

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 10th September, 1952.

## CONTENTS.

Questions :	Page
Harbours, (a) as to wharfside land values, Fremantle .....	836
(b) as to reclamation work, Albany .....	836
(c) as to maintenance dredging, etc. Transport, (a) as to zones and through-routing .....	837
(b) as to plans of proposed zones .....	837
Building Supplies as to Government purchase and disposal of materials .....	837
Lands, (a) as to assistance to Esperance Downs farmers .....	837
(b) as to allocation of farm, New Norcia .....	837
(c) as to applications for areas, Broome district .....	838
Railways, as to Diesel-electric locomotives, Perth-Kalgoorlie service .....	838
Electricity Supplies, as to wiring pump employees' houses .....	838
Education, (a) as to classrooms and renovations, Belmont school .....	838
(b) as to installation of septic tanks, Redcliffe school .....	839
(c) as to draining, Redcliffe school ground .....	839
Timber Industry, as to dismissal of employees .....	839
Workers' Compensation Act, (a) as to introducing amending legislation .....	840
(b) as to decision by Cabinet .....	840
Leave of absence .....	840
Address-in-reply, ninth day, amendment, conclusion .....	840
Speakers on Address—	
Hon. J. B. Sleeman .....	840
Mr. Styant .....	851
Mr. J. Hegney .....	858
Mr. Butcher .....	864
Bills : Health Act Amendment (No. 1), 1r. Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment and Continuance, 1r. ....	866
State Housing Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866
Child Welfare Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866
Education Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866
Fremantle Harbour Trust Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866
Milk Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866
Fremantle Electricity Undertaking Agreement, 1r. ....	866
Main Roads Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866
Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment (Continuance), 1r. ....	866
Fremantle Electricity Undertaking (Purchase Monies) Agreements, 1r. ....	866
Pharmacy and Poisons Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866
Physiotherapists Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866
Health Act Amendment (No. 2), 1r. ....	866
Nurses Registration Act Amendment, 1r. ....	866

## QUESTIONS.

### HARBOURS.

(a) *As to Wharfside Land Values, Fremantle.*

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works: What is the approximate value of the land per acre at the wharf's side at Fremantle?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) The value of land per acre at the wharfside at the port of Fremantle is almost impossible to assess, owing to the many variable areas and variable costs which might be used as a basis of computation.

(b) *As to Reclamation Work, Albany.*

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works: How many acres are there in the reclaimed area at Albany?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(2) Seventy-nine acres.

(c) *As to Maintenance Dredging, etc.*

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works: (1) What has been the cost of maintenance dredging at—

(a) Fremantle;

(b) Bunbury;

(c) Albany, to date?

(2) What is the approximate amount of silting now in Fremantle harbour?

(3) How many cubic yards did the "Sir James Mitchell" have to remove to increase the entrance depth at Princess Royal Harbour from 33ft. to 34ft.?

(4) Did the recent echo soundings of Princess Royal harbour show any decline in the depth, as compared with the soundings in the previous survey?

(5) What was the date of that previous survey?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) (a) The aggregate cost of maintenance dredging commenced in 1914 up to 30th June, 1952, is £190,765 18s. 6d. This sum includes overhead charges, excludes engineering supervision, and includes maintenance dredging covering an abnormal cost involved in the removal of silt following the part collapse of the railway bridge in 1926.

(b) Cost of maintenance dredging from 1909 to 1952 is £298,279.

(c) Nil.

(2) Siltation of Fremantle is approximately at the rate of one inch per annum.

(3) Entrance channel and swinging basin at Albany have been dredged to a minimum depth of 33ft. 6in. to be consistent with the minimum allowed in the dredging contract.

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

Approximately 330,000 cubic yards have been removed by the dredge Sir James Mitchell in this operation. A depth of 33ft. was not present over the whole area prior to this dredging.

(4) Soundings of the entrance channel and swinging basin taken in December, 1951, indicate that generally the depth of water has been maintained since the previous survey.

(5) January, 1918.

#### TRANSPORT.

(a) *As to Zones and Through-Routing.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Was consideration given to through-routing during the discussions which led to the formulating of the zone system for metropolitan transport, as announced recently?

(2) If not, why not?

(3) If the answer to (1) is in the negative, will he take steps to have the zones amended to allow for through-routing and ensure that that system is adhered to in regard to all routes?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Yes, but it was found that through-routing not only had a number of disadvantages, especially from an economic viewpoint, but its value in reducing city congestion was limited.

(2) and (3) If the hon. member cares to do so, he may peruse a report from the Secretary, Transport Board, which is in my possession.

(b) *As to Plans of Proposed Zones.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

In a recent issue of "The West Australian" there appeared a copy of a plan indicating a proposal to divide our metropolitan transport system into zones. If these plans are available, can copies be supplied to members?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

I am not aware of the publication to which the hon. member refers. The question of zoning is being considered by the Transport Board, and if any plans are available I will inform the hon. member.

#### BUILDING SUPPLIES.

*As to Government Purchase and Disposal of Materials.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Housing:

In his speech on the Address-in-reply, the Minister made mention of good buying of piping, cement, builders' hardware, etc., which resulted in a large profit. Can he state—

(1) If the goods were used on Government projects, were they charged out at higher than cost?

(2) If the goods were not used by the Government, were they sold at less than market price?

(3) Were profits made?

(4) If profits were made, were they paid to the Treasury?

(5) If not, how were they spent, and by whose authority?

The MINISTER replied:

The speech on the Address-in-reply made reference to savings effected and not to a large profit.

(1) No. They were charged out at average cost price based on method of transport or source of supply.

(2) Average price was charged.

(3) No.

(4) and (5) Answered by (3).

#### LANDS.

(a) *As to Assistance to Esperance Downs Farmers.*

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister for Lands:

Will the Government consider helping the farmers on the Esperance Downs on similar lines, but to a lesser extent, to those who are being fostered at Many Peaks, etc., by making available a couple of tractors to plough up two or three hundred acres of land on each property by those desiring that help, and the cost of same to be capitalised?

The MINISTER replied:

The matter will be investigated and I will advise the hon. member in due course.

(b) *As to Allocation of Farm, New Norcia.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Was a Mr. Childs allocated a farm near New Norcia in the last allocation of farms under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme?

(2) Is Mr. Childs a district supervisor under the scheme?

(3) Does Mr. Childs' wife already own or rent a farming property?

(4) If the answer to (3) is in the affirmative, what is the area, carrying capacity and value of the farm?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) He was, Mr. Childs has been an applicant under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme since 3/7/45, and was graded in Group 1. But for the fact that his services were required by the Department and he was requested not to exercise his right of applying for farms, he would have been allotted one long ago.

(3) and (4) Mrs. Childs, prior to her marriage in May last, was the holder of a Conditional Purchase Lease of 4,000 acres of sandplain, Melbourne Location 3554. This land is being forfeited by Mrs. Childs and will be thrown open for selection with the existing improvements, 200 acres of scrub ploughing, and survey fees—cost £243 plus £16 to Mrs. Childs. The farm was allotted to her husband on condition that his wife would dispose of her land, and his lease will not be granted until this has been completed.

*(c) As to Applications for Areas, Broome District.*

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Will he advise what stage has been reached in connection with applications for small areas of land near Broome in the names of Jones, Lawrence and Stanley, as these applications were lodged over 15 months ago, and much production has been lost?

(2) Will he give these applications his personal attention?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A departmental surveyor is in the district and has been instructed to inspect the areas covered by the applications. Further consideration will be given to the proposal when his report is received.

(2) Yes.

### RAILWAYS.

*As to Diesel-Electric Locomotives, Perth-Kalgoorlie Service.*

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

(1) What is the approximate date for the introduction of diesel-electric locomotives on the Perth-Kalgoorlie railway passenger service, as proposed by the State Railway Commission in 1949?

(2) What would be the approximate time taken for the journey between Perth and Kalgoorlie and vice versa, compared with steam locomotives?

(3) Is it proposed to continue with the out-dated passenger coaches now in use on the service abovementioned?

(4) Is it a fact that orders were placed with British or American firms in 1948 for the supply to this State of diesel-electric locomotives? If so, when is it expected that delivery will be made?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Delivery of main line diesel-electric locomotives is expected to commence early next year. It has not yet been decided on what service the first of the new locomotives will be placed.

(2) Approximately 14 hours compared with 16-17 hours for steam trains.

(3) The existing coaching stock will be used.

(4) No. The orders were placed in Great Britain in November, 1950.

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

*As to Wiring Pump Employees' Houses.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What stage has been reached in the supply of electric lighting to Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8 pumping stations?

(2) When will the wiring of pump employees' houses be completed?

(3) Is he aware that much domestic electrical equipment was purchased some considerable time ago by employees, in anticipation of electricity supplies being available?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Nos. 5 and 6 Pumping Station—

Engine installed; complete and ready to run. All power poles erected.

No. 7 Pumping Station—

Engine installed; undergoing overhaul but awaiting spare parts from England. All power poles erected.

No. 8 Pumping Station—

Foundations for engine prepared. Engine not yet installed. All power poles erected.

No electrical installation work commenced yet at any station.

(2) Unable to estimate. Financial requirements under consideration on Revenue Estimates.

(3) No.

### EDUCATION.

*(a) As to Classrooms and Renovations, Belmont School.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) When was the contract let for the erection of additional brick class rooms and renovations at the Belmont school?

(2) What was the contract price?

(3) What is the name of the contractor?

(4) Is the contract price subject to a rise and fall clause?

(5) What is the total amount of advance payments made?

(6) What is the reason for the long delay in completing this job?

(7) When is it expected that the job will be completed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) The work was carried out by the Public Works Department departmental construction organisation, and was commenced in March, 1950.

(2) Estimate £13,401.

(3) and (4) See answer to (1).

(5) Cost to date, £22,177. Since the estimate was prepared there has been an increase of over 80 per cent. in building costs.

(6) This work involved additions and the complete remodelling of the whole of the existing portion of the school. To allow the school to function, it was necessary to carry out the work in three separate sections. Delays were also experienced in the supply of material—particularly bricks, tiles and fibrous plaster.

(7) The job is complete except for the paving of the grounds.

(b) *As to Installation of Septic Tanks, Redcliffe School.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) When was the contract let for the erection of new brick lavatories and septic tank system at the Redcliffe school?

(2) What was the contract price?

(3) What is the name of the contractor?

(4) Is the contract price subject to a rise and fall clause?

(5) Has the advance payment for work done exceeded the contract price?

(6) Is there a sufficient and valid reason for the long delay in completing the job?

(7) As the existing facilities are badly dilapidated and the new job was started during February, 1951, will he give immediate instructions to secure the completion of the building at an early date and have it made available for the convenience of the children?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) 1st January, 1951.

(2) £1,604.

(3) R. L. Howells, 342 Canning Highway, South Perth.

(4) Yes.

(5) No.

(6) No, not for the whole period, but the difficulties experienced by the contractor with materials and labour would account for a considerable period.

(7) The work is complete and the lavatories are in use.

(c) *As to Drainage, Redcliffe School Ground.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that the Redcliffe school ground has a considerable quantity of water on it, and is badly in need of proper drainage?

(2) Is he aware that the shelter sheds are partly in water?

(3) As this condition of affairs has existed for many years, and in view of the fact that the school is adjacent to the Guildford airport and a bad advertisement for the State, will he give instructions to an officer to investigate and see if remedial action can be taken?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) A comprehensive scheme for draining and paving was prepared last year, at an estimated cost of £1,675. Owing to lack of funds, the work was not approved.

A reduced scheme to deal with the worst aspect of the drainage only has been prepared. This is estimated to cost £300 and is now under consideration by the Treasury.

## TIMBER INDUSTRY

*As to Dismissal of Employees.*

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Has he seen in the issue of "The West Australian" on the 9th September a report from the Secretary of the Metropolitan Timber Workers' Union that 50 of his members have been dismissed within the past three weeks?

(2) That he has found it difficult to place any of these men elsewhere in the industry, and that in his opinion the industry is facing the worst slump since pre-war days?

(3) Are dismissals through lack of trade limited to the metropolitan area only, or is there a general slackening off in demand for our timbers?

(4) How are our country mills situated regarding demand, and is there any danger of a slackening in production in the foreseeable future?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes. Inquiries indicated that the men referred to have been laid off from small factories in the metropolitan area, engaged in the manufacture of cases for tinned fruit, milk, jam, etc.

The demand for these cases is slackening as wooden cases are being replaced by cardboard containers.

(3) The dismissals referred to by the Secretary of the Metropolitan Workers' Union are limited to the metropolitan area only. Some mills in country areas are still not fully manned.

(4) Main sawmillers controlling country mills advise that there is still a steady demand for building timbers within the State. There appears no danger of a slackening in production in the foreseeable future, as there is not only an expandable market within the State but still a keen

demand from oversea for our high quality timbers. A quota for oversea has been retained in order to stabilise the industry, and can be expanded.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

(a) *As to Introducing Amending Legislation.*

Mr. W. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

In reply to a question without notice, asked recently, the Attorney General indicated that the matter of an amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act was being considered by Cabinet. Has Cabinet arrived at a decision, and if this decision is in the affirmative, will he undertake to introduce the measure early in the session?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: Cabinet has not arrived at any decision.

(b) *As to Decision by Cabinet.*

Mr. W. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

Can he indicate when Cabinet is likely to make a decision?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: No.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Bovell, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. D. Brand (Greenough) on the ground of ill-health.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Ninth Day—Amendment—Conclusion.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [4.47]: I want to have a few words to say on the Address-in-reply before the debate ends. Last night, one member stated that this was a Government of statesmen. I am afraid I cannot agree with the member for Wembley Beaches. However, I wish to congratulate the Government on the way it has looked after its friends, because it certainly has not looked after the workers. The workers can be fined and gaoled, but subsidies and gifts are presented to friends of the Government. On this aspect, the Government has been criticised not only by members of this House but also by officials in the Government service.

This Government is prepared to declare men on strike if they do not offer for or accept employment, but there is nothing to stop an employer from going on strike, and he can get away with it. Let me refer to the oil companies. On the 23rd August, the heading "Companies Issue a Threat over Petrol Price" appeared in "The West Australian". The article states—

The Oil Industry Prices Committee, Melbourne, has warned State Prices Ministers that petrol and oil trading in country areas may be seriously curtailed if increased prices are not soon approved.

Surely the Attorney General would not be so foolish as to let the oil companies threaten him! These companies are on strike, but nothing happens to them. They get away with it.

The Attorney General: They have not got away with it yet, have they?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: They have not received an increase of 3d. a gallon yet, but I am anticipating that they will get 1½d. or maybe 2d., so everything in the garden will be lovely. Of course, the companies do not expect to get 3d. These oil companies are on strike, and they are no different from a worker refusing to supply his goods—in other words, his labour because they are the only goods he has—for a certain price. The whole-milk people said they would throw their milk down the drain.

Mr. Manning: Nonsense!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is all very well for my friend the dairy farmer to talk like that. I am not sure, but I believe he was one of the men who made the threat, "If we do not get a certain price for our milk, down the drain it will go!"

Mr. Manning: Tommyrot!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is not tommyrot, and no-one can prove to the contrary. I have heard the member for Moore threaten that he would not grow any more wheat if such and such a thing were not done. Is not that a strike? Of course it is! However, if the working man does such things, or even if he only anticipates a strike, that constitutes a crime and the law is after him. It is time we woke up and gave the worker the same justice as the employer receives, though at the moment he does not get it in this State. As I said before, the Government looks after its friends and it is doing a good job. On the opening day of Parliament the member for Canning moved the usual motion for the presentation of the Address to His Excellency and concluded with the words, "and to thank your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament." I will now quote one or two items mentioned in the Speech for which he expressed his thanks to His Excellency, the Governor. Here is one—

In spite of difficulties arising from the loan position and the metal trades strike . . . . .

It will be noted that they never fail to mention the metal trades strike. Everything that happens is blamed on to that strike, according to them. Although the Governor was not responsible for what was

contained in the Speech—because I am sure he would be hurt if he realised what he had been reading—it goes on to say—

... the State remains economically sound. The employment position is satisfactory . . . . .

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if you think the employment position is satisfactory or if the State is economically sound. There is no doubt that it should be, but I would say it is financially bankrupt at present, due largely to bad administration by the Government of the day. There is no question about that. This State should be in a sound financial position because it is largely a primary producing one, and it has had good wheat and wool seasons accompanied by record prices for those commodities. As for the employment position, the Government is endeavouring in every possible way to put men off here and men off there. One would think that it did not have two shillings to bless itself with judging by the way it is dealing with workers in industry at present. During the last week or two I have asked a number of questions on unemployment. One of them was asked of the Premier as follows:—

Will he inform the House how many men's services were dispensed with—

- (a) at the Fremantle harbour works;
- (b) at the Bunbury harbour works;
- (c) at the Albany harbour works;
- (d) at the Wellington Dam.

and the Premier replied—

- (a) 32.
- (b) 60.
- (c) 25.
- (d) 40.

Further, in answer to a question I asked as to how many men were now under notice of dismissal from the Fremantle harbour works, the Premier replied that there were 61 and he elaborated on that answer by saying—

Including the effects of the metal trades strike, the latest return showed 689 people in receipt of unemployment relief in Western Australia.

Will members note the way he again brings in the metal trades strike? If there is anything to blame the metal trades strike is always responsible. The Premier concluded his answer by saying—

The number of unemployed is far less than at any time between 1933 and the outbreak of war.

Is it not a subterfuge to bring that in? The State would be in a fatal position if there were less people in employment now than there was in 1933. We were just emerging from a depression in that year. During the last few years 64,000 migrants have entered our State and therefore, does

the Premier still think for an instant that there would be less people employed now than there were in 1933? When the figure of 689 unemployed was given all the people who were unemployed had not been recorded at that stage. In four weeks the Government has been responsible for throwing out of employment 500 men. Where can they get work in these times when there is no work for them? I heard one member say they should go to the country. Where are the jobs in the country? One has only to ring up the Commonwealth Employment Service to find that there are no jobs offering for them in the country.

The Speech states there are 689 people receiving unemployment relief, but does not mention the number of people who are out of work and are not receiving it. In view of that, fancy the Government including a statement such as that in the Speech and asking His Excellency to read it out to Parliament. I repeat that the employment position is far from satisfactory. I asked the Premier another question as follows:—

In view of his answer to the member for Cottesloe regarding the number of men employed by the Public Works, Forests, Metropolitan Water Supply and Electricity and Gas Department and the State Electricity Commission, will he give the House an assurance that there will be no further retrenchments in those branches of the public service and that the employment of the men concerned will be maintained?

The Premier replied—

I regret—

He regrets!—

that I am unable to give any such assurance until I know what the loan position will be.

Again I say that the State does not seem to be financially sound if the Government has to put these people off and then say that it regrets that work cannot be found for them. I then asked the following question of the Minister for Works—

Will he inform the House when it is anticipated that work will be started on the new berth in the present Fremantle Harbour?

and the Minister replied—

It has not been possible to provide any Loan Funds from the 1952-53 allocation for the No. 10 berth at North Fremantle, as the whole allocation to Fremantle Harbour will be absorbed in meeting commitments and completing works in hand on wharf sheds and facilities.

It was only last year that this was classed as important work and that it had to be proceeded with immediately, but this year

the Government again cries poverty and lack of funds and says it cannot do any further work on No. 10 berth. That berth was urgently needed last year and the need is still urgent. At the time the question was raised the engineer in charge of Harbours and Works and the Minister for Works told us that the work was to be pushed on as soon as possible. Then the member for South Fremantle asked the following question:—

(1) How many employees of the Government have been sacked or given notice of dismissal in the past four weeks?

(2) Will he tell us the figures of Government employees sacked or under notice by each Government Department?

(3) Does the Government propose to sack any more of its employees; if so, what is the complete estimate of the proposed sacking?

and the Premier replied—

(1) and (2) Retrenchments from the 1st July to date are as follows:—	
Metropolitan Water Supply	32
Public Works Department	306
State Electricity Commission	117
Electricity and Gas	6
Forests	36
	<hr/> 497 <hr/>

No further men are under notice of dismissal.

(3) Until the Government knows the extent to which it is possible to defer contracts and also the exact amount of loan money available from all sources, including the possible State Electricity Commission Loan it is not possible to answer this question. Every effort will be made to keep retrenchments to an absolute minimum. Special representations have been made to the Commonwealth Government to assist with finance for work associated with food production.

The Leader of the Opposition also asked certain questions on unemployment as follows:—

(1) How many men were re-trenched from Government employment during the month of July?

(2) How many men have been re-trenched by the Government this month up to Saturday last?

and the Premier replied—

(1) One hundred and thirty-seven.

(2) Two hundred and ninety-four.

On the basis of those answers, if the Government thinks the employment position is satisfactory I certainly do not. I wonder what His Excellency would have said if he had known that such statements were to be included in the Speech he

had to read to Parliament. I feel sure that Her Majesty, too, would be greatly concerned if she knew that her representative was asked to read an address that is untrue and incorrect. I think the time has come when the Government should try to re-employ these men and get them all work. It is no good saying that there is a shortage of Loan funds. It seems to me that the policy of this Government and the Commonwealth Government is guns before butter. They seem to be thinking more about guns than the employment of workers in this country. The policy is a wrong one, and it is about time we considered the workers and gave them butter instead of talking so much about guns.

Mr. Graham: Give them margarine.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It would not be so bad if they could get margarine; they would be quite satisfied.

Mr. Manning: Send them down to the bush to produce butter.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Did you ever hear such ridiculous nonsense, Mr. Speaker? The member for Warren will tell the hon. member all he wants to know about the shortage in the production of butter. My friend was going to throw the milk down the drain; that is certainly not the way to produce butter. Not only does the Government put workers off but it is scratching around this country, which is supposed to be so economically sound, in order to obtain every penny it can. I would like to read the following to the House:—

#### A Midland Project Abandoned.

Tenders have been called for the sale of the delicensed Victoria Hotel in Midland Junction, which was recently purchased by the Railway Department.

The Minister for Education (Mr. Watts) said this in the Legislative Assembly yesterday, in reply to Mr. Brady (Labour, Guildford - Midland).

Mr. Watts said that it had been intended to use the premises for the accommodation of railway employees, but for the present it had been decided to abandon the project because of the lack of loan funds.

I understand the Government is selling these premises for a paltry few thousand pounds. They were brought for the use of the railway employees at Midland but the Government is in such a sorry plight financially that it has decided to turn everything it can into money; consequently it intends to sell this building in Midland Junction which may bring a few thousand pounds or so. It is to be turned into money in order to get the Govern-

ment out of its financial troubles! The next extract I wish to read concerns a huge works and is as follows:—

**Work Stops on Scheme.**

Manjimup: Lack of Government money has brought a cessation of work on the Manjimup water scheme. Sixteen men have been put off.

For some months two gangs have been employed laying a new 8-in. main from Dean Mill dam to the town reservoir about five miles away.

The main is almost complete.

The dam has been overflowing for some time and tons of water are passing over the spillway.

This Government which tells us that we are in such a wonderful position, discharges 16 men working on a water supply scheme which is about to finish. Would you say, Mr. Speaker, that the country is being properly governed when a Government does that sort of thing? On the other side of the picture we find that the Government is prepared to give subsidies to its friends. Last year £250,000 was spent on the cartage of super by road. A year or two ago, in fact every year, we were promised that the amount would not be so much, but when the Estimates were brought down we found that the figure was up at £250,000 last year. I have a cutting here which reads as follows:—

Controlled road transport would have to be found for about 230,000 tons of superphosphate during the 1952-53 season, the general secretary of the Farmers' Union (Mr. A. G. Traine) said yesterday.

This was about 70,000 tons more than the quantity that had been shifted by the same means during the past season.

Deliveries of superphosphate either by rail or road should be completed by the end of May.

A big proportion of the quantity to be transported by rail would not be moved until June and deliveries during that month could be too late to be of any practical use.

Farmers using superphosphate had been asked to place their orders with their distributors by September 1 so that the supply position could be assessed and allocations made immediately.

Up to that date, however, orders for only 281,164 tons had been received which left a balance of orders for 120,000 or more tons to be sent in. It was in farmers' own interests to place their orders at once, Mr. Traine said.

So Mr. Traine was telling the farmers to get their orders in early. I notice in today's paper there is an announcement by the Minister for Transport that the road subsidy is to cease. It reads as follows:—

No subsidy would be paid during the coming season on the road transport of superphosphate, the Minister for Transport (Mr. Simpson) said last night.

Mr. Simpson said that the Railway Department would not be able to transport more than 125,000 tons of the 400,000 tons of superphosphate required by farmers between now and June 30th next.

The heavy financial losses suffered by the railways as a consequence of the metal trade workers' strike—

There we have it again; the metal trade workers' strike.

—coupled with general financial restrictions, had rendered it quite impossible for the Treasury to again pay the difference between rail and road haulage costs.

If that was carried out I think it would be the proper thing to do. The way things are with the farming industry and the price the farmers are getting for their wheat, I do not think there is any necessity for them to be subsidised on the cartage of super by road. As I have said before, for the past two or three years the Premier has distinctly told us that it would not be so much in the following year. Instead of that we find that he is about 500 to 1,000 per cent. out in his reckoning. Last year the amount reached the staggering figure of £250,000. Instead of putting employees off, the Government should save money by cutting down on this expenditure.

The Premier: We would have been carting the super by rail if it had not been for the metal trades strike.

The Minister for Lands: And if it had not been for the lumpers.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If the Minister worked only half as hard as the lumpers did he would be earning the pay he is receiving. We are told that the railways would be employed in carting the super.

Mr. Griffith: It is a pity that the "Hansard" reporter has not a dictaphone with which to record your laugh!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: You see, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will not permit a representative of the people to speak! I feel sure the hon. member must have been at the Perth oval on Saturday and he is endeavouring to repeat here what he did down there. If he looks like a goat there is no need for him to act like one!

Mr. Griffith: It is better to look like a goat than look like you.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I do not act like one, anyway. I also notice that the Government is proposing to send coal to the Goldfields and this of course, will mean a further subsidy to its friends up there.



This will also mean, however, that those people who are employed in carting timber will all be out of work and will constitute an army of unemployed. The price that has been charged will mean a considerable loss to the Government.

Mr. May: Do you know they are coking Collie coal?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The hon. member does not have to worry at all. There will always be a Collie and Collie will be free, because the people there have the game at their fingertips! Collie means as much to me as it does to the hon. member. The boys in Collie will never be short of work. But instead of the coal being carted to the Goldfields the Government should keep the men up there on the carting of the timber as they have been doing for so long.

The Minister for Lands: Do you believe that?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes, of course I do.

The Minister for Lands: The member for Collie does not.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes, he does; he is a reasonable sort of person. The Minister ought to be proud of Collie.

The Minister for Lands: I am proud of it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: They will go on digging there; they have an industrial record of which they can be proud.

Mr. Mann: What about the lumpers?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I will tell the hon. member about my recent trip to New Zealand. The captain of the ship, Capt. Davey, said to me, "My God, Sleeman, I would like to have your Fremantle lumpers here." He meant in New Zealand.

The Minister for Lands: He never told me that.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I do not suppose the Minister has ever seen Capt. Davey or heard of him.

The Minister for Lands: That is all right.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Further to emphasise the point, I shall mention at least one other way in which the Government has been very handsome in its treatment of its friends. There is no doubt Ministers are good to their supporters.

The Premier: Why joke about it?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Last year Opposition members drew attention to the fact that the Government had presented no less than £34,000 to the industrial users of cement. I do not make that assertion on my own, because the statement is that of the Auditor General. Reference to the matter will be found in his 61st report, Section "A", for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1951. It is certainly worth reading to the House. In his report the Auditor General said—

On the 3rd May, 1950, the Swan Portland Cement Company, was advised by the chairman, State Housing Commission, that by direction of Cabinet all Government departments would draw their cement requirements from imported stocks held by the Government Stores Department, the instruction to remain in force until the additional plant from Wiluna came into production; in view of special conditions applying at Mundaring Weir which required the supply of cement in bulk containers by rail, it had been decided to maintain the then present arrangement at a maximum weekly draw of 250 tons of bulk tested cement. The company was also advised that the Government had agreed to make a quantity of imported cement available to industrial users at a maximum of 200 tons per week from the 1st May, 1950, and would review the position subsequently. The quotas of local cement allocated to certain industrial users totalling 197 tons per week, were to be withdrawn by the company.

The industrial users were also advised by the Housing Commission that the imported cement would be debited at the ruling price of the cement manufactured locally by the Swan Portland Cement Company, and the Government would absorb all extra cost, including cartage, etc.

Between the 3rd May, 1950, and the 31st January, 1951, when the arrangement was terminated (a period of 9 months), the accounts show that 6,132½ tons of imported cement were released to industrial users, whereas according to information obtained from the Public Works Department, the quantity of local cement used at Mundaring for 11 months from the 1st July, 1950, to the 31st May, 1951, was only 5,792½ tons.

The cost of the imported cement released (including charges paid by the Government Stores) was £74,321 3s. 9d., for which the accounts show that £39,561 6s. 6d. was charged to industrial users. The difference, £34,759 17s. 3d., was charged by the Public Works Department in 1950-51 against the Loan Fund Item No. 23, Goldfields Water Supply under the departmental authority—"Raising Wall of Mundaring Weir."

The charge to this loan item has not been passed by the Audit Office.

I draw attention to that part of the report and emphasise that this Loan item was not passed by the Audit Office. To continue—

It is considered that the amount of £34,759 17s. 3d., being the difference between the cost of the imported cement released and the prices

charged to the industrial users, should have been met from a specific expenditure item created for the purpose and to be submitted to Parliament for appropriation.

I think members will agree with me that that is very definite. The Government cannot say it was not aware of the position. Attention was drawn to the fact last year. Several members of this House, including the member for Melville, drew the attention of the Government specifically to this reference in the Auditor General's report and urged that something should be done about it. Not only was nothing done by anyone during the period under review, but nothing has been done about it since.

The Auditor General is the one high official that members of Parliament can interview quite easily. He is an officer of Parliament and not an employee of the Government. I interviewed the Auditor General and he told me that nothing had been done about this matter since his last report, and that he would be reporting to Parliament again on the subject. What does the Government intend to do? I say that this amounts to the misappropriation of public funds and members of the Government should be charged accordingly. Something must be done about it, and if the Government does not take steps to carry out the law and it has misappropriated money, then I say it should refund the amount outstanding to the State. There can be no excuse for any further evasion of that responsibility.

Mr. Graham: The Government should resign.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That is so, but the hon. member knows that the Government is too thick in the hide to resign. Ministers should at least carry out the laws of the land. If they have provided their friends with cement to a value of £34,000 and have done so wrongfully, steps should be taken to rectify the position. We should not allow the Government to get away with it and, when members raise the issue, allow Ministers to wipe it aside as of no importance. Apparently the Government says it will not take notice of the law or of anyone or of anything else.

Mr. Graham: Ministers are little dictators.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Auditor General is appointed to his high office to protect the financial interests of the people and, should he find there has been some irregularity in connection with the expenditure of public funds, his duty is to point out the fact to Parliament. When he has done so, should Cabinet still refuse to do anything about it, Parliament should take action to see that the Government rectifies the position. Certainly if nothing is done by the Government, Parliament should be able to take some action.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: One very bad feature about it is that the payment of the subsidy was out of Loan funds, something never done before and for which there is no authority whatever.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: And the Auditor General has pointed out the position and says that nothing has been done by the Government. He will make further reference to the matter in his next report and if the Government still does nothing about it, Parliament should take a hand.

The Premier: At any rate, the effect of what was done was to provide cheaper cement for your friends who are in the houses which were built in consequence, and plenty of them have been provided for your friends.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Now the Premier is trying to get out of his difficulty by resorting to subterfuge. The fact is that the Auditor General has drawn attention to this irregularity, and I claim it amounts to the misappropriation of public funds. What does the Government intend to do about it? Does it intend to carry out the laws of the country? It should obey those laws just as other people are required to. This sort of action is worse than what Ned Kelly would do. At any rate, he robbed to give to the poor people.

The Premier: You need not worry. We are great upholders of the law.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Government gave this money to their friends and Ned Kelly would not resort to such tactics.

Mr. Lawrence: Ned Kelly would not give it to the wealthy folk.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: This gift was to the employer class, to the friends of the Government. The workers did not get it.

The Premier: Yes, the workers did.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: They did not.

The Premier: They got the benefit of it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: They did not get the benefit of it at all. This cement was given away at ridiculous prices and the Auditor General mentioned in his report who had got the benefit, and it was not the worker.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: At any rate, the Premier would not know that the workers got the benefit of it.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No, he would not worry.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If the Government does not intend to do something about this matter, Parliament should have something to say about it.

The Minister for Housing: What will you do?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is up to the members of the Government to move in the matter. The Minister for Housing

can smile, but he should tell the House what he has done for the two-unit families. The other night he quoted instances of houses having gone to people who were in receipt of £70 a week. He did not tell the House how many had obtained houses who were not in receipt of one-tenth of that amount weekly. He picked out one or two extreme instances. How those people got the houses no one knows. They certainly did not get them in consequence of efforts by members sitting on the Opposition side of the House. It may have been through the efforts of someone else.

The Minister for Lands: You should be pleased that lumpers earn as much as £70 a week.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I could not hear the Minister's interjection, but I suppose it was not worth hearing. I should like the Minister for Housing to say why he did not tell us about the people on the basic wage who could not get homes—he forgot to tell us about them—and why the promise made to the two-unit families has not been kept. At the last election the Government and its supporters promised that two-unit families would be provided with houses.

It is certainly very hard to get a house for anybody. I do not know how long it is since I succeeded in getting a house for an applicant. When I go to the Housing Commission, I am told, "You are unlucky. This man put in his application in 1948 or 1949, and the people for whom we are providing houses lodged their applications as far back as March in 1947." Thus members can see what a lag there is to be made up. When the Government is still dealing with applications lodged in 1947, it certainly has not much to crow about.

However, the member for Melville will be able to deal with this matter at a later stage. I merely wished to direct attention to the fact that the Minister had quoted instances where homes had been provided, but he did not tell us of the people on the basic wage who had not been successful in getting homes. I have not known of any two-unit family that has received a home, though there might have been some.

Action is required in the matter of house rents. Last year when the rents and tenancies measure was going through, the Government was warned what the result would be, and on the first occasion on which a regulation was challenged, it was declared *ultra vires* the Act. The following is the Press report published on the 2nd September—

If a protected person were not living with his wife or other female dependant when he departed on military service, the dependant would not be protected.

This was the effect of a decision given by the magistrate in Perth Local Court today, when he ruled that Regulation 5 of the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act was *ultra vires*.

This regulation had apparently been brought in pursuant to Section 32 of the Act to give a wife or female dependant the same protection which she had had under the repealed Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act, the Magistrate said.

But the section did not allow such a regulation to be made.

It is time the Government took some action in that matter. We explained last year what was likely to happen under the regulations that would be framed, and I repeat that the first time a regulation was challenged, it was declared *ultra vires* the Act.

I want to know something about the projected Kwinana Oil Refinery. It seems to me that some trouble has arisen regarding the Commonwealth Government's shares in the Commonwealth Oil Refineries and that this trouble must be smoothed out before any progress can be made at Kwinana. We ought to be told what has happened, but we are not told anything. A member asks a question and is shoved aside. Another is asked and the same thing happens and, when a third question is asked, we are informed that we cannot be told anything more. What is the position? Why cannot the Premier be honest and tell us? He certainly knows what the position is.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I wonder.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Of course he does. Here is an interesting statement that appeared in "The West Australian" recently—

Canberra, Wed.—Private members, both Liberal and Labour, are becoming more vocal in their objections to the sale of Government shares in the Commonwealth Oil Refineries.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Menies) continues to parry all questions and will not admit that the sale of these shares is contemplated.

In Canberra, however, it is generally accepted that the Government is trying to find a way of escaping any Party criticism by retaining retail trading interests involved in the sale of petrol.

The Liberal Party machine wants more "de-socialisation", but more and more Liberal members feel that C.O.R. has not provoked any constitutional challenge in over 30 years and that the defence aspect of new refineries and petrol distribution should dominate.

A former Prime Minister, Mr. W. M. Hughes, M.H.R., who concluded the deal with the Anglo-Iranian Co. is bitter about any change, and is still complaining about the sale of the Government shares in Amalgamated Wireless of Australasia Ltd.

Seemingly much of the objection is emanating from Commonwealth departments, but I want to know why the Premier does not take us into his confidence. One of the worst features, not only of this Parliament, but also of other Parliaments, is that a private member is treated as a nonentity and is told nothing. If he wants to obtain any information, he has to watch the newspapers in order to get the latest news.

We are members of Parliament representing the various constituencies and it is time all Governments woke up to the fact that private members should be told what is occurring. We are being treated like kids; we are not told anything; we are not allowed to know anything. If we ask questions, we are pushed from pillar to post and not given the information sought.

The time has arrived when we should be given information about the Kwinana refinery. I think the Premier will agree—at any rate he ought to do so—that we should be taken into his confidence. I know that the Deputy Premier is of this opinion because his views on the point were recorded in "Hansard" some years ago. Let me quote his remarks appearing in "Hansard" of 1946 at page 651 as follows:—

Members of Parliament should have an opportunity to obtain a knowledge of the difficult subjects that come before the House equal to that which Ministers of the Crown are able to obtain. That proposal was also turned down in this Chamber. Last year the member for Beverley introduced a motion almost identical with that which we are now discussing. The motion—although if I remember rightly it was supported by the member for Perth—was opposed by all other members on the Government benches.

This year we appear to be reaching much the same state of affairs. Am I to assume that the Government does not like the idea of persons, who are equally elected as representatives of the people, having anything whatever to do—except in the limited and restricted manner in which they are able to have something to do with them in this House—with the public works propositions that come up for the development of the State, or am I to assume that the Government regards itself as so far superior to the collective ability of the remainder of the Legislature that it considers it has no need to accept advice from any expert departmental officers?

Let us assume for the moment that that is the underlying reason for the opposition, that the only advice that the Government—the eight or nine Cabinet Ministers—think it necessary to have is that of a certain number of civil servants who are engaged in their respective departments for that purpose. It is intended to preach the doctrine of the infallibility of public servants? I do not for one instance imagine that I am, or that anybody else including the most distinguished members of the Civil Service is, infallible. In fact, there is evidence in this morning's paper, if we do not desire to go further than that, that distinguished officers who may be classed as being in the Public Service are far from infallible, and their advice to the Crown in relation to the railway services of this country has put the country—that advice apparently having been accepted in good faith—to considerable expense . . . .

It may do a great deal of good, and it would most importantly give recognition to the fact that the people who elect their representatives expect them to know more about the public affairs of the State than they are permitted to know under the present methods. Say what we will, the ordinary member of this House does not get much opportunity—in fact, little if any better opportunity than members of the public—to know what is taking place regarding the vast expenditure that is contemplated by the Government on public works. On the great majority of occasions, the first knowledge a private member has of projected expenditure is gleaned from an article in the morning paper, and the fact is that the proprietor or editor of the paper knows about it before a member of Parliament does.

This motion would take us a long way back towards that position, because it would give a section of the members of the House appointed for the purpose a distinct opportunity of getting closely into touch with these affairs and making recommendations and, with the knowledge thus possessed after investigation, acquainting other members of the House and their constituents with the actual facts of the proposal, seen not through the eyes of the expert, whose view is not always easy for the public to comprehend, but through the eyes of an intelligent man who has made a study of the evidence placed before him and has accepted information from disinterested as well as interested parties and is well equipped to pass the information on. These are the grounds on which I support the motion.

Mr. Nalder: Who said that?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The present Deputy Premier.

Mr. Nalder: When?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: In 1946.

The Premier: We were told very little in those days. He had good reason to make that speech.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I want to know whether the Premier is going to do anything about it. It is no good supporting a motion before one goes into office, and doing nothing about it afterwards. I have heard a saying, "Put a beggar on horseback and he will ride to Hell." It seems to me that when a private member is elevated to the position of a Cabinet Minister he immediately cuts adrift from everybody. He knows everything that is going on in the country, but refuses to let others know. What are the members of the Cabinet? They are the executive officers of Parliament, and I do not see why they should not confide in the other members of the House, as the present Deputy Premier said, in 1946, should be done. He said it was time Cabinet Ministers told members what was going on, and took them into their confidence. I think the same, and I hope the Premier holds a like view. Take this Kwinana business! That is a most important project to the whole State. Every member should be interested in it, and particularly members representing the Fremantle district. Why cannot the Premier say to Fremantle members, "I will tell you what is going on," and let us know?

The Premier: I will.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Premier will?

The Premier: Yes. I will keep you fully informed.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I was going to challenge the Premier to deny rumours that were current but, the Premier having made that statement, I will not issue the challenge. I think it right and proper that private members should be taken into the confidence of Ministers and given some idea of what is occurring so that they will at least know more than the public. Under present conditions, members of the public in Fremantle know of things before their Parliamentary representatives do, simply by getting up half an hour earlier and reading the morning paper. The first information members obtain concerning matters of importance is from the newspapers. I think it is time something was done to remedy this position, irrespective of what Government is in office. I am not saying that one Government is worse than another, but some improvement should be effected in this direction so that private members will have some standing in the country.

I now want to touch on the subject of the Outer Harbour. Earlier in the year, speaking at a dinner, the Minister

for Works said there was to be an outer harbour, and one man would be pleased, and that was Mr. Sleeman, though the harbour was not going to be established where he wanted it. I am sorry the Minister is not here, because I want to tell him that where the harbour was supposed to be going was the exact position I advocated should be used for oil ships. I did not exactly advocate that the harbour should be established there, but I certainly considered that it was the place for the oil ships.

I warn the Premier that if he does not want a huge catastrophe to occur, the best thing to do is to get those oil boats out of the harbour as soon as he can. There have been accidents in different parts of the world through oil ships having been berthed in harbours. It is not proposed to have only one oil ship but two unloading in the harbour at the same time. There would need to be only one spark, and half Fremantle would go up; hundreds of people would perish; and the harbour would be bottled up for the best part of a year. Colonel Tydeman has warned us about this. He has said that one accident of that kind, in peace-time or during a war, would lead to the harbour being bottled up for years. I implore the Government to have such vessels berthed somewhere else as quickly as possible, instead of having them at the entrance to the port.

In "The West Australian" recently appeared an article headed, "Imports Through Fremantle Drop." I do not propose to read the whole article, but here are some extracts—

The full effect of the import restrictions is now being felt at the port of Fremantle. Last month there was a drop in imports of roughly 50 per cent. compared with peak months last year and this year . . .

Figures show that the decline did not show to any appreciable extent till May. Since then there has been a steady fall to the present level.

Further down, the article continues—

While buyer resistance continues and money is "tight," importers may not use their full quotas, and the coming Christmas season and the hope of "things to come" in the New Year will undoubtedly have an effect. . . .

During the winter there are few exports from Western Australia. There is no meat, butter, fruit or wool.

I heard someone say that there would be no butter going out at any time of the year now. I do not know whether that is correct. The article proceeds—

It remains to be seen whether the usual number of ships, apart from those on scheduled runs, will come

out with less import cargoes offering in order to backload with full cargoes of wool.

Later, the article reads—

Fremantle waterside workers are in a far happier position than, for example, Melbourne lumpers.

In Melbourne recently as many as 3,000 and more men were surplus and received attendance money.

Averaging about 100 men a day out of the 17 days on which there was surplus labour last month, Fremantle waterside workers have still earned an average of £17/8/6 a week since July 1.

On some days last month there was a shortage of labour.

With the improvement of which is expected at the port, shipping men argue that an increase in the port quota of 1,700 men is warranted.

That is ridiculous! In spite of the import restrictions, the paper advocates an increase in the port quota of 1,700. It says that the Fremantle men are happier than those in Melbourne. I do not know whether they are. During the last three days, 700 men have gone home each day. For the paper to try to tell us that things will be better and that there should be an increase in the number of men to handle cargoes is rot. The way things are, it looks as though a lot of men will be going home for a considerable time to come.

I would like to have a word or two with the Minister for Health to see whether she can tell something about the new Australians who are at Claremont and Wooroloo. It seems terrible to be bringing out these unfortunate people when they are on the verge of a mental breakdown or have T.B. I want to know how they get here. How do they pass the test? It is awful to bring men from their homeland and their friends and then find they have to go into the mental hospital or the T.B. sanatorium. I want to know whether the Minister can tell us about the examination that is made and why these things cannot be discovered before the people are brought out. Is it the sole responsibility of the State Government to keep them once they come here? Is the Commonwealth Government helping to keep them in those institutions, or is the State Government paying the piper? Does the Commonwealth assist?

The Minister for Health: Yes.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That is slightly better.

The Premier: The examination of the people with regard to health is the responsibility of the Commonwealth before they come here.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I think the Premier should take the matter up with the Commonwealth Government and ask that a stricter examination be made. When speaking on the position of the waterside workers just now, I forgot to mention the Rottneest queue. There was quite a lot of discussion in the paper some time ago when five or six ships used to be outside the harbour. We see none of that now that the harbour is half empty. We do not hear anyone talking about the cause of that—quite the opposite. I have heard Ministers say that it is because waterside workers have not been working as they should. I do not believe that, and I want to know what the reason is.

Why does not the Premier say that the reason Fremantle is a quiet place compared with what it was is that the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, has imposed import restrictions? As the Government tried to blame the lumpers when ships could not get into the harbour, I hope it will tell the people why there is now a different position at Fremantle. I want to tell the Minister for Police that a number of chain letters have been going around. Whilst, I suppose, they do not do a great deal of harm, they do frighten the life out of some people. I have here a newspaper extract as follows:—

#### Letters Worry Italians.

Chain letters written in Italian have been received by several Italians in the Fremantle district. One letter referred to a woman who had received 13,000 letters which she had not passed on. The woman had given birth to an imbecile child, the chain letter said.

Detective Sergeant W. P. Hagan, of the Fremantle C.I.B., said today that he had been handed copies of the chain letters which were worrying some of the Italian community. His advice was to ignore the letters completely.

It is not possible for everyone to ignore them. Some women get very worried when they receive such letters. I have a letter here that was sent to me from Sydney by a woman. I shall not read the names on it, but the next time I have occasion to deal with this subject I shall read all the names. This letter states—

#### Chain of Good Luck.

This chain of Good Luck was sent to me by the Honorable Edward Astley, from Newcastle on Tyne and was sent less than 72 hours after he got it himself. It was started in Africa by a French Officer under General de Gaulle and is going round the world for the fifth time. The person who breaks the chain will surely receive bad luck. Do not keep this; it must be mailed 72 hours after receipt thereof. A private in the Philippine

Army won first prize in the Sweep-stake complying with this chain. Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected for the third time President of U.S.A. 32 hours after he mailed the letter. Dob. B. Willesire in the City of Begin, who laughed at the Chain of Good Luck met instantaneous death in an accident in 1949. Captain Nessex who broke the Chain died after he received the letter.

Then appears a list of names, and the letter concludes with these words—

**Instructions.**

Cancel the first name and add your name to the list. Make 12 copies and mail 12 to your friends.

The police should make some inquiries into this matter. I see some members smiling, but many women get really worried about it.

I want now to say a few words on the forgotten men. I have mentioned this subject in the House previously, but I am afraid the Minister is a pretty hard man. I do not think he has much sympathy for the poor wretches confined in Fremantle gaol. Many of them are not too bad. They have certainly committed some crime or other, but I think if they were let out and given a chance they would be all right. It is of no use saying we cannot do this here because we would be trying out something for the first time. This has been tried in other parts of the world. There is a parole system in Canada. If a man is let out on parole, and he returns to gaol, he has to complete the unfinished sentence as well as any further sentence imposed on him. Quite a number of men in the Fremantle gaol could be let out under a similar system.

I know that three lifers have been let out since I have been in Parliament, but I cannot see the Attorney General letting even one man out. These lifers are now living a respectable life, having made good in society. The people in Fremantle gaol should be given a chance because, if they were, I am satisfied they would not return to the gaol. Provision enabling this to be done is contained in the Criminal Code. What is provided there is practically the same as operates in Canada where only two per cent. of those who are paroled return to gaol.

The Premier: Are you appealing on behalf of long-term prisoners?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: On behalf of any of them. A committee could be formed for this purpose, and the superintendent of the gaol could be told, "We want to try a scheme of letting out six or 12 or more persons on parole." I am satisfied if that were done the Government would not regret it.

The Premier: Certain people are let out now. Is there not an indeterminate board?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes, but I would prefer to see a parole system such as operates in Canada. Someone asked me—did I not want a school? Well, I do. I want a high school very badly. A deputation on this subject went to the Minister for Education on the 3rd July, 1929. I do not know whether the Fremantle people have got tired of waiting for a school, but I have got tired of reading this reply to the deputation. Since that time there have been Liberal Governments, Labour Governments and Liberal Governments again, but still we have no school. Mr. Drew was Minister for Education at the time, and this is the reply the deputation received—

Mr. Drew said he agreed with the deputation that a high school for Fremantle was long overdue. He said the request had his complete sympathy. He realised last year that the establishment of a Fremantle high school could not be long delayed, and for that reason had refrained from making additions to the central schools. Whether the new school could be financed at present was a matter beyond the control of either himself or the Treasurer. However, Fremantle had waited patiently for a long time, and he would do his best.

He had had frequent requests from country districts, and in all his replies he had given them clearly to understand that the next high school must be at Fremantle. He could promise nothing immediately, except his vigorous support. He would interview the Treasurer as soon as possible and he trusted he would have no difficulty in getting his sanction to the placing of a sufficient amount of money on the Estimates to make a start with the building.

That was definite.

The Premier: I think you missed your chance.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes. I will let the Premier into a secret. Six months after this promise was made, a high school was built at Geraldton.

The Premier: Geraldton must have had a very active member.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I was a bit unlucky, I think. I want to say a word or two about the Harvest-rd. jetty. I do not know whether the Chief Secretary has any information on the subject yet. I have been ringing up the Public Works Department and also the Harbour and Light Department. The Public Works Department has written to the Harbour and Light Department, but the latter department says it has not received the letter. The suggestion concerning the jetty is that it should be closed or pulled down. This would be very bad

because we are short of jetties. It might be a good thing if the department were to suffer from a few plugs of gelignite in the same way as the Cottesloe jetty was treated. Something should be done to put in order this jetty at North Fremantle so that it could be of use to the public. One department says it wrote to another, but the other says it has not received the letter. The Minister promised to find out what he could about the matter.

The Chief Secretary: To which Minister did you direct the question?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: To the Chief Secretary. He promised to find out the details and let me know. Summarised, my complaints against the Government are as follows: the provision of fines and gaol for the workers, dismissal of workers, concessions to the Government's friends and the employers as a body, local cement prices and the misappropriation of funds, the spending of about £100,000 on the conveyance of coal to the Goldfields in order to create an unemployment problem there, and the fact that after having told us that the State was economically sound and the employment position good, it sacked 500 men in four weeks. The time has arrived when something should be done and I say the sacked men should be reinstated. Had His Excellency known what was in the Speech, before he started to read it, I think he might have gone on strike; but, of course, he had to read what Cabinet had had prepared for him. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the Address-in-reply:—"But regret to find in the Speech the following words: 'the employment position is satisfactory', as they are contrary to fact and misleading."

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:

Ayes	20
Noes	24

Majority against 4

#### Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Molr
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Needham
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Doney	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Read
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Yates
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Borell

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [5.55]: I wish to comment on certain matters dealt with in His Excellency's Speech. I have no doubt that, as the session proceeds, it will be revealed that the most important aspect of the Speech was not what it disclosed so much as what it concealed. I will address my remarks first to the question of water restrictions on the Goldfields. Members generally will realise that, in a climate such as we have there, any water restrictions impose a great deal of hardship on the residents—a degree of hardship far greater than would be experienced in any area with a more moderate climate. It appears to members representing the Goldfields that any excuse has been considered sufficient for placing water restrictions on residents of that area. Any pretext at all was thought good enough for the application of restrictions, as has been apparent particularly during the last four or five years.

The Premier: Why would anyone wish to restrict the use of water on the Goldfields?

Mr. STYANTS: When there was a 24-hour cessation of work by the engineers on the pipe line last summer—there was actually no stoppage of pumping because the officials and apprentices kept the plants going—it was used as an excuse for placing water restrictions on the people of the Goldfields for a period of 14 days. There was no logic in that at all, as the pumps had not ceased working. They were kept going on that occasion in the same way as the locomotives were kept running by apprentices and leading fitters during the currency of the recent six-months metal trades strike.

We are given all sorts of reasons why those restrictions were put into effect but, in my opinion, the Government has never been sufficiently candid to give the real reason which, of course, was that too much water was being drawn off in the agricultural areas this side of Southern Cross. More than 50 per cent. of the water pumped from Mundaring Weir is drawn off before it reaches Southern Cross and in addition to that we find that, under the comprehensive water scheme, a large branch pipe line is to be taken out from the Goldfields main in the vicinity of Merredin.

Of course, the wheat-producing districts are in need of water supplies but it is my opinion—I have previously expressed it in this House—that the capacity of the present pipe line is insufficient to meet the ever-increasing demands of the agricultural areas in addition to providing the water that the people of the Goldfields can reasonably expect to receive. With the increase of the agricultural demand the position will be accentuated. I know it is the opinion of officials of the Goldfields Water Scheme that if certain boosting apparatus is installed, sufficient water can be provided. We appreciate the fact



that the Government has, over the last four or five years, built additional reservoirs at Kalgoorlie and the No. 8 Pumping Station.

But now we are told—and this is in answer to certain questions asked—that because of the refusal of the engineers at the various pumping stations to work overtime, there will be a shortage of water on the Goldfields next summer as it has not been possible to fill the reservoirs. I have been reliably informed that the reservoirs on the Goldfields, and at the No. 8 Pumping Station, are already full. So why does the Minister in charge of the department tell the representatives of the Goldfields people that restrictions will most likely have to be imposed upon Goldfields residents during the coming summer when, in fact, the reservoirs are already full?

In dealing with the question of water supplies I wish to discuss the increased property valuations that have taken place in the metropolitan area. I read in "The West Australian" some months ago that an increase in the water rates in the metropolitan area was inevitable. I did not see anything unreasonable about that because the charges of 1s. and 1s. 3d. per 1,000 gallons for excess water and the allowance for the ordinary rate of 1,000 gallons for every 1s. 6d. paid, are the same as they were pre-war.

But we read that the Government had invited its party members to a conference with the water supply people for the purpose of hearing the reasons why it was necessary to increase the rates. We were not informed about what happened at that conference and neither did the Government contradict the statement that the water rates were to be increased; that did not come until some time afterwards when a statement appeared in "The West Australian" that the Government had decided not to increase the rates.

The Government did something much worse than that. If the water rates had been increased the charges would have fallen equitably on the shoulders of all users of water and they all would have contributed to the undoubted added expense of running the department. But the Government adopted a back-door method of increasing the water rates. Valuations on certain properties have been increased, thus affecting water rates, and this will mean that the added charges will fall on the shoulders of only certain individuals in the community.

The Minister for Education: It has always been customary to accept local authority valuations and that is all that has been done in this case.

Mr. STYANTS: That is not so. The Minister for Education is usually fairly accurate but he is not in this instance. The valuation placed on my own property this

year, in order to compute the water rate is much higher than the local authority valuation. Actually the local authority valuation has been increased periodically over the last four or five years but the estimate used to strike a water rate is much in excess of the local authority valuation—that is the Perth City Council. The valuations of many premises in the metropolitan area served by the metropolitan water scheme have not been increased, while others have risen by almost 100 per cent.

I asked some questions in connection with this matter and was given a partly evasive answer. I was also told that it was true that valuations on certain properties had been increased because additions or improvements had been made to those properties. That again is not correct. I have had scores of complaints from people in the metropolitan area and they have told me that although they have made no additions, improvements or renovations to their premises, their rates have been increased. I would not object if the water rate were increased and everyone contributed towards the added expense of running the department, but I have a decided objection to the method that the Government has adopted; that is, that the valuations of certain premises should be raised, in some cases almost 100 per cent, whilst others have escaped scot free, and are not contributing in any way towards the increased expenses of the department.

The Minister for Education: The value of land has greatly increased.

Mr. STYANTS: I do not know that the actual value of land has greatly increased.

The Minister for Education: In certain areas more than others.

Mr. STYANTS: I know that quarter acre blocks which could have been purchased for £200 a few years ago are now fetching £500 and £600, but the actual valuations of those blocks have not increased. More money has to be paid for them because of the decreased purchasing power of the pound.

The Minister for Education: That applies both ways, of course.

Mr. STYANTS: My point is that the department adopted a back-door method. Firstly it said that the water rates had to be increased and then it departed from that policy and decided to increase property valuations and, as I have said, while certain properties have escaped scot free, others have increased in valuation almost by 100 per cent.

The Minister for Education: Suppose there had been an increase in rates, as well as an increase in valuations, what would have been your thoughts then?

Mr. STYANTS: As long as all those consumers who enjoy the services rendered by the Water Supply Department contributed equally to the added costs, there could have been no objection, but under the present system many properties have not had their valuations increased whilst others have been substantially raised. I now wish to deal with the question that the Premier was good enough to discuss with Goldfields members last night, because I know there is some difference of opinion among those members as to the advisability of transporting coal from Collie to the Goldfields for use as fuel in place of wood, which has been used on the mines ever since machinery has operated on the Golden Mile. After the Premier had discussed this matter with us, he said he would make certain inquiries. It seems to me that it will be a mistake of some magnitude if this proposal is put into operation. In the opinion of those on the Goldfields it will bring about a state of unemployment in those parts equal to what would take place if, say, the Great Boulder mine were to close down entirely.

The Minister for Education: Are wood supplies unlimited up there?

Mr. STYANTS: There is plenty of wood available, but the company certainly has to go out 100 miles to get it. However, I will refer to a method which, in my opinion, could be adopted to obtain ample wood supplies over shorter distances and at a lower price than is now operating, this having to be paid on account of the long haulages. I do not think there is any shortage of supplies, but the main problem is the cost of getting them.

The Minister for Education: Of course, as long as the price of wood was going up, as it was, that was more likely to close the goldmines, was it not?

Mr. STYANTS: I do not know that any benefits to be derived from a reduction in the cost of the current supplied was intended to be passed on to the gold-mining companies, otherwise we would be inclined, perhaps, to adopt a different view. However, so far as I know, that proposal has never been mooted. If it is put into operation, the only result would be that the shareholders of the Goldfields Power Corporation would obtain higher dividends than they have in the past.

The Minister for Education: I was not thinking of a reduction in cost; I was thinking of an avoidance of any increase.

Mr. STYANTS: Even if that were to take place, again I think that no benefits would be derived from a reduction in cost of production of power, because such benefits would not be passed on to the gold-mining companies, but rather would take the form of increased dividends for the

shareholders of the Goldfields Power Corporation. In passing, I want to say that they have never had big dividends at any time. This proposal to take coal as a fuel to the Goldfields Power Corporation is nothing new. To my knowledge it has been going on for some 10 or 12 years, but it has always been conditional upon obtaining concessional freight rates on the railways from Collie to the Goldfields, which have not been granted by previous Governments.

In addition, the Goldfields Power Corporation would have had to purchase its coal from the existing coalmining companies in Collie. Now, however, certain Goldfields and metropolitan interests have a mine of their own at Collie and are able to get their coal direct and not through purchase from another coalmining company. Consequently they would be able to obtain it much cheaper than they would from another coalmining company which naturally desires a profit on its cost of production. The Goldfields Power Corporation supplies electric power to a large number of goldmining companies on the Golden Mile. Excepting the Lake View and Star group, which has its own diesel plant for the generation of electric power, it would be fairly safe to say that the Goldfields Power Corporation supplies current to all the other mines on the Golden Mile. It also supplies a certain amount to the Boulder Municipal Council; it supplies the whole of the Kalgoorlie Road Board area, and also supplies a certain amount to the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council.

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

Mr. STYANTS: I can quite easily understand the viewpoint of the Goldfields Power Corporation in this matter, and also that of those who are interested in the ownership of the recently opened mine in Collie. It is not difficult to understand because it is a better financial proposition from their point of view. It is, however, difficult to understand the Government's attitude on the subject. While I admit that the rate quoted per ton mile for the transport of coal from Collie to Kalgoorlie is approximately the same as the rate from Collie to the East Perth power house, it will involve the railways in a tremendous annual loss to haul coal at that rate per ton mile. It is essential that the coal should come to the East Perth power house for the purpose of generating current, but it is not essential that coal should be hauled to Kalgoorlie, because Kalgoorlie already has fuel which can be used for the production of electric current in that district.

The answers given by the Premier to questions asked by the member for Boulder in connection with the Government's financial interests in this firewood company indicate that £160,000 was advanced

to these people; they were guaranteed that amount to purchase the assets of the Goldfields Firewood Supply Co. Of this amount, £40,000 has been repaid, which leaves the Government's interest in the assets of the Lakewood Firewood Co. at £120,000. If this wood is displaced by coal as a fuel by the Goldfields Power Corporation it will definitely mean that the firewood company will immediately become bankrupt. There will be no work for them, and no avenue into which they can extend and so justify their continued existence. This will mean, of course, that in order to recover its interest, the Government will have to seize the assets.

From my knowledge of the position, I should say that the assets the company possesses at present for the conduct of its business would not approach anything like £120,000. Some of the locomotives are those that were purchased from the Railway Department many years ago; they have been patched up and kept in order. I think the heaviest of the rails was 45lb., when they were originally put down. I do not think the company has purchased any new rails, so, with wear and tear, these rails would probably now be only about 35lb. They would be unsuitable for use by the Government Railways on the railroads. They may, of course, have some value as scrap iron, but that would be about the only value they would have. The sleepers are bushwood sleepers and would be valueless to the Government railways. So I would be extremely surprised, if it became necessary for the Government to seize the assets of this company, if it found those assets to be worth anywhere in the vicinity of £120,000.

What I am particularly concerned about is the fate of the 500 workers who are engaged in the industry and provide firewood for the mining companies, and timber for the mines. In an answer given to the member for Boulder in this House last week it was indicated that there would still be a certain amount of mining timber which the firewood company could procure for the mining companies. Of course, that is not the case at all, for the simple reason that on the Goldfields suitable timber for mining purposes does not grow in clumps and clusters as it does in our first class timber areas in the South-West. There is only an odd tree in the bush which is suitable for mining timber, and the firewood companies, at cost price, are prepared to cut that as mining timber rather than as firewood, and bring it in to provide props and suchlike to go underground in the mines.

But there certainly would not be enough of that timber to warrant the continuance, even on a very restricted scale, of the operations of the firewood companies. If they do not cut timber in the bush for firewood, it would be totally uneconomic for them to operate their railway only to

get the timber suitable for mining. I know it was suggested that the coalmining companies at Collie may be able to employ on their mines some of the displaced men. On making inquiries I find, however, that there is ample labour available in the Collie district as, unfortunately, there is in almost any district in Western Australia at present. Not only will these men be added to the unemployment market but there will also be the question of their homes. Quite a number of these were shifted from the old Kurrawang townsite and men who had been employed for long periods by the previous firewood company are still employees and have lived on and been engaged in the firewood-getting industry on the Goldfields for practically all their lives.

It would not only mean finding employment for them but there would also be the question of housing to be considered. On a fairly reliable estimate it is considered that something like 1,500 souls are dependent upon the continuance of the firewood industry in this area, which includes the township of Lakewood, and the intermediate places over a hundred miles out. We realise that the cost of firewood has gone up considerably during the last few years due to the added charges for materials, the ever-increasing basic wage rate and the consequent increased rates for firewood getting. Without possessing an intimate knowledge of the costs, I should say that one of the greatest factors in that phase would be the long distance firewood has to be hauled from the head of the line, a distance of over 100 miles.

I believe that if the Government were to take up with the Forests Department the question of throwing open a large tract of timber country within a short distance of Kalgoorlie, say, from 40 to 50 miles, which area was cut over 45 years ago, large supplies could be obtained from the regrowth of the forest. I know that from my journeyings through the bush in that locality, I certainly believe ample supplies could be obtained to meet the firewood requirements of the mining companies on the Golden Mile. True, very little mining timber is available there, because the regrowth is not sufficiently mature and would not be strong enough for mining purposes.

As a matter of fact, suitable mining timber has to be procured from other districts at present. The fact that the regrowth is not fully matured is admitted, and also that the timber available would not be of sufficient size or strength to provide adequate firewood supplies for the companies. There is one avenue, however, that might be explored with a view to allowing the Goldfields Power Corporation to obtain fuel at cheaper rates than those operating under existing circumstances.

I do not know what we will do with those who will be unemployed as a result of this proposition and the vast number of men who will be put off Government jobs, which will be inevitable unless the Government can obtain additional funds with which to continue with works in hand, and unless the Kwinana oil project commences at an early date. If it were possible to do that at an early date and on a large scale, the slack regarding employment would be taken up; but there does not seem much prospect of that in the immediate future.

An air of mystery appears to attach to the whole Kwinana project, leaving everyone wondering why the work is not proceeding. We have been told vaguely that there is some dispute over the provision of money by the Commonwealth Government for additional retail services on behalf of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Coy. throughout Australia. Whatever the trouble may be, the effect upon Western Australia will be serious if the scheme is not implemented.

Next I want to deal with what I regard as a major problem from the Government's point of view with respect to the proposal to use coal as fuel for the Goldfields Power Corporation instead of wood fuel. Last week I asked some questions in the House with a view to ascertaining what is the freight rate per ton mile charged for coal hauled from Collie to Boulder for the Goldfields Power Corporation, and I was told that it was 1.26d. I was also informed that the estimated tonnage to be hauled per annum was 1,100 per week.

I endeavoured to find out what the estimate of the Railway Department was for the haulage of coal as distinct from the freight cost per ton mile for the haulage of ordinary freight, realising, as a practical railway man, that it would not cost as much to haul coal, which is a compact commodity, as it would to haul say, a trainload of chaff, which is more bulky and offers more wind resistance. An astonishing attitude was taken up by the department which, according to the reply given to me in the House, claimed it could not assess the cost of transporting any particular commodity. If that is really the position, in my opinion the sooner we dispense with some of the heads in the Railway Department the better it will be for the State. Imagine any transporting company not being able to assess what it cost to transport various commodities!

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: How could it fix freight charges?

Mr. STYANTS. That is what I want to know. Is it a matter of guess work? How do they assess the cost of haulage of anything at so much per ton per mile? How can they do that for chaff, wool, wheat and other first and second class goods? Surely it will not be contended that they

arrive at the rates merely by guesswork! Such a state of affairs would not be tolerated by private enterprise. I cannot imagine any company operating a transport service that, when the manager wanted to know how much it was estimated to cost to transport certain commodities over a given distance, and he was told by his officers that they were unable to supply the information, would not dispense with the services of those employees very quickly. It would get rid of its costing clerks and appoint someone else capable of doing the work. Nevertheless, that is the attitude of the Railway Department.

In the circumstances, I was thrown back on the few details available, taking a charge of approximately 1½d. per ton per mile and the average cost, which is 3½d. per ton per mile and, to be reasonably clear on it, I have allowed that coal can be hauled 25 per cent. cheaper than the average commodity. Assessing the position on that basis, one need not be much of a mathematician to work out that on 1,100 tons per week, with an actual charge for coal of 1½d. per ton per mile as against 3½d. per ton per mile average freight, less 25 per cent. which I allowed, some 57,200 tons will be required per annum to be hauled from Collie to Kalgoorlie and, as it will show a loss of 2d. per ton per mile and Kalgoorlie is something over 400 miles from Collie by the nearest route through Narrogin, across to Merredin and thence to Kalgoorlie, there will be a deficit of approximately £3 6s. 8d. per ton on all the coal hauled from Collie to Kalgoorlie.

Allowing for the 25 per cent. reduction I mentioned, this would result in a net loss to the Railway Department of £137,000 per annum. If we make a summary of the total cost to the State, we have to reckon 500 men thrown out of employment, 1,500 people dependent on sustenance from this industry, a possible loss of the Government's guarantee to the firewood company—I feel sure this would eventuate because the company would not be in a position to repay the money—and then there would be the recurring loss annually of £137,000 in hauling 1,100 tons of coal a week from Collie to Kalgoorlie.

I say it is a preposterous proposition, one which in the foreseeable future the Government, with the locomotive power and wagons at its disposal, would not be capable of carrying out without neglecting other commodities urgently in need of railway transport. I refer to super and wheat. We know that it has been costing the Government something like a quarter-of-a-million pounds per annum for road subsidy on the cartage of super. In my opinion, that amount would have to be increased if the Railway Department undertook to convey this coal from Collie to Kalgoorlie.

One point I missed in making the suggestion that areas much closer to Kalgoolie could be made available by the Forests Department and that probably ample supplies of firewood could be obtained from those areas at a much lower cost than at present. While I admit that this timber is not fully matured I point out that, in the event of wood as fuel being dispensed with on the Golden Mile, this timber will be of no value to anyone. The only value it has or ever will have is as firewood. Consequently, if the Government does not exercise its right to make this timber available for firewood, it will be of no value to anybody.

Mr. May: You realise that, if the Kalgoolie Power Corporation does not get coal, it will use fuel oil.

Mr. STYANTS: I find it hard to believe that, because if the use of fuel oil were a more economical proposition than the use of coal, the boilers and furnaces would have been equipped with fuel oil appliances at the outset. I do not believe it would be possible to obtain a guarantee of continuity of supplies of fuel oil and operate as economically as with coal.

The corporation has had a bad time. For years Goldfields members have been supplied with copies of the balance sheet and it has not been paying much in the way of dividends. Speaking from memory, the dividend has been 2 per cent. or 2½ per cent. at the best. I appreciate its point of view, but I want the Government to be cognisant of what is involved and to understand thoroughly the whole of the implications. If the Government then decides to proceed with the proposition, that will be its responsibility and Goldfields members cannot then be accused of having failed to point out clearly the effect of abandoning the use of wood as fuel on the Golden Mile in favour of coal.

Now I wish to refer briefly to the traffic problem, particularly in the metropolitan area, the material loss and damage done to motor vehicles and other property, and the lamentable loss of life and the crippling of many of our citizens. The fatalities and crippling, assessed on the workers' compensation basis, must cost at least half-a-million a year, and the material loss, as calculated by one of the insurance companies, amounts to about half-a-million a year. I have given this matter considerable thought, and while I do not wish to be harsh in my judgment, I believe that much of the responsibility for the existing state of affairs rests with the Traffic Branch of the Police Department.

I know it is claimed that the branch has not sufficient patrols, but in my opinion the available road patrols are not doing the work in a proper manner. So many flagrant breaches of the traffic laws are committed that it is incredible that many more drivers are

not prosecuted for offences not associated with accidents. There are not many instances, though there are some, where we find the police taking action for breaches of the traffic regulations until such time as an accident has occurred.

The Attorney General: Are you speaking of the metropolitan area?

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. I do not know whether the Attorney General thought I was unaware of the fact that the police have no control over traffic outside the metropolitan area. I may be a bit of a Dumb Dora, but I know as much as that.

The Attorney General: Nobody would suggest that, you know.

Mr. STYANTS: I consider that the Police Department operates purely as a punitive authority, and, while I would not say it should not have the right to lay charges against transgressors, it should be an educational authority as well. In the Eastern States, though there is almost as high an accident ratio as here, the police have adopted an educational policy to a greater extent than has been done by our Traffic Branch. One can go into the street here and see instances of what I think is responsible for 75 per cent. of the accidents, namely, excessive speed.

All classes of vehicles may be seen travelling at a rate in excess of the speed limit prescribed. The speed limit is 30 miles an hour on the highways in the metropolitan area, 25 miles an hour in built-up areas and 20 miles an hour over intersections. But I warrant that any person could go out for an hour or two hours this evening and during that period see at least 20 breaches of the speed regulations. The police, to my way of thinking, should be out on the roads educating motorists. We find, for instance, that a motorist will drive on the crown of the road instead of somewhere near the left-hand kerb so as not to impede the traffic or prevent anyone overtaking him from getting past. If a motorist did that in South Australia, in the metropolitan area of Adelaide, he would quickly find a police patrol alongside him telling him to shift over to the kerb.

This offence occurs often on Stirling Highway. I have driven along that highway and seen cars that never went into the left-hand lane for a distance of up to a mile or more. They have moved into the second lane and remained there, and a motorist coming behind has been afraid to travel up on the kerb lane, because if the car in the second lane suddenly switched over to the kerb side and an accident occurred, the second driver would be at fault for passing on the wrong side.

Traffic police are stationed at various points through the metropolitan area. They should not wait until they receive a message that there has been an accident and then proceed to make the exhaustive inquiries necessary for the purpose of

prosecuting whoever happened to be at fault. They should be on the road and hail offending drivers and, if the breach committed is not flagrant, let them off with a little advice as to what is required of them.

There are certain intersections in the metropolitan area that are notorious for the number of accidents that have taken place thereon, with resultant fatalities and injuries. These intersections are well-known to the Police Department but I cannot remember any occasion when an officer has been placed there to check abuses or breaches of the regulations. There is an intersection at Grantham-st. and Harbourne-st., where I live, and I suppose that more accidents have occurred there than at any other intersection in the metropolitan area. One can stand there at any time during the busy period of the day and, in an hour, see at least 20 breaches of the speed regulations.

Yet the police have never supervised that intersection in anyway. They seem to be content to remain at their stations until an accident takes place and somebody rings them up to tell them about it. They then take all the necessary action. If a patrol officer were posted there with a view to checking the numbers of those cars which exceeded the speed limit and cut corners, the fact would soon become known to motorists that supervision was being exercised over their movements, they would take much greater care, and there would be a lessening of the number of accidents.

One could go this evening within a quarter of a mile of the Central Traffic Branch and find vehicles parked on the street with no tail lights. Yet statistics demonstrate that the absence of tail lights is a fruitful cause of accidents. One could also find motor vehicles travelling with only one headlight or with dazzling headlights. The police make a raid on headlights occasionally but there are still far too many glaring headlights in the metropolitan area, and on country roads as well. I was coming here from Mandurah one night last summer and on half a dozen occasions had to stop on the side of the road because I was completely blinded by dazzling headlights.

One could also find push-bikes without rear reflectors or headlights attached. Any member could go out for a couple of hours' drive tonight and discover 20 breaches of the traffic regulations. The police patrols must be aware of them, if they are on the road at all, but they do not seem to be inclined to take action against the offenders until an accident has occurred or until someone travels at 55 to 60 miles an hour.

Then there is the matter of incorrect and doubtful signals. According to the police report, that is another cause of accident, as also is failure to signify one's

intention to pull out from the kerb. A very frequent breach of the regulations—and a dangerous one on country roads—is the failure on the part of a motorist overtaking a vehicle in front to give warning of his intention to pass the car ahead. It is very disconcerting when one is travelling at 40 miles an hour and a car suddenly whizzes past at 60 miles an hour without so much as the sounding of a horn. I remember that before the beginning of the last war the Police Traffic Branch decided to send three of its officials from Perth to Fremantle along Stirling Highway and back along Canning highway for the sole purpose of checking breaches of that regulation, and I think that as a result of that drive between 20 and 30 motorists were prosecuted.

I would say that the general speed of motor vehicles in the metropolitan area exceeds that permitted by regulation by at least 25 per cent. One could drive from here to Fremantle along Stirling Highway, where the speed is supposed to be 30 miles an hour, and be passed by at least 20 different kinds of vehicles, from omnibuses to motor-bikes, all exceeding the speed limit. In my opinion the Police Traffic Branch must accept a lot of the responsibility for the Rafferty rules which are operating in regard to vehicular traffic in the metropolitan area.

If one wants to see a Gilbertian act on the part of traffic police, let him stand at one of the intersections on a wet and windy day. He will then perceive that when a heavy shower of rain makes its appearance, the pointsman deserts his post and dives for the nearest shelter. Yet he is very well protected against the weather, with a good mackintosh and waterproof boots—and leggings if he wants them—and has oilskin protection over his head. These things are provided by the taxpayers and the motoring public contribute quite a lot by way of taxation one way or another. Yet when the pointsman is most required—when the vision of the drivers is obscured by hail or rain—he deserts his point and gets under the nearest verandah.

I have often wondered what would happen if railway shunters, drivers and fireman decided to take shelter whenever a shower of rain fell. Trains do not run very punctually at present, but if the workers adopted that attitude the position would be much worse, and there would be a lot of congestion in moving the traffic out of the Perth yard or any other large shunting yard. I know it will be said that there is an inadequate number of road patrols, but while that may be the case, I do not think the patrols we have are strict enough. They should be not only punitive organisations, but they should be persuasive in order to reduce the number of flagrant and dangerous breaches of the regulations that occur every day and night.

We are told by people who have travelled overseas—particularly in England—that the road manners of drivers in Western Australia, and Australia generally, are probably the worst in the world. A tremendous amount of money is wasted by the National Safety Council in advertisements and "scatters" over the broadcasting system. I have a great admiration for the work the council has done in educating children in regard to the hazards of pedestrians in the metropolitan area. I should say that the paucity of accidents to children is mainly attributable to its teachings, in conjunction with an officer of the Police Department. The pointsmen in Perth do a particularly unpleasant job in a very competent manner. With the exception of the case I quoted, where they desert their posts just when the motorist most needs them in the blinding rain or hail, they carry out their duties very well.

I do not know whether the Government has ever endeavoured to use some of the money provided by the Commonwealth Government for the conduct of the National Safety Council, for the purpose of putting on additional road patrols. If we had more road patrols which enforced discipline on the reckless, careless and drunken drivers, we would get a lesser rate of accidents than we now have. The advertisements which are inserted in the newspapers, at great cost, are wasted, because the type of driver that we wish to persuade to adopt safer methods is the type who would not read the advertisements, and if he did, would not bother to comprehend them; if there was a talk on the subject, of any length, on the broadcasting system, he would probably switch to another station.

This is a major problem that we have to face. The loss of life is tremendous. If one wants to get an idea of the awful tragedies that result from motor accidents, one has only to go to the casualty ward of the Royal Perth Hospital. There we can see young, elderly and middle-aged people, and children too, with broken bones and spinal injuries so that they will never stand upright again. I believe the traffic police should make a crusade to ensure that the appalling annual toll—which is increasing with the additional number of cars on the road—shall be reduced.

**MR. J. HEGNEY** (Middle Swan) [8.17]: Before the motion is put, I desire to say a few words on it. Since the McLarty-Watts Government came to power five years ago, I have been amazed at the facility with which it disregards the rights of representatives of districts, of members of Parliament and of local authorities. In 1947 the electors of Middle Swan elected a Liberal member who represented the district for two and a half years and then decided—successfully—to seek a seat in

the National Parliament. But the Government of which he was a member refused to give the electors of Middle Swan the right or opportunity to select another member in his place.

**Mr. Oldfield:** You told us this last year.

**Mr. J. HEGNEY:** It will bear a lot of repetition. It will possibly be stated again in the electorate. The Government denied the electors of Middle Swan their fundamental right to have a member elected to represent them in Parliament and to be the medium of their approaches to the Ministers and the Government departments.

I come now to local governing authorities. We were told a couple of years ago, when the Government brought down a Bill to provide for the Bassendean-Welshpool chord railway line, that it could not consult the local authorities, because of the fact that if they got information from the departmental committee that was dealing with the question of the Bassendean-Welshpool chord railway Bill, landowners might be able to buy land along the route at enhanced prices and thus defeat the object of the committee. It will be recalled that when that Bill was brought before this House, members were given only four days in which to express opinions on it.

I can remember the Leader of the Government coming to me and the member for Guildford-Midland and saying that he expected us to go on with the debate the following evening. We had no opportunity of consulting our electors or the local authorities who were vitally concerned and when, inside of two days, one of the largest public meetings ever held there was called at the Bayswater Town Hall—there was another at Bassendean—the Bill was passed through Parliament. At that time, the Government pleaded urgency and refused to give the electors of Guildford-Midland, Canning and Middle Swan opportunity for reasonable consultation with their representatives, which would have allowed them to formulate their attitude towards the Bill.

Two years have now passed and there is still uncertainty as to whether the proposed railway is likely to be built along the route laid down in the Bill. The local governing authorities and many residents whose properties are on the surveyed route are in a quandary and do not know what to do. The Government will not pay compensation for their properties as it is still uncertain whether the line is to follow that route, and so those people can make no provision for the future. I put this question to the Minister representing the Minister for Railways during the special session early this year, and drew his attention to a paper read by the Commissioner of Railways, wherein that officer

indicated that the route approved by the Bill—it is now an Act—dovetailed admirably with the proposals for Kwinana.

I have listened with interest during the past few weeks to the member for South Fremantle and the member for Fremantle, and it appears that there is no activity in this regard apparent yet in the areas they represent. As a matter of fact, the Minister for Railways and the Government have repudiated the statement made by the Chief Commissioner, inasmuch as they have said that no final determination has been reached in this issue. Many houses have been resumed in the Bayswater and Bassendean districts, but on the Belmont side there has been no activity. That area is being kept in a state of suspense and persons whose properties are likely to be affected are anxious to know what decision is going to be reached in the matter.

I understand that the Government is now waiting for Mr. Dumas, who is away in Europe, to return with a solution of many of its problems. I believe that on his return he and another engineer are to make a survey and decide whether the marshalling yards—and possibly the line connecting Midland Junction with Kwinana—would not be better placed somewhere between Midland Junction and Kwinana, as against the route recently surveyed by the engineers.

The Government and the Minister have given the local authorities scant consideration in still another matter. A few years ago, a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the question of reform of local government, but years have gone by without any action being taken. On the first day of this session I asked the Minister for Local Government the following question without notice:—

Bearing in mind the findings of the Royal Commission which was held some years ago, is it the intention of the Minister to bring down a Bill this session either to amend or consolidate the Road Districts Act?

To which the Minister replied:—

The Bill is now being dealt with by the Crown Law Department, but when it will be ready for submission to the House I am not yet in a position to state.

I understand that there is no intention of bringing down such a Bill this session, though the Minister knows full well that the local governing authorities are crying out for such a measure. The Minister for Housing has also disregarded the rights of the local governing authorities. The Housing Commission bought up certain areas of ground in the Belmont Road Board district, and the road board asked that there should be at least two conventional-type homes erected for every pre-fab dwelling in that area. It also urged

that a better type of house should be erected in one particular part of the Ascot district, but I notice that the Housing Commission has gone on putting up a considerable number of Austrian pre-fab dwellings there, contrary to the wishes of the local authorities.

When the Minister received the deputation, the local authorities expressed a protest and he agreed in future to consult them in such matters, but I notice that the pre-fab dwellings are continuing to go up in that district. There was a dispute between the Minister and the road board, and members will recall reading in the Press that the Government overrode the board, that the board protested to the Premier, and so on. That protest was based on the fact that the health laws were being violated.

The Minister for Health admitted that the size of the bathrooms in the new pre-fab houses did not conform to the existing health bylaws, but the dwellings are still being erected and no attempt has been made to amend the bylaws. If these houses do not conform to the existing bylaw, it should be amended to fit in with the specifications of such dwellings. On that issue there was a good deal of discontent between the local authorities concerned and the Minister. The road board was annoyed because its interests were being disregarded and it looks as if Ministers of this Government, from the Premier down, do just what they like and ride roughshod over the interests of local governing authorities.

This Government has done very little for the workers of this country, and the workers will have to look to their laurels and see that their standard of living is not reduced because the employers of Australia, and the anti-Labour Governments, are now attempting to lower the workers' standards. The workers of Australia, through the trade union movement and Labour representatives in Parliament, have built up standards of which we should be proud. But the employers are now attempting, through an approach to the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, to reduce wages by £2 7s. a week and increase the weekly hours of work from 40 to 44. They have gone further than that; they have asked that the quarterly adjustments of the basic wage be suspended altogether and that a system of periodical adjustments be used. The conditions of workers in Australia have been built up over the years since 1907 when Mr. Justice Higgins first declared what he considered a minimum wage.

Because we are passing through an inflationary period the employers of Australia are anxious to exploit the workers and break down their standards of living and, whilst the Government has not openly supported this proposal, it has the interests of the employing class at heart.



We know, from this Government's attitude on Bills introduced into this Chamber, how anti-Labour Governments want to reduce the workers' standard of living. The Attorney General dallied with the Workers' Compensation Act for a number of years; he would not introduce amending legislation even though the cost of living was increasing and injured workers were forced to exist on a pittance. It was not until last session that he brought down a Bill to increase payments to injured workers.

The Attorney General: You know that is not true.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I know that from my own experience in this Chamber.

The Attorney General: Tell me the dates on which the amendments were introduced?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: During the period I have been here the Attorney General has refused to bring down legislation to amend the Workers' Compensation Act. The Attorney General knows that we on this side of the House wished to introduce a measure, but the Speaker ruled it out of order because its provisions involved the expenditure of Government money. The Attorney General is well aware that injured workers were forced to exist on a mere pittance and they had extreme difficulty in looking after their wives and families. The Government did not attempt to do anything about it.

Mr. Mann: Why did you not bring down an amending Bill when you were in office? Labour was in power for 14 years.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The hon. member knows full well that over the years Ministers for Labour in Labour Governments improved the Workers' Compensation Act to such an extent that it was the best in the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Lands: Rats!

The Attorney General: That is not right.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The Attorney General also knows that in other States of the Commonwealth, where Labour Governments are in office, the workers' compensation legislation is superior to ours. The Attorney General knows that as well as I do.

The Attorney General: South Australia has the best workers' compensation legislation.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Western Australia certainly has not the best.

The Attorney General: We are a good second.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The Workers' Compensation Act in this State is not as good as the New South Wales legislation.

The Attorney General: Yes it is; it is better than the New South Wales legislation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The Government must go to the country in six months time and it will be telling the people what it has done for the workers. I will be interested to hear what the members for Maylands and Canning tell their electors.

Mr. McCulloch: They will tell their electors how they voted for the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: That is legislation that will shackle the workers. I was elected in 1930, at the same time as the Minister for Lands and the Premier.

The Minister for Lands: You have been here too long.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: They were innocent members in those days, but in the last 20 years the Premier has changed. This is the first time since I have been in Parliament that the Address-in-reply debate has been set aside in order to bring down two Bills, the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill and the Oats Marketing Bill, which were supposed to be of paramount importance to the State. The Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment was introduced with the idea of trying to shackle the workers of this country.

Mr. Mann: Nonsense!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The Attorney General knows that that was the reason for introducing it.

The Minister for Lands: You know it was brought down to help the workers.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The Attorney General is the representative of the Employers' Federation; he was their mouthpiece on this occasion and was doing what he was told. He put up a story for the employers of this country and, when reasonable amendments were submitted, he would not accept them because he knew that his bosses would not like them.

The Attorney General: Do not rant!

The Minister for Lands: It was brought down to help the workers.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will resume his seat. Interjections must occur only when an hon. member is not speaking. I will not allow interjections while a member is speaking because it tends to reduce the proceedings to an uproar. Interjections can be made only when there is a break in a speaker's remarks—when he is catching his breath, if I may put it that way. The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I regret the interjections, but the facts are that the two Ministers concerned are finding that their consciences are pricking them and they are anxious to pin me down.

The Minister for Lands: You could not be pinned down. The only way to get a word in edge ways would be to knock you down.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I do not think the Minister for Lands has spoken to the Address-in-reply.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Minister for Lands and Labour should have handled the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, previous Ministers for Labour have always introduced that type of legislation. Mr. McCallum, the Minister for Labour in the Collier Government, handled similar legislation, as have other Ministers for Labour. In the year 1937 and onwards, the late Hon. Alex. McCallum was Minister for Labour and subsequently Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, the present Leader of the Opposition, also held that portfolio. They all dealt with labour problems as they arose. That is why I was amazed when the present Minister for Labour did not introduce the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill.

The Minister for Lands: You look amazed! You did not have an Attorney General.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: It is surprising to know that the Minister for Labour allowed the Attorney General, a legal man, to take over his Bill, especially when I know that he worked on the wharf many years ago.

The Minister for Lands: I did not!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: He was a member of the Waterside Workers' Federation and he acquired a knowledge of labour problems. That is why I was so amazed when he did not introduce that Bill.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What a shambles it would have been if he had!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: However, his colleague, the Attorney General, sponsored the measure through Parliament.

The Attorney General: It happened to come under the jurisdiction of his department. Does not the hon. member regard the Arbitration Court as part of the judiciary?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Certainly not!

The Attorney General: Well, I do!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The arbitration Bill, dealing with—

The Attorney General: The judiciary.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: —the interests of the employer and the employee—

The Attorney General: It deals with the judiciary and the Arbitration Court.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I read the Bill and listened closely to the debates in this House and you, too, Mr. Speaker, had to listen to them also on many nights and well into the early hours of the morning, and you and I know, Sir, the Bill did not deal with the judiciary but put the shackles on the worker.

The Minister for Lands: The Arbitration Court comes under the Attorney General.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Anyhow, I have now dealt with that subject and I will hear the Minister for Lands on the question of whether it does or not.

The Minister for Lands: We listened to the hon. member for days talking to the boys in the gallery and he slimed them down.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I will be pleased to hear the Minister for Lands speak to the boys in the gallery but he is not game.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, the hon. member slimed them over and over again; he was like a boa constrictor, sliming them in order to swallow them.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The Minister for Lands is very good whilst he is in his seat but we never hear him make a speech on his feet. We will be pleased to listen to him with a great deal of interest when he does.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: He is topheavy; he is afraid to stand up.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Possibly these are political matters and are controversial, but we will hear all about them in the near future when, on the hustings, the Minister will be travelling around and telling the people in the various electorates of all the good his Government has done for the workers in this country. We will be interested to hear all that. From my experience I can say that the Government is not so sympathetic to the workers of this State as it is to those who exploit labour.

The Minister for Lands: How funny!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I will now refer to some matters that are of importance in the electorate I represent. The member for Maylands kindly dealt with a great many of the Middle Swan problems last night for the reason that he has none of his own in the Maylands electorate. He happens to be a member of the Bayswater Road Board and so, because of his knowledge of the problems in the Middle Swan district, and the lack of problems in his own territory, he had to air his knowledge of those problems, of which he knows there are many.

An acute problem, which concerns not only the Middle Swan district but also the whole of the metropolitan area, is that of drainage. The other evening I asked some questions on the proposed comprehensive drainage scheme. During the severe winters of 1945 and 1946 the drainage problem became most acute. In fact, I think I lost some support from my electors in the 1947 election because of my raising the question of drainage, particularly in the low-lying parts of Belmont. The then Minister for Works, Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, approved of a proposal to initiate a comprehensive

drainage survey. To a large extent, that has been undertaken, although I understand it is not quite complete. Approximately £35,000 has been spent in conducting this comprehensive drainage survey, but as yet no relief has been given to those districts which are suffering acutely from lack of drainage, namely, sections of Bayswater and Belmont and others on towards Welshpool. In those parts no drains have been completed or none of the problems associated with the question have been tackled. Consequently, the Bayswater Road Board and the Belmont Park Road Board are greatly concerned about this problem.

I have had many telephone calls from people whose properties are now under water. Only today I visited an area where 20 houses have been built, some of which are on low-lying ground. At one of the houses I visited a woman told me that before she bought the property she had had experience of living on low-lying ground in Cannington, and she asked the vendor of her present home if the land was dry and he assured her that it was. Today, however, this brick house has the whole of its backyard right up to the lavatory under water. The area in question is immediately behind several State Housing homes in Bedford Park. This woman's husband is a Scotsman who has been only three years in this State. He is a fitter, working at the power house. He bought this property, which is now surrounded by water.

I recently had communications from people in the Belmont area and, as a result, I visited quite a number of their homes. They are situated about 200 yards immediately behind the Belmont Road Board hall and a considerable area of ground in that locality is flooded. The solution to this problem lies in establishing main drains to allow the local authorities to run subsidiary drains into them in order that the surplus water may be taken off. Until that work is done, no relief can be expected by the residents who are suffering by this inconvenience. I am sorry the Minister for Works is ill and is absent from the House tonight, because the problem of stormwater drainage has become a most important one in the metropolitan area as the drainage survey has shown.

As representative of the people residing in the Middle Swan district and especially those in the Bayswater and Belmont portions of it, I wish to emphasise that they are certainly in need of relief from the effects of this low-lying water. The member for Canning and myself are to join a deputation to the Minister for Works when this problem, in relation to the Belmont district, will be discussed. I hope that as a result of it some relief will be given. Associated with drainage

is the question of sewerage. Again I urge that the Water Supply and Sewerage Department give attention to the extension of sewerage to the Rivervale district.

By virtue of the activity of the State Housing Commission during recent years well over 700 homes were built in that area and, with private owners building as well, the census indicated that nearly 1,000 houses have been built in that district in the last six years or so. While these houses have septic tanks installed, there is no deep sewerage. Again I stress the point that there is urgent need for sewerage in that district and I hope the Premier who is of course also the Treasurer, will make provision on the Estimates for some funds at all events to start the extension of the sewerage into the Rivervale district.

While we are discussing the question of drainage in the winter-time, the matter of drinking water becomes urgent for people who are removed from the mains in the summer and throughout the year. I urge that the Government gives effect to a proposal to extend the water main along Walter road in the Bayswater district into Morley Park to serve the needs of a new school that was erected there a couple of years ago and at which there is a fairly large number of children attending.

With the rapid development taking place in that area there is urgent need for the extension of the water main to that district. I know that the department is examining the matter and that it will probably cost a bit of money; no doubt the fact that Loan funds are tight will be a determining factor from now on in all such matters. There are possibly about 100 new Australians living to the north of Bayswater in a community settlement. They have to depend on water out of the ground. Many of them are raising young families and they certainly need a pure water supply. So I urge the department to give some attention to that subject.

The question of transport has been another urgent matter in my territory in recent years. At the time of my election the Federal Bus Company operated but there was no question, however, that the service was inefficient and unsatisfactory and, when it finally collapsed and the company got out because the vehicles were not able to carry on with the service, the North Beach Bus Company were induced to take it over. The route suggested by the manager of that company was agreed to by the Transport Board without question. I understand that the Minister for Transport was out with the manager on Sunday. They went over the proposed route and so on. The route was altered from what it had been previously and, after the local authority had widened the road and strengthened it by resuming the corner and truncating it in order to

make provision for the carrying of the bus, the manager of the company contended that his buses could not make so sharp a turn. This was his contention, notwithstanding the fact that this route had been operated by the Federal Bus Company for many years previously.

It was then decided to run the bus down Dundas road; the road on which I live. The residents of that electorate petitioned the local authority to extend the road and widen it to 22ft., because of the fact that its light condition was not suitable for the heavy buses which were plying over it; they contended that this was having a detrimental effect on the houses. The answer of the local authority to that request was that provision had already been made in regard to the road which was asked for in the first instance. The local authority also added that when the diversion of the bus along Dundas road was agreed to it was not consulted and if it were to prepare this road so that it would be suitable to carry the buses it would cost £1,600. So even if the board wanted to undertake this work it would not have the money to carry it out.

A few days ago there was a deputation to the Transport Board of representatives of the Perth Road Board and the Morley Park Progress Association, asking that the buses be diverted to their former route to obviate an expenditure of that amount. We hear a lot about the revenue of the tramways falling off; that there is a deficit in tramway operations and so on. I do not wonder that this is the case when private buses are allowed to operate so close to the trams that they take away the revenue which legitimately belongs to the tramway service. There can be no efficiency in the running of transport when the Transport Board and the Minister agree to such a proposition as this. I hope, therefore, that they will see that this bus company goes back to the previous route. It gives a much wider service to the people concerned; it serves a large number of people and it will mean that these people will have a shorter distance to walk. It would, in fact, benefit most of the people if the company reverted to the route originally followed.

There has been some agitation lately concerning the altering of the name of the Guildford Airport with a view to calling it the Perth Airport. I do not know whether this has been started by the City Council or by the Lord Mayor of Perth, but I do think that Guildford is a much more euphonious name than Perth. It is also quite as old as Perth. A portion of it is in the Swan Road Board and portion in the Belmont Park road district. Guildford is also used as a telephone exchange and so I think it ought to be called the Guildford Airport; it is a far more suitable name. There are other airports in Australia which are not named

after the main cities. In New South Wales, for instance, the airport is called the Mascot Airport; it is not called the Sydney Airport. Again, in Melbourne, we find the Essendon Airport. So I do not think there is much in the proposition submitted by the Lord Mayor that the name of the Guildford Airport should be changed to Perth Airport.

Mr. Totterdell: What about London?

Mr. Needham: Call it the Totterdell Airport!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The question of traffic has been dealt with at considerable length and there is no doubt that at the present time it is a most important problem. More energy ought to be shown in the safe operation of public and private vehicles, but particularly public vehicles, along the highway. We should see that the traffic laws are policed and create a spirit among the drivers of vehicles which would make them keen to observe them and consider safety of first importance on the highway. If we could bring about something like that, I think it would eliminate many of our difficulties. As members know, if they have ever followed behind a public vehicle, when these vehicles stop at a street corner, they very often straddle the corner or stop right at an intersection. The law provides that they must stop 20ft. from the intersection. Even on the outskirts of the towns one does not know where danger is lurking and, if these buses straddle the corner as they very often do, they obstruct the view of oncoming vehicles.

I think the time has arrived when the authorities should address themselves to the question of stopping vehicles some distance from intersections. By doing that we would obviate many of the accidents that occur. There needs to be a live attitude adopted to this problem, and something should be done to save the valuable lives which are lost on the highways and to obviate the dangers that lurk around corners. We are losing too many lives, and we can ill afford to do so. This Parliament agreed a few years ago to the widening of vehicles. There are many heavy vehicles operating on the highways. To a large extent transport has been revolutionised by the six-wheeler vehicle. The size and width of trucks are beyond anything that was contemplated even 20 years ago.

The bridges built in the metropolitan area while I have been member for Middle Swan are now inadequate. I refer to bridges such as those at Garratt-rd. and Guildford-rd., and the time has come when they should be doubled in width. Only by that means will present-day difficulties be avoided. One has only to travel over those bridges to appreciate how frequently accidents occur there. Traffic fees should be availed of to defray

the cost of widening the bridges, and possibly the Minister for Works will be able to give attention to that phase. The member for Guildford-Midland referred to the necessity to widen the Great Eastern Highway. Work is proceeding along those lines over the section in the Belmont Park area, but there is urgent need for the highway to be widened throughout the whole of its length in the metropolitan area.

The difficulties associated with travelling over the highway are emphasised at night when, round about dusk, heavy trucks return to the city, four or five of them following each other in line. The road in those circumstances is of inadequate width to provide for safe operations. I will support the suggestion submitted by the member for Guildford-Midland in that respect. With regard to the point raised by the member for Maylands concerning the reclamation of the Swan River foreshores north of the Causeway. I can commend that proposal as work well worth while. For many years past insistent demands have been made for the cleaning up of the river. Much work has been done in that regard and many sources of pollution have been attended to.

The Perth and Bayswater Road Boards have reclaimed considerable stretches of the foreshore, and it is hoped that when the dredge is again operating north of the Causeway, the work will be proceeded with and cement walls placed in position similar to those to be seen along the banks lower down around South Perth and towards Crawley. That work was largely undertaken in the depression period and I can remember the then Minister for Works, the late Mr. Alex McCallum, being adversely criticised by the present Minister for Agriculture, who was at that time Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Latham, as he was in those days, protested against the spoil being distributed over the low-lying stretches of the foreshore, but today we can see the result of that undertaking. There are long stretches of river foreshore north of the Causeway that could be treated similarly with great advantage. There are other matters to which I could make reference, but as I shall have other opportunities to discuss them when the Estimates are before us, I shall not delay the House any further at this stage.

**MR. BUTCHER (Gascoyne) [9.5]:** A member of another place made the suggestion recently that the North and North-West of this State should be handed over to the Commonwealth to become, I presume, a satellite territory of Canberra. I know that hon. member made an extensive tour of the North prior to making his observations. I know that he

travelled on a State ship which called in at the various ports along the coast. No doubt he discussed the matter extensively with people with whom he came in contact and dealt with the idea he subsequently put forward. I think it is a pity that the hon. member did not accompany me on a tour I recently made of the Gascoyne electorate. Although the Gascoyne is but a very small portion of the area it is suggested should be handed over to the Commonwealth, in the course of my tour I covered some 4,000 miles. I think it can be said that I passed through the very heart of the great pastoral industry of Western Australia.

It is also true that I covered hundreds of miles of auriferous country of the pre-Cambrian series of rock formations in which all the gold, silver and other minerals have been found in this country. If uranium is to be found in Western Australia, I think it will be discovered in the pre-Cambrian series of rocks. That tour also extended to where American interests are prepared to spend a vast amount of money to prove a reality of what appears to be a geological certainty. Those people are carefully examining the area by the very latest scientific methods to determine where they are to drill the hole which they expect will tap a mineral oil basin.

I also contacted the two whaling shore bases which are expected this year to provide an additional £1,500,000 for the common purse of Australia. My tour also covered the closer settlement areas on the Gascoyne River and the fishing industry at Shark Bay which is today providing in the vicinity of £80,000 worth of fish foods for this State. All this is on the credit side of the picture. On the debit side, there are many difficulties which I know must be overcome before the North can prosper. I was indeed pleased to note the manner in which the station people are facing up to their obligations to the State and to posterity.

There is no doubt that the foolish system that was practised in the past of over-stocking no longer exists. These men are keen now to carry a flock that has a hope of existing in decent condition during a normal season and, so that the wool bales will not fall off they are improving the flocks by intensive culling and improving pastures by not overstocking. It is indeed gratifying to see what they are doing. It is also gratifying to note that the younger men realise that the industry cannot be carried on unless there is a competent staff to assist in looking after such vast areas. They realise that the people have the right to expect the remuneration that is enjoyed in the city and that they should be able to engage in the industry with the same dignity as people in the city engage in industries there.

Let me instance one case which is outstanding. This is a young man who is building homes for his workmen. The kitchens are provided with stainless steel sinks and built-in cupboards, the living rooms and bedrooms are comfortable, and there are louvered sleep-outs, the doors and windows are fly-wired, and electric light and septic tank systems are provided. I would be pleased to have in the city a home of that sort to live in.

No other section is doing more for the economy of Australia than are those people, and one would expect that all Governments would go out of their way to assist them as much as possible. I wish to instance one little group, and in that group is the young man who builds the houses to which I have referred. These people are 110 miles from Carnarvon and until this year they enjoyed a fortnightly mail service. This year the postal authorities called for alternative tenders, one to include that small dead-end circuit and the other to exclude it. The tender to exclude it was accepted, and those people were told they would have to make their own arrangements to get their mail from Carnarvon, 110 miles distant.

The mail truck is not merely a mail truck; it is the means whereby perishables are conveyed to those people, and when we consider that there are little kiddies on the stations who are being denied things that are more necessary for children there than for children in the city, it is no wonder that those people are becoming incensed and that the spirit of co-operation is breaking down. Last year this group paid in the vicinity of £70,000 by way of taxation; yet, when I tried to get the service restored—the amount in question was £400—I felt that there was very little hope of its being restored. There are other services that are now fortnightly, whereas they used to be weekly.

I have seen men, women and children living in bad humpies prospecting for minerals. I have known them to be doing that for some years before the mine was brought into production. Yet, as soon as a mine is brought into production, the taxation axe hits them, and they are considered in the same category as the farmer. We must remember that every new acre brought under cultivation by a farmer increases his asset; on the other hand, every ton of ore extracted from a mine depreciates the asset by the value of that extracted ore.

Therefore the Government should go out of its way to make a taxation rebate—at least 20 per cent.—to those people. The Government should also go out of its way to provide amenities in the way of water supplies and transportation because it is only through the development of the mineral resources that in the near future the population of the North can be stepped

up. No matter what else happens, there can be no prosperity without increased population.

The banana industry on the Gascoyne River also needs concessions. There are many hazards in that industry, including willy-willies and heavy winds that knock the plantations about, together with hot summers and cold winters. I stated last year that the way to attract population and grant relief to the people in the North would be by granting an exemption on income tax up to £5,000. That would have a considerable effect in assisting to build up the population of the North.

Those are the credit and debit sides of the North, but to believe that the debit side could be improved by handing it over to the Commonwealth is merely wishful thinking. We people of the North feel that we are already too far away from the seat of government, and to have the seat of government still further away at Canberra would be out of the question. I agree with the member for Pilbara that there is only one way to assist in populating the North, and that is by creating a new State. By so doing, we would get decentralisation through centralisation. The population would grow and prosperity would increase with the growth of a new seat of government from which railways and roads would radiate. That is my answer to the suggestion to slice off two-thirds of the State and hand it over to Canberra.

The other points I wish to mention are purely local. I am fully aware, as is every member, that the financial position today is causing concern, and I have no intention of embarrassing the Government. I know that the Carnarvon school has been almost completed at great cost, and a very fine structure it is. A domestic science section is still necessary to bring the school up to the Junior standard. When finance is available, I believe that that section will be provided, and I trust that it may be accomplished soon.

I know that work on the erection of the hospital has been restricted somewhat this year and cannot see how that could have been avoided. I have taken up the question of water supply with the Premier and the Minister, and I trust that consideration will be given to the matter this year, notwithstanding that finance is so tight. The convent is doing a grand job by educating a lot of children and relieving the strain on the State school, but its water bill is enormous and makes the work of carrying on extremely difficult. That school is entitled to receive some consideration. Then there is the Northampton-Carnarvon-rd. When I was elected to this Chamber last year, it was proposed to spend some £40,000 on the road. I strenuously took the matter up with the Premier and the Ministers and later on that grant was increased to £90,000. I have travelled there recently. The road

work is in progress and a great improvement is evident. But unless that road is sealed, it will never stand up to the heavy traffic it is asked to carry; and, though finances are tight, I would ask the Government to do all it possibly can in the way of sealing a section of that road each year.

On the Shark Bay main road and subsidiary roads, a considerable amount of money has been spent, but there again the maintenance must be kept up or that money will go down the drain. I spoke before of a staging that should be erected at Shark Bay so that the port can function as a port and not as an inland village. I also mentioned that the slipway should be built so that the fishermen will have facilities for attending to their boats. If the jetty were constructed to the deep water to accommodate the lighter, there would be enough water to build the slipway at the end of the jetty.

Those are the main things of which I wish the Government to take heed. As I said before, I know that finances are extremely tight, but certain financial commitments must be undertaken if we are to keep the people we have in the North and that, after all, is the main consideration.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

#### **BILLS (16)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Health Act Amendment (No. 1).  
Introduced by the Attorney General (for the Minister for Health).
- 2, Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment and Continuance.
- 3, State Housing Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Housing.
- 4, Child Welfare Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Child Welfare.
- 5, Education Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Education.
- 6, Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Premier.
- 7, Fremantle Harbour Trust Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Education.
- 8, Milk Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.
- 9, Fremantle Electricity Undertaking Agreement.
- 10, Main Roads Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Chief Secretary (for the Minister for Works).
- 11, Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment (Continuance).
- 12, Fremantle Electricity Undertaking (Purchase Moneys) Agreements.  
Introduced by the Chief Secretary.

- 13, Pharmacy and Poisons Act Amendment.
- 14, Physiotherapists Act Amendment.
- 15, Health Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 16, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Health.

*House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.*

## **Legislative Assembly**

Thursday, 11th September, 1952.

### **CONTENTS.**

	Page
Questions : Bus service, as to extension of Caledonian Avenue route .....	867
Sulphur, as to recovery from gold treatment plants .....	867
Police, as to provision for station, Bayswater .....	867
Education, as to new school, Hillcrest, Bayswater .....	867
State alunite industry, as to disposal of buildings .....	867
Goldfields Water Supply Scheme, (a) as to diameter of main .....	868
(b) as to reduction of farm consumption .....	868
Hospitals, (a) as to remuneration of country secretaries .....	868
(b) as to alterations and sewerage, Wyalkatchem .....	868
State Electricity Commission, (a) as to checking street lights, Fremantle .....	869
(b) as to interest rate on loan .....	869
Housing, (a) as to pre-fab houses imported and erected .....	869
(b) as to stored components of pre-fab homes .....	869
Promotions Appeal Board Act, as to introducing amending legislation .....	870
Traffic, (a) as to motor vehicle accidents (b) as to accidents involving drunken drivers and others .....	870
Rottnest Board of Control, as to personnel, employees and conditions .....	870
Gold, as to production, Kurrawang area Kwinana oil refinery, as to dredging contract .....	871
Beer, as to supplies and exports .....	871
War service land settlement, as to agreement with Commonwealth .....	871
State finance, as to Government expenditure .....	871
Workers' Compensation Act, as to introducing amending legislation .....	873
Cement, imported and local, (a) as to comment by Auditor General and criticism by member for Fremantle (b) as to time of making explanation (c) as to use by Government .....	873
(d) as to book-keeping entry .....	873
(e) as to debit for 340 tons .....	873
(f) as to checking users' commodity prices .....	874
(g) as to identification of cement used (h) as to recommendations of Auditor General .....	874