so far as its finances are concerned. There has been some talk about deferred payments. I know that all Governments have deferred payments, and so do members sitting behind the Government. It is perfectly true that the previous Government deferred some payments to be made in England, but that created no unemployment in Western Australia.

There is no question that the Leader of the Opposition can take a post-graduate course from the Premier any day of the week on this question of deferred payments. I do not think that even the Government itself is prepared to argue that the honouring of the Treasury bills is not becoming an acute embarrassment to the Treasury just at a time when the Treasury would rather not be embarrassed on account of the unemployment position. There are opportunities for the Government to attract outside capital to Australia. I have mentioned one case tonight where it has an opportunity to act, and act right now, if it is prepared to, but the Minister for Works was not particularly reassuring on that point, by his interjection. I still think that if there is a will to do it, the Government can do it.

The Minister for Works: I will have a look at the Bridgetown water scheme and see if I can do it there.

Mr. HEARMAN: The Minister should try that and see how he goes. He will then be the first Minister for Works with his throat cut! I hope I have made my point quite clear to the Minister. I still think it would be hardly sound finance on the part of the Government, simply for a matter of £16,000 to hold up a scheme which will save the railways about £20,000 a year, as it will do, in the cost of carting water to Bridgetown alone.

I know that the Bridgetown scheme is perhaps unique as far as that is concerned, but the amount of money saved to the railways alone would more than justify the most rapid completion possible of the scheme. So the Minister could not argue that the cutting down of that particular scheme was sound. At the same time, if the Government is sincere in this matter and wants to attract these people, here is an opportunity for it give concrete evidence of its desires.

If the Minister for Works is interested I can give him a good deal more in the way of particulars on that subject; and I can arrange for him to get them tonight if he wants them. I think I have made my position fairly clear. To recapitulate, I feel that the Government had more than ample warning of what the Federal policy was and what the Prime Minister's appreciation of the economic position in Australia was, but the Government appears to

me to have made no provision whatsoever to meet any of the difficulties that could arise as a result of that fiscal policy. The total sole policy is greater Government employment and asking for yet more money from the Federal Government, notwithstanding that it has received record amounts. The State Government has had more money per head of population than has any other State Government in Australia, and yet it is still asking for more and more. If this is the sole policy that the Government has to relieve unemployment, then I suggest it is singularly barren in ideas.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.0]: It was not my intention to speak this evening but as my name has been mentioned, and I suppose I can take credit for knowing more about the unemployment situation in this part of the world than any other man in this House, because I always seem to be mixed up in this business when it comes along, I think I should have something to say.

Some years ago we experienced a depression and there was much unemployment. We had a terrible job to keep many people from starving. I did my best to find work for them because I claim that every man and woman in this country is entitled to a job. But I do not want those who are now out of work to be given the same type of job as was provided by the Mitchell-Latham Government. That was not a job; in those days it was simply starvation. We approached the Government at that time to try to get work for those people and the Government said, "We have no money." The same thing is being said today. We asked the Mitchell-Latham Government to do something for the single men, but they said, "No. We will not touch the single men at all."

Had it not been for the Rev. Eric Nye, Councillor Hollis and the member for Fremantle the single men in Fremantle at that time would have had a tough spin. The Government of that day would not give us a penny piece for the single men and as good as said, "Let them starve." The Rev. Nye and Councillor Hollis started a public subscription list to provide food for these people. The first thing they did was to give them one meal a day and they were able to get hessian stretchers for them to sleep on.

We again approached the Mitchell-Latham Government and asked it to allow us to use the old base hospital for this work but they said, "Certainly not. We are not going to open that hospital." So we went about it another way and at last we forced the Government to open that place and we finished up feeding over 100 single men a day simply through the efforts of that committee. Eventually we forced the Government to subsidise the work. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, the jobs

provided for the married men and their wives. For that work they got 14s. a week between them.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That was more than they got in New South Wales.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Leader of the Opposition can speak afterwards. He knows that that is what the Government he supported was doing at that time. That was the Mitchell-Latham Government's idea of dealing with the unemployment problem and I now want to quote from Hansard to show members what was said at that time—

I cannot hope to convince the hon. member that he is entirely wrong and that we are killing work by shutting out many of the things that ought to be imported. We are making consumers pay a price that they cannot afford in order that goods may be manufactured here.

His idea was that instead of manufacturing everything here we ought to import everything. Does the Leader of the Opposition remember when he supported that idea?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What year was that?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That was in 1932. The Leader of the Opposition must remember it. Sir James Mitchell said that we would solve the unemployment position by bringing in as much as we could instead of manufacturing the goods here.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Sir James Mitchell said it; I thought you said I did.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That was the Government which the hon. member supported. That was the Government which gave a man and his wife 14s. a week to live on and gave nothing to the single men. The work they gave these married people was pulling out weeds along the streets and roads.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That was in the days when the Federal Labour Government cut down the old-age pensions.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I can remember when your Government cut them down at the same time—that was the year—from £1 to 15s. That was the Commonwealth Liberal Government.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Your Labour Government did that.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The hon. member thought that a man and his wife who were working should be entitled to receive a shilling a day less than the old-age pension.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We paid them more than did the New South Wales Labour Government or any other State Labour Government.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: You stay at home and never mind about going to New South Wales! The Leader of the Opposition can go there when he has finished.

However, it might be a good idea, for a lot of people, if he did go to New South Wales.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are going back into ancient history. Let us solve today's problems.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: A Minister in the Government of that day, supported by the present Leader of the Opposition, said—

I agree that the man and his wife who only get 14s. a week sustenance are having a bad time . . .

I think they were having a damn bad time! I saw many of these poor devils who were trying to exist on that pittance. I have been around the State at various times and people have come up to me and said, "Do you know me?" and I have said, "No." They have replied, "Do not you remember me when I was down in the soup kitchen at Fremantle when the Mitchell-Latham Government was in power?" I have then said, "Yes, I do know you now." I have found that all over the country.

The member for Blackwood spoke about the amount of money we are getting now. In the days of the Mitchell-Latham Government they did not want so much because they were paying only 14s. to a man and his wife. But today they want twenty times that much, and consequently the Government needs 20 times that much to pay for it. I do not think there is anything wrong with that. Is there? That is the reason why this Government wants more money than that received by the Mitchell-Latham Government.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are living in the distant past. Why do not you deal with today's problems?

The Minister for Lands: Why do not you deal with it?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I can remember when the Mitchell-Latham Government put out the slogan, "Work for all" and all we got was "Work for nobody."

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You just said that you had them working.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: "Work for all" was their slogan. The then Premier said, "Put me into Parliament and I will find work for all." But he found work for nobody. If this Government cannot do 100 per cent. better than the Mitchell-Latham Government did at that time, I will resign my seat in Parliament because the Government will not be worth following. I think it will do much better than that and it will not be long before it is able to employ most of these people—get them back into decent employment.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: From the way it is going, you will soon be resigning your seat in Parliament.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Our friends opposite like bringing more immigrants into this country—as many as they can.

They do not mind an army of unemployed; it is always handy to them because they can get men whenever they want them and it suits them, if there is industrial trouble, to be able to find a few scabs among those who are practically starving. That is why they are continuing with this immigration policy. The other day, at a meeting at Fremantle, it was said that a number of these people who had been in the State for quite some time had not had one job since coming to this country. What sort of treatment is that? That is the sort of thing a Government, supported by members opposite, is doing.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Chifley Labour Government brought in hundreds of thousands.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: And a Government supported by the hon. member followed on with that policy and increased the number of immigrants; they are still being brought into this country. Why cannot the Commonwealth Government suspend its immigration policy for the time being? At least until this trouble is overcome.

Mr. Court: Mr. Monck does not believe that.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I am not talking for Mr. Monck; I am talking as the member for Fremantle. I think that the intake of migrants should be cut down until this trouble has been overcome and until sufficient work has been provided for those who are now out of a job. A lot of these people who are unemployed are foreigners; they can hardly speak a word of English, so what are they to do? They are walking around town without a job to go to and it is political hypocrisy to introduce a motion of this kind.

It was well put over you tonight, Mr. Speaker; I know you could not help it and cannot be blamed. These people said last Thursday, "We will not mention the unemployment position during the Address-in-reply debate but we will put forward an urgency motion on Tuesday and the Speaker must agree to our request." That is the way it was done.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is that the way you used to do it?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The hon. member could have mentioned it a week or a fortnight ago. We are awake to all these tricks.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I'll say you are!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If the hon. member had let it go any longer, we would have been nearing a discussion on the Estimates and the Speaker would have said, "You can discuss that matter on the Estimates." I think it is about time we got on with our work instead of dealing in political hypocrisy and trying to

make out a case and blaming the Government for this problem. I know members opposite thought everything in the garden would be lovely. Unfortunately for them, we are awake to that sort of thing. There is no doubt about that. I think the best thing the Opposition could have done is that instead of moving this motion, it should have moved one reading as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House the Acting Prime Minister of Australia should immediately make some money available for the relief of unemployment in this State.

That is the motion the Opposition should have moved and, in conclusion, I trust that before long all the unemployed in Western Australia will be absorbed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is—

That the motion be agreed to.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [8.11]: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish the hon. member would speak up when he rises to his feet.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I did, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member, on rising, should say, "Mr. Speaker—"

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I did so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I rise to support the motion. The Government, in the past few weeks, has tried to absolve itself completely from the responsibility of trying to relieve the unemployment situation in Western Australia and it has done so by trying to blame the Commonwealth Government and by saying, "We have not enough money. We want more money to provide work for the unemployed." I am continually impressed by the manner in which this Government has shone as an Opposition.

Indeed, from the beginning of its term of office many of its members have been completely unhappy about the manner in which it has tackled the problems placed before it. It has tried definitely to find someone to attack and, being on the Government benches, it has met with difficulty in its attempt to do that. Therefore, it is well within its scope to try to find fault with the Commonwealth Government which, of course, is a Liberal-Country Party Government. I do not know, for the life of me, how this Government would get on if the Labour Party were in power in the Commonwealth sphere. I wonder how this Government would act then.

The Minister for Works: We would not be in this trouble.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Deputy Premier would be in far greater trouble than he is now. Just imagine Dr. Evatt as Prime Minister!

The Minister for Housing: Look whom we have now! He is trotting around the world while Rome burns. I correct that. He is trotting around the world while home burns.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This Government continually harps on the theme, "We have not enough money. Give us more! Give us more to deal with the problems that face us!" This Government will be known as the "Gimme Government." It will be known as the "Alibi like Government"; the Government that blames someone else for its maladministration. The only way this Government knows of tackling this unemployment situation is to ask for more money.

It is said that £4,000,000 was being sought from the Commonwealth Government to tackle this unemployment problem. What would that do? It would provide relief for the time being on Government works that should have been created previously by the proper apportionment of the money that this Government had already received. In any case, this £4,000,000 could be used by the Government now to stop unemployment, but what would it do? It would simply create further Government jobs of an unproductive nature which, in turn, would speed up the inflationary spiral and create a greater need for more money again in the next financial year.

One of the prime causes of unemployment in Western Australia at present lies at the feet of the Government in not properly apportioning the money it has already received. The State should have cut its undertakings according to the finances it has received. Previous speakers have already pointed out the amount of taxation reimbursements we have received, the amount of loan funds we have received, and the amount of road grants we have received. They have shown that Western Australia has been favoured in that respect.

I am one of those who would like the State to have more money. Indeed, were I sitting behind the Government I, too, would like more money from the Commonwealth Government, but I would not make that the sole excuse to absolve completely the Government I was sitting behind of all its responsibilities; and that is what this Government is doing. It is obvious to all that the unbalanced housing programme that was put into effect by the present Minister for Housing completely unbalanced the building industry.

Mr. Lapham: How was it unbalanced?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It was completely disorganised by gearing up this industry to a pitch that could not be sustained.

Mr. Lapham: His purpose was to build houses at a rate greater than that ever seen before.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes, and he built the industry up to such a pitch that it could not be sustained. The Government should have ensured, once the stage of gearing up had reached its maximum and it then commenced to fall off, that other plans were in hand to provide work for the men who fell out of that industry.

Mr. Johnson: Did not the credit squeeze prevent that?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is quite obvious that, from what we have heard tonight, the Deputy Premier and the Premier, in past weeks, have been doing their best to create the impression that unemployment in Western Australia—which is far greater than in any other State of the Commonwealth—is the fault of the Commonwealth. No one will deny that. They have given their story to the Press and it has printed it in full. The Press has given their story of blaming the Commonwealth Government excellent publicity. The Government has cried, "We have not enough money! We are asking for more!" As I have said, it will soon be known as the "Gimme Government."

The Minister for Lands: You just said that you would do the same thing yourself.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: As I said earlier, the trouble is that this Government has maladministered the funds it has received. Other speakers have pointed out that this Government has received, in recent years, a greater amount of money over and above that received by any previous Government. I suggest that this Government should be able to make do and also keep people employed as well as previous Governments have in past years instead of getting itself into this financial mess. Let me quote these figures to the House: During 1951-52 this State received, from all Commonwealth sources, the sum of £34,619,000. In 1955-56, it received a total of £40,000,000.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: £49,000,000.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes, £49,000,000.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And £612,000.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That shows a big percentage increase over the amount received in 1951-52. At that time—I am trying to compare relative values—the basic wage, in July, 1952, was £11 12s. 3d. and in July, 1956, it was £13 1s. 6d.; an increase of about 12 per cent.

Mr. Johnson: Is that the index or the pegged wage?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The wage was pegged for a time.

Mr. Johnson: It should be £14.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Even if it were increased to £14, it would still not add up to the percentage increase of the moneys granted to this Government in those years.

Mr. Johnson: And by how much has the population increased?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I will tell the hon. member that in a moment.

Mr. Johnson: I am just trying to correct a schoolboy.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The payments from the Commonwealth to the various States on a per capita basis, work out as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
New South Wales	21	0	11
Victoria	18	12	10
Queensland	23	8	7
South Australia	28	10	5
Western Australia	42	7	0
Tasmania	35	15	5
Average	23	8	10

Those figures have been given before, but they bear repetition because they show that the Commonwealth has a real regard for the fact that Western Australia does suffer disabilities. We all know that; parties of all political complexion are aware of that fact. So it will be seen that Western Australia, per capita, receives £42 7s.—almost twice as much as the average of the other States. Accordingly, as far as money received by this State is concerned, we cannot blame the Commonwealth Government. The State Government should endeavour to properly apportion its money and obviate or cut out all its frittering away of expenditure and the wrong apportionment of money.

The Minister for Works: Give just one example of that.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: One example has been given in regard to the money that is to be put into Wundowie.

The Minister for Works: That has not been done. Give one example of this frittering away of money.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Premier said that would be done. The money has been poured down the various drains without a proper realisation of what has been going on.

The Minister for Works: Give just one example.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Very well. Let us consider what the Minister for Housing has done and let us view the mismanagement in his department where finance, which was made available for 12 months, was spent in seven months.

The Minister for Lands: He built houses.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The member for Leederville asked questions about population increases. Let us have a look

at some of these figures on the basis of the wholesale and retail indices. There has been a rise in prices from 1949 to 1956 of about 74 per cent. The population during this period has increased by about 14 per cent., from about 8,000,000 to 9,000,000. During this time the yearly Commonwealth grants to the States have steadily increased from a figure of £78,074,000 to £217,675,000. That is by about 178 per cent. That means that if the last payment of the Labour Government in 1949 of £78,000,000 were increased to allow for a rise in prices and population, the figure for 1956 should be £155,000,000; instead of that, it was £217,000,000.

Accordingly, the Commonwealth grants to the States have consistently increased in the absolute sense, and Western Australia has been well ahead on a per capita basis. The unemployment figures as at the 31st July, 1956, show the following comparative position of Western Australia:—

	Unfilled Vacancies	Unemployed Awaiting Placement	Recipients of Unemployment Benefits
Australian totals	28,784	35,243	9,164
W.A.	882	5,299	2,212
W.A. per centage of total	3	15.1	22.5
	(per cent.)	(per cent.)	(per cent.)

Mr. Lapham: From where did you get those figures?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: From Commonwealth statistics.

Mr. Heal: Up to the end of which month?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I have already said they were figures as at the 31st July, 1956.

Mr. Heal: They are different from those I have.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I would suggest that the hon. member's figures are open to correction.

Mr. Heal: Mine came from the same source.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: So we see that, with a population of 7.1 per cent. of the total, Western Australia only has 3 per cent. of the unfilled vacancies but 15.1 per cent. of the unemployed awaiting placement. That is more than double the average. It has 22.5 per cent. of the number on unemployed benefits, which is more than three times the average. On these figures, it must be pointed out that Western Australia is the worst affected State in the Commonwealth. Accordingly, we can see that it is not the Commonwealth Government's fault that we have an unemployment problem here; it falls right at the door of the State Government.

During the period April, May, June and July of this year employment in the building and construction field increased in all States except Western Australia. Let me point out that on a per capita basis this

State, firstly, has the highest figure of unemployment—it has the greatest number of unemployed. It also has the highest number on unemployment relief and the highest figure for Commonwealth payments, and again it has the lowest number of jobs available. On top of that, it has the highest deficit for the year ended the 31st July, 1956.

Mr. Bovell: What a record!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is time, therefore, that the public were made aware that the responsibility rests with the State Government and that it should not be attributed every time to the Commonwealth Government. The State Government should accept some responsibility surely, and it has not attempted to accept any. I submit that the House should consider the motion very carefully and the people should be apprised of what the State Government has not done to solve the unemployment situation in Western Australia.

MR. WILD (Dale) [8.38]: In associating myself with this motion to adjourn the House in order that we might discuss the unemployment problem, I want to say that one can pin this down to two factors. Firstly, we have the continued utterances by the Premier and the Ministers associated with him that there is a grave unemployment situation with us. Secondly, there is the fact that the root evil of the unemployment we have in this State at present can be laid primarily at the door of the Minister for Housing—and with him, of course, must be associated the Government of the day.

Without recapitulating what has been said by previous speakers, I would point out that it was admitted by the Premier in the Speech given to this Chamber recently by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, that an unemployment problem was with us, primarily, in the building industry of Western Australia. From time to time this statement has been reiterated by him, and particularly at the recent Premiers' conference at Canberra—if he had been correctly reported—when he stated there was a surfeit of building materials in Western Australia but there was no money to carry on the work.

Without exposing myself to the danger of being accused of saying, "I told you so," I must remind the House that during the last session and the one before I did say to the Minister for Housing—and he may say as he said this evening when he referred to my colleague, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and to me on two or three occasions in the past, that I am in a sewer when I make this statement, but I do not mind that at all—that he produced great figures on house construction in this State, for which I give him full marks, but that in doing so he

built those houses in three electorates which gave the Government a great political advantage. Strange to say, my words came exactly true.

Mr. Heal: What electorates were they?

Mr. WILD: The Wandana project at Subiaco, Brentwood in the Canning electorate, and Maniana in Beeloo electorate.

Mr. Jamieson: There were not too many on the roll at Wandana.

Mr. WILD: That makes no difference at all. The fact was that those projects were undertaken for a specific purpose, and astronomical figures were achieved with housing. I have often wondered in the past—and I have since last Wednesday and Thursday—what the Minister for Housing thinks of the remarks of his colleague, the member for Beeloo, in regard to the housing project at Maniana, when he talked about Mr. Joe Soap being up before the court and always giving his address as Maniana.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to resume his seat. I am afraid I cannot allow a discussion on Maniana. The hon. member can discuss the housing aspects in general terms in relation to unemployment or employment. I do not think the hon. member is entitled under this motion to undertake a full-dress debate on the housing position. So far as it relates to employment or unemployment, I can allow it to proceed. Under this motion he is not entitled to discuss Maniana or any other housing project in the metropolitan area.

Mr. WILD: I am sorry if I have gone beyond the limit of this motion. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your direction. I endeavoured to point out to the House that the projects built by the Government of the day did contribute largely to the situation in which the building trade finds itself today.

Be that as it may, one can rather liken the over-spending in housing to what sometimes happens in one's own home. If the amount of money given to a housewife each week is exhausted in the early part of the week, she might continue to over-spend for a few weeks; but if she continues to overspend by 25 to 30 per cent. each week, she will one day find herself in this position: In the middle of the week there will be no food in the larder and she will have to tell her husband, "For the rest of the week we will have to live on dripping and bread because I have over-spent."

That is exactly what happened in the building industry in Western Australia. One only had to go to Brentwood to see the amount of overspending indulged in. I pass that suburb frequently, in fact every Saturday for the past three years at least, when the suburb was under construction. One could see these houses going up very

rapidly and many being built by conditionally registered builders, those admitted by the Government of the day some two years ago. I have no doubt that the Government regrets very much having let those builders in.

Very many men were brought into the building industry, who, under normal circumstances, would have worked for an employer. In addition to flooding the building labour market, in order to get jobs they contracted at prices which were not in keeping with sound business practice, and instead of working the hours advocated by those on the Government side of the House, these fellows worked on Saturdays and sometimes on Sundays. Some of them worked between 45 to 60 hours a week. I do not blame them for that because we, on this side of the House, believe that it is the initiative of the individual that gets him by.

The point is that these builders were brought in from far and wide. I know of two building teams working at Brentwood which came from Collie. They were brought into this industry because they were led to believe that the industry would last. Let us see what happened when the bubble burst. When the purse was empty, after the Minister for Housing had overspent two years running, the first to the tune of £1,250,000, and the second, according to the figures he gave, of £346,000, obviously these men found themselves on the scrapheap.

What breeds unemployment more quickly than a whispering campaign, when every time a responsible man gets to his feet he talks about unemployment? Someone said this evening, and it may have been the Deputy Premier, that if there was business about employers of labour did not put employees off when there was only talk of unemployment. If the Deputy Premier had ever engaged in business himself, he would realise that this is absolutely factual: A member of Parliament can move in the city, whether it be in the barber's chair or a shop, and if recognised as being a person in a public position, the conversation will frequently be directed along these lines, "What do you think of things generally? Do you think there is going to be a depression?"

I always pointed out that I could see no reason for a depression because our two stable industries in Australia, wool and wheat, were as sound as ever. However, when there is this frequent talk of unemployment, businessmen are bound to consider what they will do should there be a depression, a recession or when there is no money about. It is logical for them to think there is the possibility of a depression and to ask themselves, "I wonder if there is some employee I can do without?" They look around and find men who may not be fully employed or not giving 100 per cent. return, and decide that they

can be done without. Thus some men become unemployed and the idea snowballs. That is just what is happening today.

In the building industry, one finds building tradesmen of all kinds out of work—carpenters, bricklayers, timber-mill workers. Looking at the newspaper recently, I noticed that two small timber mills had closed down. The Minister for Forests received a deputation on that matter. This all stems back to the one question—overspending. The building industry reached a crescendo and then a tempo which it had no hope of maintaining. We believe this was brought about purely by bad management.

Until such time as the position is stabilised, and the Government stops talking of unemployment and more and more unemployment every time a Minister gets to his feet, and until we stop hearing speeches like the one we heard from the Deputy Premier the other evening, the position will not improve. It does not help much when the Premier talks about getting private industry to come to Western Australia to help this State out and at the same time to talk about the huge excess profits made by companies.

I say that never have Western Australians been so prosperous as in the last five years when Kwinana, Cockburn Cement and B.H.P. were established in this State. Whose money brought this about? Private enterprise, of course. Private enterprise brought a greater measure of prosperity to this State, than ever before. On the one hand, we have such statements by the Deputy Premier, while, on the other, his colleague, the Minister for Mines, is in America trying to attract capital to Western Australia. The Deputy Premier is doing more to damage the prospects of this State than any other man here.

We might ask, "What can we do to correct this position?" Some speakers this evening have mentioned the £300,000 that could be saved in respect of Wundowie. I am very certain that we are not in a position on this side to say exactly where money can be saved, where expenditure can be pruned or put to better use, but I would point out that this Government has had more money to spend this year—as I have said several times this evening—than any other previous Government in Western Australia.

I feel certain that if the Government put on its thinking cap and stopped the utterances and wild statements about unemployment, it would not be long before sanity returned to this State, and we would find men being put back into industry. If we are to have a continuance of this wild Government policy of spending a year's funds in a few months and then finding it has to again spend the next year's funds as happened before, we shall be heading for what the Government has been talking

about for the last three months. My only suggestion is to stop talking about the profits of private enterprise and say, "We want profitable private enterprise in this State." Then there would be no need for a motion such as that now before the House.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [8.41]: I oppose this motion, and am well acquainted with the reason for it. It was moved by the heir apparent to the throne on the other side of the House.

Hon. D. Brand: I read in the paper you were coming to the front bench.

The Minister for Housing: Which paper?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Some irresponsible rag.

Mr. JOHNSON: We realise this motion is being moved by the heir apparent because he is doubtful where he stands in the struggle for the leadership.

Hon. D. Brand: I am doubtful whether I can stand the hon. member much longer.

Mr. JOHNSON: The heir apparent does not know where he stands in competition with the heir apparent to the heir apparent while they sit one on each side of no heir apparent. This motion is more of playfulness and self advertisement than it is of reality.

The Minister for Housing: Some over there have no family tree.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have sat reasonably patiently through quite a number of speeches by members on the opposite side of the House, waiting for the meat in the motion. The value of an Opposition—

Mr. SPEAKER: I must point out to the hon. member that there is no substantive motion before the Chair. The debate is on the question: That the House be adjourned.

Mr. JOHNSON: The reason for the motion to adjourn the House, as given by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, was to discuss the unemployment problem and presumably to put forward the views of the Opposition on the form of the action it would take were it the Government. That is a very proper function of the Opposition. However, I think all we have listened to is a great deal of abuse of the Government. We have had only two suggestions of any account dealing with matters of importance to Western Australia. One is the suggestion that £300 alleged to be set aside for more productive capacity at Wundowie—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: No, £300,000.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am sorry I left three noughts off. The suggestion was that this money should have been spent on digging drains in the Tambellup area.

Hon. D. Brand: Out at Beeloo and Belmont. If you have not seen it, you had better have a look.

Mr. JOHNSON: I will take the hon. member round to see it if he likes.

Hon. D. Brand: I see enough of you here!

Mr. JOHNSON: That proposition has some specious value but it overlooks the point that in spending the £300,000 on productive capacity, the bulk of it would be spent in the form of providing employment. In other words, it would provide the wages for the people on the job.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Two-thirds would be spent on plant that is not produced in this country.

Mr. JOHNSON: Some of it would be produced in this country. The value in that suggestion is mainly a paying of money in other forms of wages. The member for Blackwood said something about a mining company in his area which was short of a miserable £16,000 which no bank would finance and which no bank would consider a decent risk. They could not find private capital and suggest, because it is really risky, the Government should absorb it and take all the risks, and if there were any profit, it would be taken by the people concerned. That is not a business proposition and not the type of transaction to be encouraged. If the company is so financially embarrassed that it cannot raise £16,000, it is a proposition which should not be put before the public. It cannot be much of a company if it is that hard up. Why, members of the Opposition themselves could find that much quite easily, as we all know!

Hon. D. Brand: It is not as poor as Chamberlain Industries!

Mr. JOHNSON: I want to correct once more—and it is like playing an old and scratched record—the impression that the Opposition has been trying to give by reiteration that the present Government has had more money for work than previous Governments had available. So, once more I produce the same old and battered graph which I prepared once before when dealing with this subject. The matter dealt with in this graph indicates the funds available to the Government for spending. These particular funds consist of two only—the Commonwealth special grant and loan funds.

All other funds available to the Government are so very nearly completely mortgaged in advance every year that there is no room to manoeuvre inside State revenue in the normal form—that is, in the amounts collected by various State taxes. These funds are required to carry on the day-to-day administration such as salaries to school teachers, police, medical people and the various functions of normal government. There is no room to manoeuvre inside revenue unless a completely new source of funds can be found and, similarly,

the other funds from the Commonwealth Government are tied up in varying forms. The only scope for a Government to manipulate finance in a political or administrative way is in the funds it gets in the actual special grants and loans.

Even in relation to those two sources, a very large proportion of the money expended under loan is disbursed over a series of years and therefore quite a large proportion of that is also pre-empted as to the method of its expenditure. No State Government has any wide degree of funds available to its hand to change its policy, and this particular graph indicates that this State had an amount of £13 7s. 8d. per head of population in 1948-49 from those two funds.

The amount rose each year until the year 1952-53 when there was an amount of £38 2s. 6d. per head from the two funds. Each year since then it has dropped, and last year it fell to an amount of £32 5s. 1d. But correcting those funds to the amount of value that they contained in the first year quoted—1948-49—and using the published indexes to do so, we find that the value of the money obtained for Government expenditure rose to a total of £27 15s. 3d. in the year 1950-51.

When replying to an interjection, the member responsible for this motion said that there was some shortage of loan funds in 1951-52. He said there was a temporary shortage. In that year the amount of the funds available to the Government rose from £34 14s. 5d. in 1950-51 to £35 19s. 10d. in 1951-52. However, the real value was reduced, as is shown by the graph, from £27 15s. 3d. to £23 13s. 10d.; and although he had more money at his disposal he had lost value. He complained that there was a difficulty in relation to loan funds. However, the difficulty is much greater now, because the internal value of the money we are getting is a great deal less, and we are practically back to the amount of value per head of population received in 1948-49.

In relation to that, it is of interest to remember that back in those years we were slowly recovering from a very disturbed economy—an economy disturbed by a little difficulty overseas. I think it was a war or something. But there was some difficulty, and we were in the recovery stage. We have since gone through a boom in the classical manner, and now we are going towards a depression in the classical manner; and the fact that there is a little inflation continuing as the depression starts is furthermore in the classical manner. A student of the boom-and-bust system, known as private enterprise in world economics, will find that we have entered a classical depression, and there is a very large degree of resemblance between the beginning of this depression and the commencement of the 1929 depression.

Mr. Court: I should say that there is little resemblance, and you are doing a lot of damage in what you are saying tonight.

Mr. JOHNSON: If we examine the public utterances of people who belonged to the Nationalist Party, the All-for-Australia Party, or the United Australia Party, or whatever its alias was at that time, we find that they were producing then the same argument as we heard submitted by the member for Nedlands a few days ago, and which was continued this evening by several speakers: that when there is a nasty occurrence, it must not be talked about because it disturbs confidence.

Mr. Court: It is one thing to talk about it and another to harp on it.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is a point which has some value; but this constant harping by the member for Nedlands and his hopeful followers to the effect that this situation should be hidden from the public is doing no good for the State of Western Australia. The people who vote are adults, and are entitled to be treated as such; and those who read the financial columns will find that besides the stories of very high profits that are constantly being brought forward, there are further tears about reductions in profit rates, and in such papers as are available and are not read by the majority—like the "Financial Times," which is an organ of big business—there will be found a good deal of harping on the change in the financial climax.

So it is not only Labour supporters who are doing this damage—if it is damage. The leaders of industry and of private enterprise are constantly, in their own circles, breaking into tears because their previous excessive profits are being somewhat pruned. It is only natural they would be, because private enterprise with its disbelief in planning is producing an economy which has no stability and must follow the classical method of getting in to its classical problems.

A couple of members opposite have dealt with the building industry and claimed that overspending there was vitally responsible for the downturn in Western Australia. None has gone so far as to suggest that we are getting enough houses now. There is still a housing shortage. I know, as the representative of my district, that the problem, which was showing signs of being greatly eased, is starting to get worse again because of the reduction in the building rate; and the reduction in the building rate is only in part a reduction of the State housing rate, and is largely the result of the very violent reduction caused by the credit squeeze in the private building sector.

A sector of the building industry was becoming available for private building. But, as we all know—at least those who

have some knowledge of the credit situation—it is very nearly impossible to borrow money for private building; and that is the major cause of the downward trend in the building industry. I repeat that the credit squeeze is the deliberate policy of the Federal Liberal Government. It is that Government's policy to raise interest rates and to squeeze, and it is its policy that has permitted the whole of the credit structure to get completely out of balance and become very heavily involved in time payment for luxury goods and things which are not really necessary, all this being done under a very heavy degree of high pressure salesmanship.

I am going to do something for the Opposition which I feel needs doing; and that is, to make a suggestion as to how something could be done about the growing unemployment problem in Western Australia. That is what the Opposition should do if it feels that the Government is missing out.

Mr. Roberts: Have you told the Government?

Mr. JOHNSON: I am telling it now. One of the causes of unemployment being greater here than in the Eastern States is the degree of unbalance in our internal economy. Ours is not a completely integrated economy. Ours is very largely a primary producing State, and we have not a balanced manufacturing industry. We are relying on Eastern States manufacturers for a good deal of our manufactured products. As a result we are in a degree of unbalance in that the total of Australian unemployment shows more readily here than it does elsewhere. In effect, the proportion of unemployment which devolves on the Eastern States is being exported here because of our lack of balance in a full industrial economy.

Another cause is that very large sums being spent by the Federal Government are not being spent with due regard for the economy of all the States. I feel that one thing which the Government can do and which the Opposition can assist in by supporting it, is to press the Federal Government to distribute its expenditure on all matters, including defence, in proportion to the needs of the State's economy; and I feel that the most useful formula which can be used for that purpose is the one which the States use for the distribution of the Federal aid roads grants.

If Federal expenditure were made in the States in proportion to that formula, then we in Western Australia would have a large upsurge in employment and there would be a transfer of population from the Eastern States to the West, and there would be an increasing market which would provide a suitable background for proper industrialisation. I fancy that that argument is one which the economists who provide the excuses for the Liberal Party, would find very hard to disagree with. It

is one which has some political difficulties because Federal expenditure in the Eastern States is directed towards Federal votes in the highly populated States, and that has always been so, no matter what the colour of the Government.

I make that suggestion because I feel it is a point where the Opposition can assist the Government in a proper manner, in dealing with this situation. I would further like to point out, because the reiteration of the Opposition has made it rather nauseating, that the responsibility for employment in the Australian economy is not a State but a Federal responsibility. If notice is taken of the platforms of the various parties at the Federal elections, it will be found that it is in the field of employment that both Federal parties start their platform. In relation to State elections—and this applies not only to Western Australia, but all the States—the matter of employment is not a major plank in the party political platforms.

Mr. Court: You are not suggesting that the States have not any influence on employment, surely?

Mr. JOHNSON: I am not suggesting that, but I am suggesting that if the hon. member had listened, he would have heard the Minister for Works setting out actions that have been taken by the Government to deal with unemployment in this State. However, we have heard nothing of actions being taken by Federal authorities—and the Federal Government has a Department of Works—to increase employment in Western Australia, although they are well aware of the unemployment, and they have the funds to spend. I do feel that we should remember these points.

The Commonwealth, as a Government, has acknowledged its responsibilities towards employment by the very fact that it has set up a Commonwealth Employment Service to deal with the problem. That responsibility has devolved upon the Commonwealth, at least since early in the war when it was embodied in national security regulations, and has never been passed back. There is no way of passing it back now under the uniform taxation method. It is completely wrong for the Opposition to claim, for purely political propaganda purposes, that this is simply a State proposition. It is primarily a Federal responsibility.

Administratively there is a good deal of responsibility on the State inside its own capacity, but the State's capacity is limited very strongly by the amounts of money it can squeeze, beg or get in any form from Commonwealth sources. That is the current situation. The responsibility for employment is an acknowledged Federal responsibility. The Opposition has produced no statement of value, but a good deal of abuse. There is one point I meant to deal with but omitted to do so, and that is in connection with the remark by the

member for Blackwood about rising costs in relation to railway freights and such charges, and his suggestion that that was producing unemployment.

I would refer members to page 7 of this evening's "Daily News" which is fairly recent, where there is a heading "Shock Rises Likely in Postage." The report from Canberra states—

Steep increases in postal charges are expected to provide a shock when the Federal Budget is presented to the House of Representatives by Treasurer Sir Arthur Fadden on Thursday night.

The Minister for Works: The Leader of the Opposition will not say anything about that.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That will hit everybody except members of Parliament.

Mr. JOHNSON: The report goes on—

The increases are expected to cost postal users between £4,000,000 and £6,000,000 a year.

That is a great deal more than this State needs for its little unemployment difficulties. The report later states—

... the sharp lift in the cost of materials used by the department as a result of inflation are the causes of a grave decline in the stability of postal accounts.

So we see from a Canberra dateline, a direct admission of maladministration by the people most directly responsible for the economy of this country—the Federal Government. Why should we not attack the people who have the power and mal-administer it? So I reiterate the responsibility is a Federal one. The Commonwealth Government has set up its own organisation and Minister, because there is a Minister for Employment and a Commonwealth Employment Service department, to deal with it. It is their responsibility. The Commonwealth should deal with it. The highest amount asked for is about £4,000,000, and the Federal Government has a surplus of £80,000,000. That is only 5 per cent. of it.

Mr. Court: You are not going to tell us that you do not know where the £80,000,000 paper surplus went to, are you?

Mr. JOHNSON: I think I could guess as easily as the member for Nedlands. However, it did have a surplus.

Mr. Court: On paper.

Mr. JOHNSON: On paper, and by mal-administration it faded that surplus away very largely to avoid its responsibility under the Constitution, as all previous Federal Governments have done, of dividing that surplus between the States.

Mr. Court: Not by maladministration, but by helping the States.

Mr. JOHNSON: Shall we say, that by the aid of clever accountants it has cooked its books so that it can avoid, as all Federal Governments have done, its responsibility to comply with the Constitution?

Mr. Court: The Premier would not agree with you on that.

Mr. JOHNSON: All Governments do it, and if the hon. member wants to talk about Government accounts, I refer him to the Auditor General's report for the year immediately prior to his election. In that report the Auditor General had something scathing to say about the then Treasurer who had £500,000 under the heading of "Advance to Treasurer," approved by Parliament, and he spent £2,000,000. He managed to spend eight times more than his legal allowance. The Auditor General did not like it, and by his note on the record there was nothing like that amount before. It was an astounding overdraft and an astounding piece of plain, straight-out breaking of the law. But he got away with it because nobody suggested that he put that sum of money in his own pocket.

Mr. Court: Are you referring to the Leader of the Opposition or the Commonwealth Treasurer?

Mr. JOHNSON: The Leader of the Opposition when he was Premier and Treasurer.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Your arithmetic is not too good because you said that eight times five hundred thousand was two million; four times five hundred thousand is two million.

Mr. Bovell: It does not matter what odds!

Mr. JOHNSON: It does matter; I should have said four times and not eight times. However, that does not alter what was done.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That piece of arithmetic from a future Treasurer!

Mr. Bovell: What is the Auditor General going to say about last year's deficit?

Mr. JOHNSON: At least he is not going to say that the present Treasurer broke the law. It ill becomes people who follow a Government that can do that sort of thing to quibble, as they are trying to do now. I oppose the motion.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [9.11]: I support the motion because I am of the opinion that the Government has been guilty of playing politics in connection with the question of unemployment.

Mr. Andrew: Are you?

Mr. COURT: I will demonstrate my point in a few moments if the hon. member will allow me to continue. I want to make this accusation: The Government

has been guilty of preying on the minds of the people and building up a feeling of fear and insecurity, and it is not the first time that this has been done by a Labour Government. I read with interest the debate that took place in the Federal House on the question of unemployment, about the time of the so-called 1951-52 recession. The then Deputy Leader of the Federal Opposition seized the opportunity to try to stir up a feeling of fear and insecurity in the minds of the people even though there was then only a temporary form of unemployment, in a very mild way even compared with what we have in the State at present.

Mr. Andrew: Inspired by Mr. Menzies.

Mr. COURT: I want to stress again, in spite of what has been said by the member for Leederville, that much of the unemployment is a direct result of a psychological reaction on the part of the people and on the part of the employers generally. On this occasion I feel that the State Government has overplayed its hand to the detriment of the people of this State.

When the Premier and Treasurer was attending a Loan Council meeting I was in the Eastern States and I was horrified to find that every time I read an Eastern States newspaper, be it the morning or evening paper, there were headlines as to the proposition being put forward to the Loan Council by our Premier, and emphasising the seriousness of the financial and economic position of Western Australia and the gravity of the unemployment situation.

In the course of my discussions with business people in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and to a lesser extent in Canberra, the reaction of these people was most disturbing. When they found that I came from Western Australia and was interested in the Parliament of this State, and also had some knowledge of the business community here, they wanted to know more. They wanted to know whether this was real or whether it was just a politician's gag to get a few more bob—to use the words of one prominent business executive.

As one who is loyal to this State, I went out of my way to impress upon them that if there was some unemployment, which I did not admit was as severe as suggested by the Premier, it was purely a passing phase. I pleaded with them not to take the matter unduly seriously otherwise they would injure themselves as well as do a disservice to this State. It is well known to anybody of average intelligence that the moment a firm, such as an Eastern States firm trading with Western Australia, hears of some adverse economic condition, or some unsatisfactory financial trend, it assumes a degree of caution that it would not otherwise

contemplate. For instance when those selling on credit to another State, or in the process of contemplating some expansion, or in the process of adopting a new policy, hear statements such as those given by the Premier to the Loan Council about things being grim here, it follows that they automatically button up.

They write to their managers and say, "Be careful with credit; chase up those accounts which are in arrears," and if they are in the process of engaging in some changed policy which might mean expansion within our State, they get cautious and say, "Let us have a second look." When these people have a second look, it is nine chances to one that they will become ultra-cautious and pull out altogether. It is of no use the Government's denying that the psychological and emotional results of these things is adverse, because, from my own experience, I can recall being brought before certain gentlemen in Melbourne and being asked this very question—as to whether it was as serious as was stated and whether these people should delay their expansion programme.

If I, or somebody else, had not been on the spot to give them a "shot in the arm" as it were, and give them some encouragement about the future of Western Australia, and tell them that this was purely temporary and was being exaggerated by the Premier, they would have pulled out. It is of no use the Government's denying that that is going on all the time when people in responsible positions go round preaching a gospel of gloom and despair. We have had too much of it in Western Australia.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Hear, hear!

The Minister for Lands: Do you still think it was an exaggeration? I am referring to the figures that were given.

Mr. COURT: I do not know the exact figures today and the Minister for Works was not able to give us those figures when he spoke to the motion. I feel that the figures we have had up to date are an exaggeration of the position.

The Minister for Lands: How do you know? You just said that you did not know.

Mr. COURT: From personal inquiry; I do not stand idly by when things like that are going on. I am interested in it just as I trust the Minister for Lands is sufficiently interested to find out for himself.

The Minister for Lands: Whatever the figures are, what do you suggest we should do? Bury our heads in the sand.

Mr. COURT: I am coming to that; I shall be silly enough to make some suggestions even though I have found from my own experience the other week that

it is rather foolish to put one's head out because all the wild game that are about descend upon one and want to tear one to pieces. However, I am going to have another try in that direction.

The Minister for Lands: That is fair enough.

Mr. COURT: The Premier is looking very grave these days and I might add that it is becoming infectious in the business community of this State.

The Minister for Works: Are not you overlooking the motion that you are discussing and the reasons given by the mover.

Mr. COURT: I am doing nothing of the sort.

The Minister for Works: You are talking about over-emphasising this question. What could do more to emphasise it than moving a motion of this description?

Mr. COURT: I think the Minister for Works is trying to lead me astray and I do not intend to be led astray.

The Minister for Works: I will admit that it is an awkward one.

Mr. COURT: I think the position has been over-emphasised by the State Government, particularly during the last two or three months.

The Minister for Works: This motion will not help the position much.

Mr. COURT: It will help by drawing the Government's attention to the fact that there is so much gloom and despair being spread about the place.

The Minister for Works: That is very strange reasoning.

Mr. COURT: When the Minister for Works spoke, I thought he would have given us something more informative regarding the present unemployment position than he did.

The Minister for Works: He might have been able to do that if he had been given some notice of the Opposition's intention.

Mr. COURT: I would have thought that if the position was as serious as he says it is, he would have had all the information at his fingertips as to the nature of the unemployment position in this State. What I want to know, and what I am finding it difficult to obtain from the normal channels is where this unemployment lies; to what proportion of the official or unofficial unemployment figures are the skilled and unskilled men and what proportion are male, married and single, and female married and single. Against that one has to try to offset—as the member for Stirling tried to do this evening to a minor degree—the work that is offering and divide that up into the various localities and categories of employment, namely, metropolitan area and country; skilled and unskilled.

The Commonwealth Employment Office, I understand, does not insist that a man should take employment in any locality as a condition of his receiving social service benefits because it is contrary to the policy of the Commonwealth Government to direct labour. I would be the last to suggest the direction of labour because it is a very repugnant thing to me to think that people should be directed to work in any particular place of employment. Therefore, a man is free to accept the job that is offered to him.

I suggest that out of this information we could arrive at something constructive to ascertain what are the prospects of some shifting of employment. I think it has been acknowledged by both major parties throughout the British Commonwealth that there will be, from time to time, a change in the emphasis of employment. We see it going on now in the United Kingdom and in other parts of the world with the introduction of automatic machinery together with the consequent transitory problems, and I think we must soon face a changed set of conditions in Australia.

There was a time when we considered that we had reached a stage of full employment when, in fact, we had not got to the stage where we could properly employ all the people offering. We found, through the exigencies of war, that there were people not previously employable, who we were able to take into the work force in this country. However, due to a state of over-employment—for want of a better word—in postwar years, some people entered industry who were intended, at the time, to be in the work force as a temporary matter. They were people who could not work to full capacity and who, at the time, came to work under some disability. It might have been that they were married women. They might have been aged people or people with some infirmity. They came into the work force only as a temporary measure.

There is a wealth of information to be gained from an analysis of the unemployment position in the State to see to what extent some of these people could, without injury to themselves, or without creating a serious disadvantage for them economically, make room for people who had need of permanent employment as part of their whole existence, people who are dependent on a permanent job for their existence. It would also be interesting to find out—if the Government knows this information—how many of these applications for employment that have been registered have been made by people who, through panic, thinking that the axe was going to fall on them, have taken this step to apply for employment and have become classified as unemployed more or less as a precautionary measure.

I welcome this motion for a reason which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been stated this evening. I feel that the

fact that this matter has been brought forward so early in the experience of a wave of unemployment in this State, speaks well for the social conscience—if that is the correct word to use—of the Parliaments of this country.

There was a time when the present volume of unemployment would have been dismissed with a flick of the finger and would not have caused very much concern. It does reflect well on all of us that we are concerned about this level of unemployment, and I would remind members on the opposite side of the House that the present rate of unemployment in Western Australia is still lower than the figure advanced by the Chifley Government as that which represented a state of full employment; a figure that was challenged by the present Minister for Employment, Mr. Holt. He did not agree that a figure of 5 per cent. or 6 per cent. could be accepted as being full employment and submitted that a figure much below that should be the aim of all political parties. I think it can be said that we in this House all agree on that.

I want the Deputy Premier to at least give the mover of this motion some credit for the fact that he is so sufficiently conscious of this problem of the unemployed in Western Australia that he brings this motion forward to be ventilated in this House. During the debate various points have been discussed as to the reason for this position in Western Australia. I agree with the submissions that have been made that there has been a degree of maladministration in the spending of money by the Government and, more particularly, in the position that arose in regard to the housing section of our economy.

Secondly, I feel that there has been a failure to attract sufficient private industry here and, thirdly, I submit that there has been a failure to anticipate the completion of certain major works and to take corrective action. I will go so far as to say that the third of those points is an error which people can very easily make. There is a feeling of false security that descends on all of us when we are doing well. If we are doing well in business or in our studies or doing well in any particular walk of life, we are inclined to relax and say, "This is grand! Everything is all right!"

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please! The murmurings in the House are too great.

Mr. COURT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are inclined to relax and forget the efforts we have to make. There is always a day of reckoning. I think the natural law is that we always have to pay for something. If one enjoys something today, one paid for it yesterday or has to pay for it tomorrow. There is no doubt that we have had a wonderful wave of prosperity in this State. Our primary industries were booming, our secondary industries were doing well and we had secondary

industries coming here in large doses, bringing in their wake an expansion of public works and private industry. In fact, we had three major industries coming in on top of one another. There was the Kwinana oil refinery, the B.H.P. steel rolling mill and Cockburn Cement.

There was the danger that any Government would overlook the fact that there is always a time for payment. I submit that one of the greatest dangers in the period of expansion is the aftermath. The Minister for Housing, at one stage in a debate here, when he was answering an interjection or a speech of mine, made the point—and made it quite well—that if we ever reached the stage in the Housing Commission when a person could walk in and take his choice of one, two or three houses, we would have completely unbalanced our prosperity. We would have got to the stage when the building industry would be in the doldrums and it would be a bad outlook for this State. Therefore, it follows that we have to keep up a slight pressure all the time in connection with capital development.

I submit in all sincerity that had the housing expenditure been geared more sympathetically to the capacity of the economy of this State, we would not have the present wave of unemployment that we now experience in the building industry. Once that industry shows a sign of weakening, it follows that the rest of the economy loses its confidence, with consequent unemployment in various phases. With capital works it is axiomatic that it takes more men to build a place than it does to operate it. I would not like to suggest a ratio but on one or two calculations I have made, it would appear that it takes three times as many men to build a place as to operate it when it has been completed. That is grand if there is another job for those three men to move to while one man stays behind and operates the place. There also is another factor because the equipping of that place requires non-recurring items in plant and various other installations.

If we have not got a steady flow of industries developing, it follows that we build up a work force and a construction force which have not got an outlet for their energy. I feel that that is what has happened here. It has happened on development projects before. If members care to trace back the history of various primary developments, they will find that there has been a boom in country areas and then something of a collapse when major capital works have been completed. Storekeepers have been geared to cope with this boom only to find that the labour force has been withdrawn on the completion of the works and there has been a decline in the retail business in the area.

One case which is very close to us in this State is Albany. There was a time when Albany was subject to considerable pressure from capital works and the

various traders in that district built up and up, and more traders came into the town and then all of a sudden all the capital works were completed, and the main labour forces withdrawn. If one could only submit the figures of the whole of the trading community of Albany, it would be found that, coinciding with that fact, there was a decline in the retail business in that area. From his personal experience of the area, the member for Albany would no doubt have some knowledge of that.

"The reason for the establishment of new industries is not only to create more jobs but to employ the developmental work force and coincidental to that to create more employment in the operating of factories. What is more important still, if we have no new industries coming on it follows that we cannot absorb an increase in our population either from natural causes or from migration. There is one point on which I feel some positive action should have been taken by the Government; I am, of course, assuming that it has not taken this action because the Minister for Works did not list it in the works proposed by the Government to overcome this problem. I refer to the fact that there are certain industries in this State which, if they do not get some relief in import restrictions compared with the Eastern States, are going to suffer unemployment that I consider is avoidable.

Here is something that is not going to cost the Commonwealth Government money in the ordinary way. It will not have to pay out of its pocket, as it were. But if that Government did release some import licences for selected firms on a more generous basis than their Eastern States counterparts enjoy, it would enable those people to get supplies they badly need and to keep up their full level of employment, whilst at the same time it would have a minor effect on the overseas balances. It would not have a disastrous effect as would be the position if the Government had to give a general Australia-wide increase in licences.

I feel that if the representations had been made in an objective and constructive manner on the highest possible level in the Commonwealth Government, it is a point on which that Government could be sympathetic to industry in this State and thus do something to enable industry to help itself. I am a great believer in helping people to help themselves rather than have it done on a handout basis.

Mr. Lawrence: Do you refer to overseas imports?

Mr. COURT: They would have to be overseas imports because if they are not, they would not be subject to licences. There is free trade between the States.

The Minister for Lands: Would that interfere with foreign currency reserves that we have?

Mr. COURT: It would make some inroads into it but the money required to adjust the economic problems of Western Australia is comparatively small when compared with the whole of the Eastern States. It is one point upon which I believe we can make a constructive approach to the Commonwealth Government on an administrative matter and one which can be done without reference to the other States. I do not see why the Commonwealth Government could not, through an administrative act, make some arrangement whereby these people could derive some benefit. I understand that the clothing trade, particularly the shirt side of it, is in need of some relaxation. This would enable it to manufacture to full capacity. Apart from the point of overseas balances, it would not cost the Commonwealth Government money in the ordinary way. I hope I have made myself clear to the Minister for Lands.

The next point on which the Minister for Works did not touch was negotiations with private industry for the re-employment of men who have been stood down, with the request that they stop any retrenchment and continue with development of projects, no matter how minor, from which they might have withdrawn, because of this scare that has been spread amongst them. The Minister for Works did not say in his speech that any negotiations on that level had been carried out. Members on the other side of the House might dismiss it as of no importance, but I think they would be wrong in doing so. They would find many of these people receptive if they were approached in the correct manner and received some assurance that this scare would be withdrawn.

Once people stop spending due to the utterances of those at the top in this State, it makes it extremely difficult for those firms to do what they want, which is to keep their work forces together. No firm wants to sack good men and they would not do it unless driven to it. The third point which the Minister for Works rather surprisingly did not deal with was the prospect of any Commonwealth works being carried out here in the near future. I do not know whether there is any prospect of Commonwealth works being undertaken in this State, other than those current at the present time.

It would be a point on which to approach the Commonwealth Government, namely, that if that Government had any works in prospect for, say, next year, to see whether they could not be expedited. I know the Minister for Works will mention the question of planning and drawings which might make it difficult to expedite these works, but if there are any projects that could be speeded up, some sympathetic help could be given without necessitating a specific grant to this State. From my own point of view, however, I would prefer to

see something done to help private industry rather than employ depression measures of Government spending to relieve the position.

A further point is that if the Government could come out and make some definite statement that there was to be no further impost in connection with Government charges, it would be a great help, because if industry knew it could plan for the next 12 months or two years without any further impost by way of governmental charges—such as freights and other charges—it would derive great confidence and enable it to plan and go ahead with any developmental programme it might have.

There are possibly some avenues for economy. For instance the Government is still pursuing a policy with coal which is not conducive to producing the cheapest coal for our two major industries, namely, the State Electricity Commission and the railways. If those two concerns could be operated by cheaper and better coal, it follows that they in turn could say that there was to be no increase in charges for a specified period, or they could possibly say that there might be a slight reduction.

I want to hark back to two points. The first concerns the Minister for Housing. I quote the report in "The West Australian" of a dinner which he attended at the end of last week. He is reported as having stated that—

He was disappointed that, now the housing lag had been overtaken, commercial and industrial building activities because of financial restrictions had not offset the decline in home construction.

The report continued—

He was speaking at the annual dinner of the Master Builders' Association of Western Australia.

The president of the W.A. Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Mr. K. C. Duncan) speaking later in the evening said that most architects were busier than they had ever been because of the increase in the construction of industrial and commercial buildings.

That is factual.

It was unfortunate that these big projects did not employ the same number of artisans as would be employed if the money were spent in home building.

Mr. Graham said that he was confident that the advocacies of the Premier (Mr. Hawke) had been successful in getting more money from the Commonwealth Government for Western Australia and the building industry.

Because he (Mr. Graham) had overspent £1,750,000 in one year on State Housing Commission homes, he had

been accused of creating the position existing in the building industry today, Mr. Graham said.

He had been given £2,000,000 extra for his trouble.

I could not quite follow the import of the last expression. In the Minister's own words, he overspent in one year £1,750,000 on housing, and that is no small amount for this State. I repeat that it had the effect of gearing the building trades to a false basis, one which the building trade and the Minister no doubt is regretting.

The other point is the question of £4,000,000 being sought from the Commonwealth Government allegedly to reduce unemployment in Western Australia. It is rather peculiar that the Premier, because of his responsibility as Premier and Treasurer of this State, should have made this statement, which is consistent with what he told this House. I could understand him missing the point in answering a question hurriedly in the House, but there has been no correction until tonight of the publication in "The West Australian" under the heading—

Premier will ask for Grant of £4,000,000.

The report goes on to say—

The Premier (Mr. Hawke) announced last night that the State Government was seeking £4,000,000 from the Commonwealth to reduce unemployment in Western Australia.

He said that the State would urge the Commonwealth to accept one of the three schedules, each of which would cost £4,000,000.

It is rather interesting to receive the assurance of the Deputy Premier tonight that two of the schedules do not total £4,000,000. I trust that will be duly publicised by the Government because an impression has been created that the Government had asked for £4,000,000. I know what is going to happen if the Commonwealth Government does not come up with £4,000,000. The Premier will rant and rave about the niggardly Commonwealth Government, as he has done in the past, in not giving him £4,000,000, when, in fact, we found out tonight that he has not asked for £4,000,000 on each of the schedules. Presumably, he would be very happy if he had got any of the three.

The Minister for Works: Our idea was that the Commonwealth Government had accepted a combination of the two as a better balance, rather than concentrating funds in one direction or another. We believed that £4,000,000 was the sum this State would obtain.

Mr. COURT: I suggest there is no harm in trying. Without being nasty about this, I feel the £4,000,000 has a different significance. Of that amount, £2,500,000 is badly

needed to clear up deferred payments, and if we got the £4,000,000, then £1,500,000 might find its way into this year's coffers.

From what has been told to us tonight, and the comparatively small efforts made by the State Government to relieve some of the unemployment, one can assume that the finances of the State are in a worse position than at first thought. Goodness knows they are bad enough already. It would appear from the attitude of the Government and the limits to which it has gone to get the extra money, that the finances of the State must be verging on bankruptcy. As far as I am concerned, I am confident that the present wave of unemployment in this State need be only temporary. If we preach a little more confidence, instead of gloom and despair, we will be surprised to see how fast we can get out this difficulty.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [9.45]: I feel that I can best address myself to this debate by quoting the words of a leading public citizen. This is what he said—

My own view is that there is no need for panic at the present time. I feel that if anyone, the Premier has erred in over-emphasising the unemployment problem in this State It only needs a few more people to talk about mass unemployment and man-made depressions, as we had some prominent industrialists saying in the Eastern States, and people take up the cry. In my estimation, it becomes two-thirds emotional and psychological, rather than factual, with the result that the position is aggravated to a very great degree.

Those words were spoken by a figure none less than the member for Nedlands only a few days ago. I find it difficult to appreciate the sincerity of the Opposition in connection with this motion.

Mr. Bovell: Why?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The resolution has been moved for the purpose of adjourning this House. If that motion is carried, it means that we pack up our bags and go home. I do not know what good that does.

Mr. Bovell: It would be a good thing if the Government did not come back again.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Thank goodness, there is such a thing as the popular vote. That was why the Government was returned and is still in office. We have the position where the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is so concerned about the unemployment situation that it warrants an all-night discussion on this question.

Mr. Court: Not all night.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I notice that it is more than five hours since we met and the Leader of the Opposition is so concerned that he has not yet spoken.

Mr. Bovell: You spoke here on one occasion for four hours, and on nothing.

Hon. D. Brand: For six hours.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If the occasion warrants it. Nothing from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will sidetrack me. What I did was to get a fraction of the way through, pointing out the shortcomings of the McLarty-Watts Government. I do not want to be sidetracked now and to discuss these other matters. This is an all-important question of unemployment, and charges have been raised against the Government. We listened to the member for Nedlands endeavouring to convince us that there is really no unemployment problem, therefore he is at complete variance with the deputy leader of his party who would have us believe that he was concerned about the unemployment situation in that he wants a full dress debate on it. They cannot both be right.

Hon. D. Brand: The motion has achieved its object.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I would suggest if they are so concerned today, which they were not last week, as the Deputy Premier pointed out, they might discipline their own forces in the party room. As a matter of fact, several of the members on the front benches opposite did not speak on anything, never mind the motion.

Mr. Bovell: I spoke about the unemployment position on the Address-in-reply.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The member for Vasse is of no consequence! The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and those who have been Ministers in the previous Government, together with the member for Nedlands who, it would appear will shortly assume the mantle to be discarded by the Leader of the Opposition, did not refer to the unemployment problem on the Address-in-reply. Here may I hazard a guess; this time next year there will be a new Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I will remain silent.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think this is a question the hon. member will hardly go into. I could, with great relish.

Hon. D. Brand: You have had a great lift.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Much has been said on the matter of unemployment by members opposite, yet it is of such proportions that the Country Party is silent, other than its leader who spoke

on the motion. He was very concerned and spoke, not for the purpose of discussing unemployment but to point out that not a Minister from this side of the House replied, so the Country Party is not particularly concerned about unemployment. The member for Nedlands was at least consistent when he pointed out to us that all this unemployment is so much talk and that there should be less of it. I only wish he had spoken to the Deputy Leader and begged him not to introduce the motion, then there would have been far less talk in Western Australia on unemployment.

Hon. D. Brand: Have a chat to the Premier and look in the paper over the last three weeks.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Adding to the words is not improving the position.

Hon. D. Brand: We want to know what the Government is doing about the problem.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I suggest to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that he remains silent for a few moments and gives me an opportunity to reply to the fatuous argument that has been repeated here by everybody who has spoken, that there has been too much over-spending. That has apparently fallen upon fertile ground because it has appeared in print on a number of occasions. Let me, however, point out the background, and I do this because the Minister for Housing and the activities of the State Housing Commission, as it transpires, are the niggers in the woodpile.

The circumstances of over-spending are the only concrete points put forward by the Opposition. I remember, first of all, that on a particular occasion the member for Blackwood invited me to apologise to "The West Australian" because he thought there had been some sort of duplicity on the part of the Government in having undertaken to solve the housing problem of the State in a period of three years. He said that a false impression had been gained and he asked the Minister to correct the false impression created during the last State election that the Government would solve the housing problem in three years. At that stage, I asked that the Government be given the three years to achieve that which we had set out before the people. Therefore I am interested in quoting from Hansard of the 25th November, 1955, in which the member for Dale stated—

That proves, without a doubt, that the housing problem has well and truly been solved.

Mr. Bovell: It has not been solved in the country.

Mr. Roberts: It has not been solved in Bunbury.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Where a State is growing in population there is always the need for additional housing and that is the position today. But the point is this: The member for Dale was able to say that the housing problem in Western Australia had well and truly been solved because of the action taken by the Government. The previous Government during its six years in office never once spent all of the housing moneys allocated to it.

Hon. D. Brand: Why?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Because of the incapacity of the Government to mobilise the resources. Members on the other side of the Chamber and members at the other end of this building were doing their utmost to embarrass the Government by their interference with a certain piece of legislation, and it became the bounden duty of the Government of the day, with its sense of responsibility, to build as many houses as quickly as it possibly could, in the name of humanity, to house the people who were being evicted and who were living in unsatisfactory circumstances.

That is just what the Government did. When I announced it was the intention and the objective of the Housing Commission to erect 4,000 houses in one year, the member for Dale said he had sat in that chair for three years. He said he knew what he was talking about and that it could not be done but he would be the first to take his hat off to the Minister for Housing if it was achieved.

Mr. Wild: He did take his hat off.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition might be interested in a little history from Hansard of the 18th September, 1952. He will probably remember most vividly then, and still, that the member for Melville, the present Deputy Premier, was a most inquiring type of member and asked many questions which were to the point. On page 976 of Hansard in 1952, Hon. J. T. Tonkin asked the Premier, the present Leader of the Opposition, —

Has he been successful in avoiding or having deferred, any of the State's contractual commitments?

The answer to this was "Yes". Another question was—

What is the total amount of loan money involved in these avoidances or deferments?

and the answer was—

£6,069,000.

The Minister for Works: Did I not tell the Leader of the Opposition it was millions?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I will tell you directly.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I would suggest that those who sit behind and beside the present Leader of the Opposition, the then Premier, would be very hard put at this moment to indicate to the House in what manner that money was expended.

Mr. Bovell: In railway locomotives. You would not have had any rollingstock had it not been for the McLarty Government.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The Housing Commission spent £1,700,000 in a time of easy money and the whole case of the Opposition reeks of hypocrisy. I am certain that the more discerning members of the Country Party are aware of this fact and that is why they refuse to associate themselves with this cock and bull demonstration this evening. I am sure that nobody has been impressed with it.

Hon. D. Brand: You hope!

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Loose statements were made from the other side, suggesting that we—I think it was the member for Cottesloe who made the suggestion—have our hands outstretched to the Commonwealth Government; and that if we are unsuccessful, we will squeal in connection with it, but that the position is that the State is suffering on account of mismanagement by the Western Australian Government. But Sir Arthur Fadden made a public statement in the Press on the 2nd August last in which he had this to say—

It was clear that the Western Australian Government would, on the basis of its approved loan allocation, have considerable difficulty in providing employment through its State works programme at a rate which would be desirable in current circumstances.

I repeat the last few words, "At a rate which would be desirable in current circumstances."

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What date was that?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The 2nd August last. Here we have the Acting Prime Minister stating that additional funds for Western Australia are desirable in the current circumstances.

Mr. Court: What are the circumstances?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That there are several thousand people out of work at present.

Mr. Court: But the circumstances that he was referring to are probably the reasons why there is unemployment.

The Minister for Works: No. The circumstance was the credit squeeze.

Hon. D. Brand: Ah, no!

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: To finish with the question of housing and its impact on the situation, I would say

that anybody who devotes a few moments of thought to this matter realises and appreciates that, when there is a housing problem and the back-lag has been overtaken, there is then only current demand to be met; and in one year, Western Australia completed the building of more than 9,000 homes. If members have regard for the increase in population and make allowance for other circumstances, they will come to the conclusion to which I have come, namely, that the normal demand in Western Australia with a population approximating ours is somewhere between 5,000 and 6,000 houses a year, and therefore it was inevitable—and everybody associated with the building industry knew it; every thinking person knew it; and apparently everybody but the few who sit on the other side of this House knew—that if one builds at a rate above normal in order to overtake a shortage, once that shortage has been overtaken, there is of necessity a much slower rate of home construction. And that is precisely the situation here.

Mr. Court: What did you do to anticipate that falling off? That is the point I have been trying to make.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The member for Nedlands is one of the greatest advocates of private enterprise.

Mr. Court: True.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yet we find him with his hands out all the time to do something to block up the chinks when private enterprise is failing. If private enterprise made the efforts that this Government is at present making willy-nilly to retain the services of men and to put on additional men—if private enterprise did that only half as effectively, there would be no unemployment in Western Australia at present.

Mr. Court: You must admit that you led some of these fellows up the path when you got them geared up to build more houses than you could take.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Those people undertook the construction of houses not from any high motives of public service. They went into it in their scores because to do so was a payable proposition. Indeed, it was a payable proposition—so much so that it is possible to build houses cheaper today than it was three or four years ago, notwithstanding the fact that the basic wage was about £11 a week then, and is at present in excess of £13. So they must have been having a pretty fair picnic in those days. And having made their corner, I should say that some could get out; and they will go out, incidentally, with the compliments of the Master Builders' Association, the Builders' Guild and the building trades unions. Very many of them flocked in to capitalise on the situation.

All that happened was that we gave shelter to people several years earlier than would otherwise have been the case; and, as the member for Nedlands read from a newspaper report, because of the over-spending of £1,700,000 for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1955, the Premier had allocated to the Housing Commission for the financial year just concluded, no less a sum than £5,000,000—a greater sum than ever before allocated. The figure this year is £3,000,000, and I can say honestly and conscientiously that the additional £2,000,000 was made available to build homes.

Mr. Court: What is the fate of those tradesmen you say can go with your compliments?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: They came from certain places to capitalise upon the boom—the unnatural boom then existing. All will recall—not that this is particularly relevant—that in postwar years there was at one stage a terrific rush of people to become land agents. Shortly afterwards there was a terrific rush on the part of people to become second-hand car dealers. These people come and go.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You admit that you caused the unemployment.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I admit nothing of the sort. I admit wholeheartedly that I, in association with my colleagues, and through the generosity of the Premier—

Mr. Bovell: And the Commonwealth Government.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: —was able to solve the housing problem earlier than would otherwise have been the case if we had built at a slower rate 12 months ago; and if, because we are building more slowly now, there are a certain number of men out of employment, they would have been out of employment 12 months ago.

I suggest to the members of the Opposition that they do a little talking to their own kith and kin in the Federal sphere. We have some grounds for thinking—and this may be made more obvious later, and for that reason I say no more than this—that the Opposition—that is, those ranged against us politically in the Commonwealth—are not being as fair to Western Australia as they might be, simply and purely on political grounds. I cannot enlarge upon that; but let members remember it shortly!

Mr. Court: Will the Premier table that correspondence he has promised?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I would say he would be rushing into the Chamber to do it at the appropriate time.

Mr. Court: Good! We are anxious to see it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I sincerely hope he will make a few comments on it at the same time. I expressed disappointment that there had not been a greater activity in other forms of building. I expressed disappointment at the policy of the Commonwealth Government in imposing credit restrictions. I have here the "Monthly Summary of Australian Conditions" issued by the National Bank of Australasia, for the 11th June, 1956. It contains the following:—

During the first quarter of this year, trading bank advances were reduced substantially by approximately £40,000,000 to £378.8 million in March.

The Minister for Works: What has the member for Vasse to say to that?

Mr. Bovell: I quoted the increase in the last quarter as published in "The West Australian".

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Perhaps the hon. member read that in "News Weekly" the same as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Bovell: No; it was in "The West Australian".

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I find this interesting point, which has nothing to do with the activities of the State Housing Commission. This is under the heading of classified advances of trading banks for building and house finance. The figure for December, 1954, is £151.5 million; and for December, 1955, £144.5 million. That is a decline of £7,000,000, and that represents a few houses. Because of the fact that people are unable to get credit facilities in order to build their homes, work is not proceeding on the building either of homes or other types of buildings.

Personally, I am aware of somebody whose name is well known and who constructs flats. He forms syndicates of numbers of people, each of whom has not sufficient capital himself, but joined together they can proceed with projects with assistance, usually from insurance companies. In my electorate a number of houses have been demolished for the purpose of erecting other structures, but his usual source of money supplies has told him—it happens to be an insurance company—that owing to Commonwealth policy and instructions, it regrets it is not able, as has been customary in postwar years, to make money available to him. That is a statement of fact. What I suggest to members of the Opposition is, as the Premier well said the other night, that they get out of Canberra's corner and into Western Australia's.

Members: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The position in connection with timber, unfortunately, is that sawmills are closing.

down and men are being dismissed. Western Australia—and the member for Dale will realise this and know it is true—has had some control of the export of its hardwoods in order to ensure that the Commonwealth railways and the South Australian railways will have hardwoods for the purpose of providing them with sleepers. Western Australia has honoured its obligations in this respect, but, as a result, it has had to limit its exports overseas, and has lost some markets which might be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to recapture.

At the same time, under the administration of the present Commonwealth Government, South Australia, for which we are sacrificing ourselves in order to provide it with sleepers, is importing timber—scantling and the rest of it—with which to erect homes; and timber for that purpose could be supplied by Western Australia at a competitive price; as a matter of fact, I think, at a cheaper price than South Australia is paying. Western Australian timber is used in this State for the same purpose, but South Australia is importing its timber from some of the islands north of Australia, using sterling, and it is importing other timber from North America where dollars are being used.

That is the sort of thing that is going on whilst our own men in the sawmills and the timber industry are out of a job. We have made approaches to the Commonwealth Government, but unfortunately there are certain importing interests that have a greater influence on Commonwealth Ministers than have their own departmental officers.

Mr. Court: You know that the South Australian action is not because of that. There is a good reason for it. The State of South Australia insists on that, and it has made a public statement to that effect.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am aware of the statements made by South Australia, and I am aware of how utterly false and unrealistic they are. All sorts of pleas and excuses are put forward and, unfortunately, they are only too readily grasped by the Commonwealth Government as some justification for its attitude. The fact remains, however, that we have timber workers idle in Western Australia while South Australia, at a time when our overseas balances are rapidly running out, is importing timber not only from sterling but also from dollar areas. I say it is an absolute scandal.

Only recently the Deputy Premier and the Premier made representations to the Commonwealth, but with what result? One or two minor concessions that are practically meaningless have been made. These are some of the practical things that the Opposition could be doing instead of proceeding with a talking expedition such as

we have had. I must say in fairness to the Commonwealth Government, in contradistinction to its counterpart in this State—that is to say, the present members of the Opposition—that it is apparently seized with the necessity of doing something for Western Australia.

Instead of members opposite decrying this Government which does appreciate the situation and which has gone to the Commonwealth merely for the purpose of helping our own kith and kin who are at present short of a job here, they could adopt a different attitude. We talk about the state of the pensioners. I have every sympathy for them, but the position is that a pensioner and his wife receive a pension of £8 a week, whereas these unfortunate workers with families receive £4 10s. when they are unemployed. Instead of seeking to make political capital out of this, there should be telegrams and other messages conveyed to the Commonwealth by responsible members of the Opposition, asking Sir Arthur Fadden to be as generous as he possibly can, not for the purpose of helping a Labour Government in Western Australia, but for the purpose of helping people who are in distress.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I think you have convinced them.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That surely is a proper outlook and regard for the situation.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What would you give to all these claimant States if you were Prime Minister?

The Minister for Works: That is the 64-dollar question.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There are so many steps between this and that, that it would be futile for me to endeavour to make any answer to it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What would you—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Having some knowledge of the case that was presented—in fact, I was associated with the preparation of it in certain respects—I feel that the claim is justified and that we can easily and efficiently handle the amount of money. An amount of £4,000,000 may sound a terrific sum, but I consider that those who have thought about it realise that it costs approximately £1,000 per annum to employ a worker because not everything is spent directly on labour; there are associated charges of one sort and another. This sum would, therefore, provide employment for 4,000 people.

The position in Western Australia, as it has been for 12 months, is much different from that obtaining in the other States. I well recall Mr. McMahon, then Commonwealth Minister for Social Services, introducing the Estimates for war service homes, when he stated in the Commonwealth Parliament at Canberra that it was no use making available an additional

sum—that is, a sum additional to the £40,000,000—for the erection of homes, because it would only have the effect of inflation and, in fact, no additional homes would be built when there was a limitation of materials and manpower.

When he came over here, I endeavoured to reason with him, as I had done with his Federal officers in Canberra when I was there just a few weeks before. I told him that in Western Australia we had manpower, local timber, ample cement, bricks aplenty—that is to say, burnt clay bricks, cement bricks and silica bricks—roofing tiles—millions of them stacked in Western Australia, both terracotta and cement—no shortage of any of the fundamental building materials, and that we had workmen here—competent building tradesmen—seeking employment. Some of them were not so competent but nevertheless they were the people who had helped us overcome the housing lag.

All I wanted was more money to provide houses for Western Australians, to secure employment for those people and to find an outlet for the accumulation of stocks of building materials. Apparently, little by little, the Commonwealth has come round to an appreciation of the situation. My final word is this, that if this discussion on the question of unemployment has done nothing else, it has perhaps indicated to members of the Opposition something that they did not know before, namely, that it is an easy matter to talk about overspending and thereby creating a crisis. There would have been a mighty fine crisis if there had been hundreds of people out on the streets; but because of the terrific tempo that was developed, that position never arose. So, the only concrete instance that the Opposition gave has been proved to be false. They have had shown to them that in the matter of overspending, or committing ahead, the previous Government was a pastmaster compared with whatever this Government has done during its term.

Mr. Court: You have not put up any long-term solution to this problem. This £4,000,000, on your say-so, will put you right for only 12 months.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I had intended to conclude but there is just one more point. Obviously, as I have already said, the Government cannot employ men unless it has additional funds. I think everybody knows that the only source of loan money is through the Loan Council, in other words, from the Commonwealth, and therefore we have gone to the Commonwealth for additional loan money. We cannot go anywhere else.

Mr. Court: That is only a palliative; it will not solve the problem.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If we have sufficient of these palliatives, for a sufficiently long time, it will do us.

Mr. Court: That is not a good way out.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If private enterprise is falling down on the job of providing employment, it becomes the responsibility of the Government; and that is what this Government is facing up to. It is useless being airy-fairy about what private enterprise might do if somebody speaks this way, that way or the other way. This is something that this Government is doing and it wants the resources to continue to do it. The only other source of income available to the Government is through taxation and charges. Perhaps I should ask members of the Opposition whether they would agree to or would support wholeheartedly, in order to provide works for our unemployed, the provision of higher freights and fares, motor-vehicle licences and the hundred and one other things—

Mr. I. W. Manning: And probably be called "tax-us raiders".

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Is that what the Opposition wants?

Mr. Bovell: We want some sound administration from the present Government.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: We are getting sound from that side of the Chamber and administration from this.

Hon. D. Brand: We are getting plenty of noise from over there. In your request to the Commonwealth Government—

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If private enterprise has fallen down and it cannot do the job of providing employment, and it cannot expand its activities to absorb these people, I repeat that it is the duty and responsibility of the Government. The Government cannot handle it unless it has additional resources; the Government will not be squandering money because it has to provide water supplies, drainage, sewerage, houses, hospitals, schools and a hundred and one other things, including assistance to dairy farmers who require it, according to the member for Vasse.

Mr. Bovell: It is about time you got on with that job.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In other words, there is plenty to be done in Western Australia and all we seek is the finance to enable us to do it. We have applied to the only place from which loan moneys come and I ask—and I hope it is not too late—the Opposition to co-operate with us and do their utmost, with us, to see that additional funds come to this State of ours to enable us to do something to succour those who are in distress at present and to assist in the development of the State of Western Australia.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Then be a responsible Government!

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [10.24]: This debate has accomplished two things: It will let the public of Western Australia know that the State Government has a responsibility in regard to the

employment situation and it will probably spur the Government on to greater efforts, although I have been disappointed in not hearing from Ministers some plan as to how these men will be absorbed, unless the Commonwealth Government comes to light. There has been far too much of this talk and far too much political dishonesty in continually blaming the Commonwealth Government for the unemployment position in Western Australia. There have been far too many attempts to exonerate completely the State Government.

It has always been recognised that the State Government has a responsibility in regard to employment. Tonight the member for Fremantle dived back into ancient history; he was critical of the actions of the State Government during the days of the depression; but he made no reference to the Commonwealth Government. I remember those days because I was here with him at the time—he is now the father of the House—and I remember the criticism from this side of the House when the member for Fremantle and those associated with him were in opposition. They did not let up for a minute.

The Minister for Works: You are over-looking one very vital thing.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The whole time members of the then Opposition were criticising the State Government.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you remember the Ottawa Conference?

The Minister for Works: You are over-looking one very vital thing; there was no Financial Agreement at that time binding the States in the same way as it does now.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think the Government is fortunate that there is a Financial Agreement.

The Minister for Works: That is the vital difference.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: This State has done very well under the Financial Agreement. Even on this occasion at the Premiers' Conference, our tax reimbursement, which is granted to us under a formula, was well over £1,000,000 more than we were entitled to receive, according to the formula.

It is remarkable when one looks at what happened only a few years ago. I have before me a record of a speech made by the Premier, when in Opposition, and I would like to read all of it; but I shall not do so at this stage. However, later in the session I shall quote a number of extracts from it. At that time he gave me a lecture about State finances and if members care to read that speech, delivered on the 27th July, 1948, they will find it most interesting.

One of the things he told me to do was not to say "Yes" to every person who came along and wanted money; he told me to

provide money only for those things which were absolutely essential. The present Premier then went on to say that it was not possible to provide money for everybody who wanted something. But this is the gem! This is what he said, in criticising my Government—

All that the Government appears to have done up to date is to make approaches to the Prime Minister whenever additional finance has been required to meet the demands granted by this Government.

Mr. Bovell: Is that Mr. Chifley?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: He goes on—

It is extraordinary that the members of the Government should so frequently approach the Prime Minister with requests that he should make available to them very large sums of money because, when they are not asking him to hand out large sums of money, they are condemning and abusing him on some subject or other.

Hon. D. Brand: Shame!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: He continued—

I think it says a great deal for the temperament of the Prime Minister that he overlooks entirely the condemnation and abuse that Ministers of this Government heap upon his head when it suits them, and yet makes available large sums of money to assist this Government to keep the State solvent and meet the various obligations it has assumed.

I am sorry that the Premier is not here to listen to that.

Mr. Bovell: You are like a minnow compared to a whale in making demands upon the Commonwealth Government.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has the floor and I ask members to give him a chance. I know it is very difficult, because I have had the same experience when members are talking behind the member making a speech. It is disconcerting to a speaker and I shall not permit it to be done.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Are not you permitting us to interject, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SPEAKER: Ordinary interjections are all right but it puts a member off the track if somebody behind him interjects all the time.

The Minister for Works: Why does not the Leader of the Opposition discipline his followers?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: In that speech the present Premier condemned us for making approaches to the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister for Works: You did that, did you?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes.

The Minister for Works: I did not think you did.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am not denying that. But let me tell members what the late Mr. Chifley said.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: No secrets, please.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: This is not a secret. At one Premiers' Conference—and this was published—he made a statement to this effect: The Premier of Western Australia had shown a most reasonable attitude at the conference.

Mr. Court: I think the words he used were "commendable restraint."

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: There you are! There is not much commendable restraint being shown in the propaganda of this Government because it has played politics and played them hard every time by blaming the Commonwealth for all the ills it is suffering from. But why should we not be factual about this? Some of these figures have already been given, but I quote them again. I find that this Government has received record sums of money from the Commonwealth. Let us take income tax reimbursements for a start. In my last year as Treasurer, I received £10,854,544. This Government, for 1955-56, received £12,313,318; an increase of £1,458,764 above what I got from that source alone.

Looking at the funds received under the heading of "Main Roads," I find that the Premier in 1955-56 received £5,089,383 and in my last year as Treasurer I received £2,854,584. This shows that the Government has received an increase of £2,224,809 over and above what I received. Again, from the Grants Commission this Government, in 1955-56 received £8,900,000 and in 1952-53 we received £8,041,000, showing that this Government received an increase of £859,000. The Government's revenue for 1955-56 was £49,612,406, but what was ours? It was only about £33,955,157, which is a difference of £15,657,249. That is what we had to spend.

It is no use members saying, "Look how money has depreciated" and all the rest of it. These are huge amounts and the Government should be able to finance the State's commitments within these limits. I can remember the criticism we were subject to when we were on that side of the House. We were continually told that there was sufficient finance available if it were properly handled. I maintain that the State's finances today are not being properly handled and I do not wonder that there is unemployment.

The other afternoon I asked a question and I received what I think was a facetious answer. Had we given the Deputy Premier such an answer when he was on this side

of the House and we were in office he would have gone through the roof. I asked what amount of overtime was paid by the Railway Department for the last financial year and what branches were concerned. The answer I got was that this information could not be readily obtained unless overtime was paid and a great deal of research was carried out.

Does not any ordinary business, run on sound lines, know what amount of overtime it pays? I ask the Government: Is there such an amount of overtime being paid that it could absorb extra men? Does the amount for overtime run into scores of thousands of pounds or hundreds of thousands? We are not given that information. I repeat, that if the Deputy Premier had received such an answer as that, I shudder to think what would have happened to us. I will say that I do not think he saw that reply before it was given to the House.

The Minister for Works: I did not give it to you.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No, but the Premier or the Deputy Premier sees these questions before they are answered in the House. I do not know, but it may be that hundreds of thousands of pounds are being paid in overtime in the Railway Department. Could not the money be more usefully employed by engaging extra men than by paying overtime? However, we cannot get the information in answer to that question. I repeat again that that is haphazard finance and when a large Government department carries on like that, it is no wonder that we are in a mess and we have unemployment in our midst.

The Minister for Housing: It is unfortunately true that the information sought was not available and that is precisely the same situation that has been in existence for years and years and years.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I cannot accept that from the Minister.

The Minister for Housing: It is unfortunately true and I hope, next week, to give a detailed reply pointing out all the difficulties involved in getting the figures.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: When I was at the Treasury I used to ask for such information in an endeavour to get a grip on departmental finance. I used to ask for such information to find out the reason for rising costs and to ascertain why overtime was being paid.

The Minister for Housing: But you never got those figures.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Perhaps not, but I got the figures that satisfied me. Surely the Minister for Housing is not trying to convince me that this is sound finance. Is he going to argue that the amount of overtime that is being worked

cannot be ascertained unless a great deal of research is made and more overtime is paid in order to obtain the information?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The member for Leederville would not agree with that.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am sure that the member for Leederville will agree with me in this case.

Mr. Johnson: I think I will, too.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am sure he will. I have quoted these figures of the finances the Government has received to indicate the generous treatment which it has been accorded by the Commonwealth. When we look at the position generally, we realise that the Government is going to get its loan funds, it is going to get its fair proportion of the £190,000,000 which is being guaranteed by the Commonwealth. Again, look at our favourable position in regard to roads. I am always afraid to say too much about our road grant because I know what the feeling is in some of the non-claimant States in regard to the amount of money that we receive from the petrol tax.

The Minister for Works: What is your complaint here? We are spending all the money and there are more men employed than there were before.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Of course there are! The Minister has millions more of money at his disposal and I have been pointing out some of the very unsatisfactory methods that are being used in regard to the finance that is being spent by some of our departments.

The Minister for Works: But you know quite well that we cannot touch a shilling of the petrol tax for other governmental works.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I did not say that the Minister could.

The Minister for Works: Then what is the point you are trying to make?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am trying to make the point that the Minister and his Government are getting a great deal more money than my Government ever did, and further, it has not the same difficulties. The Government is being treated so generously by the Commonwealth Government that it should be able to face up to the problems confronting it. I am not arguing that the Commonwealth Government should not give the Government some additional assistance. I hope it will, either by way of loan or, as suggested by the member for Nedlands, it might find avenues, in Western Australia, of spending Commonwealth money. It does not matter how the money is spent so long as the unemployment problem in this State is dealt with.

Hon. D. Brand: What about main roads trust funds? The Premier said that he was able to use them.

The Minister for Works: They have to be used for the Narrows bridge.

Hon. D. Brand: But there is not much in the fund at present.

The Minister for Works: We cannot spend that.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I was rather surprised to hear the Deputy Premier make reference to the fact that if war came upon us money would soon be found. Of course it would be found! As I said to the Minister by way of interjection, if a burglar came to him and pointed a revolver at his head, he would empty his pockets. He would have to pay for it afterwards and suffer for it afterwards. It is quite a different story talking about finance in wartime and finance in times of peace. If we were to make provision for finance in times of peace as we do in times of war, we would be in a serious situation.

Mr. Bovell: Our whole economic structure would collapse.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: So I believe a case has been made out by the Opposition in relation to this motion.

The Minister for Education: By whom?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: By the various speakers of course, who else? Reasons have also been given to show where the Government has failed in its duty. I think they were sound reasons and this debate has been well worth while, even though it has taken a considerable time to get through it, to let the people of Western Australia, and those who are suffering through unemployment as mentioned by the Minister for Housing, realise that this State Government has a responsibility towards them, and the blame cannot be put on the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Housing: Nobody wants to blame anybody.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Minister is blaming somebody; he has been doing so continuously. Every time that unemployment has been mentioned in the past he has blamed the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Housing: You have a second look.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: There is no need for me to have a second look. I see it every day and I hear it on the air as well.

The Minister for Housing: Let one of your colleagues pass to you a clipping indicating where that has been said.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Surely the Minister is not going to deny this.

The Minister for Housing: Surely the Leader of the Opposition or his supporters has one such extract; I challenge you.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Ministers of the State Government are continually talking about doing certain works provided the money is made available by

the Commonwealth. What is the idea of that? It is almost a daily occurrence and the purpose is to create in the minds of the public the point that the Commonwealth is treating the State so badly that the Government cannot do anything because of the action of the Commonwealth Government. That, of course, is not factual.

Mr. Heal: Does the Leader of the Opposition feel that the Commonwealth Government has some responsibility in this matter?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes, I do, but I think it is living up to its responsibility.

Mr. Heal: In what way?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I have been trying to show the hon. member for some time. I have told him what that Government had done by way of income tax reimbursement, on the revenue side; I have told him of the favourable treatment we have received through the petrol tax; I have also mentioned that we received £8,900,000 from the Grants Commission last year. All these things have come from the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Johnson: So has unemployment.

Hon. A. F. Watts: We got £42 against an Australian average of £23.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am glad the Leader of the Country Party mentioned that because the average amount we received from the Commonwealth Government was £42 a head against a Commonwealth average of £23.

The Minister for Housing: I think they owe something to us when one considers the money they have spent on the Snowy River project and in Tasmania, and when one realises that they have not spent a cracker on Kwinana.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know we have our disabilities; we have always had them. But the Commonwealth Government has not been ungenerous towards us. That applies not only to the Liberal Governments but also to the Labour Governments, and I think it is time we stopped continuously blaming the Commonwealth for the ills that affect this State. I agree that the motion should have been moved and I cannot help feeling that it will have some good effect.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

QUESTIONS.

BUFFEL GRASS.

Kalgoorlie Experimental Plot.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has any attempt been made to establish buffel grass on the Goldfields as a fodder for stock?

(2) Would he favourably consider a proposal to establish an experimental plot in the Kalgoorlie area?

(3) Have any departmental experiments been undertaken with the aim of introducing fodder vegetation to the Goldfields to offset drought periods?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

(1) Buffel grass grows well only where adequate summer moisture is available. It has not proved satisfactory in field trials in the Meekatharra and Wiluna areas.

(2) Because of experience gained, further experiments with buffel grass in areas with low summer rainfall were not anticipated. However, consideration can be given to a trial plot in the Kalgoorlie area.

(3) With a view to reducing losses from drought, experiments on pastoral properties have been undertaken from the Department of Agriculture's Wiluna office. It is anticipated that results obtained from these experiments would have a wide application in the goldfields areas.

HOUSING.

(a) Rental of Maniana Types.

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What is the weekly rental of the—

(a) two-bedroom type Maniana house;

(b) three-bedroom type Maniana house?

(2) What is the respective weekly average rental of the two and three-bedroom type houses built by the State Housing Commission during the last financial year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) £2 18s.

(b) 2-bedroom and sleepout—
£3 0s. 6d. and £3 1s. 6d.

(2)	2-Bedroom	3-Bedroom
Brick	£3 12s.	£3 17s.
Brick Veneer	£3 8s.	None built
Timber		
Framed	£3 5s.	£3 8s.

(b) Type of Houses Built Under Various Acts.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many houses were erected by the State Housing Commission in the metropolitan area during the last financial year, under—

(a) Commonwealth - State rental agreement;

(b) Workers' Homes Act;

(c) War Service Homes Act?

(2) Of the houses as under No. (1), how many were—

- (a) timber-framed, pre-cut;
- (b) brick;
- (c) other?

(3) How many of these houses were erected by the Public Works Department?

(4) How many contractors were engaged in the construction of—

- (a) timber-framed, pre-cut houses;
- (b) brick;
- (c) other?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) 1264.
- (b) 644.
- (c) 1123.

(2)

	T/F Pre-cut	Brick	Brick Veneer	T/Framed
Commonwealth-State Rental Agreement	245	408	68	543
State Housing Act	456	6	38	144
War Service Homes Act	—	683	—	440

(3) 312.

- (4) (a) 180.
- (b) 101.
- (c) 484.

RAILWAYS.

(a) Cost of Renovations at Lime Lake and Boyerine.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

What was the cost of—

- (a) labour;
- (b) material for painting and renovating the buildings at—
 - (i) Lime Lake;
 - (ii) Boyerine?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

	Labour			Material etc.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Lime Lake	27	18	1	4	1	4
Boyerine	27	18	1	6	6	3

(b) Cost of Department's Proposals, Locomotive No. 1.

Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Will he inform the House of the total cost of the department's proposals regarding locomotive No. 1, known as "Katie," at Yarloop?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

It is planned to have the locomotive on exhibition together with a "V" class locomotive at the Perth station during Show

Week, 1956, in accordance with the usual departmental publicity display at this time of the year.

The cost involved in putting the locomotive into a satisfactory condition for exhibition will not be known until after the locomotive has been received into the Midland Junction workshops.

(c) Ablution Block for Employees, Bunbury.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

On the 16th November, 1955, he replied to a question by me, indicating that plans for the erection of an up-to-date ablution block for the members of the Western Australian Society of Railway Employees stationed at Bunbury were receiving consideration.

- (1) Has this proposal now been fully investigated?
- (2) If so, what are the full details of the proposal in relation to plans, commencement, location and cost?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Investigations indicate that a combined amenity building for all branches is not practicable owing to the scattered nature of the yard.

- (a) A temporary amenity exists for permanent-way employees.
- (b) When the Bond Store and Customs Office are transferred to the Railway Department, sufficient area will be available for amenity provision at the goods shed subject to funds being forthcoming.
- (c) Present civil engineering work shops depot area is too limited for provision of an amenity building. It is planned to shift the depot and store area to existing barracks site and amenity facilities will be incorporated if funds are available.

(d) Goods Shed, Bunbury.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

- (1) In what year was the existing W.A.G.R. goods shed built in Bunbury?
- (2) What was the total tonnage of goods handled through the shed in its first year of operation?
- (3) What was the total tonnage that was handled through the shed last year?
- (4) What were the original and what are the present dimensions of floor area (including office accommodation) of the Bunbury goods shed?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

- (1) 1905.
- (2) Records are not available.

(3) For the year ended the 30th June, 1956, 28,476 tons.

(4) Goods shed: Original 42 x 210ft.; existing 65 x 230ft. Office: Original 16 x 28ft; existing 16 x 28ft.

(e) Cost of Spencer's Brook Smash.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the estimated cost of the rail smash on the 22nd August, 1956, at Spencer's Brook in respect of—

- (a) permanent way;
- (b) rollingstock;
- (c) other property;
- (d) emergency services?

(2) What has been the incidence of rail smashes over the last 12 months?

(3) What have been the causes of—

- (a) the 22nd August, 1956, smash;
- (b) other major smashes during the last 12 months?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Work in clearing and restoring tracks, salvaging goods and removal of damaged locomotive and rollingstock is still proceeding. Costs arising out of the collision will be considerable but will not be available for some time.

(2) For the 12 months ended the 30th June last, there were:

- (a) A head-on collision between two locomotives of goods trains.
- (b) A collision between light engine and rear of passenger train.
- (c) A collision between Westland express and rear of goods train.
- (d) Eleven derailments in which three or more vehicles were involved.
- (3) (a) Departmental inquiries into the cause have not been completed.

(b) (i) Driver's error in judgment and guard's failure to set points for the loop.

(ii) Driver of locomotive at fault.

(iii) Driver of Westland primarily responsible.

(iv) Six derailments due to condition of track.

Two derailments due to speed and track.

One derailment due to obstruction on line.

One derailment due to bunching of wagons.

One derailment due to track, bunching of wagons and suspected speed.

ROADS.

Gnowangerup-Jerramongup Section.

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

What amount does the Main Roads Department propose to expend during the year ending the 30th June, 1957, on the road between Gnowangerup and Jerramongup, and what work is proposed to be done with the funds provided?

The MINISTER replied:

The particulars are as follows:—

	£
Gnowangerup East section—	
249.4 M to 261 M, 249.4 M to 259 M Construction Prime 12ft. wide	29,500
249 M Construct six-span bridge	7,500
Ongerup East section—	
272 M to 299 M Construction sections totalling 5 miles	5,000
299 M Gairdner River bridge and approaches	8,000
	<hr/> £50,000

In addition, funds have been provided for expenditure by the road board on maintenance.

BETTING.

Money Received from Taxes.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Treasurer:

(1) What was the total amount of money received from the betting tax for the financial year 1955-56?

(2) What was the amount received from the winning bets tax for the financial year 1954-55?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Treasurer) replied:

(1) £300,270, of which £40,449 was paid to racing clubs.

(2) £195,060, of which £39,012 was paid to racing clubs.

WUNDOWIE CHARCOAL IRON INDUSTRY.

Profit on Pig Iron Sales and Reserves.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) In reply to question 12 of the 21st August, he reported a profit of £7,629 by Wundowie Charcoal Iron Works. Is this figure arrived at after charging interest on capital employed?

(2) If so, at what rate is this interest charged?

(3) Are any amounts transferred to reserves for depreciation, obsolescence, or replacement of machinery, buildings and equipment?

(4) Are any other reserves established?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Industrial Development) replied:

(1) No. In calculating the profit shown, the capital employed is treated as share capital. Actually, all capital is provided from General Loan Funds on which the interest charged is 4 per cent. per annum.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Depreciation and sinking fund contribution has been charged against profit and applied in reduction of loan liability.

(4) Provision has been made out of profits for furnace re-lining, long service leave, and superannuation.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) Carnarvon Main.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Is it the intention of his department to increase the size of the water main between the pumping station at Carnarvon and the town reservoir?

(2) When will this urgent work be carried out?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Provision has been made on the 1956-57 draft Estimates to commence the work, but the programme is not yet finalised.

(b) Shark Bay Bore.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) When will a start be made on putting down the bore at Shark Bay for supplying water to the town?

(2) Should there be a further delay in getting a suitable contractor, will he agree to other sections of the works proceeding, such as the laying of the water mains and the building of the reservoir?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The drilling contractor is engaged on operations for WAPET and it is not possible to give a firm date. Present indications are that a commencement could be delayed until early November.

(2) The department is obtaining the necessary materials and intends to proceed with other sections of the work without waiting for the sinking of the bore.

(c) Metropolitan Area Meters.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) What percentage of consumers of the metropolitan water supply have been metered?

(2) Are any exceptions regarding the supply of meters made to any section of the community?

(3) If so, who are they, and how many people enjoy such exemption?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 72.84 per cent.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

HEALTH.

Provision of Medical Officer, Mullewa.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that Mullewa and surrounding pastoral areas including Yalgoo are without the services of a medical officer?

(2) What action, if any, has been taken by his department to relieve the position?

(3) Can he suggest a means whereby a fully qualified medico can be attracted to Mullewa?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is known that there is no doctor resident in the town at present.

(2) and (3) Some inquiries have been made. The medical practice at Mullewa is a private one.

I might state that both the British Medical Association and the Health Department have made it well known that there is no doctor there. We are anxious to see one appointed, but we have no direct control.

HARBOURS.

Dredging of Success and Parmelia Banks.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the total cost of dredging Success and Parmelia Banks to a depth of 38ft.?

(2) Is the channel being further deepened? If so, to what extent and by whom?

(3) What would be the cost of the extra work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The total cost of the channels will be approximately £1,450,000 made up of:—

(a) Dredging operation, approximately £1,315,000.

(b) Navigational aids (some work remains) £135,000.

(2) No final decision has been reached.

(3) Unknown at this stage.

BRITISH PETROLEUM COMPANY.

Repayment of Loan.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Treasurer:

(1) What is the balance owing on the £500,000 borrowed from the British Petroleum Co. of Kwinana in 1953?

- (2) What was the condition of the loan?
 (3) What interest is being paid on the amount outstanding?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Treasurer) replied:

- (1) £500,000.
 (2) The initial term of the loan was one year, but by arrangement with the company, it was extended for a further two years.
 (3) 4½ per cent. per annum.

EDUCATION.

Electricity Supply for Roleystone School.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that the new school at Roleystone has been wired up and ready to be connected to the electricity mains?
 (2) Is it intended to have electricity made available to the school, and if so, when?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Yes.
 (2) Yes. When the State Electricity Commission makes the necessary extension to the electrical mains.

DAIRYING.

Governmental Assistance, Margaret River and Northcliffe.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the reply from the Premier regarding the availability of finance to the State Government to commence the dairy farm improvement scheme in the Margaret River and Northcliffe areas, has a decision been made by Cabinet as to the amount which this State can provide?

The MINISTER replied:

As I told the House on a previous occasion, a survey has been made of both areas mentioned. We are now awaiting the end of the winter months before taking heavy machinery to those areas. The sum of money has not yet been decided on, but whatever it is, it will be sufficient to commence and complete the work in connection with present applications.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT CONTINUANCE.

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 29th August, 1956.

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