

of stabilising our economy. After all, the housewife has to resort to controls when she starts managing housekeeping, so I do not know why we cannot do the same on a larger scale. When I use the word "controls," I do not mean something rigid and inflexible. Rather let us manage our economic affairs in keeping with the times in which we live. Let us look not only at wages and salaries, but also at prices and rents, interest, capital issues, credit and the like.

There is another matter—and that is the role of the banks. If we look into the past, we find that banking procedure has largely altered. Nevertheless, in the time of Britain's industrial expansion and in the time of America's expansion, we find that the banks played a very vital role in the economies of those countries. I made a lot of play on the matter of the investment of foreign capital, and I know that that has certain advantages in that it supplies us with equipment and technical know-how. At the same time, I suggest that perhaps one of the best means of giving impetus to progress within our own country is to promote through our banks advances to start and move on our own industries with a view to achieving some of the ends I have suggested. We must have these economic props if the banks are to do their job—and after all, they can only be called economic props.

It was suggested by the member for Nedlands that the Minister for Housing had rushed his job, and had spent the money available to him in seven months instead of using 12 months to carry out the erection of houses. For my part, I congratulate the Minister on having done so, and I only wish that he had had more money with which to make houses available. Whereas a few years ago people with families were seeking homes, today young married couples are desirous of starting housekeeping and need accommodation. The Minister is to be congratulated on having taken so many people out of back rooms and away from places that were not conducive to the raising of families, and I regret that he was not able to shorten the time from seven months to three-and-a-half months and thereby alleviate some of the strain and the emotional upsets that took place amongst certain families.

I congratulate the Government on its intention to bring before this House many vital Bills, and I feel that during this session a worthwhile contribution to the affairs of the State will be made. I thank members for the attentive hearing they have given me on the occasion of my first speech in this House.

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

*House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.*

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 16th August, 1956.

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

## QUESTIONS.

### RAILWAYS.

#### (a) Number Employed in Accounts Branch.

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the total number of employees now employed in the accounts branch of the Railway Department?

(2) What was the total number employed in the railway accounts branch before the installation of the international business machines?

(3) What rental per annum is paid for the hire of these international business machines?

(4) To whom is this amount paid?

(5) What is the estimated saving per annum achieved by use of these machines?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) 264.

(2) 269.

(3) £15,084.

(4) International Business Machines Pty. Ltd., 150 Palmer-st., Sydney, N.S.W.

(5) Last year a saving of £8,737 nett was made, but it is estimated that when the system is fully introduced a saving of £32,400 per annum should be made.

#### (b) Petrol Tanker Freights.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What would be the freight on a railway tanker of petrol from the bulk installation at Fremantle to Kalgoorlie?

(2) What would be the freight on the same tanker of petrol from a bulk installation at Esperance to Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) £175 8s.

(2) £142 10s. 8d.

#### (c) Number of Paying Passengers, etc.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What number of paying passengers have used the W.A.G.R. suburban railway services between midday Saturdays and midnight Sundays, during the past 12 months?

(2) What amount has been received by the Railway Department from such passengers?

(3) What have been the operating costs of running these services during the same period of time?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

This information is not recorded and it would entail considerable cost to extract the figures requested.

#### (d) Passengers, Revenue and Operating Costs.

Mr. WILD (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

I would request the Minister to ascertain from the Minister for Railways the figures necessary to reply to my question which he has just dealt with. Would he ask the Minister for Railways to have a further look at that question because I do know that this information was available to the Government during the disastrous railway strike while we were in office and I feel certain that it must still be available?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

I will only be too willing to submit the matter to the Minister for Railways for his consideration.

#### (e) Cost of Overtime, 1955-56.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What was the amount of overtime paid by the Railway Department for the financial year 1955-56?

(2) From which specific branches was the overtime paid, and what were the respective amounts?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

Because considerable work and overtime would be involved in extracting these amounts, this information is not readily available.

However, costs of Saturday and Sunday work could be made available if desired.

#### (f) Availability of Information.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

The Minister, in replying to my question, has stated that because of the considerable work and overtime that would be involved in extracting the information which I desire, such information is not readily available. I very much doubt whether it is correct to state that overtime would be involved. Surely the Railways Commission knows the amount of overtime that is being paid and which branches of the department—

The Minister for Works: Are you making a speech or asking a question?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Speaker will deal with me if I am out of order. There is no need for the Minister to interrupt.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Members know that last session questions without notice were disallowed by my predecessor. This session I have permitted such questions to be asked but they must definitely be questions and not statements of policy or expressions of opinion. The same applies

to those who occupy the ministerial bench. They will give simple answers only and not elaborate statements. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will not continue to infringe in that respect.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Very well, Mr. Speaker. I therefore ask the Minister to see that this information is made available for me.

The MINISTER replied:

If I might make reference to the earlier remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, I would say that he has cast rather serious reflections on the integrity of the administrative staff of the Railways Commission in suggesting that the answer given to his question was not in accordance with fact. However, I will undertake to have the question referred back to the Railways Commission to enable it to be more explicit in regard to the difficulties of supplying the information the Leader of the Opposition seeks.

I should say very definitely that it should not be thought by anyone that there is an attempt to refrain from supplying the Leader of the Opposition with figures if they are reasonably and readily available.

#### UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

##### (a) Government Employment during Vacation.

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

(1) What facilities are made available to university students to gain experience in Government and semi-governmental instrumentalities during long vacations?

(2) Which departments and governmental instrumentalities engaged university students for the long 1955 break, and in what numbers?

(3) Which departments and governmental instrumentalities have negotiated, or propose to negotiate, with university students for the 1956 long break, and in what numbers?

The DEPUTY PREMIER (for the Premier) replied:

(1) Opportunities for engagement are available in various branches of the Public Service and the Main Roads Department.

(2) Engagements are made by departments separately and particulars are not readily available. However, the Main Roads Department offered to engage 12 engineering students, but obtained only one.

(3) University students can seek employment in any department in which they are interested.

The Main Roads Department has negotiated with the university authorities to engage six university students during the 1956 long vacation.

##### (b) Available Employment Facilities.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Deputy Premier:

Arising from his answer to my question, are not facilities of the S.E.C., the Railways Commission and the State Implement Works, in addition to the Agricultural Department, being made available to students during the long term vacations, or did he mean that reference to cover all the Public Service?

The DEPUTY-PREMIER replied:

I meant to convey to the hon. member that facilities were available in all departments of the Public Service and public utilities in accordance with vacancies that arise from time to time. Employment can be obtained in those departments by students who seek such help. In connection with the Main Roads Department, which from time to time is anxious to obtain university students, negotiations are entered into between the department and the university in advance, in the hope that students required should be forthcoming. Unfortunately, however—partly I suppose because there is a smaller number of engineering students in training—we are unable to get the number we require from time to time and our last year's experience was that we got one out of 12.

#### WHEAT.

##### (a) Railway Haulage.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the average haul of wheat on the Western Australian railways?

(2) What is the cost per bushel of this average haul?

(3) What is the freight collected for this average haul?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Approximately 126 miles.

(2) This information is not recorded.

(3) 3.39d. per ton mile.

This information is with respect to the year ended the 30th June, 1956.

##### (b) Comparative Freights.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

On the 2nd September, 1954, he answered a question relative to rail freight entering into the "cost of production" figure for wheat—

(1) Do the same figures still apply?

(2) If not, what are the details entering into the present figure?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Corresponding figures for 1955-56 are:—

	Pence per Bushel.
New South Wales ....	22.5
Victoria ....	17.5
South Australia ....	8.0
Western Australia ....	13.15
Queensland ....	15.75

Weighted average is 16.62d.

## DEPARTMENT OF NATIVE WELFARE.

### *Number and Duties of Officers.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) How many field officers are employed by his department, and what area does each serve respectively?

(2) What are the precise duties of each of these officers?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There are 17 field officers employed by the Department of Native Welfare. They are distributed as follows:—

- Northern District—1 (district officer).
- East Kimberleys—1 (patrol officer).
- West Kimberleys—1 (patrol officer).
- Broome—1 (assist. district officer).
- North West District—1 (district officer).
- Ashburton-Gascoyne—1 (patrol officer).
- North-Central—1 (district officer).
- West Murchison—1 (patrol officer).
- East Murchison—2 (assist. district officer and patrol officer).
- Southern District—1 (district officer).
- Metropolitan and Eastern Wheat Belt—2 (assist. district officer and patrol officer).
- Eastern Goldfields—2 (district officer and assist. district officer).
- Southern District—1 (district officer).
- South-West—1 (patrol officer).

(2) The duties of each of these officers are substantially the same; they vary only in the degree of responsibility according to their classification and the district or subdistrict in which they are stationed. The State is divided into five administrative districts, each of which is in charge of a district officer and each district is subdivided into two subdistricts, each in charge of an assistant district officer or a patrol officer according to its area and the native population.

The duties of a field officer encompass normal responsibilities and requirements of an officer of the State Public Service and, in addition, the following:—

- (a) The implementation, administration and direction of Government native welfare policy under the authority of the commissioner;
- (b) regular patrolling of his district and subdistrict for the purpose of making and maintaining personal contact with natives, inspection and attention to all matters pertaining to conditions of employment, housing, health, education, social service and other welfare needs;
- (c) where applicable the supervision and training of subordinate field officers;
- (d) maintaining public relationship and liaison with local authorities, hospitals, doctors, schools, protectors of natives, etc.;
- (e) the administrative supervision and inspection of missions, checking subsidy lists and administrative returns, etc., investigation and recommendation of applications by missions for financial grants in aid and conduct or supervision of established ration depots;
- (f) as the native's sole official adviser and guide he must make himself conversant with a variety of subjects from tribal law to the Companies Act and from the calculation of medicinal dosages to how to apply for the age pension;
- (g) supervise all native reserves and facilities thereon, distribution of rations orders, blankets and clothing, etc., where required;
- (h) maintaining methodical and efficient field office systems, accounting and statistical requirements as required by the Treasury and Audit Departments; responsibility for Government motor vehicles and other property and equipment on issue; investigation and recommendation in respect of applicants for pensions and allowances under social service benefits legislation.
- (i) investigation and recommendation in respect of acquisition of land and improvements by the Government for leasing or sale to natives;
- (j) act as intermediary between the State Housing Commission and native applicants for homes and assist the latter with their applications, deposit and subsequent payments; the purchase of furniture, advice on housekeeping methods and generally assist with the new problems the natives meet as householders;

- (k) arranging apprenticeship, vocational guidance tests, accommodation, etc. where required;
- (l) assistance and supervision as required of native co-operatives or individual natives engaging in business enterprises; assist the Health Department's officers in the organisation and conduct of medical and nutritional surveys, diphtheria and polio immunisation, mass chest x-rays, etc.;
- (m) maintaining constant liaison with school teachers and contact with native parents to minimise truancy, etc., noting promising individual scholars for assistance with further secondary education, academic or technical training;
- (n) by arrangements with the Child Welfare Department, field officers carry out in respect of native children all the functions which that department exercises in respect of white children;
- (o) advising and where necessary appearing on behalf of natives in law courts and advising and assisting native prisoners and generally acting as agents for natives at all other points of contact with the civic, social, and economic orders of civilisation.

#### WATER SUPPLIES.

##### *(a) Consumption in Metropolitan Area.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) What was the total consumption of water in the metropolitan area last year?
- (2) What average per day does this work out per head of population?
- (3) What was the maximum consumption per head of population on any day last summer?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) 14,407,775,000 gallons.
- (2) 105.06 gallons.
- (3) 240.76 gallons on the 22nd December, 1955.

##### *(b) Enlargement of Lake Grace Town Dam.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Has approval yet been given for the enlargement of the town dam storage at Lake Grace and full reticulation of the town?
- (2) If so, when is the work likely to commence?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The provision of headworks is listed for consideration in the 1956-57 works programme, which is not yet finalised.

##### *(c) Reticulation of Dumbleyung Townsite.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

When is work likely to commence on the reticulation of Dumbleyung townsite?

The MINISTER replied:

This work is listed for consideration in the 1956-57 works programme which is not yet finalised.

#### BOTANICAL GARDENS.

##### *Establishment and Site.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Has the Government decided to establish botanical gardens in the John Forrest National Park?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is "Yes"—

(a) did the Government give consideration to the Zoological Gardens as a possible site for botanical gardens before arriving at such a decision?

(b) On what grounds was the South Perth site rejected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. The National Parks Board of Western Australia has given consideration to a number of sites, but so far, no site has been selected.

(2) (a) Among the sites considered was the Zoological Gardens, but the area is too limited for the establishment of botanical gardens.

(b) See answer to (a).

#### BUNBURY AREA.

##### *Works for Unemployed.*

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

What is the nature of the works envisaged by the Government in the Bunbury area on which present-day unemployed personnel in that area will be offered employment?

The MINISTER replied:

An approach has been made to the Commonwealth Government for special funds to finance works for the relief of unemployment in this State. Finality has not yet been reached.

#### ST. CLAIR'S HOSPITAL, BUNBURY.

##### *Resumption and Compensation.*

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the fact that 5 acres 1 rood 5.8 perches of land known as St. Clair's Hospital, Bunbury, was resumed on the 6th August, 1943, and a further 2 roods 19.5 perches on the 19th September, 1945,

for school purposes, and that up to the 24th November, 1955, there was no definite plan for the utilisation of this land, and that to date no compensation has been paid, will he advise—

(1) What are the terms of the arrangement whereby the owner is continuing in occupation?

(2) Why after repeated requests over many years has not this land been handed back to the owner?

(3) What amount of compensation would be paid the owner as at this date?

(4) Has compensation been paid to the Perpetual Executor, Trustees Agency Co. (W.A.) Ltd., administrators of the estate of Thomas Henry Lovegrove, deceased, for 22.6 perches of land resumed on the 6th August, 1943, and adjoining that of St. Clair's Hospital, Bunbury?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There is no specific arrangement, but of her own volition the owner has been allowed to remain in possession.

(2) To date advices from the Education Department indicate that the land is required for school purposes.

Under amended legislation (Section 29 (a) of the Public Works Act) the owner has the right to seek a firm decision and, if such an application is made, the matter will be fully investigated.

(3) This would be the subject of assessment in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Act and of negotiations with the owner or her authorised representative.

(4) No, no claim having been made.

#### TRAM SERVICES.

##### No. 22 Route.

Mr. HEAL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Can he inform the House if the No. 22 tram route will be replaced this financial year by either trolley-buses or motor transport?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is "Yes," can he indicate the approximate time of the replacement?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) No. The Tramway Department has no plans for replacing trams on this service during this financial year.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

#### ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

##### (a) South-West Power Scheme Subsidy.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

As in an answer to a previous question he admitted that the S.E.C. had advanced reasons why the subsidy of £72,000 should be continued, will he read such reasons to the House?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes. The reasons are:

(1) The adoption by the South-West State Power Scheme Act of the report and of the Electricity Advisory Committee's recommendation was the commission's authority to proceed with the scheme. The subsidy was an essential part of that scheme.

(2) The economic justification for this scheme was based on the continuation of the subsidy for the period recommended by the committee. All planning was based on the assumption that this subsidy would be continued, and the main transmission lines and extensions were erected on this assumption.

(3) The scheme was part of the Government's policy to provide electricity at the cheapest possible price to country consumers and to make electricity available to as many rural consumers as possible as an amenity and as an aid to increased production.

(4) The scheme was part of the Government's policy of decentralisation in an endeavour to encourage industry to extend to country towns and to rural areas.

(5) The loss of the subsidy will mean that the consumers of the metropolitan system will have to bear the future losses on this developmental scheme for country areas. This appears to the commission to be inequitable.

(6) A part of the loss which the commission is now asked to bear, is due to the fact that the Government of the day asked the commission to reduce the tariff it had recommended by 1d. per unit on one step of the proposed scale. This was estimated to cost £12,000 per annum at that date.

(7) The effect of the proposed action may be to limit further extensions to the scheme.

(8) The present tariff schedule is reasonably competitive with that of the metropolitan area. It is not possible to give supply over an extensive and sparsely settled country area at competitive prices unless the scheme is subsidised.

##### (b) Capacity, etc., of Smallest Type Transformer.

Mr. OWEN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What is the capacity of the smallest type of transformer (to convert 20,000 volts to 440-250 volts) in use at present—

(a) in the metropolitan power scheme;

(b) in the South-West power scheme?

(2) How many consumers can draw supplies from such a transformer?

(3) What is the approximate cost of a transformer of this capacity?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) 25 KVA.

(b) 25 KVA.

(2) A definite number cannot be given as the needs of each consumer must be taken into consideration.

(3) £500 installed.

*(c) Karridale-Augusta-Flinders Bay Area.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Works:

Further to his reply to my question concerning the urgent need for electricity supplies in the Karridale-Augusta-Flinders Bay area, why is the State Electricity Commission not at present contemplating making such extensions?

The MINISTER replied:

The extension to Karridale-Augusta-Flinders Bay area was not included in the original South West power scheme, and until this scheme has been completed further extensions cannot be considered.

**NARROWS BRIDGE.**

*Allocation of Main Roads Funds.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What amount of main roads funds has been set aside to meet the cost of the Narrows Bridge?

(2) From which years' funds have these allocations been made?

(3) When tenders are called for the construction of the bridge, will any of the conditions refer to payment to the contractor?

(4) If so, what will the conditions be?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The amount of £36,000 per month, as from September, 1954, is being paid into the Narrows Bridge Trust Account.

(2) Answered by No. 1.

(3) Yes.

(4) (a) At any time payment will be made on basis of value of work done, less 10 per cent. retention.

(b) The limit of the retention money at any time will be £50,000.

(c) Minimum payment at any time will be fixed at £20,000.

**AQUATIC CENTRE.**

*Establishment in King's Park.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is it intended to introduce legislation during this session to permit the erection of an aquatic centre in King's Park?

(2) Will he acquaint the Perth City Council that it would be advisable to seek an alternative site for the proposed aquatic centre, as any decision affecting the use of King's Park must receive the assent of both Houses of Parliament?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Government has not received any request from the King's Park Board or the Perth City Council to introduce legislation to establish an aquatic centre in the park.

(2) The board and the council are aware of the necessity to obtain parliamentary approval to any proposal to establish an aquatic centre in the park.

**COALMINING.**

*(a) Stockton Open-cut, Cost-Plus System, etc.*

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) What was the date of the commencement of the Stockton open-cut at Collie?

(2) When was the cost-plus system first introduced into the coal industry at Collie?

(3) What was the price of coal at pit head when open-cutting first commenced?

(4) What was the highest price reached for open-cut coal?

(5) What amounts have been advanced or guaranteed by the State Government to—

(a) Amalgamated Collieries of W.A.;

(b) Griffin Coal Mining Company;

(c) Western Collieries Ltd.?

(6) What are the balances outstanding at the present time of each of the three companies concerned?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (for the Minister for Mines) replied:

(1) October, 1943.

(2) March, 1941.

(3) Six months to the 30th June, 1943:

Small coal—18s. 10d. per ton.

Large coal—

		Per Ton.
		s. d.
Cooperative	....	22 4
Proprietary	....	21 8
Cardiff	....	20 8
Stockton	....	21 1

Six months to the 30th December, 1943:

Small coal—20s. 5d. per ton.

Large coal—

		Per Ton.
		s. d.
Cooperative	....	23 11
Proprietary	....	23 3
Cardiff	....	22 5
Stockton	....	22 9

(4) Prices of deep mine and open cut coal not segregated.

## (5) The amounts are—

Company	Advanced from General Loan Funds (Hire Purchase Agreements)	By Guaranteed Bank Overdraft	Total Assistance
	£	£	£
(a) Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd. ....	546,936	90,000	636,936
(b) Griffin Coal Mining Co. Ltd. ....	—	430,000	430,000
(c) Western Collieries Ltd. ....	—	467,500	467,500
	546,936	987,500	1,534,436

## (6) The balances at present outstanding are—

Company	Advanced from General Loan Funds (Hire Purchase Agreements)	By Guaranteed Bank Overdraft	Total Amount Outstanding
	£	£	£
Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd. ....	261,494	—	261,494
Griffin Coal Mining Co. Ltd. ....	—	357,600	357,600
Western Collieries Ltd. ....	—	427,500	427,500
	261,494	785,100	1,046,594

## (b) Money Owing by Companies and Cost-Plus System.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) What amount of money is owing, individually, by the three coal mining companies of Collie, under hire purchase agreement, or alternatively, guaranteed by way of bank overdraft?

(2) What price per ton was being paid to Amalgamated Collieries under the cost-plus system in the six months immediately preceding the 31st December, 1955?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (for the Minister for Mines) replied:

## (1) Amounts owing—

Company	Under Hire Purchase Agreements	By way of Guaranteed Bank Overdrafts	Total Amount Owning
	£	£	£
Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd. ....	261,494	—	261,494
Griffin Coal Mining Co. Ltd. ....	—	357,600	357,600
Western Collieries Ltd. ....	—	427,500	427,500
	261,494	785,100	1,046,594

## (c) Price Per Ton to Amalgamated Collieries.

Mr. WILD (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

Can the Minister reply to the second part of my question dealing with the price paid to Amalgamated Collieries?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (for the Minister for Mines) replied:

I am sorry I omitted to answer that part of the question at the time. The answer is 60s. 8d. per ton.

## ROADS.

## (a) Welshpool-rd. and Lesmurdie Hill Deviation.

Mr. OWEN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has the Main Roads Department made a final decision on the route of the Lesmurdie Hill deviation on the Welshpool-rd.?

(2) If so, when will work on this project be commenced?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Resumption of land along the line of the deviation is being put in train.

## (b) Allocation of Federal Aid Roads Funds.

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

(1) Referring to my question answered on Tuesday, the 14th August, as to allocation of Federal aid roads funds for works connected with transport other than roads and referring to the item of £70,000 expended for "Traffic Fees Replacement," will he fully advise the House as to the circumstances that gave rise to this payment?

(2) Does he consider that shortage of plant and/or labour is responsible for the unexpended sums totalling £48,435 in the hands of the road boards mentioned; and if not, what does he consider are the reasons for the non-expenditure in such a substantial number of cases?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Before 1941 the Commonwealth Grants Commission was deducting substantial amounts from the grant assessed as payable to Western Australia because of the State's failure to bring its finances more into line with those of non-claimant States by applying some of the metropolitan licence fee revenue to payment of loan servicing charges on loan funds expended on roads.

In 1941 the Main Roads (Funds Appropriation) Act was passed. This Act required the Treasurer to pay from the Main Roads Contribution Trust Account (Traffic Fees) the whole of the 22½ per cent. metropolitan traffic fees normally payable to the Main Roads Department, into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. As a result of the passing of the 1941 Act and similar subsequent Acts, no adjustments have been made by the Grants Commission on account of road debt charges. The same statutes provide that the 22½ per cent. metropolitan traffic fees shall be reimbursed from petrol tax funds by an amount equivalent to that transferred to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The current Act limits the amount which may be paid into Consolidated Revenue Funds to £70,000.



This item £70,000 shown in the statement supporting my previous answer represents reimbursement to the traffic fees fund from petrol tax funds for the year 1955-56.

(2) It is not considered that shortage of plant and/or labour is generally responsible for the unexpended sums totalling £48,435 amongst 33 local authorities. The department in some circumstances hires plant from local authorities. It has been found that plant to the value of about one-third of the monetary size of the department's programme of works is required. On the same basis this £48,435 would represent a shortage of £16,000 worth of plant spread amongst 33 local authorities. This is negligible, and in some cases lack of organisation and ineffective usage of plant has been observed. Plant is available for hire from private contractors.

### AIR SERVICES.

#### (a) *Merger of Airlines and Role of Transport Board.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Does he subscribe to the views on the merger of MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd. and Airlines (W.A.) Ltd., as expressed in Part V., paragraphs 54-57 inclusive of the twenty-second annual report of the Western Australian Transport Board?

(2) To what extent does the Western Australian Transport Board influence or approve any alterations in schedules of aircraft in Western Australia?

(3) Have the alterations of schedules of aircraft serving the North-West complained about by the member for Gascoyne the approval of the Western Australian State Transport Board?

(4) (a) Has the Western Australian State Transport Board advised the State Government of any deterioration of the air service to the North-West?

(b) If so, when, and in respect of which services?

(5) Is it possible to reconcile the views expressed in the Address-in-reply debate by the member for Gascoyne with the views of the Western Australian State Transport Board?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, subject to qualifications, as mentioned in answer to No. (5).

(2) All timetables for aircraft services are submitted to the board for approval.

(3) Yes. The complaints arise out of timetables approved on the merger of the two airline companies. Immediately upon receipt of complaints, MacRobertson Miller Airlines Ltd. were requested to review their schedules, with a view to remedying any defect. As a result, new timetables were submitted and approved.

(4) (a) No.

(b) Answered by (a).

(5) I see no reason to question the views expressed in the Transport Board's report, nor can I see any conflict between those views and the remarks of the member for Gascoyne. Perhaps, however, the Transport Board might more appropriately have used the word "should" instead of "will."

#### (b) *Benefit to Kalgoorlie from Merger.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Was the member for Gascoyne correct in his assertion of the 9th August, 1956 Hansard, that Kalgoorlie has greatly benefited from the merger of MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd. and Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. to the detriment of the northern services?

(2) Is it not correct that the present seven air services a week to Kalgoorlie replaced 14 per week about two years ago, and 10 per week just before the merger?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Although there has been a reduction in frequency of the service, Kalgoorlie has benefited by the replacement of Dove aircraft by larger aircraft with three times the passenger and freight carrying capacity. Any variations in the northern services are not dependent upon the Kalgoorlie services. There has been no consequential lessening of Douglas aircraft services to the North.

(2) Yes, it is correct.

#### (c) *Transport of Perishables and Freight Rationing.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What quantities of subsidised perishables were transported by air in Western Australia by MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd., Airlines (W.A.) Ltd., and the MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. (i.e., the merger company), for each of the years to 30th June, 1954, 1955 and 1956?

(2) Did Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. have a system of freight rationing for regular clients on certain runs?

(3) Has the merged company (MacRobertson Aviation Co.) been able to abandon this system of freight rationing under its new schedules, and greater overall availability of D.C.3's?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The quantities transported were—

	1954	lb.
MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd. ....	277,909	
Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. ....	85,548	

1955	lb.
MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd. ....	343,162
Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. ....	77,403
1956	lb.
MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd. ....	19,048
Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. ....	10,905
MacRobertson Miller Airlines Ltd.	472,386

(2) There was no such system. On occasions where the volume of freight offering exceeded the capacity of aircraft, it was necessary to ration freight.

(3) The same conditions as in No. (2) apply to the present company.

*(d) Demand for Aircraft in the North.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) In which months is the greatest demand for aircraft in the North of this State—

- (a) South-North;
- (b) North-South.

(2) If MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd. were short of freight and passenger capacity during these periods, were planes available from other Australian airlines for charter or diversion to the MacRobertson Aviation routes during those periods?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) South to North: February, March, April and May and during school holiday travel periods in August and December.

(b) North to South: December and in school holiday travel periods in February, May and September.

(2) I am informed no planes were available for charter or diversion from other Australian operators in March, April, May and December last. These are the busy months on all Australian services.

*(e) MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd. Shareholders.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How many shareholders are there in the present MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd.?

(2) What proportion are Western Australian residents?

(3) What is the number of wages and salaries employees of MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd.?

(4) Is it not in the interests of Western Australia and decentralisation to have a Western Australian company operating the interstate service, rather than an organisation like T.A.A., which is controlled in the Eastern States?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 868 shareholders; 952,069 shares issued.

(2) 802 Western Australian residents hold 475,970 shares; 66 non-Western Australian residents hold 476,099 shares. One such shareholder, MacRobertson Pty. Ltd., holds 430,694 shares.

(3) 397.

(4) This would depend upon the standard of service given.

*(f) Complaints in the North.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has the Transport Board received any complaints in respect of MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. Pty. Ltd. air services to the North?

(2) If so, what was the nature of same, and the result of investigation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) In April last, complaints were received from the Nullagine Road Board alleging late running and omission of calls with resulting deterioration of perishables. The matter was taken up with MacRobertson Miller Airlines Ltd., who submitted revised time-tables, aiming to remedy the position. The road board was advised of the action taken. No further communication has been received from them.

**SHIPPING.**

*Interstate Consignments Direct to Geraldton.*

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping:

(1) Have any cargoes been recently consigned direct to Geraldton by interstate ships from Eastern States ports as a result of advertising cargo space?

(2) Will he give particulars of such consignments?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied:

(1) Yes, by the "Koorawatha" ex Melbourne.

(2) This vessel was advertised in the Melbourne Press over a period of four weeks as accepting cargo for Geraldton direct.

Space was booked for 29½ tons of general cargo, but only six tons were eventually shipped.

The "Woomera" was advertised in the Sydney Press as accepting cargo Geraldton direct. No bookings were made.

The "Baroota" has also been advertised ex Sydney. No particulars as yet available concerning bookings on that ship.

**BEER.***Alcohol Percentage.*

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What is the respective alcohol percentage in beer in each of the Australian States?

(2) Has any consideration been given to lowering the rating in this State?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied:

This question should have been directed to the Minister for Police. The details required are as follows:—

- (1) The percentage of alcohol contained in beer in all States of the Commonwealth is almost uniform. Analysis figures over various periods show that the average strengths range between 8 per cent. and 9 per cent. proof spirit and that there is no appreciable difference between the Western Australian strength and that of other States.

(2) No.

**DAIRYING INDUSTRY.***Assistance for Under-developed Holdings.*

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

(1) Referring to his reply on the 7th August to question numbered (5) on that day, is it proposed to include dairy farmers in the districts of the Denmark and Albany Road Boards in the dairy farm improvement scheme?

(2) If so, when is it proposed to make plans for the initiation of the scheme in those districts, at least to the extent already planned in the Margaret River and Northcliffe areas?

(3) If it is not proposed to include the first-mentioned areas, will he state the reasons?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Arrangements have just been made for the initiation of the scheme in these districts, and the necessary forms have been distributed. These will permit a survey to be made so as to collect the necessary information, including the finance required.

The scheme will be implemented in districts of the dairying zone, other than Margaret River and Northcliffe, as soon as the necessary funds become available.

(3) Answered by No. (1).

**FREMANTLE HARBOUR.***Depth at Low Tide.*

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

What is the depth of water at low tide every alternate 20ft. or thereabouts from the south side to the north side of the Fremantle railway bridge?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

Soundings taken in 1951, 30 feet upstream of the railway bridge, are as follows:—

Zero ft.	South Shoreline ft. in.	
50	4	3 below Low Water
100	5	0 below Low Water
150	9	6 Below Low Water
200	4	6 below Low Water
250	5	6 below Low Water
300	8	6 below Low Water
350	8	0 below Low Water
400	4	6 below Low Water
450	6	6 below Low Water
500	8	6 below Low Water
550	8	0 below Low Water
600	7	6 below Low Water
650	14	0 below Low Water
700	13	0 below Low Water
730		North Shoreline

} Navigation Spans

**AGRICULTURE.***Esperance Land Settlement Scheme.*

Mr. PERKINS (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Can he elaborate on the statement which appeared in the Press this morning regarding a proposed land settlement scheme at Esperance?

(2) Is it correct that, from the figures that were quoted in the article, the total loan funds required by somebody could amount to £11,000,000?

(3) Does the Minister contemplate a civilian land settlement scheme on similar lines to the war service land settlement scheme?

(4) If not, what did he have in mind in regard to a 500-farm land settlement scheme in that area?

The MINISTER replied:

In the first place I should say that the Government was interested in opening up this area in some way that would encourage further agricultural development. With that object in view, a committee was appointed some few years ago to examine the position and, arising from its report, it became clear that if sufficient money were made available a large land settlement scheme could be commenced in the Esperance area.

An unsuccessful approach has been made to the Commonwealth Government and the State Government is now endeavouring to interest private financial institutions in undertaking a land settlement scheme and, should such arrangement come to fruition, naturally the requirements of the company or the institution concerned would have to be taken into account by agreement between the Government and the company.

Therefore, what I am saying now has nothing to do with what was published in this morning's Press; it is merely a capitulation of what was said on previous occasions in regard to a 500-farm scheme. I now understand that, on information that has recently become available, a very

large American financial institution is today interested in the development of that area. That institution talks in many millions of pounds and, although nothing definite has been arrived at, I understand that its preliminary inquiries are based on an area of 1,000,000 acres and all that that implies in regard to superphosphate, freezing and so on.

We are now awaiting a letter from the company which will be submitted to the Government. This company is interested to the extent that it intends to send an officer to visit this State in November of this year to enter into further discussions on the matter. If these arrangements eventuate, this scheme will be the greatest land settlement project the State has ever seen.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Sixth Day.*

Debate continued from the previous day.

**MR. O'BRIEN** (Murchison) [2.52]: I join with previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on achieving such a high office. Having known you for many years, and knowing you as I do, I feel sure that you will be most fair in carrying out your duties. I wish you a successful future. I would like to take this opportunity to air my grievances as the member for Murchison, and also to congratulate the present Government on supplying many benefits for my electorate.

**Mr. Evans:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. O'BRIEN:** First of all, I would like to thank sincerely the Ministers who have paid a visit to my electorate. I refer to the Minister for Native Welfare and the Minister for Education. They visited half my electorate over a period of one week. They could ill afford to spare the time because, as members know, Ministers are very busy people.

**Hon. D. Brand:** Some of them.

**Mr. O'BRIEN:** It was common to hear from the schoolmasters of the State schools and the headmasters who have been teaching for 20 to 25 years that that was the first occasion on which a Minister for Education had visited them in their schools. I would like to commend him most heartily for having done so. I feel that Ministers and all members of Parliament should travel around the State to see how the other half lives. Once again I would like to thank these Ministers for having extended that courtesy to me and the electors of the Murchison with a view to seeing at first hand the problems that confront their various departments. We have problems in the Murchison similar to those in other parts of the State.

The Murchison electorate is a huge one. I have said on more than one occasion that it is approximately one-third of the area of the State. I would like to take

members right through the electorate as far over as the South Australian border, which was mentioned by the member for South Perth last evening. Let us commence at Wurarga. From there we visit the old Gullewa mine which at present has good values. That mine could be drilled for a company or for interested people and it could produce a large quantity of gold. From Wurarga we proceed to Yalgoo and north-east of Yalgoo we have the Gnows Nest goldmine which has a rich reef, but because of the water problem in past years it was obliged to close down. I would suggest to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines that no time should be wasted in drilling the Gnows Nest mine.

Some time ago in this Chamber I also stressed that we should conserve water and make use of it because the water there is of good quality; it is drinkable water. On the west side of Yalgoo we have the Melville district which is also a good prospecting area. Further north we find Mt. Magnet, which is some 80 miles away. One could travel north, south, east or west of Mt. Magnet and still find goldmines working there at the present time.

**Mr. Ackland:** How will increased freights affect those people?

**Mr. O'BRIEN:** I will get to that shortly. In talking about Mt. Magnet, I would like to point out that we have at the present time the famous Hill 50 goldmine and the Eclipse mine, which at the moment is employing many men, and which when it is further developed, will employ many hundreds more, I hope. There is the Mt. Magnet Development Co. at the old Morning Star mine which, the newspapers report, has good prospects. I know that to be true because I saw specimens during my visit to that area recently.

It is little wonder, therefore, that the present Labour Government assisted the mining town of Mt. Magnet by building homes for the mineworkers in that district. Further homes are required. Many homes have been built in country districts and many also have been built in the metropolitan area but we want to produce gold. What we want today is gold, and we can produce it, provided the mining companies and prospectors are given the assistance. They are prepared to go out-back and develop this country which in turn will help to decentralise the population and industries of this State of ours. The prospects in and around Mt. Magnet are excellent at the present time.

We then proceed to Cue which is a distance of 50 miles north. Members will have read in the papers that the old Fingal mine now under the Day Dawn Goldmining Co., was diamond-drilled to a depth of close on 4,000ft. It was assisted by the present Labour Government by the grant of a subsidy, thus enabling the mine to be proved. In the past geologists were of the

opinion that a reef stretched throughout the Murchison district. It has been proved by drilling that the reef is one of the largest quartz reefs in the world and the values are good. Further drilling will be carried on. Using the up-to-date Canadian method of drilling, the original bore holes will be wedged and drills will shoot off at various depths, proving the values at the different levels and proving the actual size of the reef, and also ascertaining the depth of the reef from the surface. In my opinion the future for Day Dawn is very bright.

Although accounts have appeared in the Press indicating that Big Bell, which is 18 miles west of Cue, is a ghost town, I contradict the statement because I have followed very closely the work of the prospectors in the area, and I have the latest figures from the State battery at Cue relating to the crushing put through by the Clark party. Before reading the figures, I might add that leases around Big Bell were held by a company and prospectors were debarred from carrying out any work on the leases, which were held by Mr. Mandelstein, now deceased. Until the 25th March last all those leases were held by the estate of that gentleman and worked by the big American gold mining company known as Big Bell.

The Clark party consisted of three prospectors, namely Larry Clark, Jack Farrelly and another man named Macillwee. They have been developing a lode which is approximately three-quarters of a mile south on the same country as Big Bell itself. In my view, they have located a big lode formation which will prove to be of great benefit to the district of Cue. Those prospectors are not assisted by the Government in any way. They did not apply for assistance but battled on under their own steam. For lack of ready money, they found it necessary to take out a crushing, and this was treated at Cue. They brought out a crushing of 33½ tons which yielded 30 oz., or an average of 18 dwts. 4 grs. to the ton. The sands have been treated and they average 12 to 13 dwts. to the ton.

Another prospector named Bozanich, is working a little further north in the same area, on the east side of the workings. He sent in a crushing of 23 tons for a return of 8 oz. 15 dwts., or an average of 7 dwts. 14 grains over the plates. The sands are still to be treated. This illustrates the fact that despite the rumour of Big Bell being a ghost town, it is far from true. It could become just as big a mining town as it was a few years ago, if it is assisted by the Government. I have requested the Government to give assistance to these prospectors by way of up-to-date appliances, such as compressors and tungsten steel with an air leg to enable them to develop on modern lines. When the two crushings referred to were taken out, the old method of hammer and tap was used. These prospectors have been

in the Murchison electorate for many years and they deserve every encouragement because of their great faith in the goldmining industry.

Going further north from Cue to Tuckanarra, right through Nannine, all having been prosperous towns that could be prosperous again, to Meekatharra, mines have been developed but only to shallow depths. There is the Feenian and the Consuls; there is the Queen of the Hills, which is a large though low-grade proposition. This mine could turn out to be very successful at depth. I have requested the Government to deep drill in the mining towns mentioned. Even if one good mine were proved in each town, the money would be well spent because it would help to decentralise this State, a move which, in my opinion, becomes more and more necessary each day with the invention of the hydrogen and atomic bombs.

East of Meekatharra we find the old township of Wiluna. Although no gold-mining activity is carried on there at the moment, there are very rich copper deposits at that centre. The copper miners are transporting the ore to the railhead, a distance of approximately 80 miles. I have suggested to the Mines Department that that copper ore should be treated and so segregate the mineral, thus enabling the miners to get a fair distribution and a fair price.

We have further to the east, the Agnew mine, formerly known as the East-Murchison United, which was averaging 10 dwts a ton. It is worked down to a certain level and is one of the mines that was developed by the De Bernaldes group who were obliged to close it down because of increased costs and shortage of labour. I consider that the day is not far distant when that mine will be working once again. As a matter of fact, I know that the holders of that particular lease are investigating at the present time the prospect of floating that mine on a 50-50 basis, and it is said that the place will live again as a gold-mining centre. In my opinion the Leonora district is one for prospectors, and I would like to see a new battery erected there in the not too distant future to enable the prospectors in that area to crush on the spot. There is an old battery at Leonora which was held some years ago by Wright Bros. If that battery could be brought into operation once again or made available to prospectors, it would not, in my opinion, be as satisfactory as an up-to-date plant, such as we have at Menzies. The battery at Leonora would be of great benefit to the prospectors, and only approximately five weeks ago, when travelling from Leonora to Agnew, I saw two prospectors working on the side of the road. I was very pleased when shown some specimen stones which had been mined by those men, which proves that, at a shallow depth, gold still exists in that area.

Further east at Lancefield there is a mine which has been receiving assistance from the Government for development and to enable it in the near future to become a company proposition. Practically right through to the South Australian border we have auriferous country. Areas which have in the past produced gold could still do so if the Government encouraged and assisted prospectors to go outback. In Western Australia from the north-west coast, almost to the south-east coast, we have nothing but a continuous line of auriferous gold-bearing country. It is true that, in places, this country has not proved itself, but we are not in a position to say so until it has been drilled and properly tested in order to see whether these reefs run at depth and whether or not they carry gold.

I think that Western Australia, with its gold and minerals, is second to none in the world. This country has not yet been proved, but it will be as time goes on, and I take this opportunity of congratulating the Government on sending the Minister for Mines to America together with the Under Secretary for Mines in order to gain knowledge of the oil and mining industries and learn of up-to-date methods in drilling, which will enable the Government to carry on with the good work it is doing in developing the goldfields of this State.

Next I would like to read an address delivered by the president, Mr. R. J. Agnew, at the annual general meeting of the Chamber of Mines of Western Australia held at Kalgoorlie on the 22nd May, 1956. It is as follows:—

The price of gold remained constant during the year at £15 12s. 6d. per fine ounce.

During the year 2,865,048 long tons of ore were treated for a yield of 834,326 fine ounces, the value of which amounted to £13,036,338. This represents a value of 29,201,410 dollars, in which form it emphasises the importance of the industry in the national economy. The figures quoted above show a decreased tonnage of 375,330 compared with the previous year and a decrease of 27,666 ounces of fine gold. The gold recovered per ton was 5.82 dwt. compared with 5.32 dwt. for the previous year.

The activities of the Gold Producers' Association have been limited during the period under review and such small profits as have been made have been due largely to differences in the rate of exchange. During the period from the 1st May, 1955, to date there have been four distributions of premium totalling £24,924. There have, however, been no sales whatever since the 17th October, 1955. The total amount distributed to members of the association since its formation amounts to £1,829,437.

It is noted with pleasure that the Federal Government has recently introduced legislation to continue the assistance to certain mines in the industry for a further three years. While this assistance does not go so far as we would desire, it is certainly some encouragement to those mines which are on the margin.

Two upward adjustments totalling 6s. 7d. per week were made to the basic wage during the year under review. The result of these was to raise the basic wage from £12 9s. 4d. to £12 15s. 11d. per week, which is the rate ruling at present. In reducing and fixing the industry allowance at £1 15s. per week the Arbitration Court determined that there should be no reduction in the overall minimum rate so that the minimum rate payable in the gold-mining industry at the present time is the basic wage, namely, £12 15s. 11d., plus £2 industry allowance, making a minimum of £14 15s. 11d. per week.

Following the hearing by the Arbitration Court in October, 1955, of claims for amendments to the conditions of all goldmining awards, new clauses in the various awards came into operation towards the end of December, 1955. No sweeping changes were made but certain increased rates for overtime and an extra public holiday were introduced. There does, however, seem to be a tendency in recent cases which have come before the Arbitration Court dealing with the Goldfields awards to bring these into line with awards in the metropolitan area. This does not appear logical as conditions in the goldmining industry are in no wise comparable with those ruling in the industrial sphere elsewhere. The peculiarities of necessity ruling in an industry such as mining should be sufficient to allow us to obtain awards on our own account and we should not have irksome clauses introduced into our awards simply because they exist in the awards in the metropolitan area pertaining to metal trades. It is considered that our awards should be framed purely on the conditions and customs prevailing in the goldmining industry.

I am happy to be able to again report that industrial relations between the companies and the unions have been on a very friendly footing throughout the year and for this we are indebted to close co-operation between the officials of the unions and the mine managements.

Manpower during the past year has been more plentiful than for many years past, though in many cases the quality of such labour offering has not been all that could be desired. This is due in large measure to many

men offering for work who have not been previously employed in the industry and to such men not staying long enough in the industry to make them proficient.

The cost of stores and equipment has shown some rise during the year and while most stores can be procured readily from Australian sources, equipment from both Australian and overseas sources is still liable to long delay in delivery.

I make no apology for again referring to the onerous burden which the industry has to bear in the form of high railway freights. Particularly on the lines serving the Eastern Goldfields, both from the metropolitan area and the southern seaboard at Esperance, the mines are the main support. It might not be quite correct, but it would be approximately so to say that these lines are to no small extent paying for the rest of the railway system in the State. At a time when the mines are spending large sums of money in order to reduce costs of operating and suffer a fixed price for their product, it seems only reasonable to expect some relief from the high freight rates which are imposed by the Railway Department. To instance only one item, that of diesel fuel oil, on which most of the mines are dependent for the generation of power, it seems to be out of all reason that this commodity which can be landed at Esperance for slightly in excess of £14 per ton costs a further £7 per ton to freight it a distance of 250 miles to Kalgoorlie. In view of the business which the mining companies are giving to the Government railways it is considered that the time is opportune for the Government to consider the position with a view to giving some relief by way of concessional freight rates.

The Joint Safety Committee has been extremely active during the year and many worth-while recommendations have come out of their deliberations. I had something to say on a previous occasion regarding safety in the mines, but still feel that a certain number of experienced men are not taking all necessary precautions to avoid accidents. As I have said before, without the co-operation of everyone engaged in the industry we will not be able to reduce the accident rate to an absolute minimum. Too many are still prepared to take that risk which in many cases leads to serious accidents, sometimes fatal.

It is particularly pleasing to see the number of applicants for the Chamber of Mines junior scholarships. Not only was there a largely increased

number compared with the previous year but the standard of the applicants generally was high. On account of this high standard and the difficulty in differentiating between many of the candidates, it was decided that for the current year extra scholarships be granted in the junior division. There is, however, still room for improvement in the number of applicants coming forward for the senior scholarships, which, as well as free tuition, provide the student with substantial monetary benefits which enable him to devote full time to his technical studies at the Western Australian School of Mines. It might be noted here that the amounts of the scholarships have been considerably increased.

Once again I have to mention the Federal Member for Kalgoorlie, the Honourable H. V. Johnson, and Senator Vincent, and to thank them for the help which they have been able to give us during the year. We have received much assistance from State Government departments, especially the Mines Department, and I would like them to know how much we have appreciated this assistance.

That completes the report of the president of the Chamber of Mines of Western Australia, Mr. R. J. Agnew.

I omitted, when I was speaking of the various mining towns, to mention those on the east side, such as Kookynie, which is a noted gold producer and which could be diamond drilled with success tomorrow. Ora Banda is also a mining town where the ore is of a soft, large, decomposed lode formation which can be worked rather cheaply. This brings down the cost of breaking the ore. But what is necessary in that particular centre is a reduction in the cost of water supplies. If the mines there could receive cheaper water, they could, in my opinion, get better extraction from the ore.

We know that a mine manager who is trying to save water by using the return water, is not using water that is as good as it would be if there were a plentiful supply. Consideration should be given to enabling the mine-owners in that area to purchase water at a reduced rate. Later when the mines are more established, I dare say they would be agreeable to face up to the original price, but in order to permit them to establish themselves, I think consideration should be given to allowing them to have cheaper water.

Hon. D. Brand: What are they paying now?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I think they are paying 7s.

Hon. D. Brand: What would you consider to be a reasonable reduction?

Mr. O'BRIEN: If they paid 5s., I should say it would be a very reasonable concession. I come now to the housing position. As these places grow, and I can visualise them growing in the not so distant future, houses will be required, and I think the Government should give some attention to that problem. Moves have been commenced to house the aged people in various country centres. In Cue the local road board has interested itself in the matter and has had a number of homes built—I think 10 have been erected. It has received assistance from the Lotteries Commission to enable it to build the homes for those aged citizens—"senior citizens" as they have been called by the Minister for Health.

I would like to see every consideration given to the aged people in the way of provision of homes and other amenities, which could be made available to them. I have received a letter from an aged person in Meekatharra and I intend to see that something is done for this old pioneer, who is in need of a home, so that he may spend the remainder of his days in comfort. The letter is dated the 5th August, 1956, and is addressed to "Mr. O'Brien, M.L.A., Government House, Perth." I am not there yet, of course, but at Parliament House. The letter reads—

Dear Sir,

I beg to seek your assistance if in your power to help me. I am one of the old prospectors of the Meekatharra and Murchison area. I came to Meekatharra in 1906 and have prospected and mined over most of the country from Meekatharra to Marble Bar for 50 years and now I am an old man, 77 years of age, and unable to work much more and too old to be out in the bush alone.

I want to build a house in town and to be near other people, but on applying for a block in Railway Street I am informed that the upset price is £20. Well, I think it quite unfair to the old prospector who, after all, was the means of bringing population and wealth to the country to open up and work the mines which we found.

I have worked hard and saved a little money and by so doing I have saved the Government 12 years pension money. Surely we are worth a little consideration! Please try to see if you can do anything in the matter to help us. I feel sure you will not be lacking. Please reply when convenient. I will be pleased to meet you when visiting Meekatharra. Apologising for my troubles,

Yours faithfully,

R. J. MEEK.

I have not had the pleasure of meeting this old gentleman but will do all in my power to see that he gets his home in Meekatharra. Wiluna is 709 miles from Perth but I will not be saddled with all that distance; instead I will point out that we have 365 miles of railways in the Murchison area. There is approximately 250 miles on the eastern side from Kalgoorlie to Leonora and also the railway out to Laverton, which makes a total of approximately 600 miles of line. I am of the opinion that in years to come our railways will still be there but that everyone will have to pay to keep them functioning, though whether under a scheme similar to a national health scheme or otherwise, remains to be seen.

With regards to the Murchison, I know the electorate and its requirements intimately and I suggest that that part of the State should receive a special concession by the granting of free rail freights and fares to that area, which constitutes one-third of the State. It may seem that I am asking a lot but I do not seek to have the produce of the Murchison electorate exempted from freight. The producers of that area will continue to pay rail freight on their cattle and other produce despatched to Perth or elsewhere, but the exemption I am seeking is a concession in the form of free freights and fares to the Murchison, which would help towards decentralisation.

Mr. Perkins: Hear, hear! How would you distinguish between different parts of the electorate—Kalgoorlie for instance?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I had nothing to do with the redistribution of seats. The electorate takes in from Varden-st. north.

Hon. D. Brand: What is your attitude towards pulling up the railway from Wiluna to Meekatharra?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I do not think any railway line should be pulled up hastily. I visualise the Wiluna line eventually going across into another State, as was mentioned by the member for South Perth last night. I have also visualised the Laverton line being extended in that direction. With modern developments such as the perfection of the atomic bomb, decentralisation becomes more than ever necessary, and it is essential that we should not have a great part of our population concentrated in a few towns or cities that would be easily destroyed.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you think the Minister for Railways and the Minister for Transport will be as welcome as the Minister for Education up there?

Mr. O'BRIEN: They are all welcome to the Murchison area. We hear a lot about railway expenditure but we must remember that the McLarty-Watts Government purchased the diesel engines and did not refrain from heavy expenditure in an endeavour to curtail expense. It must be



agreed that the purchasing of the diesel engines was a progressive step, but by doing so much in such a short time and in obtaining so many of these new engines, I believe that Government jeopardised our railway system.

Hon. D. Brand: Did not your Government order some more?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I think that in the Murchison area we could well have continued to use the coal burning steam engines and in the drier seasons we could have reverted to the diesels, working the two types in conjunction with each other, which I believe would have been far better than using only the diesels.

Hon. D. Brand: Did not your Government order some diesels?

Mr. O'BRIEN: The steam engine would always be able to get through, even in wet weather, unless the line were destroyed or there happened to be a bad wash-away. But the new diesels have never been proved in the wet weather and when we get a bad thunderstorm in that area, the line is sometimes two feet under water and that water lies there for some considerable time, sometimes a week, before it recedes or dries up. A steam engine would get through if the water were 6 or 9 inches over the line, but the engineers in charge of the diesels claim that 4 inches is the limit for that type of locomotive. So if we had a really good season in the Murchison we would be without a train service for half the winter because it would have to be cancelled on so many occasions. Luckily, this year we have had a dry season, at least since the diesels commenced running, and they have not had to prove themselves under wet conditions.

As regards the air service to the Murchison, when Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. conducted the service on its own, it left nothing to be desired. It was a good service and the Dove aircraft used were ideal for the job. I know what I am talking about because I have travelled in them on many occasions. Every consideration was shown to passengers and goods. However, since that company merged with M.M.A., the service has been cut almost in half. I admit that the Big Bell mine has closed down and that, no doubt, was mainly responsible for the reduction in the air service. I have been assured that a much better service will be given when there is more activity in the goldmining industry.

The Murchison depends so much on the assistance it receives and for that reason these small concessions—and they are only small although they might sound quite large—of free transport of goods and free fares to the Murchison, would be of great benefit to the State and would help to decentralise. To produce gold we must have up-to-date machinery and the assistance given to the mining companies

would be well repaid. Speaking now of the Kalgoorlie side of the electorate, the electors there have a problem as regards bread deliveries.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.4 p.m.*

Mr. O'BRIEN: Before the afternoon tea suspension, I was talking about the deliveries of bread. The bakers delivering bread to North Kalgoorlie—that is, those the other side of Varden-st. north—claimed they were unable to do so because of the cost, and also because they were unable to get suitable employees. By the non-delivery of bread from house to house they have penalised all the people—both those who are prepared to pay cash and others. The practice today is for the bakers to deliver bread at odd shops, and for a cart to go to a set point where a bell is rung, as an ice-cream vendor would do, on hearing which the housewives are obliged to come out and take delivery of their bread at that point. It is high time something was done about the matter, and I sincerely trust the Minister responsible will take the necessary action to see that these people are no longer penalised.

Mr. Evans: Hear, hear!

Mr. O'Brien: Even in a small town like Yalgoo, where bread is railed from Mount Magnet twice weekly, it is delivered to one's door, and yet it is claimed by these master bakers that they cannot deliver bread because of the cost. When they were challenged on the cost angle they blamed the employees.

I would like to touch on the Mine Workers' Relief Act. I am pleased to see from the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that a Bill will be introduced to increase maximum compensation payments under that Act. That is something which is desired by miners, and to which they are justly entitled. Before a miner is discharged as totally unfit, he is notified that he is suffering from silicosis. When he receives a certificate from the Minister for Mines stating that he is suffering from silicosis in its early stages, he does not receive any consideration in regard to his disability. In my opinion that is most unjust.

In any other industry where an employee becomes disabled he is paid according to that disability. I say that when the Minister for Mines furnishes a certificate to any miner stating that he is suffering from silicosis in its early stages that is tantamount to notifying that person that he is suffering from a disability caused by his occupation and that accordingly some consideration should be given to it. We will not, of course, know the context of the Bill until it is introduced, but I trust that it will give consideration to these mine workers.

Mr. Evans: Would you agree to the elimination of percentages altogether?

Mr. O'BRIEN: Yes, I would; because I claim that if a man is thrown out of employment through no fault of his own while working for an employer, he should get the total disability allowance.

Mr. Evans: That is quite right.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I thank members for having given me a very attentive hearing.

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

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [4.10]: I would like to add my congratulations to those of other speakers on your election, Sir, to the office of Speaker, and to the member for Boulder on his election to the position of Chairman of Committees. I have no doubt that both you, Mr. Speaker, and the Chairman of Committees will maintain the tradition which has been built up in this Parliament of impartiality of treatment to all members, irrespective of where they sit in the Chamber, or which party they represent. I trust that you, Mr. Speaker, will have a pleasant, if not also a very long, term of office.

I listened with a good deal of interest to the debate on the Address-in-reply, particularly to the speeches made by members who gave some thought to the difficult economic problems facing Australia today. As the member for Nedlands said, it is very much easier to state what the problem is than to suggest an easy remedy. Obviously if there were an easy course to rectify the position, Governments would be only too anxious to follow it. Whatever course is pursued, considerable difficulties will have to be overcome.

In my opinion, spokesmen for the Commonwealth Government set out the facts very clearly when they said that the real problem facing Australia was one of rising costs in industry. Unfortunately, costs continue to rise. Irrespective of which party or electorate we represent, none of us can view the economic position with anything but misgiving, unless that trend is corrected. The further that costs rise in comparison with those outside of Australia, the more difficult it will be for the comparatively few industries in Australia which now produce goods at a competitive export price and earn the international credits to build up our overseas funds.

Some people take a very superficial view of the position, and seem to think that the difficulty about our dwindling overseas credits is an artificial problem which will have no serious effects, even if nothing is done. Any responsible person, whether left or right in his views, will realise that if Australia cannot import a certain range of essential goods—and that range is down to the minimum level—serious repercussions will be felt in industry. Of course, that will

eventually affect the capacity of our secondary industries to supply even the home market.

Members of country electorates have noted with interest the appeal by the Commonwealth Government to secondary industries to pull their weight and to export a portion of their products, so as to earn a portion of the international exchange required to pay for the import of essential items for the carrying on of our secondary industries. As far as I can see there is no indication at present of an increase in the output of our secondary industries. That is bound up with the question of high internal costs in Australia. It amounts to this: We should look after industries which are earning the vital foreign exchange. The major earners are the various branches of primary industry—notably wool, but to a lesser extent wheat, meat, fruits of various kinds, and minerals.

At one time it appeared that uranium finds in Australia might prove to be an important factor in building up our overseas funds, but no great income seems to have been derived from that source. I do not know the figures relating to the sale of uranium, but apparently it is very difficult to get detailed information of something which is of such great importance strategically. Be that as it may, the point I emphasise is that the branches of primary industry—and I include minerals—are our main exchange earners. So far as can be seen, that position will not be altered in the immediate future.

That brings me to the question of the policy to be adopted towards those primary industries. There has been quite a spectacular increase in the production of wool, noticeably in recent years. It is probable that that rate of increase will be maintained as a result of research into pasture improvement and into increasing efficiency. It must also be recognised that the needs of the Australian population are increasing because of the immigration policy and the natural population growth within Australia. With the exception of wool, it is problematical whether the increased production in Australia will be able to keep pace with the increased internal demands, hence the importance of safeguarding the welfare of the wool industry.

The wool industry has battled along with the minimum of assistance from Governments. Rather than place heavy imposts on that industry, future Governments should recognise that it offers the best scope for earning the major portion of our vital international exchange.

I was extremely interested in the statement which appeared in the Press this morning from the Minister for Agriculture in regard to the development of Esperance. I have always thought that that area along the south coast, which enjoys a very

reliable and well-spaced rainfall, will develop into a very important part of the agricultural areas of this State. The developments so far are very encouraging indeed, but I think it would be a mistake to encourage either our own prospective settlers in Western Australia, or those coming in from outside the State, to think that settlement can go ahead at Esperance without their having to face some unexpected problems.

The experience elsewhere in Western Australia has been that settlers carry on for a period before some of those problems really show up; but I am not suggesting that the problems are likely to be of such a nature that they cannot be overcome. On the other hand, we have had many experiences in Western Australia of people being encouraged to settle in a particular area, and a lot of money has been lost. As a result of allowing settlement to take place before appropriate investigations have been made, the State gets a bad name.

As a matter of fact, there is a big portion of that country between Ravensthorpe and Esperance, part of which I represent, and another part of which is represented by the member for Eyre, concerning which our knowledge of the rainfall is very scanty indeed. The gauges there are situated a long way apart in many cases; and, judging by the experiences in other parts of the State, there could be considerable variations of the rainfall between those gauging points.

I have discussed with both the Minister for Agriculture and the Director of Agriculture the possibility of installing a number of gauges in that area, which could possibly be read once a week. I understand a type of gauge has been developed which the Meteorological Bureau considers to be reasonably satisfactory. Possibly this type of gauge would give a reliable estimate of what can be expected in the way of variation of rainfall in that area. What I have said also applies to the area west of Ravensthorpe.

Any members who know that country along the south coast will be aware that there is a fairly high range of hills extending eastward from Albany and almost to Hopetoun—just on the west side of Hopetoun. There is some high country at Ravensthorpe but eastward to Esperance there are just low sandhills along the coast. The experience elsewhere in Western Australia is that that type of topography causes considerable variation in rainfall. I hope that action can be taken as quickly as possible in order to provide information to prospective settlers as to what they might expect. I also think that the Government could do considerably more in the way of experiments by co-operating with established settlers in those areas, particularly around Ravensthorpe.

So far as the area at Esperance is concerned, I believe it has a bright future. But the Minister has not been very explicit either in his statement to the Press, when he left the plane last night, or in the statement which he made to the House this afternoon, as to what he actually envisages. In his statement to the Press he mentioned that 500 2,500-acre farms will be developed in the Esperance area in the future, if Western Australia can raise the money needed.

He stated further that the money needed for the project could either be raised by private enterprise or borrowed from the Commonwealth Government and that each farm will cost between £17,000 and £22,000. He also said that these farms would provide an excellent standard of living for settlers and assure them of a good future, and added that all properties would be suitable for sheep and cattle-raising.

I do not think there is much wrong with the capitalisation if it can be limited to that amount. My own private estimate of the cost of developing a property at Esperance is probably about £12 per acre. Working on that figure of £12 per acre, it would actually take £22,000 to develop an area something less than the 2,500 acres named in the Minister's statement.

The Minister for Health: Practically no clearing is required.

Mr. PERKINS: Clearing is the least worry in agricultural areas these times. I think that the member for Eyre will agree that if these properties were developed to the fourth year, when they would have a reasonable carrying capacity, there would not be much left out of £12 per acre. That shows some disparity in the Minister's figures. What is he going to do with the other 700 acres?

Mr. Ackland: Do you think it is necessary to improve the whole 2,500 acres straight away? Could it not be done progressively at a later stage?

Mr. PERKINS: It all depends on what the Minister envisages. I rather suspect that what he has in mind is a civilian scheme similar to the war service land settlement scheme. I consider it would be more economical if it were developed by an outside company as it would be done more rapidly. If undeveloped country is left for any length of time it is a good harbour for vermin.

The Minister for Health: There is not very much vermin there now.

Mr. PERKINS: Not very much at the moment. But our experience is that as we develop an area and provide feed, the vermin follow. Actually there is very little at the moment in the way of red mite, lucerne flea and other bugs; but we cannot be so optimistic as to think that those pests will not arrive when the area is developed. We can also expect some of the

other problems that the Leader of the Opposition is well conversant with, such as foot rot.

In fairness both to members of this House and to members of the public, the Minister should be explicit as to what he envisages. I would like him to refer the matter to Cabinet so that he can speak not only with his own voice, but with reference to a Government decision. We will then know where we stand. We have had far too many instances of these grandiose schemes being carried out to a certain stage and then being left in mid-air without their being able to be continued. I would like the Minister for Agriculture to work out the details of what he proposes and submit them to Cabinet so that it will be a Government scheme. We will then all know where we stand.

Before we get to that stage, I would like some statement from the Government as to what it is going to do about providing funds for the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank to enable those settlers who have developed considerable portions of Crown land to carry on with further developments. They have taken up areas from the Government, and at the present time they are finding it difficult to carry on. In fact, in some cases they are walking off their properties because they have run out of capital.

Hon. D. Brand: Quite a few members would be interested in that.

Mr. PERKINS: It is particularly galling for those people to be told by the management of the Rural and Industries Bank, which administers the agency section—the equivalent of the old Agricultural Bank—that there is no money available to enable them to carry out vital improvements on their properties—they are asking for only limited amounts; there is not one of these settlers who has had more than £1,000 advanced to him—when they hear of a grandiose scheme being planned by which it is envisaged, apparently, that up to £22,000 will be advanced to each settler. I consider that this is a particularly vital matter, and I think the Premier knows the difficulties associated with it.

I am hopeful that, although the Premier is not here and the Minister for Agriculture is not in his seat, the other members of Cabinet who are present will take steps to see that the matter is considered by Cabinet, and that some authoritative statement is made in the House as to what the policy of the Government really is. At the present time different Ministers seem to be putting up different propositions; so what are we on this side of the House to believe? We have to rely on the information that we are able to obtain in the Chamber. Unless the Government envisages that we will bring a series of deputations to the different Cabinet Ministers in their offices, the proper thing is for the Government to make a statement

in this Chamber so that all members will have an opportunity to hear it and, if necessary, criticise the statement and the policy enunciated.

The Minister for Native Welfare: The Minister might have cleared the contingencies about his proposition.

Mr. PERKINS: He may have. I asked him a question without notice—I admit it is unfair to expect him to give a reply immediately—as to the amount of loan money that has been made available to the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank in the last two years to help these settlers who are battling with their own money plus whatever assistance they can get from relatives or any other sources that they can tap. I think there is far too much uncertainty. I do not want to criticise the Government unduly at this stage. I am only suggesting that a clear statement should be made.

There is another aspect. We have heard a lot of argument in this Chamber already this session—and I have no doubt we will hear more—about the unpayable country railway lines. I understand that the Minister for Transport has had some discussion with the Farmers' Union, and he has named some lines which are returning less than half their operating costs. He thinks we may have to close them. Of course, there is quite a lot of Press controversy on the question, too, and this suggestion was put forward very forcibly. Still, we can debate that proposition when it comes before us on the floor of the House.

I do not wish to deal with the question as to whether a line should be kept open or closed at this stage, but I do suggest to members that it is rather a ridiculous position when we have in some of these areas that are only poorly developed and which are served by the so-called unpayable railway lines, settlers who are walking off their properties and ceasing to be customers of the Railway Department. They are doing that simply because the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank is unable, so the bank says, to make sufficient funds available to carry out vital improvements.

Surely if we are going to increase the revenue of the Railway Department, the only way we can do it is to produce more goods for the railways to carry. The tendency of the Transport Board seems rather to be to chivy the producers who cart a comparatively small percentage—an infinitesimal percentage—of their produce by their own vehicles, yet we find that the Government is overlooking the vital necessity to increase the productivity of some of these districts which are comparatively sparsely settled.

The Minister for Transport: But you and many of your colleagues seem to spend nearly half your time asking for permits for farmers to be able to circumvent the railways.

Mr. PERKINS: In reply to that: Is that going to make or break the railway system? How much does that amount to in the total revenue of the railways?

The Minister for Transport: You would be surprised.

Mr. PERKINS: Surely the Minister is getting things out of perspective!

The Minister for Transport: No, I am not.

Mr. PERKINS: I suggest to the Minister that half a dozen of these farms that I have mentioned, where the farmers have walked off, would provide more revenue for the Railway Department than all the traffic which the department gets through the policing by the Transport Board; and ill-will is created towards the Railway Department in the process. The lines I have in mind, particularly, serve the south-eastern area.

I have no doubt that if the Minister does come to the House with the suggestion to close some of these lines where the revenue shows such a poor comparison with working expenses, we will hear of such lines as the Nyabing-Pingrup line; or the Ongerup line, with which the member for Stirling is concerned; and perhaps even the Lake Grace-Hyden line. It so happens that these are the areas where the settlers are finding it very difficult to carry on with the development of the Crown land that they have taken up.

I know of one instance where a settler from South Australia came here with approximately £2,000 and spent the whole of it in clearing and partly developing a property east of Pingrup. He may have been over-optimistic in the area he cleared, but, as he pointed out in justification of what he had done, had he cleared only portion of it and attempted to burn it, the fire might have got away and burnt out the rest of it. Members who know anything about clearing country in the wheatbelt know that once a fire has been through virgin country there, it is difficult to get that area to carry a fire again for perhaps 15 or 20 years.

However, the whole of that property has been cleared, and the man I have mentioned did not have a very good crop from it, as he was forced to crop it on the burn. Being short of money, he could not afford to fallow it and wait until the following year before putting in the crop. The agency section of the Rural and Industries Bank has refused to lend him money for fencing and the provision of water supplies on the property, and at present this man is off the farm and working for the Land Settlement Board, fencing at Jerramungup.

I have suggested forcibly to the commissioners of the Rural and Industries Bank, and to the Premier, that if the Government does no more, it should make sufficient finance available to fence such properties and provide water supplies on them.

Although it is not their money they are spending, because the agency section is guaranteed by the Treasury, the Rural and Industries Bank contend that if they advance money for fencing and water supplies they will be morally bound to go still further.

I do not entirely agree with them, although I certainly hope they would do so. But if they thought there was anything wrong with the personal equation, or that the individual was not suitable as a farmer, I would suggest, that, if the individual could not carry on, unless the property were fenced and provided with water supply it would revert to bush and be useless to anyone for a considerable period of years, and in the meantime the settler concerned would lose his £2,000. It is a tragic position.

If members want any colour on the position, I suggest they read some of the numbers of "The Countryman" from the beginning of May onwards, when one of the senior reporters of that journal and a photographer were down in that area. I can assure members that the articles I have mentioned are not over-coloured. In my opinion they present a fair picture of the difficulties that the settlers are putting up with; and, in fact, they are quite in line with what other members—the member for Moore and the member for Greenough—have said, as both can quote similar cases in their own electorates.

Some of these men who have had the grit to use their own savings in developing their properties up to the present stage are as good a type of settler as we will ever see, and I suggest that £1,000 advanced to each of them would go much further than a similar amount spent on any Government land settlement scheme.

I do not wish to debate the Government scheme at this stage as I would like first to hear the Minister's proposals; but I repeat that if we have only a limited amount of loan money to spend in this direction, it will go a lot further if used in helping men who are prepared to help themselves than by putting it into some grandiose Government scheme. I think the Minister for Transport will agree with me, because I have discussed the question with him in regard to housing. He has found it necessary to amend his housing scheme and allot a considerable proportion of the available money to people who are prepared to use their savings in providing homes for themselves; and the same principle applies to the development of our farm lands.

The Government cannot say it is not aware of the position, as I brought a representative deputation from these areas down to discuss the problem with the Premier, and he gave that deputation a favourable reply and said that the limiting factor was finance. If there is to be a lot of finance available from any

source for the development of our agricultural land, I submit that the first responsibility of the Government is to help these men to whom the Premier has given some encouragement, and to whom, I maintain, the Government has a moral obligation. I hope that in the not distant future the Minister for Agriculture will take the opportunity to get from Cabinet a clear statement as to what the Government's policy really is and then tell the House what is going to be done. We will then be able to talk to some of the people we represent, and either try to fall in with the Government's policy or else endeavour to have it altered.

I asked the Minister for Water Supplies what the average consumption of water per day per person was in the metropolitan area and he said it worked out at 105.06 gallons per head. I asked, also what was the maximum consumption on any day; and he said that on the 22nd September, 1955, the consumption in the metropolitan area was 240.76 gallons per head. I do not begrudge the people of the metropolitan area their water. We all feel proud of the way Perth has developed, and I would be the last one to suggest any course that would mean that the suburban gardens should look any less attractive than they do at present.

But I would contrast the water consumption quoted with that at another point where the Government has put in a local water scheme in a country district. In this regard I will read a letter dated the 21st June, 1956, from the Under Secretary for Works to the secretary of the Kulin Road Board. It is as follows:—

Your letters of the 16th March and the 10th May last with regard to the roofing of the town dam at Kulin have received consideration. The cost of roofing this dam would be approximately £14,000, which is a high figure for a comparatively small saving of water and in due course some alternative must be found. The town is using almost 50 gallons per head throughout the year and even at this figure the dam is adequate for the present population, but naturally when storage drops at the end of the summer mild restrictions are applied to safeguard against a late or poor following winter. Kulin at the present has a reasonable supply and there are other towns which are in worse circumstances. It would be difficult to justify further expenditure on your scheme until the supply to other towns is at least on a par with your own.

I have no reason to think that the Under Secretary did not clearly state the Minister's opinion on this particular point. What I question is the statement that at present Kulin has a reasonable supply. If, at 50 gallons per head, Kulin has a reasonable supply, it appears that the metropolitan

area, with a much lower average temperature, throughout the summer months at least, has something more than a reasonable supply at 105 gallons per head throughout the year.

The Minister for Works: What big industries are there in Kulin likely to absorb 500,000 gallons a day?

Mr. PERKINS: I hope that the Minister will reply to my speech and that he will enumerate these industries which are unduly pushing up the consumption in Perth.

The Minister for Works: A little investigation would show them to you.

Mr. PERKINS: I cannot think of any.

The Minister for Works: Have you ever heard of the oil company at Kwinana?

Mr. PERKINS: Yes; and I know that it uses a certain amount of fresh water. But, of course, all its cooling water is drawn from the ocean; and, spread over the metropolitan area, I think the Minister would find that the amount per head which the Kwinana Refinery pushes up the average consumption for that area, would be very small indeed. At any rate, I shall be interested to have the figures from him!

Hon. A. F. Watts: Before Kwinana existed the figure was 95 and the population was less.

Mr. Ackland: A restriction on sprinklers makes a difference of over 20,000,000 gallons a day.

Mr. PERKINS: I am anticipating that when the Minister does give us the figures, we will find that the average consumption per head in the metropolitan area will be raised by comparatively few gallons by these industries to which he refers. In any case, there is a contrast between the metropolitan area and our country districts in that at Kulin there is one bore which has usable water—and that is about as much as anyone could say for it—but over most of the district it is difficult to obtain any usable underground water at all. In the metropolitan area, under practically every suburban allotment, there is a large supply of water available, which has only to be tapped. That is the difference.

In this Chamber I have personally advocated that the department should alter its metropolitan rating policy in order to encourage people to save water rather than to use it. But in any case I believe the statement of the department that 50 gallons per head is sufficient in a country district can be questioned. I know the difficulty the Minister would have in doing anything further in Kulin at present. I have some more urgent problems from that area which I have been putting to him; but I do not want to let him lose sight of the problem at Kulin while considering other urgent matters. The particular ones to which I refer are Lake Grace and Dumbleyung.

I have another approach to this problem which I hope the Government will carefully consider: it is not something which only a small area is asking for. I am referring to a resolution carried by the Central South Regional Council, which covers a large area extending from Williams and Marradong on the west out to the No. 1 rabbit proof fence on the east; and from Corrigin in the north down to the Lake Grace line and extending out and embracing the Newdegate and Lake areas.

As can be seen, the regional council represents a large area, and that body carried the following resolution which, if the Minister has not already seen it, will be available for his perusal, in the very near future:—

That the State Government be urged to make a survey of the district east of Narrogin to determine where it is practicable and desirable to pipe Wellington Dam water.

The Minister also knows that the people from a number of towns and districts out there have already approached him, by deputations which I introduced, asking that consideration be given to the extension of the pipeline east of Narrogin to serve Wickopin, Yealering, Corrigin, Kullin, Lake Grace, Newdegate, and right down to Pingrup.

Members who know that area will realise that it is mostly below the 16-inch rainfall isohyet; and over a large portion, it is impossible to obtain underground water supplies. Also, it is difficult to excavate deep down because there is a salt water table underneath. While the local farmers have done a good job by preparing catchments to cater for their own needs, there is a request for the same facilities to be made available to them as are available to a large portion of the State.

I realise that the Minister has commitments on his hand, and that he has to finish the comprehensive water scheme approved by Parliament. But work is proceeding on that, and we all know that the time is not far distant when the job will be completed. However, it is necessary, some time before the completion of that scheme, to decide what we can do to meet other urgent water needs in our agricultural areas, and I hope that the Minister will agree to the requests I have made. It is only a matter of an investigation at this stage, and I can assure him that the local authorities and organisations in those districts covered by the resolution will be anxious to extend the fullest co-operation possible.

In fact, the Corrigin Road Board, part of whose area comes within the amended comprehensive scheme, and part of which will be served by the pipeline running south of Corrigin, has gone to the trouble and expense of contacting all the settlers in its area, and they have a litho marked with those who are in favour and those

who are against the proposal. In a portion of the district, the ground is of a lighter nature and at present there is no water supply problem. That litho will be available to the Minister whenever he would like to inspect it; he may have even seen it when he visited Corrigin.

What I would like to emphasise is that until this survey is made, we will not know where are the best places to extend the supply lines. There will be portions of these districts which do not require a reticulated water supply; and I think members will agree that as we are so short of loan moneys to do the essential jobs for which the Government is responsible, it would be utterly stupid to use loan funds to push a water pipeline into an area where it was not really required. So in my opinion it is necessary to find out just what portion of the area really requires a reticulated water supply and where it is practicable, from an engineering point of view, and economic, to build these lines.

I do not wish to push the barrow for any particular area at present; all I am suggesting to the Minister is that he give serious consideration to the resolution, and that he arrange for the survey to be made as soon as practicable. I reiterate that the local authorities and other local governing bodies will give him the utmost co-operation in carrying out that survey.

It seems to me that all these rural problems have a close relationship between one and another. Obviously, when we are considering the difficulties of maintaining our overseas balances and building up the production of those products that can earn us international exchange; and when we consider that these products are, very largely, the produce of the land, it is most necessary to give encouragement to land settlement where practicable. Furthermore, in order to make such settlement more attractive for people who are encouraged to enter these rural areas we, in this Parliament, should be prepared to ensure that when people do settle on the land they are able to live a reasonably civilised life.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order! I cannot hear the hon. member because there are too many undertone conversations being held.

**MR. PERKINS:** Those living in the cities often get the idea that people residing in the country districts are a more virile type—

**MR. ACKLAND:** They are!

**MR. PERKINS:** —who do not need the comforts and amenities which city people take for granted. That is all very well up to a point. It is a fact that country people do put up with tough conditions, but the ultimate result must be that the drift away from our country areas to the city will be accentuated. All parties represented in this Chamber give lip service to the policy of decentralisation.

Mr. Evans: We should have more of it.

Mr. PERKINS: I am very pleased to hear that interjection from the member for Kalgoorlie. If we can hear more from him along those lines, we on this side of the House will give him as much support as possible, because it is not lip service as far as we on this side of the House are concerned.

A great many of us here live in the country, or have lived there; and believe it is vital, if we are to retain the progressive section of our population in the country districts, not to ask too great a sacrifice of them. I believe that there will always be facilities available to people who reside in the metropolitan area that country people cannot enjoy; but where it is practicable to extend any facilities to country areas, I suggest that if we are to give more than lip service to this policy of decentralisation, we should support any move that is made in that direction.

The provision of adequate water supplies is the greatest of all the services that should be made available for people in the country. I have known of many instances of families who have established themselves in a country district, but who finally left for the city because water was not readily available. One often watches a family growing up in the country. This family perhaps builds a nice home and establishes a lovely garden. Its members feel quite safe in the thought that they will have adequate water supplies to maintain them and then suddenly they experience a dry season, the water supply gives out, and the garden dies.

Members representing country districts know full well that such an occurrence does not happen twice. Sometimes a man is prepared to give it another go; but in nearly every case his wife has had enough, which eventually leads to the family moving to the city.

Mr. Hall: Would not the lack of hospitals play a big part?

Mr. PERKINS: Yes; but that factor is not as serious as the lack of other facilities. We are gradually improving our hospital facilities in many of our country districts, and that factor is not as serious as many intangible things that are experienced in the country. It is often the little things that count; and without water one cannot make available many of these other amenities. Electrical appliances and labour-saving devices can be installed in the home; but in Kalgoorlie and other country areas where the temperatures are fairly high in the summer—although those that are used to high temperatures do not find them uncomfortable—a nice home and a nice garden are appreciated, especially by the womenfolk. To them it is half the battle if they are able to have decent living accommodation, plenty of water and pleasant surroundings.

We are now able to develop various plants which provide valuable stock feed in the dry periods of the year. Also, those dry periods do give us some advantage in the control of pests. I emphasise that if we are to retain these progressive families in country districts we should not expect to create a gap between the facilities they are able to enjoy and those that are enjoyed by those people who live in, say, Nedlands, Floreat Park, and other suburbs.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [5.7]: I join with other members in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on attaining the high office of the Speakership. I sincerely hope that your term will be a happy and a long one. I also take this opportunity of paying tribute to the late Don Barker, M.L.C., who worked so hard for the North and its people. With his loss the North has really been dealt a severe blow.

There are a few matters relating to the Kimberley electorate to which I wish to refer. Firstly, I congratulate the Government on its fine efforts over the past three years. Those efforts have been beneficial and satisfying in comparison with the stagnating and stultifying efforts of the McLarty-Watts Government during its six years of office. I will admit that a great deal remains to be done, but at least we can say that some of our Government buildings are now in a reasonable state of repair, and many additions have been made to them.

In the three years the Government has been in office we have heard a lot about populating the North. I think every person here—and, in fact, every person in Australia—realises that the only way to populate the North is by the expenditure of huge sums of money. There is no other way. Suggestions have been put forward for the division of the million-acre pastoral properties in the North. That should be done; but if it were, it would not be practicable to cut those million-acre properties into anything less than properties of a quarter of a million acres, because such areas would have to include the bad sections with the good. I am quite sure that it would not be advisable to cut them into sections of a lesser area than one quarter of a million acres.

One real hope of populating the North, I think, lies in the Ord River scheme; but there is no doubt that the complete answer to the problem is to spend many millions of pounds in that area. It is up to the Commonwealth Government to realise that it cannot continue to hold those vast empty spaces in the North. If the Commonwealth Government is at all sincere in its policy towards the North, it must and should grant further taxation concessions. After all is said and done, the paltry few thousands of pounds it would lose would not be as much as Mr. Menzies spends on his trips overseas. It is only a small amount, and it would induce people to



remain in the North. It would be beneficial to the employer, the producer and the worker.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What about our Minister for Mines?

Mr. Court: Are you suggesting that the Minister for Mines should not have gone overseas?

Mr. RHATIGAN: Not necessarily; he does not go as frequently as Mr. Menzies does.

Hon. D. Brand: Mr. Menzies does not go as frequently as did Dr. Evatt, nor as Dr. Evatt would were he Prime Minister again.

Mr. RHATIGAN: I would now like to touch on the Department of Native Welfare. My inquiries and observations lead me to believe that it is because of the dictatorial attitude of some of the departmental officers that a lot of complaints are made. They come from the natives and from persons that these officers represent, and from employers and residents of the various towns.

One very serious complaint is in relation to natives who are sent to hospitals from stations and outback places where they may be employed. On discharge, the Department of Native Welfare claims as its prerogative the looking after of a native, taking him to the ration camp and at times finding him a job. Under the old system, however, the medical officer arranged for him to be returned by plane or other transport to the place whence he had come. That was quite satisfactory. Now it is a question of getting the native to say "yes" or "no." In many cases he may say that he would like a job in town, whereupon he is found one; and in consequence, his relatives and employer—who may be looking forward to his return—find that he does not come back. This is a matter which the Minister should look into.

When the Department of Native Welfare was first established it looked after every aspect with which the native was concerned. But as time has gone by, the department has shelved its responsibility; and we now find that the Public Health Department looks after the health of the native and the Education Department after his education. The missions, of course, are playing a big part, and rightly so. But as a result of all this, the Department of Native Welfare has gradually pushed its responsibility on to the other departments, and I cannot see any benefit at all in its existence other than the fact that it supplies patrol officers.

Numerous complaints have been made to me by people in the North as to supplies; indeed, one complaint was made in this House today. I do not intend to elaborate on the matter, but I shall content myself with reading a few extracts

that I have with me. The following is an extract from the "Northern Times" dated the 26th of April, 1956, which concerns Wyndham. It reads as follows:—

How long, oh Lord, how long? do we have to wait in Wyndham, for airfreight from Perth.

Surely with an amalgamation of two airlines, it is only natural to expect a better service—goodness knows it couldn't have got any worse! What of the freighter—does it ever carry any freight—occasionally a bundle of newspapers, and many's the time when they don't come too, and perishables if they aren't off-loaded. After all, man doesn't live by perishables alone. In our own instance we have been waiting a week for vital engine parts which despite imploping telegrams are still gently reposing in M.M.A.'s office where they are a great help in keeping a refrigerator going.

Three planes have come and gone and still no parts, no freight bag at all on today, but there were electric light globes on for Darwin.

This is not an isolated case. I know of two other concerns, one State and one Commonwealth, which are also waiting on overdue spare parts.

I could be wrong of course, actually facts have proved me so, but I was always under the impression that the idea behind an air service was that of speedy delivery to benefit those in need of urgent supplies. If you don't want anything in a hurry, there is always boat mail. The mere fact of having ordered goods by air freight should, in itself, stress the urgency of the requirements.

The "Koolinda" and "Kabbarli" can get here in nine or ten days, whilst freight stays in the airlines office in Perth for five days.

Mr. Hearman: Speak up!

Mr. RHATIGAN: The hon. member should talk about speaking up! To continue—

A great thing this progress. Still what is the use? This, I know, will get me nowhere. People have been complaining for years, with very poor results, and I don't doubt for one moment that the company will have its answers pat—something on the lines of "if they have no bread let them eat cake?" The cake is the passengers, with plenty of sugar coating in the way of "free release," but the freight—or lack of it—is a bitter pill to swallow—in fact it makes me sick.

There is a further cutting, dated the 16th of May, 1956, which reads as follows:—

The freighter broke the record last week—it was almost on time. The

only snag there was no freight on it bar perishables.

I have several of these cuttings, but I will not weary the House with them. I will merely proceed to read another one dated the 31st May, 1956, which has the following heading: "Senator Investigates Increased Plane Landing Charges," and reads as follows:—

Prior to the amalgamation of the two airlines operating in the North-West, planes could, on request, land on a station where a runway had been provided.

The charge for such landing was £10, but it enabled sick people to come to Perth for treatment without having to undergo a long road journey to the nearest scheduled landing place. After the amalgamation, however, the Dove planes which had been used on these runs, were replaced by D.C.3 aircraft, and the charge for making these occasional landings was raised to £30 plus the usual flying charge to Perth.

This very heavy increase in the charge for such emergency landings practically renders the service useless to North-West residents, some of whom approached Senator Seward in an endeavour to have the charge for emergency landings reduced.

The Senator has now received advice from the Minister for Civil Aviation to the effect that its Wednesday service will be diverted in order to meet these emergency calls at the former charge of £10. Apparently the Department or the airlines company expects that all cases of sickness must occur on Wednesday, concluded the Senator.

I think that is proof positive that the people in the North are not satisfied with the services rendered them by M.M.A. I have travelled fairly extensively by planes up there, and I wish to congratulate the pilots and staffs of these planes; they render an invaluable service. I can only conclude that the complaints are made because this particular company is attempting too much with the planes—in some cases old ones—at its disposal. It is quite frequent now, while travelling on these planes, to find that they have engine trouble, and that, of course, delays them for 24 hours or longer. As I have said, I think the company is attempting too much with the planes at its disposal.

Mr. Court: Has there not been some improvement in the Kimberleys by the withdrawal of the older planes and their replacement by Doves?

Mr. RHATIGAN: That has only just recently taken place, and some stations are receiving better services while others are not as well catered for. I do not know quite how it is working out, because it is

only recently that the change has been made, and I think we will have to wait until it has had a sufficient trial.

Mr. Court: I should imagine the Doves would be much more satisfactory than the old Ansons.

Mr. RHATIGAN: I should say so, and I speak from personal experience of the Anson. In fact, I think it is high time that we prohibited Ansons from flying at all. I had an experience of a forced landing in an Anson on one occasion.

I would ask the Government to give consideration to these other matters, although I am aware that loan funds are short. The goods sheds at Derby and Broome require a great deal of work to bring them up to standard; and the conditions under which the staff of the Harbour and Light Department at Derby work are deplorable. That building was erected when Derby was first settled, and it has not been improved since. There is room for vast improvement to that accommodation. Offices for the Harbour and Light Department should have been included in the new building recently erected for the Public Works Department and the State Shipping Service. The addition of another two rooms would have overcome the difficulties being experienced at the goods shed.

It is pleasing to note that another ship will shortly be added to the North-West service. This will relieve the acute passenger transport by State ships up and down the North-West coast. With the proposed opening up of a tourist route in that region, a further two ships would be needed. I believe that one will be put into commission on that route in 1957.

I agree with all that the member for South Perth said yesterday regarding the natives in the Warburton Ranges on the South Australian border. I trust that the Government will look into that matter because the member for South Perth was correct in his remarks.

On motion by Mr. Toms, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.23 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, 21st August, 1956.

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