

remedy. I congratulate the Government on the good work it is doing, and if it obtains the help and assistance from members of Parliament to which it is entitled, it will continue that good work. We are passing through an extremely difficult period mainly on account of the international position, and I therefore hope the Government will receive all the help possible from members of Parliament.

We have heard a great deal of criticism of the Government in this debate. We have been told that we are getting only 100 miles of bitumen road constructed a year. I could talk for half an hour on that subject, but the fact remains that although the Main Roads Department is doing an excellent job, it is a long way behind in its works programme, through no fault of its own. One of the main drawbacks is that it cannot get men, and those it does have will not work in outlying districts. Often, when it desires to do a job, it has to suspend one operation to proceed with another.

I know that has happened many times. When it was working on the 60-mile Bussell-highway between Busselton and Nannup, there was a request for some work to be done on a section of the Nannup-road, which was practically impassable, and, after pressure had been brought to bear, the department had to stop work on the Busselton highway to attend to the Nannup section. There was a terrible row about that, but what else could the department do? I have been told time and again by Mr. Young, the Commissioner of Main Roads, that in various districts he could have used one or two more gangs, but could not obtain them.

Then again, I have also been informed that in several instances, if it had not been for local labour being obtained, the work would not have been done because the men who are in the metropolitan area will not go to the country. Therefore, the department has only half the number of men which it requires at its disposal. It is simply a question of obtaining the proper facilities to carry out its work. It is all very well for members to put forward suggestions, but we must face the true position. I think it would have done members good if they had gone to the Eastern States and seen the effect of some of the industrial strikes there, especially the one affecting the metal trades and the iron and steel industries. They would then have had a better conception of all the difficulties which are confronting the Government. We talk about spiralling prices, but 50 per cent. of the trouble is due to lack of production. If no-one will work, how can we ever produce? I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.9 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 7th September, 1950.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### ROADS.

*As to Port Gregory and Balline Areas.*

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Works:

Will he approve of a grant of money to the Northampton Road Board for the purpose of constructing a road to Port Gregory and for the construction of roads in the Balline area, which would assist in opening up a large area of good farming land?

The MINISTER replied:

An allocation has been made on the 1950-1951 programme of works for the improvement of the road between Northampton and Port Gregory.

No allocation has been made for the construction of roads in the Balline area.

#### WATER SUPPLIES.

*(a) As to Additional Storage, Geraldton.*

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Water Supply:

Will he give an assurance that the provision of additional storage tanks for the Geraldton water supply will be commenced at an early date?

The MINISTER replied:

It is hoped to commence construction of a one million gallon service reservoir for Geraldton water supply early in the new year.

*(b) As to Comprehensive Scheme, Pumping Costs.*

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Water Supply:

What would be the estimated cost of pumping one million gallons of water—

(a) from Collie to Narrogin;

(b) from Collie to Katanning?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) Cost of pumping one million gallons Wellington Dam to Narrogin, approximately £20, or 5½d. per 1,000 gallons.

(b) Cost of pumping one million gallons Wellington Dam to Katanning, approximately £30, or 8d. per 1,000 gallons.

Compared with cost of 1,000 gallons from bitumen catchment with annual rainfall 18 inches of approximately 3s. 1d. per 1,000 gallons.

**CHANDLER ALUNITE WORKS.**

*As to Supply of Gypsum and Plaster.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Who wrote to Mr. Collett, of Gypsum and Plaster Exporters, Ltd., under date the 23rd December, 1949, withdrawing the offer previously made to supply gypsum and plaster?

(2) Whose signature appeared on the letter?

(3) Was Mr. N. Fernie in Perth during office hours on the 23rd December, 1949?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Deputy Director of Industrial Development.

(2) In the absence of the original letter, I cannot ascertain the actual form of signature used by the Deputy Director.

(3) It is believed Mr. Fernie was absent on this day, either on leave or an investigation in the country. As he is not in Perth today, it has not been practicable to confirm by personal inquiry.

**HARBOUR DREDGING.**

*(a) As to Rockbreaker "Lobnitz."*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) For what special purpose was the rockbreaker "Lobnitz" purchased?

(2) On whose recommendation was the vessel acquired?

(3) Who was the vendor?

(4) What was the cost to the State of the vessel delivered at Fremantle?

(5) Was the purchase made through an agent? If so, who was the agent and what amount of commission was paid?

(6) Has the "Lobnitz" carried out the work for which she was acquired?

(7) If not, what amount of work was done by the use of the vessel?

(8) Were there any days during which the "Lobnitz" was working at Bunbury when she was able to continue for a full shift of eight hours? If so, on what day?

(9) What expenditure has been involved in connection with the "Lobnitz" covering the period between the day on which the vessel left Fremantle for Bunbury and the 31st July, 1950? How much of this amount was in respect of maintenance and repairs?

(10) What use is being made of the "Lobnitz" at present?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) For the breaking of basalt rock on Bunbury Harbour floor.

(2) On the recommendation of the Director of Works following advice by the Chief Engineer, Sydney Maritime Board.

(3) The vendor of the equipment—Marine Board of Launceston.

(4) Equipment only was delivered at Fremantle.

(5) There was no agent.

(6) The basalt cannot be broken until the clay overburden has been removed.

(7) and (8) Answered by (6).

(9) This information is not immediately available.

(10) Answered by (6).

*(b) As to Tabling Papers.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the Minister's studied evasion of my questions, will he make available for perusal papers dealing with the purchase of the "Lobnitz" and its use at Bunbury?

The MINISTER replied:

I will, with pleasure.

**COMMONWEALTH BUILDING PROPOSAL.**

*As to Alternative Site.*

Mr. YATES asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

(1) Is he aware that the Commonwealth Government intends to resume land in the Terrace-drive, Perth, for the purpose of erecting thereon offices for the Repatriation Department?

(2) Was approval given by the Housing Commission to the firm of Krantz and Sheldon to build 120 flats on the land in question?

(3) Does he approve of the Commonwealth Government's decision?

(4) If not, will he make representations to the Minister for the Interior (Mr. McBride) to see if other land could be selected?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) The Housing Commission, when indicating approval of the erection of temporary buildings, was not aware of the Commonwealth Government's intention to resume land for the purpose.

(2) Approval has been given to date by the Housing Commission for the erection of 60 flats in Terrace-drive, and for other flats in the immediate vicinity.

(3) and (4) He approves of the Commonwealth Government's decision to erect temporary accommodation to meet the urgent requirements of the Repatriation Department in Perth, using materials not directly affecting the housing programme. Representations are now being made by the Premier to Senator McBride concerning an alternative site for the proposed building.

#### DAIRYING.

*As to Slaughter of Heifer-Calves.*

Mr. MANNING asked the Minister for Lands:

In view of the wholesale slaughter of heifer-calves which is causing concern in the dairying districts, will the Government give favourable consideration to rearing heifer-calves on Government farms by means of artificial feeding?

The MINISTER replied:

It is not possible to undertake large scale rearing of heifer-calves on Government farms as these are already fully stocked.

An examination of statistics indicates that there were more heifer-calves under one year of age in this State at the 31st March last (35,984) than in any previous year, with the exception of 1949. (1947, 32,057; 1948, 33,958; 1949, 36,640.)

Inquiries are being made as to whether there is any abnormal slaughtering occurring during the current season.

#### TRAFFIC.

*As to Suspension of Motorist's License.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Attorney General:

Will he lay on the Table at the next sitting of the House all papers dealing with the case of Mary Ellenor Dargie, of 19 Perth-street, Cottesloe, who, in 1948, had her driver's license returned to her by the Executive Council after a life suspension by the Supreme Court?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

No. Files dealing with recommendations made to His Excellency the Governor are of a confidential nature and it is not customary for them to be made public. The file will be made available to the hon. member for his information at his convenience.

#### SEWERAGE.

*As to Septic Tanks for Schools and Kindergartens.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Under which Act is it mandatory to install septic tank systems at all schools and kindergartens?

(2) Is this instruction strictly adhered to?

(3) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Health Act provides that a local authority or the Commissioner of Public Health may serve written notice on an owner requiring him to install apparatus for bacteriolytic treatment of sewage. This notice is mandatory.

(2) It is Government policy to install septic tanks in all Government schools where deep sewage is not available, and this is being progressively extended to private schools and similar institutions.

(3) Local circumstances, such as adequate supplies of water and suitable absorptive soil, must be allowed for.

#### CO-OPERATIVE BULK HANDLING, LTD.

*As to Disputed Storage Charges, Bunbury.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) What are the particulars of storage charges amounting to £1,957 2s. 3d. which were disputed by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., and subsequently written off the accounts of the Bunbury Harbour Board for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1949?

(2) On whose recommendation was the adjustment made?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

(1) Under Clause (b) (1) of Regulation 104A of the Bunbury Harbour Board published in the "Government Gazette" of the 14th January, 1939, one-eighth of a penny per bushel per week or part of a week was payable in respect of all wheat of any season held in store after the 15th March next following the close of the particular wheat season in which the wheat was received until the date of the delivery of the wheat.

By an agreement entered into in 1941 between Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. and the Western Australian Government Bulk Handling Committee a storage charge of one-twenty-second of a penny per bushel per week was agreed to.

The solicitors for Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. and the Solicitor General were of the opinion that the additional charge authorised by the regulation in respect of the storage of wheat of the 1946-1947 season which was received in store after the 15th March, 1947, would not commence to operate until the 15th

March, 1948, and would then be calculated from the 15th March, 1948, to the date of delivery out of store. Since in this particular case the wheat was received in store after the 15th March, 1947, and delivered out of store before the 15th March, 1948, no additional charge was payable under the regulation.

The difference between one-twenty-second of a penny per bushel agreed to in 1941 and one-eighth of a penny per bushel thus wrongly charged under the regulation was written off.

(2) Answered by (1).

### TROLLEY-BUS SERVICE.

*As to Cambridge-street Route.*

Hon. A. H. PANTON (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Will he endeavour to have further transport made available at peak periods on the Cambridge-street run between McCambridge-street and Oxford-street?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

I will bring the matter under the notice of the Minister for Transport and advise the hon. member as soon as I can.

### LICENSING COURT.

*As to Alterations to Hotel Rex.*

Mr. FOX (without notice) asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

(1) Has he noticed in this afternoon's paper that the Licensing Court has granted a license for the Hotel Rex on the corner of Hay-street and King-street provided substantial alterations are made to the premises?

(2) In view of the scarcity of building materials, what will be the reaction of the Housing Commission to an application for extensive alterations to be made to that hotel?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) I have not yet seen the evening paper.

(2) With regard to alterations to licensed premises, these are considered four times a year and every case is dealt with on its merits.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Seventeenth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. MANN (Avon Valley) [4.43]: At the outset I would like to give thanks to the electors of Avon Valley for having returned me by a large majority.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You mean the Labour electors!

Mr. MANN: There was a grave prospect of my being defeated, and in that event I would have felt sorry to have missed the charming atmosphere of this Chamber. Apparently, however, everybody thought I

was right and returned me, after a three-cornered contest, with the largest majority I have ever had. I pay a tribute to those who elected me because apparently they thought my policy and my courage in attempting to form a new party were justified.

Mr. Fox: Did you not tell them that you were coming over here?

Mr. MANN: No, they did not want me to embarrass your side of the House. I am very pleased that I am back.

Mr. Rodoreda: So are we!

Mr. MANN: I gathered that from the applause that greeted me when I rose to speak. I extend my congratulations to those members who have been returned to this House, and for those who were defeated I am sorry. Even in this game of party politics we know that a fine feeling grows up, if not inside the Chamber, at least outside of it, and we regret the defeat of men who were very fine fellows indeed. I am sorry for the young members on this side who have to sit behind the Government. I remember that when I came here years ago I was told that one had to be careful about what one said because otherwise one might embarrass His Majesty's Government; but when I sat in opposition I was told, "Put the boots in for all you are worth." I have sat on both sides and as a result of long years of experience have become accustomed to politics. I think that the curse of Australia today is the party machine—party politics.

Mr. J. Hegney: Is that why you formed another party?

Mr. MANN: A little while ago members and the staff were invited to a dinner and they got together and chatted amicably. But then members returned to the Chamber only to hear the party issue raised again. In Parliament the interests of the country should come first and self-preservation second. There is a tendency in the world for democracy to break down and we assembled here can, by our conduct, assist in breaking it down. The new members have come to this Chamber imbued with a lot of ideals. They have come here with a great illusion, a magnificent idea of what they can do and can become. They will soon be disillusioned. The illusion is a great one, but the disillusionment is greater. New members who are full of hope of reforming the whole world will find, in the long run, that they are only small persons after all and have to stand behind the Government, irrespective of its party complexion. I have seen how, when the whips have been cracked, members have come to heel mighty quickly. That applies to both sides.

What are we doing to help Australia generally? What is done appears to be just a bidding for votes. We observe that Sir Earle Page proposes to give free milk to children and free medicine to everybody and free this and that. We start

this sort of thing with the children at kindergarten age. We take children away at three years of age—probably because their mothers do not want them—and put them in a kindergarten, and from then on they are trained in the wrong way with a materialistic outlook. The pioneers were worthy folk, who did not clamour for State assistance. They did not appeal to the Government for this and that, for things to be supplied to them free of charge. They built this State and accumulated wealth entirely by their own initiative. If we continue in the way we are going we will take away from the people of Australia the initiative to carry on. As the years pass by, this Commonwealth, young as it is, will decline, because the generations to come will have no initiative and no desire to help themselves.

During my election campaign I told the people that they must judge for themselves. I was criticised for the action I took in forming what I hoped would be one unified party on this side of the House, but, in spite of that and criticism in other directions, I enjoyed the election campaign, which afforded an opportunity to meet the people in frank discussion. However, I did object to Ministers of the Crown using Government cars and Government drivers to oppose me during my campaign, at the cost of the taxpayers. That criticism could be applied equally to the present Government and its predecessor. At election time all members should fight their campaigns on their own, or at least without the assistance of Government cars and drivers.

In the course of the recent election at least three Ministers of the Government worked against me in my electorate. They were justified in opposing me, because they believed I was wrong, and I told the people that they must decide the issue for themselves. They decided in my favour. In "The West Australian" this morning there appeared a report giving the results of the Premiers' Conference. We have often heard in this House a great deal about what a terrible man Mr. Chifley was, but at the recent Premiers' Conference the attitude of Mr. Menzies did not appear to be much more favourable towards the States than was that of Mr. Chifley in the past.

I believe that in the not distant future unification will be forced on the States by the attitude of the Federal Government. Even now this Parliament is no more than a local governing body, and most local governing bodies have the power to tax. We have not such power, or at all events we are afraid to use it. The reduction in assistance from the Commonwealth Government must have a great effect on the public works programme of the State, and also on its land settlement policy. The result will be to retard the development of Western Australia.

Recently I went to Northam to discuss the question of a regional council for that area, but the Honorary Minister for Agriculture simply said that, as he wants to form a regional council in the Moora area, he would not agree to the formation of such a council at Northam. At this meeting, called by the Northam Road Board, there were delegates from Toodyay, Avon Valley and Upper Swan. I represented Avon Valley. However, the Honorary Minister for Agriculture said, in effect, "No. I am the dictator here. You will do as I say." I resent any Minister, irrespective of party, telling people what they shall do. I will not tolerate any Minister of this or any other Government dictating in that fashion.

Mr. Ackland: As a delegate at that meeting, had you the authority of the Beverley and York Road Boards?

Mr. MANN: Yes.

Mr. Ackland: Did they give you authority to represent them?

Mr. MANN: Yes. The hon. member need not worry about that. A similar meeting was held at Narrogin and, in the local Press, under date the 4th August, there appeared the following:—

#### Regional Council.

#### Question of Government Recognition.

The matter of seeking Government recognition of the South Central Regional Council was discussed at last Saturday's executive meeting of that body.

W. Manning (Narrogin), said that at one time he had thought that it would give the council status if it were recognised by the Government, but now he was inclined to think that they would be better without its interference and he thought that they should not press the matter.

He was supported by the Hon. V. Doney, M.L.A., who contended that Mr. G. K. Baron Hay's interests in the council was sufficient. If they received too much recognition from the Government they were likely to come under its control. He was not keen on being too closely connected with the Government. (Laughter.)

The Minister himself had no faith in his Government in that regard, and what faith have I—a mere member of the Government—in the actions of the present Honorary Minister for Agriculture?

Mr. Graham: No wonder the Chief Secretary is absent.

Mr. MANN: I am sorry he is not present. I come now to a question raised by the member for Warren, and if I took the proper course of supporting the Government, perhaps I would remain silent on this question. I believe it is time there was a full inquiry into the Soldier Settle-

ment Scheme and land settlement generally in Western Australia. I have had personal experience of land settlement, with practically no money and a heavily capitalised property. During the years from 1920 to 1930 I saw hundreds of men walk off the land.

It has been said that there is no need for an inquiry today because the men on the land are prosperous, but it is a false prosperity and a fall in prices could spell disaster. If a settler sustains a loss in the first year or two it takes him many years to regain financial stability. During the recent election campaign I visited a property, to the west of York, that had been bought by the Government for soldier settlement. It was a 5,000 acre property on which was a fair amount of poison. It was a grazing lease and was purchased for 12s. per acre. Bulldozers were put in to pull down the jarrah, whitegum and blackboys, but the trees were not properly pulled out of the ground, and they remained green. A scandalous feature of the matter was that the bulldozers had gone straight through the boundary and division fences, smashing them down. The man who had that contract was one who had made a similar mess in another part of the State.

When I visited that property there were 50 new Australians working there. They were working a 40-hour week and receiving £7 per week each. I asked what had been their occupations in private life in other parts of the world and discovered that not one of them had ever handled an axe before. Members will realise what a staggering cost will therefore have to be charged against that property, for which soldier settlers will eventually have to pay. After the 1914-1918 war a number of misfits, as well as many good men, were forced to walk off the land because they simply could not make a living. There should be a stock taking now to ensure that no misfits are placed on the land.

I am concerned at what will be the eventual cost of soldier settlement to the taxpayers of the country. If we are to suffer any curtailment of our finances we will not be able to bear the cost, which will run into tens of millions of pounds. After the 1914-1918 war, land settlement in this State was stagnant, but it was realised by the Government that it had to put men on to the land to bring more country into production. What has been the result of the scheme? It has put the practical farmer out and put an impractical man in. That has been the policy, and costs are going to rise higher and higher. If a man is put on the land today on the basis of the reimbursement he is supposed to pay, and it is anticipated that his returns will be greater than in 1942, then he should assist in paying back to the State the amount of assistance granted to him. The stand should not be that no greater strain

must be imposed on him, because it would be a hindrance. Therefore I would like to see an inquiry into soldier land settlement.

I was one of those who went on the land under that scheme. I do not make that request on any personal ground at all but am merely anxious to ascertain what the true position is in this State respecting the scheme. As a member of this House I represent a large section of soldier settlers in my electorate and therefore I am entitled to know, with them, what the real position is. I am concerned about the question because it affects old soldiers. The attitude seems to be, for some reason, that if the Minister had not been a returned soldier, there probably would have been an inquiry. That is not right. I am casting no reflection on the Minister or anyone else in saying that, but, we, who have participated in the Soldier Land Settlement Scheme, want to know what lies in the future.

Let us have an inquiry into the scheme and try to save it before the position goes too far to effect a remedy. It has been suggested that because prices for wool and wheat are high soldier settlers cannot go wrong; but they can go wrong, because one has to take the personal equation into consideration. Many of these young men are likely to fall by the wayside because of this wave of prosperity. The man who succeeds in life is he who has learned the hard way. By this sudden wave of prosperity there is a chance of these young men being ruined by extravagant spending, which will eventually lead them on to the rocks.

I go further and say that there is not a man in this House, except the Minister, apparently, who knows what the state of the Soldier Land Settlement Scheme is. As one who, in the early days, went on to what was recognised as one of the poorest properties in Beverley, who lost heavily and was saved only by the generosity of my creditors and the Agricultural Bank, I solved my problem only by the growing of clover and the use of superphosphate; and my property is now a highly valued one. The soil in this State is deficient in some elements, particularly in the southern areas. It falls short of many requirements. Mr. Baron Hay is one of those who do not seem to be making any headway in solving this problem. Although some experimental farms have been established they are only pilot stations for agricultural purposes and no-one seems to pay much attention to the cost of grazing. For instance, Parliament should have a standing land committee similar to that which I have advocated with respect to public works. There are many members on this side of the House who are interested in agriculture—even on the other side of the House—who are entitled to have some say because they know farming. From the rank and file a committee could quite easily be formed to investigate many of our problems.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Minister himself is a returned soldier farmer.

Mr. MANN: The Minister is not a farmer; he is a viticulturist. The member for Irwin-Moore, the member for Roe, the member for Katanning and myself are four members who are engaged in mixed farming and should have some say in this planning of the Soldier Land Settlement Scheme. However, the trait of all Governments is this: A Cabinet is appointed of from eight to ten persons and for some unknown reason they develop an extraordinary superiority complex, considering themselves the salt of the earth. The important point is that, apparently, their parliamentary supporters are merely regarded as so many damn fools. The Government just carries on. We, on this side of the House are entirely in the dark as to many matters, but by appointing a standing committee such as I have suggested, the whole of the State would know what the position was. No matter whether the different parties change from one side of the House to the other, the position remains the same. The other day I discussed with Mr. Dumas the question of the importation of more bulldozers into the country by means of a dollar loan.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do you think the Minister should be immune from an inquiry because he is a returned soldier?

Mr. MANN: The Minister should agree to an inquiry being made. The question does not relate to him but to that which we should know. I do not believe in a Royal Commission being appointed because it would mean that some man with no knowledge of the subject would be made Royal Commissioner. In speaking to Mr. Dumas about the provision of bulldozers in the western part of the Great Southern area, I pointed out to him that large properties were held by farmers there who were not able to clear their land owing to the shortage of labour, and the work could be done only with the use of bulldozers. There are thousands of acres which will prove a success if properly developed because of the present high returns being obtained by farmers. If the Government could obtain bulldozers from the Commonwealth Government, following a dollar loan, it should be its policy to request that as many as possible be brought to this State to develop those properties which have been thoroughly tested. This would be a means of boosting our production.

An inquiry should also be made regarding the conservation of water. Bulldozers are the only means by which we can develop this country quickly. There are many millions of acres held in the western part of my electorate by the Forests Department. I have gone through that timber country, and the requisite amount of millable timber is not there, and never will

be. By appointing a standing committee from members in this House to inquire into the question of land development, we could assist to increase production in the State very rapidly. I suppose the remarks on the subject made by me and other members during the Address-in-reply debate are, apparently, not worth anything. This applies irrespective of which party is in power. Whatever an ordinary individual says in this House—and I am not speaking to my electors, but as one who is concerned about the welfare of the State—is entirely disregarded by the Government.

However, by having a standing land committee of this House, the whole position could be investigated and the committee's report tabled. The matter would then become one for Parliament, which should decide these issues, and not the party. Another burning question today is meat. The Government is on a sticky wicket at present about this problem. It must either de-control or increase the price. But what is it doing? It is merely meandering along praying to God that prices will fall. At the markets yesterday the price for sheep at Midland Junction went up 5s. or 6s., but we are not getting the sheep. If we have bountiful rains at the end of this season, then the supplies of meat will further decrease. The only hope of their increasing would be for the farmers to have a sudden drought. We would then have large numbers of sheep coming into the market. Why will not the Government decide upon de-control? It muddled through the winter months and then, when the House was about to meet, it suddenly decided to approach Professor Copland and obtain his ideas about price-fixing. He sent Mr. Kelly, who is only a mouthpiece of Professor Copland, to this State to report on the meat problem.

It is always a case of passing the buck, but if the Government wanted to meet the situation, it could have the assistance of every member of this Parliament. But we receive no consideration from the Government at all. It has decided on the question, and what a mess it is in! It is now importing frozen meat from Victoria at a pretty high price. It has been in cold storage for some time, I believe, and if that is true then this State will be living on it for a long time. The only way to meet the problem today is to de-control. We have denied the worker an increase in the basic wage for 12 months. The farmers are not looking for higher prices for their sheep because taxation is going to sock them pretty heavily this year, do not worry about that! They are not the type of men to deny the working man his foodstuffs. What are they going to do? They are not going to carry the sheep over till next May, June and July on the present high costs. There are men who are prepared to buy at £6 per head while the price of wool remains so high.

Mr. Hoar: You are not pleading poverty on behalf of the farmers, are you?

Mr. MANN: No, most of them are doing very well, but the point I want to make is, why should the farmer hold on to his stock? If the Government is going to rely upon cold-stored meat to ease the situation, it will be in a hopeless mess and there will be no meat available by the end of the year.

The present price-fixing system is not worth a snap of the fingers. To stop the prevailing blackmarketing while price fixation continues is quite impossible. The only way is to de-control prices and allow the workers on the basic wage to receive an adjustment in respect of any price increase. Under present conditions, we are really denying the workers that right. The moment the Government makes any attempt to combat blackmarketing, it will be in trouble. I notice that the Minister is not in his seat at the moment. He has not launched any prosecutions against blackmarketing. I appeal to him to take courage and de-control meat prices and let them find their own level.

Let me point out some of the difficulties being experienced by the farmer. Men working on farms insist on having their five-day week and, after Friday night, they go home. What is the farmer to do? Is it any wonder that he asks why he should work for the Taxation Department? When the dairymen are asked to produce more milk, are not they just as much entitled to claim the shorter working week? Some of the workers, if living a mile from the farm where they are employed, demand overtime for the period occupied in travelling.

Mr. J. Hegney: They are the new Australians.

Mr. MANN: Yes, I might tell the hon. member that those men know all about the 40-hour week and are claiming it, too.

Mr. J. Hegney: They are well educated.

Mr. MANN: Yes. I feel sure that when the prices of wheat and wool fall below the cost of production, the farmers will no longer gamble on a rise in the market. Otherwise, with rising prices, they will fall heavily into debt again, and I cannot believe that they will be willing once more to endure the financial despondency and misery of former years. One of the principles of the Liberal Country Party organisation aims at encouraging people to return to the rural areas, but that is not likely to happen under existing conditions.

I now want to raise a question respecting Cabinet Ministers. Something strange seems to have happened. When the present parties took over the Treasury Bench, the then member for West Perth, now Sir Ross McDonald, was Minister for Native Affairs. Two years ago, he suddenly realised that he could not carry on and so

he resigned. Then Mr. Parker, M.L.C., became Chief Secretary and Minister for Native Affairs. He carried on for two years and then, for some reason or other, he resigned. It was given out that he had to relinquish ministerial rank for business reasons. Then the Government decided that the then Minister for Works should no longer hold that portfolio, and he was made Chief Secretary and Minister for Native Affairs, though how long he will stick it, I do not know. Thus, we have had three different Ministers holding the portfolio of Native Affairs in the space of a very little time. Where is that sort of thing leading us?

Mr. J. Hegney: They should have appointed you.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You could not have made a worse job of it, anyhow.

Mr. MANN: I now wish to say a few words on the native question. These people are of a hopeless type.

Mr. Oliver: Why hopeless?

Mr. MANN: Because they can be little more than hewers of wood and drawers of water as long as the world lasts. They are not like the American negroes. It is recognised that the Australian aboriginal is of an exceedingly poor class, and when there is in his composition a strain of white blood, he develops the cunning of a dingo. I know the people of this type well; they are to be found in my electorate in numbers. I am afraid that Mr. Middleton has merely passed the buck and has provided a veritable paradise for some of these people. The member for Boulder need have no great ideas about the equality of mankind, because I am convinced there can be no equality between black and white. These people over the years have lived a nomadic life—a life of their own entirely—and it is impossible for them to adapt themselves to our ways of life. That cannot possibly be done in one generation or in 50 generations, and it is of little use talking of building houses and expecting them to live in them.

At Mt. Lawley, a home has been opened for the training of 10 to 15 half-caste girls for domestic service. Many native girls are trying to raise their standard of living, but the male aboriginal will not do likewise. After these girls at Mt. Lawley have completed their training, what is likely to become of them? It is not reasonable to expect that any decent white men would marry them, and so what will happen will be that these girls, on completion of their training, will either marry an inferior type of white man, or return to the aboriginal camp life, marry some dirty hobo and bear children year after year. Incentive is given to an increase in the half-caste population by the monetary return from the child endowment. We are doing wrong in raising them



to a higher standard and then allowing them to fall again to their old level. This is the sort of thing that is apt to breed communists.

I consider that some of the departmental officials have no outlook; they have not the faintest idea of how to deal with these people. I have known a farmer to employ one of these men as a casual worker. He was paid the basic wage, but as soon as he became able to drive a tractor, he demanded £2 per day. So I consider that the idea of taking those girls to Mt. Lawley is quite wrong. People must realise that the half-caste is quite a different type from the white and, by our training them in this way, they are being placed in an entirely false position. What standard of life are they going to live afterwards? That is the question we have to consider.

All this talk about granting citizenship rights is the greatest farce imaginable. The natives want citizenship rights only to enable them to get drink—nothing else. Some of them are making big money—up to £10 and £15 a week. I asked one of them, "Why not apply for a permit for a small house? You are making enough money to do that." But no, these people prefer the gambling school; they would rather spend their money on playing two-up. They are an irresponsible type having no sense of citizenship. I am afraid that a lot of the migrants being brought from overseas have no citizenship or decency, either. Some of those people are of a bad type, filthy in every way, and it is too much to expect that they can be raised to a level equivalent to our standard of life. Their population is increasing by leaps and bounds, and it pays them to have babies. There is no control in that regard.

I would like to hear the Minister for Native Affairs speak on this subject. I was sorry he did not attend a meeting at Katanning which was called some time ago by all local governing bodies to discuss the problem. Mr. Middleton was there, with his officers, and he tried to ram his views down our throats. It is the Government's duty to make the policy, and the Commissioner's to carry it out. But I think that today the Commissioner is calling the tune. He lays down the policy and the Minister does as he is told. That strikes me very forcibly indeed. I doubt if the Minister knows the exact position of his department. I speak strongly on this subject because I foresee impending trouble. We have no hate in our hearts for these poor devils. I myself have tried to help them on my farm, but they are hopeless. I want to mention the policy speech of the Leader of the Country and Democratic League, but I do not want to speak behind his back tonight. When I fought my election campaign I was pretty solidly opposed by his party.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: They were certainly after your scalp!

Mr. MANN: Yes, and the result of the election was a court case, which I won. I was astounded to read the following statement in the policy speech to which I have referred:—

Mr. Doney, as Minister for Works, faced the enormous problems of public works and water supplies, both country and metropolitan. The greatest bottleneck is shortage of steel plates for pipes. We have somewhat relieved this shortage by importing at much greater cost from Japan and overseas. The Commonwealth rejected the comprehensive water supply scheme of our Labour predecessors, but proposed a smaller scheme for which legislation was immediately introduced and passed. This work is being pushed ahead both in its southern and north-eastern sectors as quickly as possible.

I replied to that in the Press and said that a committee was appointed from both Houses to decide the issue with respect to that measure, and one man—Mr. Roche—defeated the Bill. Probably he was justified, and perhaps he believed he was right. If he believed the legislation would have an effect on the people east of the Great Southern, he was justified; but for anyone to include what I have just read in a policy speech was wrong. I told the people of Avon Valley and Brookton what I thought of the Government and the Minister. I say now, and I repeat what I said in my election campaign, that we should have had the Hawke comprehensive water scheme. It is recognised by the farmers today that the Leader of the Opposition was right, and the Minister for Works knows that. If the Bill had been passed these unfortunate people would have had some water to carry on with, because the scheme by now would have almost been in operation. If a war breaks out, the Great Southern scheme will not be finished until it is over.

The Chief Secretary: Who do you suggest put up the matter you have just spoken of?

Mr. MANN: It is in the policy speech of the Minister's party, and the Minister was in my electorate quite frequently. I do not mind a fair issue, but this is not true, because this House passed the Bill. The Minister himself supported it, and so did I, but it was defeated by a Country Party man in the other House.

The Chief Secretary: You will remember that I solidly supported the Bill.

Mr. MANN: Yes, but when the elections were on, the Chief Secretary subscribed to his party leader's policy speech. I am not referring to the Chief Secretary alone, but to the policy speech. My electorate is rather fortunate with respect to water inasmuch as a large part of the area I represent is in the Avon Valley. But water is a most important matter, and the overall picture in Western Australia was never

more grim. In the eastern wheatbelt the dams are empty, Mundaring is low, and the problem, because of the possibility of carrying more stock, is acute. I believe the only salvation of the State lies in larger schemes. I have listened to the Minister for Works, who is a young man, and I hope that he will show State-wide vision in this matter.

The Government should endeavour to establish large catchment areas in the hills for the conservation and subsequent reticulation of water. Also, if the Prime Minister has any faith in this Western Australian Government, let him help us by providing bulldozers so that we may carry out excavations of areas where water may be obtained. At the present time, boring in the river flats of the Avon Valley is producing marvellous results. We are not particularly short of water there, but we are experimenting and getting astounding results. We have obtained 20,000 gallons at a depth of 80ft., and possibly more. Why has not deep boring been attempted in this State? We might have sub-artesian water here. The farmer alone cannot carry out this work, because the question of amenities for the towns arises. If the Government is prepared to make bulldozers available, the farmers will pay any price, within reason, to have dams excavated for the conservation of water.

I hope that in the years ahead we will be spared the horrors of war, both here and overseas, but no-one knows what the future holds in store. I think that we in Australia can expect increased taxation. Our first and foremost job is defence. Unless we are prepared to help ourselves, should a European situation eventuate, it is a case of God help the lot of us! Let us have a better feeling towards each other and forget party issues. When I mentioned land settlement to the Minister for Lands, it was not with the idea of embarrassing him. We should all try to develop this great country. I am not a Minister, and do not desire to be one now.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why say "now"?

Mr. MANN: I suppose I had a desire at one time to be a Minister, but not now. I am willing to give all the help I can. I am not a city man. All I know is how to till the soil. We should all do our best and not become involved in petty party questions. My last remark to the Government is this: Let it at least take the members of its own parties into its confidence. I can appreciate the position of members opposite. If the Government has no faith in its own members, how can the Opposition have faith in the Government? The Minister for Lands may smile, but if the Government is sincere in its administration then let it be equally sincere in taking its supporters into its confidence so that they may help. We possibly have as much brains as the members of the Government.

Mr. Oliver: God help the country if you have not!

Mr. MANN: I do not pass that reflection. If the Government believes in us, it should at least take us into its confidence and let us try to help the country.

MR. NIMMO (Wembley Beaches) [5.40]: I have much pleasure in adding my quota of congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment to your present position. I have a number of small problems that I wish to touch on. First of all, I would like to mention the wholemilk position. In my old electorate of Mt. Hawthorn I had a lot of dairies, and I also have quite a few in Wembley Beaches. Most of the dairymen have received notice to quit. Some were in the fortunate position of having land in the country or in towns not far from the city, and found it comparatively easy to transfer their stock and equipment. Quite a number, however, did not have sufficient money to do that and so could not afford to transfer their stock. While I represented Mt. Hawthorn, several dairies went out of production. One man sent most of his stock to Midland Junction to be slaughtered, and he then decided to give up. I think he is taking a trip to Ireland. My sympathies go out to the present member for Mt. Hawthorn because of this problem.

Some of the people who are left in my electorate have received notice to quit by November. I have tried to get extensions for some of them, and have been rather fortunate in being able to stave off the actual time of leaving for one or two months. My opinion is that this has come about too early. I quite agree with the Milk Board in wanting to move these people into the outer areas, but I think it is too early to do it. On the other hand, it has been mentioned that most of the properties will be used for the building of houses. That will occur in some areas in a few years' time—I should say, not within six or seven years, and maybe longer. What I am trying to tell the House is that by the coming summer we shall, in my opinion, be definitely short of milk. The position will arise that people in homes will be using condensed or powdered milk.

Mr. Marshall: They cannot get it now, so how will they get it then?

Mr. NIMMO: I will tell the hon. member in a minute. The member for Warren mentioned the appointment of a Royal Commission. In one way I am in favour of a Royal Commission, but I consider this matter too serious to wait that long. We should devise some other ways and means and get experts on to the job at once. During the course of the Honorary Royal Commission, which inquired into bran and pollard, quite a lot of evidence was produced which would be of considerable value. Therefore, I suggest that members read through the evidence tendered to that body because it will explain my point. The milk position is certainly very

serious. We talk about free milk for school children! I do not know where it will be obtained unless we import supplies from Victoria or New Zealand.

Mr. Hoar: You are quite right.

Mr. NIMMO: Therefore, I appeal to the Government to try to get some experts to go into the position of milk supply. A number of members in this House could give a far better picture—or perhaps I might say a worse picture—than I can. I understand that the people in the whole milk business are rapidly leaving it. Another aspect of this question is the t.b. testing of cows. To my mind, that testing of herds in some of our suburbs has been a credit to many of the dairies. At one time I had an idea that t.b. testing was a good thing, but a farmer told me, a few days ago, that he had a certain cow tested for t.b. and it reacted. For some unknown reason that cow was not sent away to be slaughtered and it was kept on his property. It was re-tested approximately three or four months afterwards and the same cow gave a negative result.

The farmer asked me whether I thought t.b. testing was good for the industry and whether it was a step towards improving the quality of the milk. I told him that I had not had enough experience to answer his question. But, I remember the statement of Mr. Hampshire, during the investigations of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the sale of some cows. I am not sure whether Mr. Hampshire said this in evidence or mentioned it to me personally, but he remarked: "Cows can have t.b. in certain glands and those glands can be locked." That is the way he explained it to me. He said that a cow could have a locked gland in the leg, but as soon as that cow was injected for a t.b. test it fired the gland and the cow showed a positive t.b. result. But, if that cow had not received the injection the t.b. would not affect the milk in any way, because the gland would remain locked.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: He only gave you that as his opinion? He did not give you any evidence to support it.

Mr. NIMMO: No, I am repeating to the House what Mr. Hampshire told me. I am not in a position to say whether that is correct or not because I do not know very much about the cow or cocky trade. Therefore, I hope that the Government will not wait until a Royal Commission is appointed but that it will obtain experts to inquire into the whole milk industry.

Mr. Hoar: What sort of experts would you suggest?

Mr. NIMMO: Independent ones.

Mr. Hoar: Government officials?

Mr. NIMMO: No. I think we could get experts from the milk industry without appointing Government officials.

Mr. Hoar: I agree with you that something should be done quickly.

Mr. NIMMO: Definitely. I was pleased to hear the member for East Perth speak about Heirisson Island last night. I hold the same opinion as that hon. member, and there is one question I have been turning over in my mind. Will we have the pollution committee chasing the Government on this matter? All I want to know is: What is going to happen about sanitary conveniences on the island? If this island is to be made into a sports arena, and thousands of people attend the events there, surely it will mean that a pumping station will have to be put in. It is not possible to put in a station for £1,000. It costs a large sum of money and I know of one or two parts in my electorate where a pumping station should be provided. If this could be done, we would be able to deal with the sewerage.

There are a number of other areas that would be easier to sewer and which would have roads to approach sports grounds. Let us utilise those places instead of using this island. Like the member for East Perth, I think it would make a very fine botanical garden which only a few people would visit each day. However, if it becomes a sports arena, we will need not one bridge, but two or three and have nothing but one-way traffic.

Last night, the member for Warren spoke about the tourist trade. Last weekend I had the pleasure of going through the hon. member's district on the way to Albany. I came back to Perth through York. I had with me some Tasmanian people and their opinion was that the areas we visited were outstanding. They said, "Why does not your Government make this area a tourist resort?" However, what struck me was that at every corner where a road went to the right or left, it was necessary to stop and think about which way we had to go. There was no indication as to the direction of any of the roads. We took a number of wrong turnings and this state of affairs existed right through to the district of the member for Albany. A large number of the roads are without signs and to my mind that should be rectified. Mine was not the only car on the roads and several others were more or less lost because of the lack of signposts. We in Western Australia are missing a marvellous opportunity in the tourist trade.

Mr. Bovell: Hear, hear!

Mr. NIMMO: Some time ago I was in the Eastern States and I stayed at the Windsor Hotel. I asked one of the men in the foyer if a Western Australian paper was available. He said, "No. We have not a Western Australian paper. We have papers from all the other States but not from your State." He told me that the West was a little forgotten place and appar-

ently did not warrant the purchase of papers. I told him that we had a country and a half and our trouble was that we did not advertise it as we should. I was born in Tasmania and lived there for a number of years and I must say that the Tasmanians put it over a lot of the other States in the way that they run their tourist trade. We could take a pattern from Tasmania.

To my mind, the Government should finance the beach areas and I will endeavour, as I go on, to give my reasons. First of all, I will start at Waterman's Bay and North Beach. Some time ago in the House I mentioned the fact that we wanted the Government to build a boat harbour. The idea was to endeavour to get fishermen, on their way down, to shelter there, if necessary, or, even unload fish. We also wanted to try and persuade private yachts and motor boats to use the harbour and the ocean. One resident in that area, who has since recently passed away, left a certain sum of money for this project if it ever eventuated. This district comes under a poor road board. We cannot appeal to the road board and the only other authority we can approach is the Government. Unfortunately, the Government has turned a deaf ear to our appeals.

The next best thing is to try to get the Government to take over the responsibility of financing the beaches. The building programme in the North Beach-Waterman's Bay area is progressing very well, but we want more roads, footpaths and so on, and the road board is finding it difficult to obtain the necessary finance. The board has to borrow the money and this means interest payments. Some time ago there was a blitz on the beaches and, quite rightly, it was pointed out that there were a lot of hovels there. We want a lot of amenities in the beach areas. If the Perth Road Board spent the money on the beaches then the districts would have to go without roads, because it cannot afford to build them. To do so the board would have to borrow the money, and I repeat that not only would it have to pay that money back but also the interest charges as well. On that stretch of the beach we have a lot of rocks and it is really of no value for swimming.

There are, however, some nice little bays in one or two parts. If we could, as the Perth City Council has done, put a groin out there, I do believe we could make an excellent beach either at Waterman's Bay or North Beach. It would also improve the beach because the sand runs right out almost to the reef which, I think, is approximately three miles away, and it is not likely that it would result in uncovering more rocks. If a groin were put in, it would mean that the sand would bank up and cover the rocks on the beach. I hope the Government will devise ways and means to help finance the beaches. I do

not think for one minute that the Government should take over the beaches. These should be controlled by the road boards or councils concerned.

We are more or less in the same plight down at Scarborough, for though we want more amenities on the beaches it would mean the more that was spent on beaches, the less there would be to spend on roads. Most of those beaches are used by visitors whom, of course, the people of Scarborough welcome. We might find six, seven or eight thousand people on the Scarborough beach, but I guarantee that out of that number there would not be more than 1,000 local residents. It shows therefore that the beaches in my area are used by more people outside than from the district itself. I do think that everybody should share the financial burden.

At City Beach—I notice the member for West Perth is not in his seat—a different system applies. The money spent on that beach comes from the ratepayers of the City of Perth, or from the people under the jurisdiction of the Perth City Council, and the stores in the city help to finance alterations on City Beach. That does not concern the Perth City Council. Some time ago I think it was the Cottesloe people who were complaining that they could not finance their beaches. So far as the rest of the beaches are concerned, I think it is up to each individual member to do what he can to further their interests. In most of those districts as building progresses, something should be done to help finance their beaches so that money which they use for these beaches could be spent on the roads. I would like now to touch on the housing problem.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Are you getting many?

Mr. NIMMO: The lifting of controls has perhaps made our work a little bit different. Before controls were lifted, we were visiting the Housing Commission almost every day with only one regret, and that was that the offices of the Commission were closed on Saturday and Sunday.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Were you making any progress?

Mr. NIMMO: The people are not now coming to us and asking us whether we will get them permits. Instead they are asking whether we will get them bricks, timber, iron for their roofs, tiles, water pipes, baths and so on. This has brought quite a lot of extra work on my shoulders and, I dare say, that applies to other members as well, because in our endeavour to try to help these people, it is necessary for us to visit spot mills, firms and so on, appealing to them in an endeavour to get the materials that are particularly wanted.

I would stress to the Assistant Minister for Housing that the time has come when everything that is possible should be done to help the production of materials. We read of higher production in bricks and of

the higher output of timber, but that is not enough. The question is whether that higher production will meet the demands of the people who are receiving permits. One of our main problems is the self-help scheme, as it affects people who are building during week-ends and have no contact with firms. That is one of the big problems we have at the present time.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Where are you going to build the ex-naval men's homes?

Mr. NIMMO: I will tell the hon. member a little bit about that after tea if he wishes. There are quite a number of young fellows in my area who are building at week-ends under the self-help scheme, and they are finding it very difficult to get asbestos and tiles. I wonder whether something could be done to revive the old Workers' Homes Act in order that these young fellows could get the necessary finance to build. In the case of war service homes a young fellow can go to the authorities and borrow money on a very easy deposit. He is not required to put down as large a deposit as he would have if he went to a bank or a private organisation. That, of course, helps the returned man. Now, however, we are getting quite a number of young fellows who were too young to go to the war—men of 22 and 23—who want to get married. They have not got the money to enable them to carry on under the system of today. Therefore the first thing they do is to put in for a Workers' Home under the small unit family scheme.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And that is the end of it!

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: One might as well write a letter to Mars!

Mr. NIMMO: I have spoken to quite a number of these young fellows and they have told me that had they been returned soldiers, they would have been able to build with the help of the war service homes section. I hope the Government will see fit to make use of the old Workers' Homes Act with a view to providing similar terms to those obtained for war services homes.

Mr. J. Hegney: The terms are liberal enough. It is a matter of raising funds.

Mr. NIMMO: If these young fellows could get assistance under the old Act by the payment of a small deposit, we would find quite a number of them would build houses.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is not a question of shortage of funds in this matter. It is a matter of Government policy.

Mr. NIMMO: I am trying to explain that if the Government made use of the Workers' Homes Act to give these young fellows the same privileges as those enjoyed by men under the War Service Homes Act, they would be able to build far more houses.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: If the Government did that, it would be all right; but it will not.

Mr. NIMMO: I am hoping it will. I should like to quote an instance of a young carpenter who explained his position to me. I thought he had done a good job. He was from a family who had no surplus money and were therefore not able to help him. He could put up £70 or £80. He is married and has one child. He has an application lodged for a small unit home and if he were able to get finance to help him build he would erect his own self-help home because as a carpenter he is in a position to do the job.

Mr. J. Hegney: Could not he get the money from private enterprise?

Mr. NIMMO: I do not know whether the hon. member has himself tried to do so. It is not very easy.

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

Mr. NIMMO: There is another matter to which a certain amount of attention should be given. I refer to the master builders who have gone out of the trade. I cannot say how many there are, but I know of one very good builder and he and his son are what I would term jobbing, that is, doing small jobs. Some time ago I asked the younger man why he did not return to the trade and his explanation was that it was too much trouble running around trying to get permits for this and that, and he found it much easier to do the small jobs. There must be quite a number of these men about, and I think the board should try to ascertain how many of those who have left the business since the beginning of the war would be available to return.

I should like to give the House an idea of the growth of my district and of the development that I think will take place. The area includes a lot of University endowment land, much of it unsuitable for home sites on account of the sewage treatment plants, etc., but much of it eventually will be made available for sale to private people. One area is termed Hackett's Estate. Members probably know where that is; from Subiaco one may see a cleared patch except for the presence of half-a-dozen trees that have been allowed to remain. That is Hackett Estate and it contains enough blocks to build 270 homes. In the Wembley area there are not many blocks left for building purposes. In Floreat Park, the new estate, on part of which development has been started, the set-up is such as to reflect considerable credit on the Perth City Council.

I should like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it would be permissible for the member for West Perth to hang a plan of that new estate on the wall of the Chamber for the information of members. I have accompanied visitors from other States on an inspection of this new subdivision, and they have expressed the opinion that it will make one of the nicest residential areas of the whole of the

suburbs of Australia. That is saying a lot, but when members see the plan, I think they will agree.

In the setting out of this estate, provision is made at Reabold Hill for a thousand acres of reserve, as well as quite a number of other reserves, golf links, space for kindergartens, civic centres, etc. Between Floreat Park and City Beach, there are roughly 2,000 to 3,000 building blocks. These figures are approximate. In the Churchlands Estate, towards Scarborough, there are approximately 1,000 blocks. This number might not be realised if need is found to provide for an extra road or park. In the subdivision of Double View, there is another estate with approximately 600 blocks; at Western Park there are 240 blocks and at Innaloo about 1,800 blocks.

In the Wembley district this year, 254 permits were issued. This has been the best year experienced in that area, the number in the previous year having been 200. That number related to my old boundary, but the figures I have given for this year relate to the area from Gregory-street west. In the Scarborough area, approximately 234 permits have been issued. On this basis I should say that in the course of a very few years, the population of the area will just about double.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Are you going to tell us about those ex-naval men?

Mr. NIMMO: Some of them are doing very well. I do not intend to detain the House any longer because I understand that there are five speakers to follow and I hope they will cut their remarks short, as I have done, so that we may finish the debate tonight.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [7.40]: I desire to take this opportunity, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the position of Speaker. There is no doubt that this office is an important one in our deliberative Assembly, for the Speaker must hold the scales fairly between all members. I feel certain that you will maintain the dignity of the office and its great traditions.

I had a spell from this House for a period of three years, during which time I gained a good deal of experience in the new sphere in which my lot was cast. Before entering upon a discussion of politics I would like to express the view that we all share the feeling of the Premier who, in Canberra yesterday, said that the Royal Family will be assured of a very warm and cordial welcome when they visit Western Australia. Further down the page on which Mr. McLarty's remarks appeared, however, was a reference to the Governor General, Mr. McKell, in which some doubt was expressed as to whether he will occupy that office at the time of the Royal visit. The newspaper report is as follows:—

The Governor-General (Mr. McKell) has held office beyond the normal three years, but there is no move at present to make a change. The Liberal-Country Party Government's opinion that any future Governor-General should be divorced from political activity was expressed in appropriate places in London during the recent visit of Mr. Menzies. Mr. McKell is highly regarded at Buckingham Palace, where his dispatches on Australian affairs have kept the King keenly interested in Australia and his projected tour.

Because of the dignity he has brought to his high office, Mr. McKell has no enemies among senior members of the Cabinet or in diplomatic circles.

I was very pleased to read the latter portion of that report but I hope that Mr. McKell will remain in office and that no party political move will be made to displace him.

I knew Mr. McKell before he entered politics in New South Wales. He was one of the first men I met when I left Western Australia for a period of work in the engineering industry there, and I enjoyed his friendship for many years. As a matter of fact, I helped him win his selection ballot for the electorate of Redfern in 1916 and the subsequent election when he defeated the then Premier of New South Wales. If there is any underhand move to displace Mr. McKell, how striking a contrast that will be with the attitude of the Labour Government in this State, which recommended Sir James Mitchell's appointment as Lieutenant-Governor of Western Australia. When I first came into this Parliament, Sir James was Premier of the State and opposite him sat the late Hon. Philip Collier who was then the Leader of the Opposition. They enjoyed a friendship of many years, although they were political rivals. When Sir James was defeated as member for Northam, what happened? The then Premier, Hon. Philip Collier, recommended his appointment as Lieutenant-Governor. I think no-one will doubt that Sir James has filled his high office with great distinction to himself and benefit to Western Australia and the same can be said of the present Governor-General of Australia. I hope there will be no manoeuvring to displace such a capable Australian.

The most important function of government is finance. We all know that when Governments get their financial Bills through they are satisfied because they can then apply themselves to administrative work. I have been following the discussions that have been taking place at the Premiers' Conference, where a battle is in progress for a fairly substantial share of the revenue drawn by the Commonwealth from the taxpayers under the uniform taxation measure. I

remember that at the election before last the present Premier said that if the Liberal and Country Parties came into power, they would fight for the restoration of the State's right to impose taxation. But what do we find?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He has altered his opinion.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: We find that he is more than satisfied with the operations of the Uniform Taxation Act and considers he is getting a better return thereby than he would if the State had the right to impose its own taxation. As a matter of fact, he asked the Prime Minister not to interfere with the position. Undoubtedly, Western Australia is doing very well under the uniform taxation measure, but it is surprising to compare the opinions that the Premier and his colleagues held three or four years ago, when they were going to move mountains to have taxation rights restored to the Parliament of this State and to prevent the State's rights being whittled away, with the opinions they now hold. We find that it is more convenient for the Premier in these days to draw from the Federal Treasurer's fund raised through the uniform taxation measure and disbursed to the States under the reimbursement Act.

This Parliament has no say at all in the matter of finance. No taxation measure of any kind is brought down, and consequently the members of this Parliament do not address themselves to the principles of taxation, nor have they any voice in connection therewith; and to that extent the rights of the State Parliament have undoubtedly been whittled away. In spite of statements made by members opposite and in another place, and the propaganda for the restoration of State rights, I doubt whether in our life-time taxation principles will ever again be discussed in this House.

I was very pleased to observe that the principles of the Federal Aid Roads Agreement Act have been agreed to. I think a great deal of credit is due to the late Mr. McCallum who, as Minister for Works, negotiated that agreement at a conference between the Prime Minister and State Premiers. With his ability and his knowledge of what was needed in Western Australia he was able to have the matter settled on a population-area basis. I feel certain that our present Minister for Works is well satisfied to know that the same principle will be continued and that we are to have a substantial increase from the petrol tax fund.

The Minister for Works: Very pleased!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Members who have been approaching him recently to have certain roads in their electorates attended to—and this applies much more in the country than in the metropolitan area—will be able to go to him in the future

with a great deal more confidence than hitherto, knowing that he will be in possession of more funds.

The housing question has loomed largely in this discussion, but I do not intend to deal with it at great length. This matter has a historical background. Following the first world war, housing activities were developed and carried on until about 1930, when the depression struck Australia, as well as the rest of the world. There was then a substantial drop in building with the result that the housing programme went down considerably. In the following years we never caught up with the house construction necessary for our people. As a matter of fact, many farmers and, particularly workers, were unable to secure funds to build houses. In many instances their incomes were small and they were living on a starvation basis. As a consequence they had to seek shelter where only a small charge was made, with the result that slum conditions developed throughout Australia, including Perth.

Many people in the outer areas and nearer the city, live in sub-standard conditions. Those conditions still exist throughout Australia and more particularly in our own State. Had we been able to tackle this problem in the depression days, when there was ample labour and material, we would not be in our present difficulties. Many skilled artisans were out of a job at that time, and on the dole. A Government of which I was a supporter—a Labour Government led by Mr. J. C. Willcock, as Premier—passed the Small Loans Act under which people could borrow small amounts of money. That was done in an endeavour to create activity in the building trades. A person could, under that measure, borrow up to £100 to make additions to his home.

We felt that if we could get those in the building trades into employment then other industries would develop and we would have more employment for our people. That gave a fillip to the industry at the time. Members in those days knew something of the old Workers' Homes Board. The member for Wembley Beaches spoke of the Workers' Homes Act, and how it should again be brought into operation. I support his advocacy. I remember that before the war there was a waiting list of over 500 people for dwellings under the Workers' Homes Act. In those days it was a question of money.

Mr. Marshall: It will be again very shortly.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: If I remember correctly, the surplus funds under the State Superannuation Act and moneys not immediately required by the State Insurance Office were made available to applicants for workers' homes at that time. There is no question but that the benefits under the Workers' Homes Act were admirable. A former Labour Premier, Mr. Scaddan,

introduced the workers' homes scheme under which many houses were built, and many persons with slender incomes were assisted to purchase their own homes without a large deposit. The great difficulty today is that although the restrictions on building permits have been lifted up to 12½ squares, lots of people can still do nothing because they have not sufficient money. When I went home to tea this evening a person was waiting to see me on this very question. He did not have sufficient funds to enable him to commence building, notwithstanding that he was living under sub-standard conditions. That is a retrospect of the past, and it indicates the difficulties we were confronted with prior to the war. After the war started, I remember the predecessor of the member for Moore, the late Mr. Berry, advocating from his place in the House, the construction of ships at Fremantle; and his advocacy eventually bore fruit. What happened was that we had very few shipwrights here, so that some of our carpenters were drawn into the industry—more than 300 as a matter of fact—and became what were called "added shipwrights". I am assured that the ships constructed were of little value as a contribution to the war effort.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They were well built.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I did not say they were not, but that as a contribution to the war effort they were of little value. As a matter of fact they were only a sop to Western Australia. I say that because the late John Curtin told a number of us that, on an occasion when we were trying to settle an industrial dispute in connection with the shipbuilding programme. Possibly many of those carpenters could have been engaged on the building of homes that were necessary even then. The problem that confronts us today, has, of course, accumulated over the years and it will take a long time to solve. Whilst the Minister who is nominally in charge of housing says that the erection of homes should be left to private enterprise, I do not think that this, or any other Government, could go back to that system. I believe that houses must be built en masse as the State Housing Commission is doing today.

As a matter of fact, a former Commonwealth Government—I think the Bruce-Page Government—knew of the need for housing in Australia and passed what is known as the Commonwealth Housing Act, which provided that at least £10,000,000 a year should be made available for the construction of houses in Australia. However, that legislation has become almost a deadletter; nothing has been done in connection with it except, I think, that about £1,000,000 has been spent altogether throughout Australia. When the war was ending, the Commonwealth Labour Government, headed by

Mr. Chifley, and the Premiers in conference, except the Premier of South Australia, agreed to the Commonwealth-State rental homes scheme. The idea underlying that proposition, apart from building houses for the needy, is to provide a decent home for a worker who is rearing a big family, and has not sufficient income to pay the full economic rent. Under the old order, thousands of workers were forced into slum conditions because they had to live in the cities with their wives and children. The idea was to get away from those conditions and build decent homes for the people and provide amenities, such as schools and so on. Those were the fundamentals behind that scheme. It made a substantial sum of money available for that purpose.

If the building programme to which the Government is committed is to be fulfilled, mass building, such as is being done today, must be continued. There is plenty of scope for private enterprise to work side by side with the activities of the State Housing Commission and the Public Works Department. Whilst the Minister may make statements to tickle the ears of his supporters, I think, if a commonsense attitude is adopted, the present Minister for Works, in reviewing the situation within a few years, will take an altogether different point of view. I wish to draw attention to a statement made by Mr. W. L. Brine, who represents the master builders on the State Housing Commission, at a dinner given by the Master Builders' Association the other evening.

Mr. Styants: The Royal Commission said he should not be a member of the State Housing Commission.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: He referred to recent criticisms of housing costs by people who ought to know better. I understand that he referred to the Leader of the Opposition and quoted a certain gentleman who stated recently that housing costs had risen since 1947 from £87 to £187 per square. He said that was incorrect. The Leader of the Opposition stated in this House that the cost per square had risen from £87 to £187 in two years. Mr. Brine stated that that was incorrect. He was taking a two-bedroom house as an example, and said that in 1946 such a house cost £76 per square. He further stated that in July, 1950, the figure had risen to £126 per square. In this evening's "Daily News," there appears the following:—

Experts Quote £200 Square.

Builder W. Brine's statement on house building costs were misleading, as was any statement on costs based on the squareage of a house, Perth architect J. B. Fitzhardinge said today.

It was to be assumed that the figure of £126 a square quoted by Mr. Brine referred to the base price used by the State Housing Commission for its group houses and was for a house of timber construction.



Normally when a price per square was used the squareage was taken under the main roof.

The base price was an overall price and in the type of house referred to included a lot of verandah which was cheaper to build.

The figure would not take into consideration any extra costs caused by site variations; nor would it include cupboards except standard kitchen sink fittings.

The houses of the type referred to apparently were fitted with a cheap wood stove and a chip bathheater.

Members of the W.A. Institute of Architects who had discussed Mr. Brine's statement believed that the minimum allowance for a good quality two-bedroom brick house would be £200 a square.

Addressing members of the Master Builders' Association, Mr. Brine said that an earlier statement that housing costs per square had increased from £87 to £187 since 1947 was incorrect. Taking a two-bedroom house as an example he said that in 1946 the cost per square was £76 and in 1950 (July) £126.

Although Mr. Brine is a builder and a member of the State Housing Commission, here we have experts stating that the cost of a two-bedroom house is now £200 per square.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The test would be to discover at what cost per square Mr. Brine would build such a house.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes. There is no question that housing costs are increasing every day, and if the present trend continues, there will be no possibility of the average person being able to buy a house at all. The other evening, the member for South Perth discussed McNess homes. The McNess Housing Scheme was a fine way of perpetuating the name of Sir Charles McNess, a philanthropist who did a great deal of good work in this State. During the depression, he made money available for road work and his name is perpetuated in the McNess-drive on the way to Araluen. He provided the money for the construction of that road, and the then Premier, Mr. Willcock, was able to induce him to set aside £50,000 for the purpose of building McNess homes. Those homes have been a wonderful help to aged persons and widows with families, and have enabled many people to live decently in houses at a nominal rental of 5s. per week. Many widows have thus been able to rear their families under decent conditions, and I know that a number of them have since remarried.

There is a tremendous waiting list for those homes. When I was associated with the Housing Commission, I believe there were over 500 persons on the waiting list, but of course, in those circumstances, most of them have little hope of acquiring such

homes. Unless a small number of McNess homes can be built from time to time, side by side with the other housing activities in this State, many deserving persons must remain without dwellings. It is to be hoped that in the future other citizens who have acquired a good deal of this world's goods will decide to perpetuate their memory in like fashion. During my recent election campaign, I discovered that one of the most outstanding requirements, particularly in tenancy housing areas, was roads and footpaths. Many people are becoming impatient at the delay in the provision of roads and footpaths. In portions of the South Belmont area they are still waiting for roads to be constructed. Of course, the road board has been asked to build footpaths but it appears as though it will be some time before that can be done because of labour conditions and the lack of materials.

In the tenancy areas I found great interest being displayed in kindergartens. I was associated with this movement in my district before I was defeated three years ago, and I have again become interested in it since my return to Parliament. It appears, however, that many areas have little chance of having kindergartens established. In the first instance the buildings are dependent upon groups of private people, or people in the locality, raising sufficient funds for the purpose of building.

I realise that the provision of teachers for kindergartens is a most important function and there are insufficient young women taking up that work because the salaries paid are too low. Whilst the Government makes a contribution towards the salaries of the teachers, it gives little help so far as the buildings are concerned. We find that that is part of the financial system under which we exist. The Government cannot obtain sufficient funds to engage in this sort of activity.

About a fortnight ago an article appeared in the Press dealing with the need for kindergartens in Perth and the rest of the metropolitan area. It stated—

About 200 children are on the waiting list for the Lake-street kindergarten. Because the kindergarten can take only 50 children, some of the children on the list may have to wait two years for admission. One girl has had her name on the list for two years. Her father is working in the country and she and her mother live in one room in a boarding house. The child has no yard to play in and most of her day is spent indoors. In another family one child is attending the kindergarten but her sister is still on the waiting list. All metropolitan kindergartens have long waiting lists but because of lack of finance the Kindergarten Union is unable to provide more buildings or train more teachers.

Where a family has only one child, particularly in the city areas, it is absolutely essential that the child come into contact with other children at an early age. This prevents the child from becoming selfish or spoilt as is usually the case where there is only one child in the family and there is no kindergarten available. I think the time is coming when the Education Department will have to give closer attention to the development of the kindergarten movement in Western Australia. It is a private organisation and has done great work. At one time, during the depression days, the organisation found difficulty in paying teachers' salaries. At one stage the organisation depended upon the Lotteries Commission but after that things were put on a better basis. However, this matter should be given close attention and the Education Department should do more than it is at present.

Side by side with the kindergarten movement is the question of infant health clinics. The Infant Health Association has proved to be of great benefit and has done much to save children's lives. The death rate per thousand has been immeasurably reduced because of the work carried out by this organisation. It extends throughout the metropolitan area and many country towns but there is an urgent need for its beneficent work in many other centres. It is an important function of government to try to save children's lives and the Government should give as much help as possible in that direction. The Government meets portions of the salaries of those engaged in the work but the other portion has to be raised by the local committees or residents in the districts concerned.

This movement could be extended, and would be extended if more funds were available for the purpose. We should endeavour to further its activities throughout all country towns as well as in the suburbs of the metropolitan area. If we did that, we would encourage young women who are bearing children, because these institutions are of great help to them. Young mothers get excellent advice from the infant health centres and I, personally, am indebted to the organisation. My two children were difficult in the feeding stage and I came into contact with the work of the infant health centres. My daughter, who is a fine girl, would not be alive today if it had not been for the close attention and advice of the infant health organisations. Therefore, I can speak with feeling upon the work done by the association.

The other day I read with great interest a statement in the paper. In times gone by, Labour Governments in this State tried on many occasions to have a Bill passed for the purpose of setting up a State labour exchange. On every occasion those opposed to Labour in another place rejected the legislation. They always stood

up for the private labour exchanges. Many of us associated with unemployment in those days knew full well how many of those exchanges battered on to the workers. In many instances workers would be called upon to pay half their wages for receiving a job, and after about a fortnight's work that would be the finish! This payment was to recoup the labour exchange for its services. Such practices were indulged in time and time again.

We have had many arguments in this Chamber on the question and I am pleased to find that a Commonwealth Labour Exchange was set up by a Labour Government. Its function has been of great benefit to Australia. The Commonwealth Labour Exchange has been praised by a Liberal Minister in the Commonwealth sphere; I refer to Mr. Holt, who is the Commonwealth Minister for Labour. It was refreshing to see what Mr. Holt had to say the other day about that labour exchange. In "The West Australian" of the 26th August, 1950, appeared the following:—

#### Government Employment Service Defended.

Melbourne, August 25.—Every leading industrial country had a Government employment service, the Minister for Labour (Mr. Holt) said in a broadcast tonight. This was his answer to those people who said that the task should be left to private enterprise.

The department's staff, he said, had been cut by 200, or 12 per cent., but wherever offices had been closed there had been protests.

Mr. Holt said that full employment had created new problems in the recruiting of seasonal labour. Without the employment service sugar-cane, fruit and vegetable crops would not have been harvested, because unemployed men no longer flocked to districts where seasonal work was offering.

Much seasonal labour was now provided by newly-arrived migrants. Before a migrant arrived in Australia the Commonwealth employment service had analysed his previous experiences and aptitudes.

Replying to criticism by some employers that the service made it easy for people to transfer from one job to another, Mr. Holt said that in a time of full employment a dissatisfied employee would look for work elsewhere whether there was an employment service or not. The service at least tried to steer him into work of the highest national value.

"One of the great benefits which full employment brings is the opportunity to seek that kind of employment which is congenial to the person concerned," said Mr. Holt.

That is what the Commonwealth Minister has to say about a labour exchange. Yet, for many years, arguments were advanced in this House and in another place, opposing the setting up of a State labour exchange. Mr. Holt said that the Commonwealth Labour Exchange is rendering a national service to the workers of Australia and also to the employers. I put this to the Minister for Works tonight, bearing in mind his viewpoint on private enterprise doing all the home-building in this State. I feel certain Mr. Holt takes a different view of this important issue, and I hope the time will arrive when he takes a similar view on the matter of mass building of houses, as we do on this side of the House.

Another change which should be effected in this State—it operates in other States—is uniformity concerning electoral rolls. It is most confusing to have several claim cards to fill in. When an elector supplies all the correct information on the one claim card, that should be sufficient. Many people have become confused and the time has arrived when only one electoral office should be sufficient for enrolments. This has been discussed over the years and I think at least three of the States now work through the Commonwealth Electoral Office. In Western Australia one has to fill in several claim cards. Whilst the State card today is almost a facsimile of the Commonwealth card, we find that there is disparity regarding the time permitted on which one has to send in an amended claim card after moving from one place to another. Under Commonwealth law a period of six weeks is permitted but under the State law now it is three months. So people become very confused with enrolment cards, especially prior to elections, and the time has arrived for uniformity with them.

An important need in the electorate of Middle Swan is the provision of a crossing in Rivervale. When I was a member of this House previously I discussed this proposal and made representations to the then Minister, urging the construction of a crossing there. A Town Planning Commission was appointed and in its report made in 1929-30 it recommended that a subway should be constructed at the Rivervale crossing. Its members had other views as to where the road should go, but they were definite on the subway proposal. The time is fast approaching when this should be undertaken. It does not necessarily affect my electorate only, but the whole of the State, because it is a main artery to the eastern and northern suburbs.

Mr. Marshall: It is the Great Eastern-highway.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, and along it a great flow of traffic proceeds. In spite of warning lights and bells, accidents happen there quite often. We hear nothing, of

course, of the near misses. The Minister did indicate, in his letter dealing with the matter, that he had the work under examination and that when the opportune time arrived he would endeavour to do something about it. When I read his letter some days later I advised the Belmont Road Board, the Perth City Council and the member for Victoria Park. "The West Australian" wrote a small sub-leader on the issue, giving its viewpoint and emphasising that it was even more urgent than the Minister had thought. I would also draw the Minister's attention to the difficulties experienced with the Causeway. I well remember the time when work on the Causeway was held up because of the lack of money. The then Minister for Works, Mr. Lindsay, when confronted with the question of what the Government was doing about it, decided to spend £20,000 on the work and said that would do for another ten years. A war intervened and hampered the project. If we do not reach a decision on the question of the Rivervale crossing and get the machinery on hand in order to proceed with the job as quickly as possible, the same thing may happen as occurred with regard to the work on the Causeway. It has become a great bottleneck and is impeding the flow of traffic to the city.

In the sub-leader in "The West Australian" a by-pass road was mentioned. Again I would indicate to the Minister that this matter was also raised some years ago. As a matter of fact, the other evening a gentleman spoke to me on the 'phone concerning the by-pass road, the construction of which was urged years ago. It was suggested that the by-pass road should commence somewhere near the Greenmount station in the vicinity of the tennis courts at the corner, then cross the Helena River, and continue in the direction of Maida Vale-road on to Rivervale. There is no question that the idea put forward in "The West Australian" sub-leader is quite sound. Attention should be paid to that aspect. I know that area pretty well and I do not think there would be many difficulties in the way of by-passing all the crossings that occur from Rivervale on to Guildford and Greenmount.

There are three main crossings to be by-passed but at Guildford there are a number of other crossings which at times are danger points and deathtraps. If we plan now for a by-pass road before further land is bought up, then the problem will be easier even though, as suggested by the newspaper article, we cannot now complete our roads. If that were done we would be able to plan ahead and the work could be proceeded with by this Government or some succeeding Government.

I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the Great Eastern-highway is needing reconstruction where it finishes

near Belmont. My advice from the Public Works Department is that provision was made for the construction of the Great Eastern-highway and Albany-highway just before the war and the work was almost ready to be put in hand. Unfortunately war broke out and nothing could be done. I realise the difficulty in connection with plant and bitumen, but nevertheless, having gone halfway into Belmont, there is urgent need to continue the widening of the Great Eastern-highway through to Midland Junction. The late member for Guildford-Midland and I made representations to the authorities at the time for the reconstruction through to Midland Junction. The Belmont Road Board has been interested in this proposition and has been given some advice by the Commissioner of Main Roads. But it is not satisfied and has asked the Minister to give much earlier attention to the reconstruction of the highway.

Recently we had a deputation to the Minister about the reconstruction of the Guildford-road and I believe the points then made are still fresh in his mind. Knowing that the funds are available out of the proceeds from the petrol tax, I hope that this work will be approved of at the earliest possible opportunity. Some years ago the matter of straightening the road at Whatley was considered, land having been resumed for the purpose and the necessary plans drawn.

The Minister for Works: It depends upon the plans of the Railway Department as to where the road will go.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I understand it is intended to build marshalling yards at Cresco and that another railway and bridge will be built near the Belmont railway bridge, the line then going through to Welshpool. The question arises whether we should create another crossing or whether a subway should be provided there. We had hoped to get a subway where the present crossing is, but the Railway Department was the stumbling block. I cannot see that the provision of a subway is a responsibility of the Railway Department and doubt whether it would undertake the work. I think it is a job for the Main Roads Department.

The Minister for Works: Straightening up the road?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, and building a subway. It might be said that funds cannot be appropriated for this purpose, but I believe that the Federal Aid Roads Agreement permits of money being spent, not only on roads, but also on other works allied to road construction. I feel sure that the Main Roads Department will do the job and that the expense will be borne by main road funds.

There is another road in my district—Wellington-Camboon-road—portion of which serves the Toodyay electorate. I have met the Morley Park Progress Association, the Perth Road Board and other

bodies and have been asked to make representations to the Minister now that he has an increase of £400,000 in the Federal aid road fund. The road will be used by men engaged in primary production, who have used it for many years. A section of two miles was approved when Mr. Millington was Minister for Works, but when the troops were bivouaced in the scrub nearby, the surface was badly damaged and I think some indemnity should have been paid by the military authorities to cover the damage. It is a light gravel road and is used for carting timber and firewood and a good deal of damage has been done to the surface, so much so that poultry-raisers have complained of its condition.

Another important question is that of water supplies. Doubtless the member for Canning will be directing the attention of the Minister to the need for pipeline extensions and drainage in that portion of his district contiguous to Middle Swan. A pipeline extension required in Middle Swan is along the Beechboro-road. Recently a man named Kelly, who is a builder, started a tile factory in Beechboro-road, Bayswater. He was unable to obtain sufficient water out of the ground for his industry and was under the necessity of carting water for drinking purposes. The Factories and Shops Act prohibits that sort of thing, and if he cannot get water from the department, his activities may have to cease. A few days ago I received a letter from the secretary of the Brick and Tile Employees' Union asking me to make representations to have the pipeline extended along Beechboro-road.

This is not a new proposal; the residents in that area have been asking for years for an extension of the main. Unfortunately, war conditions prevented the work from being put in hand and I know the difficulties that prevail at present. Nevertheless, settlement is increasing; it is a growing industrial centre, and the fact that a tile factory is being started makes the need for a water supply even greater. Morley Park used to be a small settlement, but is now becoming an important centre because the building of tenancy houses resulted in amenities being extended close to the district. The Government has built a school there, which will be opened shortly, but the children will have to use rain-water for drinking purposes. Consequently, the time is not far off when the main must be extended to that part. I understand that the question of taking the pipeline to Morley Park hinges on the completion of the Mt. Yokine reservoir.

Another important matter is that of drainage, which, in the metropolitan area, has become an acute problem. The Minister is fortunate that the rainfall in recent years has been normal and that the water level on the swampy areas has not risen

as it did five years ago. After the two wet winters then experienced, all the low-lying portions at the foot of the Kalamunda hills and in other parts of the metropolitan area were affected by the rise in the water level and districts like Cannington, Welshpool and Bayswater suffered through lack of a proper drainage system. The Federated Progress Associations met to discuss this matter and I arranged an interview with the Minister, as a result of which it was decided that a comprehensive survey should be made so that the problem could be tackled, not piecemeal, but on a comprehensive basis. Financial provision was made for the survey and that work was undertaken, but I do not think that any activity has resulted from it. The ex-member for the district endeavoured to get the matter of drainage at East Belmont attended to because of the difficulties encountered at that stage; and the road board had to spend £500 to remove the water which lay across the Maida Vale-road and the civil airport drain.

I am pleased to know there is some activity in this direction. There are one or two spots in the Bayswater district, particularly Beechboro-road, to which I suggest the Minister might apply himself; and there are a number of places in which the disadvantage will become intensified during the wet season and which should therefore be attended to. I am informed that engineers have said that, in accordance with the law of averages, it will be 50 years before we will have another two very wet seasons in succession; so that in the near future the State will not be confronted with the problem that faced the Government of that day. Drainage work is not very remunerative unless there is a good deal of production associated with it, which is why Governments do not readily tackle it. However, I have referred to the matter because it is important.

With regard to sewerage extension, there are quite a number of people in East Victoria Park who have been waiting for some time to have their premises connected with the mains. In the Rivervale and Belmont districts, too, there is need for sewerage extensions at the earliest opportunity. The local authority has decreed that septic tanks must be installed in new houses and there is an urgent need for the sewerage system to be extended. The problem is acute at Dunreath behind the North Belmont tenancy area. Recently we had a deputation to the Minister for Health to see if something could be done, but it was generally agreed that the solution of the problem there is an extension of the sewerage system into the Belmont district, which would mean that it would also serve the Guildford airport area.

I want to bring to the attention of the Minister for Education the fact that the grounds of the Redcliffe school are in a very bad condition. Some of the boards

are missing from the shelter sheds, but the worst feature is that they are under water. Most of the children from the migrants' homes in the Canning electorate are attending the Redcliffe school, which is not in a central position because the Commonwealth resumed a large area of land at the Guildford airport and bought out many of the residents in the war years. Furthermore, the school is in a low-lying area. There are similar low-lying areas in the district represented by the Honorary Minister for Housing. In former days I visited them with the Minister for Education. The location of schools in such areas is due to the fact that, in days gone by, land-owning companies made good fellows of themselves by giving away the worst pieces of land for school sites and selling the remainder, thus creating problems forever after. The Redcliffe school is in one such location. When I was here before, I endeavoured to persuade the department to fill in the lower parts with gravel, and I hope that the present Minister will see to it that the matter receives further attention.

At the 1947 election, when I was defeated, the question of poultry feed was a burning one in the Middle Swan electorate. I was unable to do much for the poultry farmers in the matter of rising prices, and I know that many of them who had hitherto supported me voted against me at that election because they thought that the incoming Government would do something in the matter of providing cheap food. An Honorary Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into this problem and it brought down certain recommendations. But, since my re-election, quite a number of poultry farmers have approached me and complained that the price of poultry feed continues to rise. As a matter of fact, some of these men have gone out of business. In other instances, the wives are going out to work to help support the home. I remember that the Premier, in accepting the evidence of the Royal Commission, said it was his intention to give full effect to the recommendations. But, as was the case with other Royal Commissions that were appointed, nothing eventuated and today the poultry industry is in great difficulties.

I think I have now touched on the most important matters affecting my electorate. I hear quite a lot of members who, to use a vulgar phrase, are "barking" and suffering from laryngitis. I have been in that condition for the last week. With a view to obtaining some relief, I tried to purchase some penicillin chewing gum. I went to my local chemist and he asked me if I had a doctor's prescription. He said he could not help me unless I had one. Coming to Perth I made an effort to obtain some of this chewing gum at another chemist's shop, but was again refused.

Finally I got in touch with another chemist I happened to know—not the member for Victoria Park—and I told him

of the refusals with which I had met. I told him that my throat was pretty bad and I wanted to do a bit of talking but could not do so because of my condition. I said I had heard that this new chewing gum was very good for sore throats and hoarseness. He said, "Are you putting it on me for some?" I told him I had approached him in good faith to get some, and he told me he would let me have a packet at a cost of 3s. I bought the packet and my throat has improved. The point I want to make is that he said, "You fellows up there at Parliament House put this chewing gum on the prohibited list under the Poisons Act and that is why you have to pay 15s. to a doctor to get a medical certificate enabling you to obtain a 3s. packet of chewing gum." I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**MR. NALDER** (Katanning) [8.50]: This debate has gone on for some time, and it gives me much pleasure to offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Chairman of Committees, on being appointed to the positions you both occupy. Things seems to have altered quite a bit since I was elected to this Chamber a little over three years ago. I do not experience the feeling of strangeness that I did then. I feel also that there is a more friendly spirit existing here than there was at that time. I do not know why that should be, but possibly the strangeness I felt originally has worn off.

The Minister for Lands: There are other reasons, too.

Mr. Marshall: You are of a retiring disposition.

**MR. NALDER**: That may have something to do with it. Perhaps I have taken a leaf out of the book of the member for Murchison. One thing I would like to mention for the consideration of the House has to do with the opening of Parliament, an important event which takes place every three years.

Mr. Marshall: Each 12 months.

**MR. NALDER**: I mean, the opening of a new Parliament. I think some improvement should be made in regard to visitors. Invitations are issued, and people commence to arrive here quite some time before the actual opening, and we find them filing into the galleries of both Houses. They are denied the opportunity of witnessing what takes place outside. I suggest that an announcer from the A.B.C. be stationed somewhere outside so that he could broadcast to those in the galleries what is taking place.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What about television?

**MR. NALDER**: That would break the monotony of looking at the empty Chambers, and would give the people an interest in what was taking place outside. On the last occasion, it was something out of

the ordinary to see the procession of bandmen and members of the Forces, but the people who were seated inside could not witness that spectacle. Another suggestion—this would probably have to be approved by the Standing Orders Committee—is that, after the Usher of the Black Rod notifies members of the Legislative Assembly that the Governor has met in another place to give his address, the members of this House should remain here instead of going to the other place. I believe that would be a good thing, and it was suggested to me by the Deputy Premier in a discussion we had some time ago. Mr. Speaker and the Chairman of Committees could go to the other place to receive the Speech, and all other members could remain here and listen to the broadcast.

Mr. J. Hegney: A very good suggestion.

**MR. NALDER**: I say that because I believe that most members who went to the other place when Parliament was opened last month did not hear what was said. Also, if what I have put forward were adopted, it would mean that more room would be available for visitors in the other Chamber.

Mr. Graham: We had a copy of the Speech as soon as we returned here.

**MR. NALDER**: Yes, but we could remain in our seats and, by doing that, more room would be made available for other people in the President's gallery.

Mr. Needham: What about tradition?

**MR. NALDER**: Tradition probably comes into it quite a bit, but we do not live on tradition altogether. Times alter, and I do not see why we should not adopt a change if it were in the interests of all concerned.

The Minister for Lands: The public could then hear the Governor's Speech in this Chamber, too.

**MR. NALDER**: Yes. I believe that it would be more interesting for the people in the gallery here to see members in their places, rather than the empty seats. I hope consideration will be given to the suggestion.

I feel sure that all members are pleased to hear that Their Majesties, the King and Queen, have agreed to come to Australia in 1952. We very much regretted the illness of His Majesty, King George, which prevented him from paying us a visit some time ago. I am certain, too, that their forthcoming visit will be well remembered by the citizens of this country, and that a very warm welcome awaits Their Majesties and the Princess. We trust that the King will enjoy good health, and that his visit will be memorable to the people of this continent.

Some points have been brought before this House by other members that I would like to refer to. The member for Merre-

din-Yilgarn last night referred to the removal of the super. subsidy, and remarked that nothing was said about it. Evidently he does not read the papers very much, or listen to the radio, because something was said about it. I attended quite a few meetings where strong opposition was expressed to the action of the Commonwealth Government in removing the subsidy. I wish to give reasons why I believe the removal of that subsidy is not in the best interests of Australia. First of all, we are a primary producing country and rely on exports from the land. We must encourage primary production, and one of the easiest ways of doing that is to make superphosphate available in as large quantities and at as small a cost as possible.

We all know it is necessary to use superphosphate and that primary production is practically impossible in this State without it. If we give consideration to our exports, and take last year as an example, we find just how great is the value of super. to this country. Last year the wool we exported gave a return in the vicinity of £285,000,000. Although I have not the figures for export of commodities such as meat, dairy produce, eggs, wheat, skins and so on I believe that in the aggregate the return would be in the vicinity—at a conservative estimate—of at least £500,000,000.

Let us compare that figure with the amount of about £4,000,000 paid by the Commonwealth Government in subsidies on superphosphate. The cost of the subsidy was a very small fraction indeed of the return for our export of primary products. In point of fact, the Commonwealth is making no real saving at all by withdrawing the subsidy and although it may not be so immediately, I believe that in the long run it will have a detrimental effect on production, especially when the price received for our exportable products declines.

Mr. W. Hegney: Did the Country Party members in the Federal Parliament agree to the withdrawal of the subsidy?

Mr. NALDER: I do not know, but I do know that in the country areas of this State strong opposition was expressed to the removal of the subsidy.

Mr. Graham: Will those people demonstrate their sincerity when they have the opportunity of doing so at the next election?

Mr. NALDER: The committee that has been appointed by the State Government to investigate the manufacture and distribution of superphosphate has agreed to a regulation under which road contractors carting superphosphate shall be paid 2s. per ton for unloading super. at the farms. I hope that point will be cleared up before the road carting of super. to the country again commences. On some occasions during last season contractors with tip trucks, when they arrived at farms and could not find the farmers, simply tipped

their trucks and dumped the super. on the ground. That happened on a number of occasions in certain districts, and I hope it will not occur again.

It was the policy of the superphosphate companies last year to send to a farmer, when super. was to be delivered to him, a telegram saying that the superphosphate was leaving the works. The intention was to give the farmer the opportunity of being prepared for the arrival of the truck. On a number of occasions when a farmer received such a telegram on a Friday morning he waited about all Friday afternoon and Saturday and the truck did not arrive with the super. until the Sunday afternoon. It is hard to expect the farmer, under those circumstances, to be ready at a moment's notice to unload the super. from a truck. In future when telegrams are sent to farmers for that purpose, I hope they will be able to rely on the super. arriving after reasonable time is allowed for the truck to travel from the superphosphate works to the farm.

Many members have mentioned country water supplies and I asked the Minister for Water Supply some questions about the construction of the pipeline from Wellington Dam to Narrogin. The distance from the dam to Narrogin is 81 miles and up to date 13 miles of it have been constructed in a period of approximately 12 months. The Minister said he hoped the pipeline would be completed in two years. If that is to be done, there will have to be a sharp increase in the rate of construction. It is to be regretted that the supply from Japan of materials for the manufacture of piping has been cut off owing to the war in Korea, and I hope the Minister will endeavour to secure supplies elsewhere in order that the construction of the pipeline may be delayed no longer than is unavoidable.

The Chief Secretary: The scheduled rate of construction is 10 miles the first year—actually 13½ miles have been constructed—27 miles in the second year and 45 miles in the third year. That is the usual ratio in jobs of this kind.

Mr. NALDER: I hope that that schedule will be adhered to, but I am drawing the attention of members to the possibility of delay occurring and am suggesting that every effort be made to see that a supply of material is available so that progress may not be interrupted. In reply to a question this afternoon with regard to the cost of pumping water from Wellington Dam to Narrogin and Katanning, the Minister gave some interesting figures, but his comment at the end of his reply does not appear to me capable of standing up to investigation. He was asked the cost of pumping 1,000,000 gallons from Wellington Dam to Narrogin, and replied that the cost would be £20 or 5½d. per 1,000 gallons, and that the cost of pumping 1,000,000 gallons to Katanning would be £30 or 8d. per 1,000 gallons, compared with the cost of approximately 3s. 1d. per 1,000 gallons

for water from a bitumen-surfaced catchment with a rainfall of 18ins. I do not know where the Minister got those figures and do not think they take into account the cost of the pipes and the cost of laying them.

The Minister for Works: That was for pumping only.

Mr. NALDER: With regard to the figure of 3s. 1d. per 1,000 gallons for water from a bitumen-surfaced catchment, I should say that once the catchment was laid down there would be no cost at all attached to running water into a dam. Apparently the figures given take into account the cost of constructing the bitumen-surfaced catchment, although no specific area is given. I think those figures are misleading and that they require investigation. I would like to discuss that with the Minister later on so that the position can be clarified.

The Minister for Works: You asked for the cost of pumping. That is all.

Mr. NALDER: Yes, but the Minister gave figures regarding amounts of water and the approximate cost of running 1,000 gallons of water off an unspecified area in an 18-inch rainfall. He gave the figure as 3s. 1d. per 1,000 gallons. I believe that the figures used must have been based on the actual cost of putting down the bitumen, although the answer does not specify any area.

Farmers everywhere are interested in the postwar J.O. wool scheme and some little opposition has been displayed in various parts of the State. I believe that is mostly because of ignorance of what the scheme is actually intended to do. The J.O. scheme—Joint Organisation scheme—came into being during the war for the purpose of purchasing all unsaleable wool, not only in Australia but also in South Africa, New Zealand and the Old Country. The wool purchased was unsaleable and a stockpile has been built up. This stockpile has diminished until this season all of the wool will be resold.

Over the years farmers have been pressing for a scheme whereby an equitable price would be obtained for their wool. The scheme suggested will be run by farmers who will put a sum of money into it and the Commonwealth Government has agreed that 7½ per cent. is a reasonable percentage. A number of farmers have already expressed the wish that it should be even higher. However, the provision of 7½ per cent. will build up a considerable fund and when the wool returns recede, the price will be kept at a level which will give farmers a reasonable amount for their product. This is an opportunity that farmers must not overlook and they have a chance of organising and making their presence felt. If they miss the opportunity now, I believe one might not occur again.

Mr. Marshall: Will they be liable for taxation on the 7½ per cent.?

Mr. NALDER: No. I understand that the 7½ per cent. deducted from the farmers' wool clip will be taken by the Commonwealth Government and placed in a fund. If the scheme does not meet with the approval of the woolgrowers of Australia and no legislation is enacted, the money will be returned in full to those who contributed.

Mr. Needham: Will they be taxed on it when it is returned?

Mr. NALDER: If it is returned it probably will be taxable, but if the money is held in a fund and legislation is passed, it will not be taxable.

Mr. Marshall: What do you think of the Copland scheme which would bring in a 33 1-3 per cent. reduction?

Mr. NALDER: That suggests another aspect altogether which at this stage I do not feel inclined to discuss, although it has its merits. I believe there is quite a lot of support for that scheme but farmers in general throughout the country have not had time to discuss it. That brings me to the subject of meat supplies.

Members, for several weeks, have been talking about the supply of meat and what should be done about its control. Up to date there has not been one practical suggestion to overcome the shortage. I believe this is one matter that should exercise the mind of the Government. The only way to improve the position, perhaps not immediately but over a period of years, is to de-control meat. We have had suggestions that the blackmarket can be stamped out and we have heard members say that the Minister for Prices should take action to see that these blackmarketers are brought to boot. But, will that improve the supply of meat to the consuming public of Western Australia? The member for Mt. Hawthorn has been very interested in this matter, but I think he has overlooked the point mentioned by the member for Avon Valley this evening that the consuming public is being fleeced because people are paying for supplies which they do not receive.

Mr. Needham: That is what the member for Mt. Hawthorn was emphasising.

Mr. NALDER: The consumer is not receiving that which he is entitled to obtain because of the present controlled price of meat.

The Attorney General: The price index is not linked with pricefixing and has no relation to it.

Mr. W. Hegney: Yes, it has.

The Attorney General: No, it has not.

Mr. NALDER: To my mind the best way to overcome the problem and improve the supply of meat is to de-control it. Because of the high price of wool at present farmers are not worrying so much about the breeding of fat lambs and the



preparation of fat sheep for the market. They can get their incomes by just keeping their sheep and taking the wool from their backs. During the shortage—the period of the year when meat supplies become scarce—farmers will not, under present control, retain their stock until prices rise. If prices were de-controlled more people would be encouraged to keep sheep for that period. It would automatically increase production and keep prices at a more stable level. Under present conditions the consumer gets no benefit from the fall in price during this time of the year. When shorn sheep come on to the market, there is always a decline in price. Under control the consumer does not get any benefit from this. He is paying the maximum price all the year round. If meat were de-controlled I believe everyone would benefit—the consumer as well as the producer.

The members for Roe and Avon Valley have suggested that the Government should make provision for an ample supply of frozen meat to become available next year. There has been a shortage and it will continue while price control remains. Unless the Government makes some provision to de-control, there will be chaos next year. There are other matters to which I could refer but I will leave them to be raised later in the session. However, the liquor problem is of major importance and I believe that every thinking citizen is alarmed about it. I therefore take this opportunity of making some remarks on the question. The consumption of liquor in this State has grown to alarming proportions.

Mr. Brady: Be careful, now.

Mr. NALDER: I will be careful, but what I say is true. It is the duty of every member of this House and the Government's to do something about this problem.

Mr. Manning: Hear, hear!

Mr. NALDER: The youth of our country must be considered. If we are to be a strong nation then the comments made by Dr. Hislop in another place a few weeks ago are worthy of serious consideration. I speak in this vein because quite a number of reports have been brought to my notice. I mention the youth of our nation because only a few weeks ago a girl of 15 years of age was taken from the lounge of one of our country hotels in an extremely drunken condition. If we allow that sort of thing to continue in our midst, the standards of our country, of which we are proud, will deteriorate. The Licensing Act as it is today gives the Government power to see that these abuses are not permitted.

Mr. Marshall: That is quite true.

Mr. NALDER: There should be an enforcement of the liquor law.

Mr. May: You mean it needs policing.

Mr. NALDER: Yes, and enforcement. We must agree there is room for improvement and I consider that a committee should be appointed consisting of members from both sides of the House to go into this question. We must view with alarm the number of traffic accidents that are occurring today. Every day in the Press reports appear of people taken to the court on charges of drunken driving.

Mr. J. Hegney: One has only to see the number of cars outside the hotels.

Mr. NALDER: Are we to allow these incidents to continue and increase in number or are we to take steps to prevent them? I am not suggesting that we should have prohibition but we should tackle this problem and endeavour to minimise it. Unless we take some action, then I believe that our pride of place in the British-speaking countries of the world will deteriorate to such a stage that we will extremely regret it. I therefore hope the Government will consider this suggestion and ascertain whether some good may not be achieved by the appointment of a committee such as I have suggested, to improve the position as it exists here today. I have been told that in various States of America legislation has been introduced whereby a man convicted of drunken driving is faced with the fact that for him there is no option but to be sent to prison. If this will help take the menace from our midst, then it is a suggestion which could be well adopted in this State.

The member for Avon Valley, I believe, assumed a pessimistic attitude towards our native population. We know that as human beings they have descended to almost the lowest rung of the ladder: but are they to blame? We must accept the responsibility and try to improve the lot of these people. No matter how low a person may have become, I believe there is something in the human heart to be appealed to in order that he may be lifted up, as has been said by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I did not say that.

Mr. NALDER: The problem is greater in this State than elsewhere in the Commonwealth, and I consider it is our responsibility to improve the lot of the natives. If we educate these young people and provide better conditions for them, I am sure they will respond. It may take some time, but why say they are a hopeless lot and turn them out into the bush and there let them remain? I therefore hope that every effort will be made to improve the position of these unfortunate coloured people in this State and other parts of Australia.

One other point I would like to mention is the position of the less fortunate children in our midst, among whom I include the orphan children who are entering this State from England. Today, church organisations and the Government are doing much on their behalf. It is the

responsibility, and the obligation, of each individual to assist in this problem. To-day many people are receiving liberal incomes. Those in the farming communities, and in the business world, could help financially and also make goods available to assist in the welfare of these unfortunate children. They will be amongst the men and women of tomorrow, and I believe there are many people who could offer much more assistance than they are giving at present by helping organisations that are doing much to improve the condition of these children and fit them to take a place in the society of our State.

**MR. SHEARN** (Maylands) [9.31]: Although you have been repeatedly congratulated, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to the Chair, I desire to add my good wishes. A feature of a number of the speeches made during this debate has been the pertinent references to the international situation. When one realises that those parts of the world that are in turmoil for the moment are within a few days' journey of our shores, it is only right that we should give some attention to what is happening both inside and outside of Australia.

The manifest complexities of international affairs are fraught with almost terrifying possibilities. The Korean situation is only a part, indeed a small part, of the pressure under which civilisation as we regard it lies, and which we must face if our western civilisation is to endure. It would be a fatal delusion to believe that it is not our concern at this distance or that we can play our part against the forces opposing us and continue to indulge in political party quarrels or close our eyes to the stark facts of the situation in the hope that solution of our great and urgent problems will automatically arise. All thinking people realise that ultimate decision and action in democracies reside in the hands of those few comprising His Majesty's Government, and their task and responsibilities call for the exercise of courage, initiative and co-operation and a full regard for what is today a trust of tremendous importance.

When the Prime Minister of Australia addressed the nation a week or so ago, he drew for us a picture of the responsibilities that rest on this part of the Empire in order that we may make the contribution that will be required of us should the position deteriorate to the stage that some well-informed people seem to think it will. The point I wish to make is that while we may have our sharp political differences, and while we are all entitled to express our viewpoints, there must be an over-riding consideration of our responsibilities. If we are to be an effective force and if we are to be in a position to exercise influence on the younger people of Australia, and prevent the tendency to propagate alien ideas, we must accept our

individual responsibilities and face up to actual realities in the political arena as well as other aspects of our lives.

I find it somewhat difficult precisely to reconcile the attitude of the Prime Minister in his recent speech when I read the reactions of the Premiers meeting in conference at Canberra yesterday. Mr. Menzies, in his speech, laid great emphasis, not only upon our duties as individuals, but also upon the responsibilities of the various States to co-operate and build up development and general production. The States, however, cannot achieve this if the Federal Treasurer for the time being does not show an equal amount of realism in relation to the money to be made available from the Federal Treasury to the States. The Commonwealth should give full consideration to the plight in which the various State Governments find themselves as a result of the inflationary spiral which, though beyond the control of State Governments, has added to their difficulties and confronted them with increasing costs, all of which have a serious effect upon the stability of the State Treasuries.

So the cold fact is that unless the Commonwealth approaches the financial situation in a spirit of realism, it is almost impossible for State Governments to play their part and to be able to undertake those works which are so necessary. Surely in such circumstances the Commonwealth has an obligation to provide additional reimbursement from taxation to meet the essential requirements of the States! There are quite a number of important works that one could link up with the future development of the country. For example, I might mention the standardisation or rehabilitation of the main railway lines in this State as something which Governments have vacillated over for a dozen years and I do not suppose there is any more important project from a national point of view that ought to receive earlier attention.

The other evening the Leader of the Opposition spent considerable time in discussing the situation in the north-western portion of the State. It has not been my privilege to travel through the North, but I know sufficient of it to realise that, apart from its tremendous potentially wealthy areas, it presents a most potent danger from the defence point of view; and if the Commonwealth Government is to do its duty by this State, and if it is to discourage possible enemies from taking advantage of the vulnerable position of the North-West, there is need for it to make an early review of the situation affecting the North and North-West. I observe that on the Notice Paper there is some reference to the appointment of additional Ministers; and I shall be interested to know whether the Government proposes, amongst other things, to make available a Minister to attend to the

North-West. In view of the importance of the problem, I should imagine that such a portfolio should be allocated. I hope the Government will pay some attention to that, in view of its national importance.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung.

Mr. Marshall: It is disgraceful! When members opposite want the support of the Independents they are all present, but when one of the Independents is making a reasonable speech, none of them is here. And they talk about democracy!

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House, and there is a quorum present. The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. Marshall: A bare one!

Mr. SHEARN: There is a definite and serious obligation on the Commonwealth Government to see that sufficient funds are made available when a plan has been prepared by the State Government for the proper, adequate and essential development of the northern portion of the State. There is an obligation upon the Commonwealth Government to provide money for the purpose. Referring to the attitude of the Prime Minister at the Premiers' Conference, it will be recalled that when the present Government was in Opposition in the Commonwealth Parliament, its members did, on a number of occasions, express themselves as being much more solicitous for the needs of the various States than was the Chifley Government. Though I have no intention of wearying the House with a number of quotations, I think it might be pertinent to quote one short reference made on the 11th November by the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies in relation to this aspect. Speaking of the party he represents, he said—

We continue to stand for the Federal principle; that is, for a division of powers between Commonwealth and States, as distinct from complete centralisation of power at Canberra . . . As we believe in the division of power, so we believe that the States must be preserved as real governing bodies and not as the mere dependants of the Commonwealth. We shall therefore take an early opportunity of convening a special conference with the State Premiers to reconsider the problem of the financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States.

In view of that statement, it is interesting to read this morning's paper and note the efforts made by the respective Premiers—and particularly our own Premier—along those lines. Surely no-one knows more than the Prime Minister about the strategic importance of Western Australia, which is essentially a Federal re-

sponsibility; no-one knows more of the need to deal with the undeveloped portions of this State, as against other States. He would know that in connection with the expanding migration policy, if there is any State capable of absorbing the types who are coming here it is Western Australia, which provides the most fertile ground. It is difficult to reconcile the attitude of the Prime Minister in November with his attitude yesterday.

I hope that our Premier, who appears to have had the assistance of the other Premiers, will not let the Commonwealth get away with this attitude. The indications are that, despite what the Prime Minister had to say formerly, there is an anti-State feeling, either in his own mind or in his Cabinet; and this is a very subtle means by which we will gradually find the States, as another member has said, being squeezed out. It might be opportune if I were to remind members that this matter was dealt with in this House by the Leader of the Opposition in a speech he made on the Supply Bill in 1947. I do not propose to quote more than a paragraph or so of that speech, but what I shall quote will show clearly what was prophesied at that time and what now appears to be in process of becoming a reality. Referring to the present Premier, the Leader of the Opposition said—

The Premier, in his policy speech, promised to have the State resume control of its own finance and to arrange for taxation reductions on a substantial scale. His comments on Governments being puppets of the Commonwealth I will pass over, generously, as one of his election-time indiscretions, until we see results later.

At a later stage in his speech, the Leader of the Opposition said—

Following the statement of the case by the Premiers at the Premiers' Conference, the Prime Minister became very angry. I will quote from "The West Australian" of the 23rd January, 1946. This is from the report sent to Western Australia through "The Herald" news service, not contributed to by anyone but a reporter in the Eastern States. The report says—

The six State Premiers, one by one, attacked uniform taxation, each explaining the difficulties of his particular State. The Queensland Premier (Mr. Cooper) was particularly outspoken, as was Mr. Wise (W.A.), who said that Western Australia's difficulties were such that the State could not be developed properly unless it had control of its own finance. The other Premiers differed only in detail.

Further down it continues—

Even Mr. Chifley's accustomed grin was gone by the time the Premiers had finished their attack, and he got grimmer and grimmer as he replied.

Unless the Premiers of Australia stand up to their responsibilities in respect of the relationship between the States and the Commonwealth, it looks as if we are to be confronted with a very dire state of affairs, and in no State more so than in Western Australia. The responsibility of present-day conditions rests with the Government because of the vast amount of rehabilitation and developmental work ahead of it, and unless the Commonwealth Government gives the requisite assistance then we, as a State Parliament, might just as well go out of business, because no concern could carry on under the conditions imposed by the Prime Minister. I am as sensible, as other members, of the overriding importance, financially, of preparing for the emergencies of war should they arise. The proposals for the development of the State, the need for immigration and the carrying on of the business of the country, also form an integral part of our very existence. So I hope that good counsel will prevail and that the Prime Minister will redeem his promises and adhere to the statements he made in November last when he was Leader of the Opposition in the Federal House.

Passing from that subject I desire to refer to various boards that operate in Western Australia. This matter was mentioned earlier in the debate. Personally I have never been very enamoured of any of these boards. I believe that because of the existing conditions when they were established there may have been some justification for them, but because of the present chaotic conditions of many industries, which are not only influenced, but practically entirely controlled by boards, I do wonder, as do other members, whether they are serving a useful purpose, and whether they are justified. So I think a duty rests on this Government to investigate their activities and to ascertain to what degree they contribute usefully to industry, to the producer and to the consumer, and whether, in the final analysis, their continuance is necessary.

Without being able, at this stage, to express a definite opinion with respect to any or all of them, I do think there are one or two boards that have outlived their usefulness. As they are a cost to the State, and as I believe they hamper, to some extent, the activities of industry, something should be done about them. I suggest this is a matter of some urgency to the Government, and I hope it will receive attention in the not too distant future.

A great deal has been said about soldier settlement, and whilst I do not desire to enter into a discussion on the lines pursued

by the member for Avon Valley, I could not help thinking, whilst he was speaking, that as one travels through the country one cannot help being struck by the vast areas of first-class land which are close to all facilities, including ports, and which appear to be merely used for the pasturing of a few head of cattle. When we know, as has been pointed out so often, the difficulty the Government experiences in obtaining suitable virgin land, the practicability of either enforcing the use of these lands to their full productivity by the present owners, or the purchasing of them for soldier settlement farms, might well be investigated.

Some emphasis has, I know, been laid on the fact that the Government has been purchasing farms and, to a degree, ousting those who are accustomed to farming by putting on soldiers with little or no experience. I cannot say whether that is true, but it is quite evident that the Government is responsible to see that lands in the areas that I have referred to are, in the interests of the community in general, put to much better use than they are, apparently, at present.

I had intended to say something about the Fremantle harbour extension proposals, but in view of the fact that the Minister has been good enough to assure me, representing a large body of people who are vitally concerned in the matter as it affects the river, that their interests will receive consideration by being included in the terms of reference of the inquiry to be held by the Chief Engineer of the Harbours and Rivers Department of South Australia, I do not propose to pursue the subject in a general way.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you know what the terms of reference will be?

Mr. SHEARN: Like other members who have addressed themselves much more fully to this subject, I want it to be clearly understood that I am not in a position to challenge the qualifications or integrity of Col. Tydeman, nor do I for a moment wish to do so. Whilst I say that, I am not, however, unmindful of the fact that it is history now that other equally competent engineers were just as confident of the situation and sure of their plans, and those plans did not turn out as they were represented.

This is a matter in respect of which we have a responsibility not only to the present generation but to posterity; and I am not overlooking the tremendous financial responsibility involved. I give to the Minister the assurance that the public is looking to him to see that this inquiry will not be, as was represented in the paper, merely a chat between Col. Tydeman and his officers, and the engineer who is coming to Western Australia. I make it quite clear that the people of the metropolitan area will, through their members, watch for the terms of reference with the keenest possible interest. They are determined

that the investigation shall be thorough in every way and that there shall be a clear and precise statement in relation to these matters about which such a great deal of conflicting opinion has been expressed.

I believe the Minister is sincere in this matter but we all know how such investigations fall, at times, short of requirements. The nature and the terms of this report are awaited with great interest, as will be also the ultimate report by Mr. Meyer. Whether that report, when submitted, differs in any respect from the recommendations of Col. Tydeman, or not, so long as we are satisfied that the inquiries have been conducted with thoroughness and impartiality, the people whom I represent will be willing to abide by the result.

As I mentioned a few sessions ago, and as figures published some weeks ago reveal, the Titles Office is fast reaching the point where it will be physically impossible for it to house the most valuable documents in the possession of the State in the accommodation at present provided. I am well aware of the difficulty faced by the Government in finding extra accommodation but I suggest that the Minister should take the earliest opportunity of discussing with his officers how some provision can be made in this direction. It is imperative that accommodation be provided to cope with the tremendous increase in the business of the Titles Office and to ensure the preservation of the titles belonging to the people of the State, now in the custody of that department.

The member for West Perth dealt thoroughly with our metropolitan traffic problems. I do not wish to reiterate what he said but to register my protest, on behalf of the people of our northern suburbs, at the fact that, while commendable effort is being made to relieve the congestion caused by the inadequacy of the present Causeway, nothing has been done towards solving the equally urgent problem of traffic to the northern part of the metropolitan area. Any member with knowledge of Beaufort-street and the adjacent crossings must know that the ever-increasing traffic is becoming not only a menace to pedestrians but also a cause of economic loss to those concerned in the use of that thoroughfare. I hope that the Minister for Transport, in conjunction with the Minister for Police, will give early attention to this matter.

It is impossible entirely to relieve the situation overnight, but certain suggestions which might tend to alleviate the position have been put forward. It has been suggested, for instance, that the buses catering for the traffic to the northern part of the metropolitan area should have their terminals on the other side of the railway line, as do the Bassendean and Inglewood buses. Lacking any intimate knowledge

of the technical details of the problem, I will not express an opinion about it, but I have been informed that that aspect should be investigated. I am concerned at the gross unfairness, to the people of the northern districts, of allowing the present state of affairs to exist. Something must be done to ease the bottleneck occasioned in this area. Some time ago the Government indicated that it was considering setting up a metropolitan traffic authority. I think all members will be interested, when the Acting Premier replies to the debate, to learn whether any progress has been made towards that end. It is obvious that there can be no co-ordinated approach to our traffic problems generally under the present disintegrated system of traffic control.

The member for Melville, during his speech, paid considerable attention to the necessity of overhauling the educational system of this State. He is able, from his background of experience, competently to discuss this matter, and I voice my approval of a number of the conclusions at which he arrived. I am greatly concerned that this State is not securing the intake of teachers that is essential if the school-leaving age is to be raised, or even if we are to cater adequately for the children at present in our schools. In this regard I feel that the Government would have a sound case to put before the Grants Commission. It is high time the salaries of our teachers were reviewed in the interests of the children of the community. Unless such a review is made there will be no improvement of the position, as people will not enter the teaching profession when far greater inducements are to be found in other occupations.

It is as well to note what is happening in other Government departments. I personally know of two officers who left an important department in this State solely because the remuneration paid to them was so poor in comparison with that offered by private enterprise or the Commonwealth service. I think, in that connection, it is about time that the Premier took this point up with the Commonwealth Government. Of course, that will not allow the Government to escape its responsibilities to these important departments. I refer, for instance, to the Geological Department and the Agricultural Department. They are two that come to my mind. Suitable officers are difficult enough to get and when they have been in the service for some time, have become accustomed to local conditions and are thus in a position to advise the Government on important matters as a result of their experience and knowledge, it is pitiable if we are going to lose them because we fail to recognise the fact that they are being underpaid. Therefore, I hope that the Government will give some early consideration to this situation because unless and until it does, not only will it take the risk of losing further valuable personnel but

it will also have little opportunity of attracting others into the various services of this State.

Recently, road boards in the metropolitan area met in conference with the Minister for Works to discuss the provision of more funds from the Federal Aid Roads Agreement. The Minister told us that he was sympathetic towards the situation and that the matter would be represented when the Premier went to the Premiers' Conference. Unless something is done in this connection I warn the Government that quite a number of important roads—roads important not only to the districts they traverse but also to the whole State—will be seriously damaged and the Government will find itself in a difficult position.

The expansion that is taking place in some districts, and the State Housing Commission bringing in its train the necessity for new roads, footpaths, kerbs, drainage provision, fire hydrants and electric light, will greatly add to the burden of local authorities. With the increasingly added cost of road construction it will be physically impossible, on the restricted revenue and borrowing powers of local authorities, to contemplate the construction or reconstruction of these roads. Many of them are used by wheat trucks, superphosphate carters and others in order to service the outlying portions of the State. Therefore, the time has arrived when these matters must be treated on a State basis.

I know that the Act provides that these roads shall not come within the category of main roads but to my mind the time has arrived when they could very aptly be claimed to be subsidiary main roads or metropolitan developmental roads. I think the member for Mt. Hawthorn had something to say about the subject the other evening. As these roads are fast deteriorating, I hope some early decision will be made so that local authorities may be able to plan their labour and materials and undertake, at the earliest possible moment, the total reconstruction, on a proper basis, of the roads to which I have referred.

Referring again to transport, I know that the member for Murchison will not agree with my proposition, but, as the Government has indicated, early next year—although Victoria Park has been on the list for some time—it proposes to substitute buses, on the No. 34 or Perth-Maylands route, for the single-track tram service. I believe that the time has arrived when some serious consideration should be given to this aspect of the No. 18 or Beaufort-street-Inglewood service. As a result of the efforts of the member for Middle Swan, some years ago, the No. 18 tram service was extended. At that time the extension proved to be somewhat difficult because of the great length.

Today the situation is being tremendously aggravated because in that area—in Bedford Park, as it is termed—there is an

increasing amount of State Housing Commission activity. Because of the slowness of the trams, quite apart from the nauseating noise and nuisance to the community generally, they are unable to cope adequately with the traffic that is offering. So, I hope the Government will give some consideration to this proposal in the interests of those people who the Government itself, by its State Housing rental proposition, has placed on the extreme end of this particular service.

There are a number of other matters to which I would like to make some reference but as they can perhaps be more properly dealt with on the Estimates I want to conclude by saying I have tried to indicate, as shortly as possible, that there are a considerable number of problems over which, despite criticism to the contrary, this or any other State Government has no control. However, that does not mean that the Government has no responsibilities. There are many matters the lie entirely within the province of this Government. Just to name one or two there is the necessity for the Government to face up to its responsibility in relation to the north-west portion of the State; there is an equal responsibility to investigate the practicability of the better use of good lands adjacent to main lines. The Government also has a responsibility to implement a more completely satisfactory state of affairs at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, and there is a necessity resting upon the Government to take early action, with the Commonwealth Government, to do what is practicable and possible to rectify the deplorable meat position. It is a problem which I have been told is likely to be with us for quite a considerable time unless something is done. Only by concerted action can we look for any alleviation in that respect.

So I say finally that so far as the Government is concerned, elected as it was to carry out its policy, I am sure the Opposition recognises, with me, that that opportunity should, and shall, be given to it. At the same time it does not mean that the Government can overlook its definite responsibility to the people in relation to the matters over which it has appropriate and complete control.

**MR. CORNELL** (Mt. Marshall) [10.19]: Earlier in the evening I did have ideas of moving the adjournment of the debate but my ideas have been changed for me.

**Hon. A. H. Panton:** Have the whips been cracking?

**Mr. CORNELL:** This is a case of the Assistant Whip being whipped by the Whip. I seem to have reached the stage, like my friends in the Liberal Party, where they have organisers to organise the organisers. I did not want to speak this evening but, as that necessity has been forced upon me, I shall endeavour to be as brief as possible.

I feel somewhat like the old Scotsman who, summoned to the deathbed of his wife, said, "Is there anything I can do for you, my dear, before you pass over the great divide?" She said, "Aye, Sandy, you can do me one favour." He said, "What is that?" and the wife replied, "At my funeral let mother"—that was the Scotsman's mother-in-law—"ride in the front coach with you." The Scotsman jibbed a bit about this because, like many of us, he had "had" his mother-in-law, but after some deliberation he said, "Well, lassie, I will do it, but it will spoil the day for me." Similarly, my having to speak tonight has spoiled the day for me.

Nevertheless, may I join with previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, upon being re-appointed to the position which you hold. As you have said, the honour is never quite so pleasing as members seem to think. However, I am quite sure you are happy to sit there and listen to us obscure back-benchers for another three years. After that time I hope you will again be an entrant for the Speakership stakes should occasion arise. I also wish to congratulate the new members on their maiden efforts because it took my mind back three years when I went through the same nerve-racking experience.

I was rather interested in what the member for West Perth had to say. I felt sure he would be astride his hobby-horse and mention his celebrated coat, but perhaps, like another Joseph in history, who had a distinctive coat, he thought it better to remain silent for the time being. I would like to pay a tribute to the member for Murchison who, as we all know, is the father of the House. May I say in passing that he is the best sinner in the House and he outsits the old fellow "Sitting-Bull."

The member for Moore expressed his disappointment regarding the ineptitude of the Government in not doing more for the areas he represents. I have looked up his remarks, audited them, and found them correct. Had he been opposed at the election I daresay the slogan would have been "Ackland for Moore," but now it is a case of "No more for Ackland." I heartily support what he has said, particularly with regard to hospitals in his area and also those in mine. They are in a deplorable state. The Medical Department is inclined to ride to death the shortage of materials and labour excuse which it generally produces as a reason for not doing some of the much-needed work on the various hospitals. Recently I had occasion to approach the Minister in connection with what I thought was very desirable work at the Kellerberrin hospital. The reply followed the same pattern as it usually does. She said:—

It is recognised in the department that certain features at Kellerberrin hospital are unsatisfactory and that improvements should be made.

There is, however, a tremendous volume of work for various hospitals now in hand or projected, all of which is of an urgent nature.

It is felt that it will be some time before it will be possible to undertake work at Kellerberrin hospital beyond that for which tenders have already been let.

The point I wish to make is that of the poor excuse often advanced by the Medical Department of not being able to procure contractors even to tender for new jobs. In the case of the Kellerberrin hospital and that of the institution at Wyalkatchem, I represented to the Medical Department that if it would only agree to do some work there, there were tenderers able and willing to do the work. That met with little avail. I think tenders were called eight times for the work on the Bruce Rock hospital before one was forthcoming. My point is that it is better to do jobs at places where there is a reasonable expectation of tenders being submitted than to call them in the forlorn hope that something may turn up.

The comprehensive water scheme was also mentioned by the member for Moore and he made reference to the fact that in his opinion the scheme would ultimately be taken to Mt. Barker which, as we know, is outside the limits of that scheme. He also quoted the comparative rainfalls between Mt. Barker and Dalwallinu, because he is interested in the latter. With the tolerance that is characteristic of you, Sir, may I be permitted to read some extracts from a letter to the Minister for Works dealing with the self-same subject? I made representations along these lines pointing out that certain extensions provided for in the comprehensive scheme in the direction of Minnivale and on to Wyalkatchem and thence to Koorda seemed to be in an extremely immature state and, in fact, they had not even been conceived.

I got a rather startling reply. I do not think the Minister compiled the letter but his signature appeared at the bottom and therefore he must take the responsibility. The startling assertion was that areas I represented had an advantage over the Great Southern areas because the Goldfields conduit passed through the area about which I made representations. That was damn poor consolation because the pipeline had to go somewhere, and seeing that was its direct route, it was the obvious place in which it should be. In my letter to the Minister I said, *inter alia*,

I acknowledge your letter of the 12th instant.

In a Press statement made by you recently, reference was made to the continuation of the pipeline to Mt. Barker but no mention was made of the extension of the service to Minnivale, Wyalkatchem, Koorda and surrounding country. The Mt. Barker area is

not covered by the modified comprehensive scheme; the other districts (also north Kellerrerrin and York-rakine) are.

I would appreciate further advice regarding the construction of the pipeline from Cunderdin to Minnivale, such as a reasonably accurate date on which this particular extension is expected to begin. Until now, a "Dean Maitland-like" silence has obtained in respect of this main. I note from your letter that tenders have also been called for steel plate to enable a commencement to be made with the construction of the main from Cunderdin to Minnivale. Until this is completed, the Wyalkatchem and Koorda districts cannot be serviced, and these and other areas are justifiably entitled to consideration far ahead of Mt. Barker—which extension seems to be receiving quite a bit of publicity and constrains me to the belief that the work has been actually agreed upon, notwithstanding, as I have already mentioned, that it was not contemplated in the modified comprehensive scheme.

The point you make in the third paragraph of your letter, namely, that the northern and north-eastern areas have started with an advantage over the Great Southern districts in that the Goldfields Water Supply main conduit running through the centre of their section is already in existence whereas the conduit from Wellington Dam to Narrogin—and no doubt later to Mount Barker—has to be constructed before any commencement can be made in distributing water in the Great Southern area, is noted—not, however, with a great deal of enthusiasm. Firstly, because the Goldfields main had to be where it is and, secondly, because before much additional country can be watered from this pipeline, a considerable distance—in the aggregate further than from Wellington Dam to Narrogin—of the existing main has to be either replaced with larger conduit or additional piping laid in parallel. Again, the increase in the capacity of Mundaring Weir is a condition precedent to the provision and distribution of water to the north-eastern areas.

I accept your assurance that there is no desire on the part of the Government to give undue precedence to any particular area in the carrying out of its policy of providing a distribution of water to rural areas. Perhaps instead undue publicity has been given to the work done and to be done in the matter of a water service in the Great Southern portion of the State.

One thing is crystal clear, however, and that is that a similar display of enthusiasm has not been in evidence

so far as the water problems in the north-eastern wheatbelt are concerned. The positive steps taken in respect of this area have been very short ones, but in respect of the Great Southern seven-league boots are being worn.

It is reliably estimated that water from Wellington Dam will reach Narrogin in mid 1952 and appropriate ceremonial will thereupon be duly staged. In Kondinin, about the same time, a tap will be turned on to deliver similar substance, this time from Mundaring. Can you inform me when Wyalkatchem may celebrate a "benediction of the waters"?

The reply was that tenders had been called and that Wyalkatchem in due course would celebrate its benediction of the waters. I hope that happens within a reasonable period, but if the pipeline to Mt. Barker is commenced and given preference, I must consider my position in relation to the Government because it would be grossly unfair to continue the pipeline in that direction and leave the north-eastern areas neglected.

It is not often that I lock horns with the member for Melville, but I wish to refer briefly to a point he raised on the Supply Bill that vacancies should have been filled at by-elections. The hon. member disputed the opinion given by the Solicitor General on the question whether, in the case of the resignation of a member, the Speaker had discretionary power to withhold his warrant for the issue of the writ. As a semi-interested party, I also secured a legal opinion and I should like to read it for the edification of members, or otherwise.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: By a bush lawyer?

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Or was he a tame one?

Mr. CORNELL: Well, he charged me city fees. The opinion of my solicitors was sought on the following matters:—

(1) When a vacancy occurs in the Legislative Assembly through the resignation of one of its members and Parliament is not in session, what is the maximum period that may elapse before the issue of the writ for the filling of such vacancy?

(2) If, on the occurrence of a vacancy in the Legislative Assembly caused by resignation of one of its members, Parliament is not in session and a general election will ensue before it meets again, could the election for the filling of the vacancy be held over until the general election?

The reply to these questions was as follows:—

The issue of a writ in the case of a vacancy in the Legislative Assembly is governed by Section 67 of the Elec-



toral Act. There is an unfortunate ambiguity in this section. Under the provisions of Section 67 (1) when a vacancy occurs in the Assembly, it is mandatory upon the Speaker on a resolution by the House declaring the vacancy to direct the issue of a writ.

Under Section 67 (4) if a vacancy through death or acceptance of an office of profit occurs while the House is not sitting, it is mandatory on the Speaker or Governor to direct the issue of the writ forthwith on a certificate being given in the case of death by two members of the House or when the appointment of the member to an office of profit has been advertised in the "Government Gazette".

Under Section 67 (5), where a vacancy occurs through the bankruptcy of a member it is again mandatory for the Speaker or Governor to direct the issue of the writ on being given notice of the circumstances by the Registrar in Bankruptcy. In each of these subsections, the language of the Legislature is that the prescribed officer "shall by warrant under his hand direct the Clerk to issue a writ."

Where, however, the vacancy occurs out of session through any other cause including resignation, the language is different and provides that the Speaker may without any resolution direct the Clerk to issue the writ. There is no provision in the section giving any specific time for the appropriate officer to take the necessary action for the writ to be issued. Where the Legislature uses the word "may" with reference to an act to be performed by an individual, the normal rule of statutory construction is that the power is a permissive one only which the officer concerned cannot be compelled to exercise. Where "shall" is used, on the contrary, the power is normally regarded as mandatory and if the officer declines to exercise the power when the necessary circumstances arise, then he can be compelled to do so by a mandamus.

Under some circumstances, even though the word "may" is used, the power has been judicially interpreted as mandatory, but we know of no case where the word has been so interpreted if the word "shall" is used in respect to similar powers in the same section.

We consider, therefore, that under the circumstances you outline, there is nothing to compel the Speaker to direct the issue of a writ to fill the vacancy until the House is met and the necessary resolution declaring the vacancy has been passed in accordance with Section 79 (1) of the Act.

We would, therefore, answer your questions as follows:—

(1) The issue of the writ to fill the vacancy is at the discretion of the Speaker whose duty it is to direct the issue of the writ. The Speaker may postpone the issue of the writ until Parliament has resumed and the Assembly has passed a resolution declaring the vacancy.

(2) Yes.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not think much of the opinion.

Mr. CORNELL: The member for Melville also made reference to the bulk bins along the Yarramony-Eastward railway survey, and I feel bound to reply to his observations. I do not propose to trace the history of that railway proposal; older members probably know it by heart, but the fact remains that since 1923, the Act authorising the construction of that line has been on the statute-book. When the Bill to authorise the construction of the line was before the House, all the speakers supported the measure, and the Minister for Works at the time, Mr. W. J. George, stated that the settlers in the area had suffered great disability during the period they had been on the land under a promise that a railway would be constructed, and that the authorising of the line would honour the promise given to those men when they selected their land some 15 or 20 years previously.

Following this, an amount of £30,000 was placed on the Estimates for the construction of the necessary earthworks; but although an actual survey was made, no work was done and there is little chance of its ever eventuating, though some of the settlers maintain it is the logical route for the broad gauge railway if it ever comes into being. Had this railway been constructed, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. would have been obliged to provide the necessary bins along the route, and it is reasonable to say that considerably more than seven would have been required.

In criticising the carriage of wheat from those bins to the railway the hon. member did overlook the relative positions of the two flour mills, one at Kellerberrin and one at Northam; and when the time arrives—and I might mention that the member for Melville said in his speech, "if it ever does"—for the carriage of wheat to be done by the railways, it would be logical for that wheat to be transported to either of those two mills and processed there; and the flour would obviously be hauled to the port by the railways. Thus the extra handling which the hon. member referred to would be eliminated.

Prior to the erection of these bins, most of the settlers in that area delivered their wheat to sidings on the Dowerin-Merredin loop line and from there it has been, over the past six years, while road transport has been in operation, transported back along

the roads over which it had just been carted, past the farms on which it was grown, to the main bitumen road and thence to Fremantle. Those farmers thus had the mortification of seeing the wheat they had delivered to the siding a few weeks previously going past their farms en route to Fremantle. Although the Railway Department displays a great optimism regarding its capability of handling harvests in the future, in my humble view we can look forward to road haulage for some time to come.

A considerable proportion of the wheat produced in Australia is sold on the home market at a discount of approximately 7s. per bushel. This means that the Yorkrakine farmers have contributed £33,000 towards the internal economy of this country, from one harvest alone. I think, therefore, that the action of the Government in providing them with the necessary bulk facilities was small recompense for their contribution from the last harvest and many harvests yet to come. The member for Melville, though he may not have intended to do so, led the House to believe that all these bins were in the Mt. Marshall electorate, and that the representations I made to the Government and the action of the Government in acquiescing in the construction of the bulk facilities after the proposal had been previously turned down, may have been designed to give me some electoral advantage.

I might mention that four of these bins are in my electorate, one at East and one at West Yorkrakine, one at Kodj Kodjin and one at North Baandee. The remaining three are in the electorate of the member for Northam, and I feel sure that if he were in the House he would say, "Hear, hear!" to the observation that he has been particularly active in his representations for the construction of those bins. He expressed some disappointment that the construction of the three bins in his electorate would have to be postponed for 12 months. The hon. member has been most energetic and active in presenting the case of the constituents in that portion of his electorate, and his action obviously supports that taken by the Government in making the bins available to farmers in that part of the wheatbelt, thereby considerably easing their burden.

The member for Kalgoorlie, in a speech which I particularly enjoyed, made reference to certain aspects of socialisation and accused us on this side, quite rightly too, of being socialists, if only little ones. With that much of what he said I entirely agree. When it suits our book we press the Government to take steps along socialistic lines. I have no grouch about that, but I believe in free and unrestricted enterprise. I do not think the Country Party has ever definitely proposed the complete eradication of socialism. It would be quite impracticable, anyhow. But some of the tall poppies of the Liberal Party concur with my statement about free and unrestricted

enterprise except when the establishment of an institution by private enterprise is liable to interfere with and compete against one in which they are interested. In that case they are not particularly keen about it.

I can remember one occasion when Elder Smith & Co. Ltd. made suggestions for the extension to this State of Elder's Trustee Co. which functions in South Australia, the idea being that it could administer farmers' estates. I must confess, in view of the set-up of Elder Smith & Co. Ltd. in this State and the service it renders to farmers and graziers, the proposal had my approbation. However, I am reliably informed that when the matter was placed before the local board, several directors who had directorships on two other trustee companies which function here, were not very keen about the idea. But they still believe in free and unrestricted enterprise! So I feel sure that although we preach private enterprise, we have a leaning in some respects to some aspects of socialism.

Mr. Bovell: You speak for yourself!

Mr. CORNELL: I believe that where private enterprise falls down on the job there is an obligation on the Government to remedy some of the defects that private enterprise has permitted to continue. Nevertheless, some supporters of the Labour Party see great virtue in the capitalistic system and the profit motive. I notice that the late E. G. Theodore, for instance, left £500,000, which is considerably more than I am ever likely to leave.

Mr. May: He made that after he left politics.

Mr. CORNELL: Nevertheless, he made it.

Mr. J. Hegney: It shows what a financial genius he was.

Mr. CORNELL: I quite agree.

Mr. Styants: If you find a good gold mine you will soon leave £500,000.

Mr. CORNELL: He had more irons in the fire than a gold mine.

Mr. Ackland: There were some in this State, too.

Mr. CORNELL: Yes. I now come to a question which I think should be brought to the notice of the House—that of plant pools.

The Minister for Works: Not so late at night!

Mr. CORNELL: I did not hear that interjection. Pooling, we are led to believe, was inaugurated at the suggestion of local governments. I cannot quite subscribe to that proposition because I think the matter was put on a plate to the local authorities and it was said, "Look, boys, you had better approve of this. It is something the Government wants you to do." Certain of the local authorities did fall for the bait and gave

the plant pool their blessing. But a perusal of the many and varied files which the Minister for Works was generous enough to place at my disposal, and which if I had three days to spare I could read with leisure, proved that they must have been a small minority of the local authorities, because the number of applications received from the municipalities and road boards for assistance from the money that has been allotted to the plant pools, has been considerable.

Again, of course, we strike a conflict of legal opinion. Three solicitors appear to have entered the ring on this occasion. The opinion of our local Solicitor General was thrown out before he could establish a toehold. The opinion of Professor Bailey, the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor, was then sought. I might mention that my opinion is that the Commissioner of Main Roads, when requesting the State Solicitor General for an opinion, put up a minute more or less requesting him to give the opinion that he, the Commissioner, really wanted, and the Solicitor General appears to have obliged.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I have said that before.

Mr. CORNELL: We do agree occasionally. The concluding paragraph of the State Solicitor General's opinion is as follows:—

I am, therefore, of the opinion that the State has no authority to grant financial assistance for the purpose of purchasing roadmaking plant to local authorities who are in a position to purchase such plant from loan moneys.

The opinion of the Solicitor General was that so long as a local authority had a borrowing potential it could not possibly be assisted in the purchase of plant. As the borrowing potential of a local authority is ten times its ordinary revenue, it is pretty obvious that no local authority, however small, could ever participate in the Commonwealth grant which, in my opinion, was given for the specific purpose of assisting, as the Act says, local authorities in the sparsely populated areas. The original opinion of the State Solicitor General was circulated to all road boards, and the howls of dismay and indignation that resulted caused the Commissioner of Main Roads and the Minister to run for cover. They then sought the opinion of Professor Bailey which was—

The absence of a precise definition of "beyond the resources of local authorities" is due to the desires of the Commonwealth to leave to the States the determination of the most appropriate means of providing plant in necessitous cases.

As to whether the assistance to local authorities in this regard be by way of direct grant or by the purchase and

pooling of such plant under a State authority, would be a matter for the respective States to decide.

However, in accordance with the current transportation policy of the Australian Transport Advisory Council, which not only aims at each mode of transport operating in its field of greatest economy and usefulness, but also aims at the maximum level of economy of construction for each type of transport, it would appear that, from the information supplied to me, the pooling of such plant is desirable as it would ensure economical purchase and operation.

The concluding paragraph states—

I do not think it proper that I should express any view as to the correctness or otherwise of the opinion given by the Crown Solicitor of Western Australia to your department.

It is rather surprising that that question should be asked of Professor Bailey. A third lot of solicitors, a private firm, then entered the arena. This time an opinion was obtained by the Road Board Association of Western Australia from its solicitors, Messrs. R. S. Haynes & Co. After dealing with the word "resources" as used in the Commonwealth Act, and giving definitions of it from a spate of dictionaries, they say—

On the face of these definitions it seems that the word generally includes means or funds which can be obtained in an emergency, or funds available at need, and, if this were its true meaning in this Act, the board's borrowing power would be part of its resources. But the term can quite likely mean, in its present context, present existing funds owned by the board and available for the purchase of plant. We do not think it could be seriously suggested that the section meant to take into account the sale value of the board's assets as buildings because surely the Commonwealth legislature would not expect a board to convert its assets into money to purchase plant. It means rather resources or funds which have not yet been appropriated. If the term does not cover money already spent, it is quite probable that it does not include money not yet in possession of the board but which the board might borrow if it wished.

If "resources" include money which can be borrowed, it would probably be similarly correct to say that it includes rates to be raised in the next and following years, because in fixing these rates the board can budget for the purchase of plant, and we think it most unlikely that the Legislature would have intended "resources" to carry that meaning.

The Commissioner of Main Roads, backed presumably by the Minister, decided that the plant pool was to remain a plant pool, and I think, from memory there is at the moment a sum of £162,000 lying to its credit. The road boards are still clamouring for some specific financial assistance from that fund, but the reply is that it has been ear-marked for plant which is on order, and which I would say has been on order for the past three years, and will be delivered, no-one knows when. It is interesting to trace the hop-scotch tactics of the Commissioner of Main Roads in this matter.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: There is nothing new about that.

Mr. CORNELL: On one file there is a minute to the Minister, from the Commissioner, in regard to a question raised by the member for Pilbara. It reads as follows:—

Mr. Rodoreda is making inquiries about the special Commonwealth grant of £60,000.

Members should note the next paragraph.

There is no such thing as a special Commonwealth grant. I am not clear as to what Mr. Rodoreda means. He might possibly be referring to the proposed use of £60,000 for plant purchase, which it was decided would be reserved from the £192,000 available under Clause 6, Section 5, of the Commonwealth Aid Roads and Works Act of 1947.

It is obvious that the Commissioner of Main Roads knew perfectly well what the member for Pilbara was asking, because in one sentence he says he is not clear what the hon. member wants and in the next breath he makes a suggestion and scores a bull's eye. I am not sure whether this was the answer given at the time, but he says—

In view of the uncertainty as to what the question refers to, the following answers are suggested: Answer No. 1—No such grant exists. Questions 2 to 4 answered by No. 1.

Across that in pencil is written the word "Cancelled," so possibly that may not have been the answer, but I will bet that the answer given was equally as evasive. Throughout the negotiations with regard to this plant pool can be seen the dead hand of the Commissioner of Main Roads, and it is apparent that he was determined that local authorities were not to be given any reasonable grant from this fund to enable them to purchase roadmaking plant which the Commonwealth Government said they should receive.

At present there is £162,000 in kitty and the only plant that has been delivered consists of four power graders—Fordsons—that have been allocated for use by some of the North-West boards, and I think one that is operating in the electorate of the member for Roe. To give Fordsons to those

local authorities is to send a boy on a man's errand. It is like filling a boiler with a teaspoon. This is a sorry state of affairs, when road boards are being deprived of what should be undeniably theirs. The North-West road boards, in particular, have received a raw deal. It is inconceivable to me that some of those boards, with a revenue of less than £1,000 per annum from rates and licenses, can ever expect to purchase worthwhile plant from their own funds. This money was specifically set aside to assist such boards. There are several poor boards in my electorate but they are not affected to the extent of those in the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition, or others further north.

They all have a justifiable cause for complaint at the shabby treatment meted out to them. I suggest that the Minister give away the idea of a plant pool. The plant that is on order could be absorbed if and when it arrives. The Main Roads Board could probably utilise it to build up its own nondescript plant. I suggest that reasonably decent grants should be made to the road boards. With £162,000 in hand assistance to the extent of £3,000 or £4,000 could, in certain cases, be made available and the money expended in the manner for which it was intended.

The Minister for Works: There are about 149 of these local governing bodies.

Mr. CORNELL: That may be so, but this money was earmarked for those in sparsely populated areas and no more than one-third of the boards would be competent to receive assistance from this fund. I am glad that the Minister is a bit my way in this matter. I hope that he will go the whole distance in the near future and rectify this state of affairs which cries aloud to be remedied. Notes were taken of a deputation that waited on the Minister at Donnybrook on Friday, the 18th August, 1950. Even the South-West boards are anxious about the position. The Minister says he wonders how the plant pool policy was ever accepted by anyone, to which I would add "Hear, hear."

There has apparently been some pressure by local authorities for the establishment of a plant pool. There are also notes of a deputation that waited on the Minister for Works at Greenbushes on the 19th August, 1950. There the Minister repeated the views he had expressed at Donnybrook and said he did not think it was possible to provide pools of machinery which would meet the demands of boards throughout the State at one time.

Mr. J. Hegney: The idea was not sound.

Mr. CORNELL: Yes, what promised to be a dazzling meteor turned out to be a wet squib.

Mr. J. Hegney: Who sponsored it?

Mr. CORNELL: It was conceived in a frenzy of despair at having all this money and in a determination that the local authorities should not participate in any direct grant. The sooner it aborts, the better. Throughout the negotiations in regard to the plant pool the Commissioner of Main Roads seems to have been determined that he would be the be-all and end-all of the scheme.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He is very conscious that he is in charge of a fund.

Mr. CORNELL: He is using powers that were given him and which it would require an amendment of the Act to remove, in order to deprive the road boards—I quote the remarks of a certain friend of the member for West Perth—"of what should be their birthright" and what was given to them by the Commonwealth for a specific purpose. I think the fund should be distributed to the road boards in the manner that was intended.

That brings me to a suggestion made in this House some sessions ago for the establishment of a parliamentary standing committee on public works. Had such a committee been set up there would have been more expedition in the progress of public works in this State. Such a committee would have given attention to the question of plant pools and any sensible set of men would have ironed out the difficulties and put the money to the use for which it was intended.

With such a committee we would not be witnessing the present spectacle of the study in still life that is represented by the inactivity on the new Causeway, and that project would have been nearer completion that it is now. I admit that a Bill for the setting up of a parliamentary standing committee on public works was introduced without a great deal of enthusiasm. Certain clauses were inserted in the Bill which meant that it was more or less born with the stamp of death on its brow. While it was not stillborn, it was so nearly so that it did not matter and what would have been a necessary and desirable adjunct to Parliament, went overboard.

There is nothing further I have to say At this late hour I do not think you, Sir, would wish me to say more and I conclude by expressing to you my keen appreciation of your indulgence to me. I wish you well in the future and, in making my maiden speech for this session, I again desire to thank the officers of the House for the courtesy and consideration extended to me during the rather brief period that I have been here. At the recent elections, after figuring in a photo-finish three years before and winning by a short head, hard ridden, I was given the rather rare tribute of a walkover. I do not anticipate that will happen again. I think one in a parliamentary lifetime is all that anyone can expect.

Mr. J. Hegney: How about the emus and grasshoppers up there?

Mr. CORNELL: I think I have spoken for a good deal longer than I originally intended.

Mr. Hoar: Tell us more about them.

Mr. CORNELL: If the hon. member wants me to enlarge on the emus and grasshoppers, I will do so, but on another occasion. I support the motion.

On motion by Mr. Rodoreda, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 11.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 12th September, 1950.

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Thirteenth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 7th September.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [4.35]: Like others who have already taken part in the debate, I offer my congratulations to the new members. I am sure they have taken up politics seriously, and no doubt they will find it a full-time and interesting task. One of the very great privileges in life is to serve one's country, but there are some who discount the value of the services we render to the people. Nevertheless, my experience entitles me to say that extremely good service is rendered by our political representatives, and I am sure that the new members will add to that reputation.

I also add my expressions of regret, to those of other members, that the time arrived for two of our number to retire from active participation in parliamentary work. Mr. Thomson served this country in a political capacity for a long time, much longer even than the period I have been in politics. He represented the people of Katanning in the Legislative Assembly and later the South-East Province in this House. It is pleasing to know that he has been succeeded by his son. Mr. Miles, who has also left us, was a member of this House for about 37 years. Nobody knew the North-West better than he and, further, no-one has done more for that part of the State. I am sure that he will be missed, for the knowledge and advice that he could impart will be lacking in our debates.