

Thus became established what has become known as the doctrine of common employment and which may be enunciated as follows:—

If the person occasioning and the person suffering injury are fellow workmen engaged in a common employment and having a common master, such master is not responsible for the consequences of the injury.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Under this Bill he will be.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. So far back as 1877, this principle of common law was considered to be of doubtful value and in that year a committee of the House of Commons was appointed to consider the law on the subject. A Bill providing for the total abolition of the doctrine of common employment was referred to the committee, who reported that they were unable to recommend abolition of the doctrine of common employment; they nevertheless recommended that the existing law should be so far altered as to make the employer responsible for acts of him who was designated as vice master. As a result of this recommendation, an Act was passed known as the Employers' Liability Act.

Hon. E. Nulsen: When was that passed?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think it was in the year 1880. An Act on similar lines was passed in Western Australia in the year 1894. It is known as the Employers' Liability Act of 1894, and it is No. 3 of that year. I have said, before the Act was passed a workman could recover if injured in his employment only when he could prove that the employer had personally been guilty of negligence which led to his injury.

In the case of large employers and incorporations this was impossible because one could not prove that a corporation, in its corporate entity, was responsible for negligence however negligent another employee of the corporation might have been. After the Act a workman was *prima facie* entitled to recover where the employer had delegated his duty or powers of superintendence to other persons and such other persons had caused the injury to the workman by negligently performing the duties and powers delegated to them.

But the doctrine of common employment except insofar as it was thus abrogated still remained. The Bill proposes to absolutely abolish that rule so that in future an employee will have the same rights and claims against his employer as would a stranger, and he will not be in any way affected by the defence which was formerly available, namely, that the accident arose out of the negligence of a fellow employee.

As I said before, this doctrine was abolished in England in 1948 by a law reform Bill of that year; and it has also been abolished in some of the States of the

Commonwealth. If the old rule of common employment is abolished, then, of course, the provisions of the Employers' Liability Act, which to some extent alleviated the situations caused by that rule, will no longer be applicable and will therefore be repealed by this Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. Nulsen, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 5th. September, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions: State Housing Commission, as to employees, salaries and quarters	500
Gold, as to prospect of increase in price	501
Agricultural Education Committee, as to report and Government's intentions	501
Address-in-reply, twelfth day	501
Speakers on Address—	
Hon. A. L. Loton	501
Hon. J. G. Hislop	507
Hon. G. Fraser	513

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

QUESTIONS.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

As to Employees, Salaries and Quarters.

Hon. J. MURRAY asked the Minister for Transport:

Will the Minister inform the House—

(1) Number of employees employed by State Housing Commission in the years 1947 to 1951 inclusive—

(a) males;

(b) females?

(2) Total salary bill for each of these years?

(3) Total cost of Plain-st. building for the Commission, including resumption and latest addition thereto?

The MINISTER replied:

(1)—	Males.	Females.
1947-48	158	31
1948-49	173	41
1949-50	232	75
1950-51	256	71
(2)—	£	
1947-48	64,142	
1948-49	94,994	
1949-50	132,167	
1950-51	181,365	

Activities of State Housing Commission include administration of—

- (1) War Service Homes Act for Commonwealth Government.
 - (2) Commonwealth-State rental homes.
 - (3) State Housing Act (workers' homes).
 - (4) Building Operations and Building Control Act.
 - (5) McNess Housing Trust.
- (3) Recent additions to Plain-st. building, which are still in progress, are not for occupation by State Housing Commission. The cost of that portion of the building occupied by the Commission was £55,022. The land was purchased by the Government together with brick buildings thereon, now occupied by the Agricultural and other departments for £12,000.

GOLD.

As to Prospect of Increase in Price.

Hon. G. BENNETTS (for Hon. E. M. Heenan) asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Has the Minister read the statement in today's issue of "The West Australian" attributed to the Minister for Mines, Queensland, that most observers considered the price of gold would be raised to at least 50 dollars (£A22 6s. 5d.)?

(2) In the light of his recent visit to Canberra, does the Minister consider that there is any cause for hope that this opinion is well-founded?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Commonwealth Treasurer assured the deputation from the goldmining industry which met him in Canberra on the 24th August, 1951, that the Federal Government was continuing, in international discussions, to support proposals for an increase in the official world price of gold. Sir Arthur Fadden said that the Commonwealth Government appreciated fully the importance of the goldmining industry to the Australian economy and particularly so far as Western Australia was concerned. He made it clear that it was the desire of the Commonwealth Government that economic gold production should be encouraged and stated that the Commonwealth Government had the problem under examination.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

As to Report and Government's Intentions.

Hon. A. L. LOTON (for Hon. A. R. Jones) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Since the report of the Agricultural Committee has been available for some considerable time, will the Minister answer the following questions:—

- (1) Was the report considered one which could be put to practical use;
- (2) If the answer to (a) is "Yes," when will the Government make known its intentions?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Government has already put into practical use some of the recommendations, whilst others will be adopted as circumstances will permit. The report is considered a valuable one and it is the intention of the Government to use it to the fullest extent when practicable.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Twelfth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South) [4.37]: I wish to offer you my congratulations, Mr. President, on having had a knighthood conferred upon you by His Majesty the King, and I trust that you will be spared for many days to enjoy that distinction. To the two new members of this Chamber, Messrs. Henning and Murray, I extend my congratulations on the winning of their respective seats. As they both have a very useful rural background, I feel certain the knowledge they bring to this House will be most valuable in the debates of this and later sessions. To the Clerk of the Council and the Usher of the Black Rod I desire also to extend congratulations, and I know that we have in them two very able and valuable servants of the House.

I feel somewhat disappointed—in view of the information that I have obtained during the present session—that such small progress has been made with the comprehensive water scheme from Collie to Narrogin. We were informed that that scheme was considered to be a No. 1 priority, but only 31 miles of the pipeline have been completed and steel has just recently arrived for the construction of another 7½ miles. We, in the southern areas of the State, have during the last three summers, in particular, had very severe water rationing. In some cases, no potable water has been available for domestic use at all and it was hoped, when the present season's rains commenced in

April, that we would have a fairly plentiful supply in the catchment areas of Narrogin, Wagin, Katanning and some of the centres further east.

Unfortunately, although the opening rains in April were considerable, the run off was not very satisfactory, with the result that we once again face the prospect of a summer with an extremely limited water supply. When the comprehensive scheme eventually reaches Narrogin it will overcome one of the greatest problems of the Railway Department, which is the haulage of water for locomotive requirements. The number of man hours worked and the number of locomotives used during this past summer and preceding dry seasons in the haulage of water for railway requirements have been colossal.

Until six weeks ago a water haulage shuttle service had been operating to Narrogin for railway needs. Shortly that service will have to be recommenced, because it seems that the winter rains are over and the water at Narrogin is far from adequate to supply the locomotives, quite apart from meeting the needs of domestic consumers. I realise that the Government was taken unawares by the cessation of steel supplies from Japan. I am led to believe that an arrangement had been entered into for the import of steel from Japan, but when the Korean war became more serious, America considered that the steel could be put to better use for rearmament than for the manufacture of pipes to be used for water schemes in Australia.

In consequence, the supply of essential steel for our needs has been cut off. From the reply which the Minister gave to a question I asked the other day, it appears that no steel is coming forward from Japan, but it is hoped that a contract can be let in America. At this stage that is probably wishful thinking on our part; because if America has stopped our supplies of steel from Japan, it is hardly likely that she will supply it direct herself. We will have to continue to hope and trust that the B.H.P. will increase its output by more than 80 per cent., which is the extent of its output at present.

It is for this reason that I support Mr. Watson in his contention that the Snowy River scheme should have been deferred until some later stage. The areas mentioned by Mr. Forrest and the centres in the eastern districts, and in the Goldfields and also in the southern districts of the State have been without water supplies for many years, and it seems unwarranted that the supply of materials and the use of labour which is in such scarce supply should be diverted to the Snowy River scheme rather than utilised in supplying water to country centres. That applies not only to our own State but also to other parts of the Commonwealth. I thank the

Minister for Water Supply for continuing the programme of conserving water in rock catchments in the eastern areas of the State.

Anyone who has seen the excavations made and, in some cases, the concrete tanks that have been built, and knows that such work is to be continued in order to impound more water, will agree that people in such areas are better off than those who are situated in heavier rainfall country. I also sincerely thank the Minister for Works for the able manner in which he has kept all members informed of the progress of public works undertaken in their respective electorates. If any tender is accepted by the Minister for Works for some project in a particular province he always advises the member concerned of the name of the successful tenderer and the date when the work will be commenced. He is the only Minister who has done that.

Hon. G. Fraser: He has done nothing in my province.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I speak only for the province I represent; I cannot speak for that represented by the hon. member. The Minister has certainly done it for us.

Hon. G. Fraser: Of course, you and the Minister wear the same school tie.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I sometimes wear the same coloured tie as the hon. member, but quite often it is not a school tie.

Hon. L. Craig: Sometimes he wears none at all!

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Another matter which gives rise to great concern in all areas of the State, but more particularly in the southern districts owing to the settlement that is taking place there, is the lack of Government surveyors. At one time a surveyor was stationed in Narrogin to serve the whole of the southern area. Today the southern districts are without the services of a surveyor.

Hon. G. Bennetts: No encouragement is offered to young men to become surveyors. We need their services in Esperance, but we cannot obtain them. There is valuable land there, but it cannot be surveyed and subdivided.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: As I was saying, no surveyors are stationed in the southern portion of the State; and today, with closer settlement, the subdivision of large estates and of town lots for the erection of homes is being delayed for the want of competent surveyors.

Hon. G. Fraser: There are a number in Fremantle you can have.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Perhaps the Minister will take note of what the hon. member says and make one available for the southern portion of the State. We have none, and it would be appreciated if one could be appointed to serve that area. During the last few months we

have heard a great deal about butterfat, dairy-farming and other kindred matters. There is one aspect I bring to the notice of the Minister for Agriculture, and that is the method used for the testing of cream. I understand the system followed at present is that when a can of cream arrives at a factory a sample is taken to test for butterfat. That sample is put on one side for testing by the Department of Agriculture tester, who check-tests it for butterfat content.

Hon. L. Craig: That is correct; he check-tests it.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I thank the hon. member for putting me right. However, that is only a check test on the factory test. The point I want to make is that the producer claims he is entitled to have the can of cream checked for butterfat content, but so far the department has not been favourably disposed to doing that.

Hon. L. Craig: The producer does get his can tested. The departmental official takes a sample from the can and checks that against the factory test and that can is frequently tested by the Government tester.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Only a sample is taken for the factory test.

Hon. L. Craig: The Government man is present there half the time.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, half the time; I agree with the hon. member on that! Nevertheless, the occasion does arise when some cans during the course of transit to the factory are well shaken up. Some are transported by road and others by rail. Each can is supposed to be stirred before the test sample is taken. If all of them were well stirred, the test would be satisfactory, but on some occasions they are not.

Hon. L. Craig: I have watched them for hours and I have not seen one that was not stirred.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Is the hon. member a director of the factories?

Hon. L. Craig: I am not.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I hope that the Minister will tell me whether the department is able to do anything in the matter.

The Minister for Agriculture: If you will tell me what you want, I will explain.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I have been trying to tell the Minister for the last five minutes.

The Minister for Agriculture: You have been telling me what you do not want. However, your remarks are being recorded and the matter will be investigated.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I should like the inspector of the Department of Agriculture to take a sample from the can for his butterfat test and not merely tell the sample taken by the factory operative.

The Minister for Agriculture: In view of the conversation with Mr. Craig, it was very difficult to understand what you were driving at, but I can understand that.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I thank the Minister. When speaking last evening, the Minister took a good deal of trouble to point out the satisfactory position, in his opinion, of the dairying industry.

The Minister for Agriculture: The future of the industry.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The Minister quoted figures to show what had been achieved in the production of milk, butterfat, etc., and, speaking of future prospects, he expressed the belief that the industry would experience a better time.

The Minister for Agriculture: It should do so with butterfat at 4s. 2d.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: We can all agree if such is the case. I wish to direct attention to the overall position of the industry in Australia and not merely in Western Australia. I have some information contained in a booklet dealing with dairying in Australia. I shall quote a few extracts as follows:—

Milk production in Australia has increased slowly since 1945, but is still not much above pre-war production. During 1949/50 an output of 1,253.5m. gals. was achieved, 100m. gals. more than the pre-war average. Production during 1950/51 will be slightly less than last year's figure.

While milk supplies have increased by less than 1 per cent., population has grown by 20 per cent. since 1938/39, and important changes have taken place in the forms in which milk is used. More is consumed as whole milk, greater quantities are absorbed in the manufacture of processed milk products, and cheese production has increased by 50 per cent. As a result, the quantity of milk available for butter production has been reduced sharply.

The most important feature of the new pattern of disposal is the quantity of whole milk now consumed. Higher living standards and awareness of the nutritional advantages of milk have caused an increase in annual consumption per head from 23.4 gals. before the war to 30.4 gals. in 1949/50. Larger quantities are now being used by processed milk plants to produce condensed and powdered milk and other preparations. Unlike butter and cheese, those milk foods are not exported under contract to the United Kingdom, but are available to compete in lucrative overseas markets, in addition to their ready sale in Australia. Under such conditions, and as a result of government encouragement in the early war years,

output of these milk-processing factories increased from 29,705 tons in 1938/39 to 106,579 tons in 1949/50.

Cheese production, which was also encouraged during the war, increased from 29,304 tons to 44,859 tons, but all exportable surplus is sold under the United Kingdom contract.

Butter Shortages.

The expansion of output of these processed milk products, together with increased consumption of whole milk, has reduced the quantity of milk available to butter factories. As a result, butter production has fallen from 203,500 tons in 1938/39 to 173,182 tons in 1949/50. Local requirements rose from 84,902 tons in 1946/47 to 90,432 tons in 1949/50 even under rationing, which kept consumption at about 24 lb. per head per annum. Despite increased production in this period exports declined slightly from 83,793 tons in 1947/48 to 81,494 tons in 1949/50.

When butter rationing was lifted, in June, 1950, it was not anticipated that consumption per head would immediately increase to the pre-war annual level of 32.5 lb. Yet during 1950/51 exports fell to 52,000 tons. Production to the end of April was only slightly less than the same period in 1949/50, so that increased local consumption has been responsible for this sudden reduction in export sales.

Those figures show that the industry is not keeping pace with requirements, and that the diversion of whole milk into processing and other avenues is going shortly to cause much concern to those responsible for the activities of the industry. It is to be hoped that the statement made by the Minister after his inspection of Peel Estate last week regarding the large quantities of milk to be produced there will be borne out by experience. Otherwise, the people of this State will probably find that this all-important food is not available.

Several members have referred to the Licensing Act. Apparently some overhaul of the whole statute is overdue. The number of accidents occurring weekly and the number of cases before the various courts in which liquor is alleged to be the explanation of most of the charges is causing serious concern to all sections of the community. Beer drinking, like horse-racing, is evidently becoming a national industry. I wish to quote from a statement that appeared in the Press a few days ago as follows:—

Australians drank more beer in the year ended June 30 last than in any previous year. The consumption was a record at 162,845,000 gallons, compared with 145,807,000 gallons in the year before—an increase of 17,038,000 gallons or 11.7 per cent.

There were, of course, more people to drink it—but only 3.3 per cent. more. The consumption in the year to June 30 was slightly more than 19½ gallons a head of population, compared with 18 gallons in the previous year and 12 gallons in the year before the war. In the last financial year the excise paid was £37,324,000—£3,905,000 more than in the previous year. In 1938-39 the excise paid on beer was only £7,288,597 or 21/ a head, compared with 89/9 in the year just ended.

These figures should make every responsible member of the community take some heed of where we are heading today. In many country towns—and I think in the metropolitan area, too—it is almost impossible to have any sort of function unless beer is made the bait to attract the audience. If one wants to hold a social evening, unless a keg of beer is available—

Hon. L. Craig: Four kegs.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The people might be better beer consumers down the hon. member's way, but they are more moderate in other districts.

Hon. C. H. Henning: It is drier country.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes. We have not reached saturation point yet. These figures are quoted for beer only, and when we take spirits into account we must realise that a stupendous sum is spent annually on liquor. The consumption of beer per head is almost equal to that of milk.

Hon. G. Bennetts: You have to drink beer on the Goldfields because you cannot get milk.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The annual consumption of milk per head is 30.4 gallons, and that of beer is 19.5 gallons. Parliament should be alive to the facts, and should try to do something to curtail the excessive consumption of liquor.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What do you suggest should be done?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Last session Dr. Hislop made several suggestions, but to date I do not think much has come of them.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Weaker beer might do it.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, and not so much spare time. The 40-hour week was introduced to give the people more leisure, and it certainly has, but many people live under such conditions that they have no real home life, and so during their leisure times they go to a hostelry.

Hon. L. Craig: Pub.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I call it a hotel, or drinking place of some sort. That seems to be the only form of relaxation that some people are able to obtain.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Do you suggest a Royal Commission, or something like that?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: If the alcoholic content were reduced—

Hon. L. Craig: It would not keep.

Hon. G. Fraser: It does not keep too long now, apparently.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I think the position would be better if the sale of liquor were more liberalised, but at the same time one should not be able to buy bottles of beer right on closing time. I think such sales are responsible for a big proportion of accidents. One other matter that is causing country people concern—and I think Mr. Bennetts will support me this time—is the increase of rail fares and freights. Towards the end of March an announcement was made in "The West Australian" under the heading "Rail Charges Raised 30 per cent. Important Decisions on Transport Policy," as follows:—

Railway fares and freights in this State are to be increased by an overall 30 per cent.

We realise that because of the more prosperous times, and the increases that all sections of the community receive as the result of better seasons, etc., some increases to meet additional costs are necessary, but I do not think the country people expected that the additional costs to be imposed would be as high as they are. At this point I shall quote some figures to show the percentage increases in superphosphate rates—

Town.	Miles.	Old Rate.	New Rate.	Increase per cent.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Amphlon	79	9 9	1 3 7	141.880
Badgebup	247	18 7	1 16 5	95.964
Bakers Hill	40	6 10	18 5	109.531
Balkulling	104	10 6	1 4 6	133.333
Hyden	325	1 1 10	2 1 2	88.55
Newdegate	306	1 1 1	2 0 4	91.304

The increase of 88.55 per cent. relating to Hyden, was the lowest I could find.

The Minister for Transport: These charges are still below the cost of the service.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I remember last session Mr. Craig saying that those who use the railways should pay. Well, that is all right so long as the people who use the railways are not compelled to use them because of the policy of the State Transport Board, but have some choice. I suggest that board's title is a misnomer; it should be "The Railway Protection Board," because it has only one policy, namely, to protect the railways against whatever competition it possibly can. To say that the charges are still below cost is very little satisfaction to the people in these areas who have to use the railways. The increase of 30 per cent. is not borne out with respect to any of the places I have quoted, and I do not think it applies, with regard to superphosphate, to any town.

The Minister for Transport: If you apply it to all commodities, you will find it does.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: That might be so, but superphosphate is a most essential commodity.

Hon. L. Craig: It is carried at a concessional rate.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: If we do not have superphosphate, we do not have production and if we do not have production we do not have towns, and if we do not have towns, we do not exist.

Hon. G. Bennetts: In addition, you have minimum truckloads.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, I shall mention that point in a moment. I wish now to deal with the new rates for hay and chaff which have operated as from the 1st May, 1951. The figures I am about to quote have been supplied to me by a firm selling produce on commission. There used to be a five-ton limit on oats, and it is now eight, and the same for bulk or bagged wheat.

The Minister for Transport: The limit was six tons with respect to wheat.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am sorry. The limit is now five tons on bagged or bulk oats and it has gone up to an eight-ton minimum. This is a heavy penalty on the small producer.

The Minister for Transport: The idea is to release more trucks.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I do not know the reason. I am concerned with the effect of the increase on the person who has to finance an eight-ton truck for wheat.

The Minister for Transport: The matter is under review now.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: On Friday a notice appeared in the Press to the effect that the Minister had agreed to meet a deputation from various bodies in connection with some of these matters.

The Minister for Transport: I called the conference, really.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I shall now quote the figures that I mentioned a moment ago dealing with the new rates for chaff, straw and hay—

Town.	Miles.	Old Rate (4 ton minimum).	New Rate (5 ton minimum).	Increase.	Increase per cent.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Northam	66	15 3	1 12 4	17 1	112
Pingelly	130	1 0 7	2 4 7	1 4 0	116.6
Narrogin	162	1 3 0	2 9 11	1 6 11	117
Wagin	193	1 5 0	2 12 7	1 7 7	110.33
Katanning	225	1 7 0	2 15 0	1 8 0	108.7
Lake Grace	287	1 9 7	2 18 1	1 8 6	96.3

The old rate for barley and oats was based on a five-ton minimum, and that has now gone to an eight-ton minimum. The figures applying to Narrogin were, old rate

£1 3s.; new rate £1 9s. 11d.; increase 6s. 11d.; and percentage increase 30. That is one of the few instances where 30 per cent. really does apply. Wagin, also, has a 30 per cent. increase.

I might add that the increases applying to the freight on oats and barley, apart from the incidence of the minimum truck load being raised from five to eight tons, is somewhere about 30 per cent. on the average, because we come down to 29.57 per cent. increase at Lake Grace, and the highest applying to any of the towns I have just mentioned is that applicable to Northam, which is 43.7. The commercial agent agreed that double sheets would be provided for all consignments of chaff, especially during the winter months, but loss has been incurred through the new minimum of five tons having to be observed where, on many occasions, only one sheet had been supplied. For many years past, as soon as the winter rains commenced, the loaders were instructed to keep down to 100 bags, slightly over four tons in weight, when one sheet completely covered the load. If this is attempted under the new rate, either the farmer or the produce firm will be penalised because of underloading. I bring that to the notice of members because of the interjection from the Minister for Railways and I hope that the matter will be rectified very shortly.

There is another matter dealing with superphosphate and that concerns the statutory declaration which is required from users of super. It appears that the Minister for Agriculture, in his enthusiasm to try to arrive at some form of rationing, has authorised the issue of statutory declarations for the obtaining of information. From the answer that he gave in this place, and from the reply given by a Minister in another place it appears that this statutory declaration has been required without the authority of any Act of Parliament. Another such instance came to my notice this morning. All producers have had a 10 per cent. cut on their superphosphate quotas this year. So, if a person wants to get an increase, or have his old quota restored, he must make application to the Superphosphate Distribution Committee. I intend to read the letter that is sent out with the statutory declaration. It reads as follows—

In response to your request, I enclose the necessary form for you to make application for an increased quota on the grounds that if restricted to your present quota, serious financial hardship will result. You will already have received a copy of the Distribution Plan for the season commencing 1st July, 1951.

You will note that the application is in the form of a Statutory Declaration, and your attention is drawn to the following essential matters in connection with the completion of the application:—

1. Every question which applies to you must be answered fully and accurately. Questions which do not apply to your particular case, should be ruled through.
2. Your signature must be witnessed by one of the authorised persons shown at the foot of the Declaration.
3. The Declaration must have affixed to it a duty stamp for 1s., which must be cancelled by the person witnessing your signature.
4. When complete, read the application through carefully, make sure every question has been answered, the Declaration stamped and properly witnessed, then post direct to the Superphosphate Distribution Committee, 133 St. George's Terrace, Perth.

As the questions set out in the Declaration are designed to give the committee all the necessary information, please do not attach an accompanying letter with irrelevant details, as the committee will be guided in their decision by the information contained in the claim, the total number of genuine claims and the total tonnage of superphosphate set aside for the particular purpose of assisting genuine cases of hardship.

Please note that the closing date for receipt of applications by the committee is strictly the 30th September, 1951, on which date the committee will proceed to examine all claims and decide the measure of assistance which can be given where this is deemed necessary. As soon as the committee has made its decision, you will be advised what quantity of extra superphosphate, if any, has been allotted to you.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Is that sent out to all farmers?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: No, they have to apply to the Superphosphate Distribution Committee, the manufacturer or, I believe, the Farmers' Union. However, the statutory declaration is the form that has caused me the most concern. I do not know whether every farmer is supposed to be a statistician, but if he must complete the information required he would need to go very thoroughly into all aspects of his operations. This form is a statutory declaration and if any wrong information is supplied the farmer commits an offence and is liable to a penalty. For the information of members I will read what is set out on this statutory declaration—

Statutory Declaration.

(Every question must be answered.)
In support of application for increased
quota of Superphosphate.

Please post direct to: The Super-
phosphate Distribution Committee,
133 St. George's Terrace, Perth.

Surname

Christian Names

Address..... Siding.....

Present quota tons.

Name of Distributor through whom
quota ordered.....

(a) If partnership—full name of
every partner.....

(b) If a family concern, state
names and ages of members depend-
ent on the farm.....

(c) Area of farm.....acres.
Cleared.....acres.

(d) Area cropped and/or top-
dressed in 1951:

Wheat or other grain.....acres
of heavy land,.....acres of light
land at.....lb. per acre on heavy
and.....lb. per acre on light land.

Area of heavy land under sown
pasture topdressed.....acres.

Area of light land under sown pas-
ture topdressed.....acres at.....lb.
per acre on heavy and.....lb.
per acre on light land.

(e) Average annual production of
farm for the 3 years ended 30th June,
1951:—

Wheat: Yield.....bushels. Ave-
rage per acre.....bushels.

Other grain: Yield.....bushels.
Average per acre.....bushels.

Sheep: Carried.....

Wool: Yield.....bales. Average
yield.....lb. per sheep.

Fat lambs: Marketed.....

Milking cows: Carried.....

Whole milk: Production.....

Average per cow.....gallons.

Butterfat: Production.....lb. Ave-
rage per cow.....lb.

Strike out production items which
do not apply to you.

That is a nice sort of form to send out.
I do not know how many farmers have
filled them in or how many are capable
of doing it correctly.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is why it is
sent out. They do it so that the farmers
will not bother about applying.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: It is beyond me
why forms such as this are sent out.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Red tape.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: It is more than
red tape. I forgot; there is another page
of the declaration. I will not weary mem-

bers by reading it through but the other
page states that applicants are required to
state briefly and concisely the grounds
on which they claim serious financial
hardship if restricted to the present quotas.
There is nothing about increased produc-
tion. The form covers only the financial
aspect and the need for additional super-
phosphate on that basis. At the bottom
of the declaration there is a note: "Com-
mittee's decision." If I wanted any super-
phosphate, I would refuse to fill in a form
of that kind and I hope that all farmers
desiring superphosphate will give the
question serious consideration before they
commit themselves to filling in statutory
declarations such as this. There is no
doubt about its being genuine because one
has to affix a 1s. stamp and then have the
stamp cancelled by the witness.

Another matter concerns Mr. Parker
and his outburst against the Gnow-
angerup Road Board on the question
of native affairs. I think he was
carried away by his enthusiasm. When
the hon. member was a Minister of the
Crown, and particularly the Minister in
charge of the Department of Native Af-
fairs, he had a wonderful opportunity to
set up a model native settlement at Bass-
endeau. He would have been able to keep
a close check on this settlement and show
members how a native institution should
be run. I support the motion.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Are there any
natives in the native settlement at Bassen-
deau?

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan)
[5.25]: In rising to speak, I would like to
congratulate you, Sir, on the honour which
His Majesty the King has bestowed upon
you. We have been very fortunate in
this House in those who have held the
office you now occupy. Your predeces-
sors have been similarly honoured, and
I am sure every member of this House
joins with me when I say that you are
worthily upholding the tradition of the
past. For that reason, you have deserved
the honour which you have received. Un-
fortunately, at this stage there is always
a moment in which we must mourn the
loss of old friends who have passed on.
At the same time we welcome newcomers
to this House. We also welcome persons
in authority in the places of those who
have given us grand service in the past.
Life was ever thus, and we must go on.

During the last year or so, a feeling
has been growing in my mind that gov-
ernment generally, particularly in Aus-
tralia, is not meeting with general ap-
proval, and that Governments in general
are losing the position they formerly held
in the minds of the people. This can be a
most dangerous situation if we allow it
to continue. In order to protect the
people, and their government by Parlia-
ment, serious steps must be taken by those
who are in Parliament to see that its
sanctity is maintained. I am most con-

cerned about the approaches made by the Federal Government to State Governments for transference of powers.

It has become a more or less routine method to suggest to State Parliaments that they should grant powers to the Commonwealth Government. I admit that it is probably not even contemplated, in the way in which it appears, when it is suggested by either present or past Prime Ministers, nor is it suggested when Premiers send messages back to the Federal Government in regard to their attitude in these matters. But the new method seems to be that the Commonwealth Government simply asks State Governments to refer powers without any reference to Parliament for either temporary or permanent transference. Even Parliament should not take unto itself the right to alter the Constitution. We should strongly resist any method of altering the Constitution other than by a direct appeal to the people.

When it is suggested by the Commonwealth Government that a request should be made to the States for the transference of certain powers, and the State Cabinets meet and consider the questions, I believe that both sides are exceeding their duties, and their powers. We as a Parliament would be exceeding our duty if we referred either temporary or permanent powers to the Commonwealth Government to alter the Constitution under which we, as Australians live. Members of the public should take a deep interest in this matter and ensure that no change is made to the Constitution unless the question at issue is referred to the people by way of a referendum. I am glad to see that the people are being given a chance to say "Yes" or "No" to a further request by the Commonwealth Government for the transfer of certain powers, and that that acquisition of powers can follow only after acceptance by the people at this referendum.

There is a very definite duty upon us to see that government of the people by the people is maintained as a democratic way of life. If we get to the stage at which Cabinets consider they can make the laws of the country without reference to Parliament, or that a Federal body can simply ask that powers be given to it and considers that Cabinet alone is the body that can refer those powers, we shall be in very great danger of losing this democratic form of government, and it will not be long before there is a move towards unified control throughout Australia. I believe we have seen evidence in the recent past that such a unified control would not be in the interests of the people. In Australia, we have seen inflation—firstly, by a slow method, and recently by a rapid method; and I agree with Mr. Craig that, to a very large extent, this inflation has followed the tremendous spending by Governments, both

Commonwealth and State. Unless there is some curbing of this attitude, we will find that Australia, instead of being in a prosperous position as it is today, will be on the verge of bankruptcy. In this stage of our history, every State is endeavouring to get what it wants without any reference or regard to the general good of Australia, and without considering that other parts of the Commonwealth deserve equal consideration.

It is a lamentable sight to witness newspapers all over the Commonwealth stating the astronomical figures State Governments desire to spend, and then saying later that they are amazed at the amount the Commonwealth wants to spend. It looks as though we are living as parochial individuals in our particular States, without any reference to national aspects. I have criticised very severely most of the expenditure made by Commonwealth Governments in the past, and especially the recent past. In particular, I agree that the distribution of free milk is something we neither need nor desire.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Furthermore, saving is what is wanted, and a saving of half a million pounds could be made overnight by cancelling the free milk scheme. When a Commonwealth Government believes it can act in loco parentis and can decide how children are to be fed in times of prosperity, it is high time that a different attitude in regard to health matters was adopted by that Government. If there is a desire to economise, there is also considerable room for economy in the free medicine scheme, which looks as though it is going to cost the nation £2,500,000 a year. In fact, I doubt whether that sum will meet it. There are any number of drugs—or I should say quite a number of drugs—on that list for which the public themselves can quite well afford to pay in these prosperous times.

Let me give two examples which have interested me recently. I believe that if a Government decides it is going to give a life-saving drug, it should be provided in its basic state. If it is to be presented with frills on, the frills should be paid for. There is a very reasonable method of giving penicillin which we can all administer at a cost of 4s. or 5s. for 400,000 units. But not so long ago a trade representative came to my rooms and offered me a nice plastic syringe containing 300,000 units. The ends of this plastic syringe covered a sterile needle and, with the removal of this plastic end, it was used as a piston for the syringe.

I said to him, "Surely this is an expensive item?" He said, "That need not matter; it is on the free list!" The cost of that 300,000 units was 12s. whole-

sale and 16s. retail. I do not believe that any nation can afford that method of handling free drugs. I repeat that the cost of that 300,000 units was 12s. wholesale and 16s. retail, and it is seldom that less than four or six doses are given in any one case. The profit made by the chemist would be 16s. upon handing over that plastic syringe.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What would be the cost of the same amount of penicillin in a simple container?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It would be very much less, and there is a perfectly adequate method for anybody to give it for 4s. or 5s. Not very long ago, I had occasion to treat an individual suffering from a disease that had previously resisted all forms of treatment. A recent journal had published the information that large doses of a particular antibiotic drug would cure this disease. So a request was made for a large amount of the drug to be made available. It was made available freely to me, and without question, and I am pleased to say that the results have been excellent, and that the patient has been cured. But, because a large amount was required, I suggested that I might obtain it from a wholesale house. I could not obtain it by that method, however, because there is no means by which payment could be made other than through a registered pharmacist. So a registered pharmacist has received, willy-nilly, a present of £25 as his share of the profit on the drug, which I do not believe he ever handled.

These are anomalies which should be corrected, and I believe that if the Commonwealth Government wants to economise, there is any amount of room to do so in these matters. I am in favour of giving free medicine to people who cannot afford it to the extent of relieving their suffering or saving their lives; but I do not believe that this medicine should be so widely and generously bestowed in that fashion because I consider the nation cannot afford it. The time for giving to the public is when people are in distress, and not when they have so much money to spend that Governments must endeavour to take it back from them by some other means.

If the Government had followed the advice of a man like Keynes, and that outlined by Mr. Craig last night, it would have had a stock of money set aside at the present moment to use as a fund for a rainy day. But all the Government seems to ask for now is more and more money to make bigger gifts to other people than those who subscribe through taxation and other means used by Governments for obtaining that money.

There is a very interesting summary made in America by one of America's leading economists by the name of Sumner Slichter; and, for anyone who may care to read it, it appeared in the "Atlantic

Monthly" about four to five months ago. Slichter makes a review of the various forms of taxation and their effect on the general economy, and his remarks apply very well to what has happened here. A brief word about this might prove interesting.

Everyone of us knows, and we do not require Sumner Slichter to tell us, that any cut in demand or any increase in supplies will automatically lower inflation. That is such a simple lesson that it should be by this time generally accepted all over Australia. One of the most effective means in these days of controlling inflation is by the strict control of credit and borrowing. It must be obvious to all of us that at times like these when money is so free, the control of credit and borrowing is obviously a wise step. In referring to the taxing of companies, Slichter points out that as the income from companies contributes only about five per cent. of the income of the general individual in any country, the increase in company tax does not produce the effect it was hoped.

Hon. L. Craig: It increases prices.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That is exactly what it does do. It has the reverse effect to that which was expected in controlling inflation. Sales tax may stop some people buying if they are the type who will hesitate before buying the high-priced article; but in times of great demand, sales tax will act as a means of inflation. The only result it may have is that the actual money of the sales tax returns to the Government; but it has a very marked influence upon inflation. In the case of tax on personal income, this must have a very definite effect in controlling inflation, but this has a very bad effect in other ways. If increase in personal tax is upon the savings group and savings generally, inflation will continue at a greater rate. If this tax destroys the savings group, it automatically destroys incentive; and once incentive has been destroyed, as it has been destroyed in Australia, a nation is in great difficulties.

One of the most obvious remedial steps is a reduction in non-essential government expenditure. I will repeat that I believe a tremendous saving can take place in Commonwealth and State Government expenditure. I came across a particular instance professionally—and I can give no more than the bare details—of a young man who had practically no scholastic background and who was allowed to choose a rehabilitation course after having been found unfit at the end of a year or two of military service.

This man elected to undergo a rehabilitation course of a scholastic nature. The result is that all the time he has been undergoing this training, for which he is now proving unfit, he has been receiving very nearly the equivalent of the basic wage. I would like to know the country that can go on with that sort of thing—giving men who have served the nation for

a short time rehabilitation courses for which they are not suited, and paying them while they are doing those courses.

"Price-ceiling" is a phrase used by Slichter and generally used in the United States, whereas we employ the expression "price-fixing." Price control is regarded as having very little effect without other controls, and it is perfectly clear that the effect will quickly lessen in any particular instance. It shifts trade very rapidly to blackmarkets, especially in the larger cities. It has been recorded in nearly all large cities that, where price-fixing has been attempted in rigid fashion, goods of which the price has been so fixed very seldom reach the city for distribution, but find their way to the blackmarket. This particularly refers to food which has been known to be collected 10, 15 and 20 miles outside the borders of big cities and taken to the blackmarket, never reaching the centre of the city for distribution at normal rates or fixed prices.

One of the greatest difficulties in inflation—and I think we see it in Australia in a most evident fashion—is to control the production of goods on which the people desire to spend their money and which are made from materials which are scarce, the goods so manufactured not adding in any way to the economy of the country. That is possibly an area in which governmental control might prove of very salutary effect. Obviously when people have plenty of money to spend, it is on the luxury lines that it will be spent; and if these non-productive or non-utilitarian types of goods which call for the use of scarce materials can be controlled, some very definite control of inflation may also take place.

I believe that the real answer to the problem, as has been said by all who write about inflation from the economic point of view, lies in the national outlook. It lies in a realisation by the people that the only way to reach sanity and economy is to work and produce, so that there are goods to be bought for the money that is available. There seems to have grown up in Australia a desire to obtain all the good things of life without any real effort; to obtain the highest wages possible and the highest profits possible without very much in the way of personal endeavour.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Is the problem confined to Australia?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am not going to discuss countries outside Australia, because I believe that in a number of countries the effort of the individual and the national outlook of the individual are of a different type.

Hon. L. Craig: It is worse in Australia than anywhere else at the moment.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I believe that in this country we are in danger because we have lost any national outlook we had and have developed, in the main, a selfish approach to the problem. It is evidenced,

as Mr. Craig said last night—and I agree with him—by the spectacle, to which I have already referred, of each section of the community trying to get what it can for itself without consideration for others. It is reflected in the attitude of the man in the street; and until we get a better national outlook to this problem, I am afraid that no matter what laws we introduce, we shall not solve the problem.

I am sorry I have another rather mournful note to strike, in that I was not altogether very happy about the Administrator's Speech, which avoided two issues that I think we must consider very soon; alcohol and s.p. betting. If a Government fails to attack the moral issues of a nation, it will not last very long. It is a sorry thing if a Government feels that it cannot tackle moral issues, and that only by avoiding controversial matters of that sort can it hold office. Although the people themselves, by their attitude to public affairs, must produce the answer to these problems, Governments should realise that by the restrictive control which they exercise they do not altogether allow any alteration to occur as a result of public opinion unless they make an effort to ascertain what that public opinion is.

I regret that we did not tackle these two questions. While s.p. betting may be a difficult problem, and the answer hard to find, surely it is not right, honest or just to see, week after week, men being fined for the stupid offence called obstructing the traffic, when they are really being prosecuted for s.p. betting. I am very sorry if we think that is the way these matters should be handled.

Hon. A. L. Loton: The same applies throughout Australia.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The subject is one that deserves to be tackled by men of intellect who feel they are capable of giving us a lead in this matter. There are men in the Cabinet of that type, and I am sure that a lead from them would be followed by many other folk in the community. I do not propose to embark upon what I think should be the way in which we should alter the distribution and sale of alcohol, except to say that I do consider that a more commonsense approach to the problem is possibly to be found in the words of the Spanish philosopher, Professor Madariaga, in articles which he has been contributing lately to newspapers in South Australia, in which he accuses us of being like the Mediterranean people in that we are afflicted with wrong methods of handling alcohol. He expressed his view in a phrase of which I cannot quite remember the words, but which conveys that the answer to the problem lies in mixing this beverage with food and so altering our whole method of approach. I believe that is the correct answer to the question.

Australia's problems and difficulties are made no less by inflation and are aggravated by the fact that we are a young

people in a young country, endeavouring to expand our resources at a stage of the world's history in which so many of the resources of a nation are costly to expand. Let me put it another way. During the time of great growth in America, life was simple. But in this particular age, any expansion of a country calls for tremendous works on a very great scale; and I think some reassessment of the nation's resources and our ability to develop those resources is warranted.

Let me give an example. In Tasmania the other day, I saw hydro-electric schemes of great magnitude. Recently in this State we congratulated ourselves on having added a 25,000 k.w. power station at Fremantle. But the two stations at Tarraleah and Tungatinah on the Derwent and the Ouse Rivers between them will generate 295,000 h.p. Before the whole of the schemes are completed there will be 2,000,000 h.p. of electricity for distribution at a very low rate. I do not know the actual figures, but I do know that their heating unit will be 0.35d., and the cost of electricity in Tasmania is negligible. As a result of cheap power, a number of industries have been established in Tasmania that were not in existence before, vast industries like the Boya paper mill and the Australian Paper and Pulp Manufacturers, and the Goliath Cement Company, all big undertakings. Then the aluminium company, which is going to Launceston and will be established above Cataract Gorge, has undertaken, if necessary, to take the whole of the output of the power station being built in that gorge and will distribute something like 110,000 h.p.

Hon. G. Fraser: What will be the cost to the individual?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It will be very low indeed. I cannot give the exact figures at the moment, but I am having them sent over to me. But the power is very cheap indeed. Some people have an arrangement for taking one h.p. a year for £4 or £5. This would be equivalent to the whole of the output at South Fremantle being sold at something like £100,000 a year. The cost of electricity in Tasmania is very cheap.

So here we have Tasmania building up vast power supplies and so attracting many industries of a varying nature. At the same time we read of huge dams being built in New South Wales. It is predicted that within four years New South Wales will have power to sell and will be looking for buyers. Then Victoria is building the Kiewa scheme which is going to bring enormous horsepower in the way of electricity through the eastern districts. In this State we shall be in difficulties because we cannot obtain cheap power. Our power will always be expensive because we have to make it from coal. We cannot produce cheap power from our water supplies as other States and countries are able to do.

But can we in Australia afford to go on building these enterprises without some assessment of our needs and our ability to satisfy them? I do not say that the Kiewa scheme should cease, but can we build all these schemes at once? Can we construct enormous dams and power stations in New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria and the enormous project contemplated in Queensland with the small reserve of labour available?

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you not think it better to have over production of electricity than under production?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not know; but I think there should be a reassessment of our resources. Something in the way of an overall picture of Australia's ability to handle these projects is what is needed, rather than an attempt on the part of every one of us to grab what he can out of the common pool. It may be that some of the schemes would be better delayed, and that others would be better hastened. At any rate, it seems to me that we must develop a national rather than a parochial outlook in regard to our own affairs and those of other people.

Another defect I noticed in His Excellency's Speech was that there is no word yet of an overall traffic authority, which is one of the things most needed in this State today. I can never understand why it is that one can discuss traffic problems with any section of the traffic authorities and they will unanimously say, "We want an overall traffic authority to end these problems," and yet that goal seems to be impossible to accomplish.

Hon. G. Fraser: Did you discuss your scheme of last year with them?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I got nowhere, simply because nobody seemed prepared to compromise. The Gilbertian attitude of the moment is that the various traffic authorities can confer and decide upon something that will improve traffic conditions and then, when they have gone their various ways, any one of them can ring up the next morning and call it all off. How long can we allow that state of affairs to continue? We see the points-men walk off in a period of heavy traffic and leave the public and the motorists to find their own way through. It is only the good sense of all concerned that prevents serious accidents under those circumstances.

Hon. F. R. Welsh: Why are they allowed to do it?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Search me! When returning from any of our sporting fixtures, one finds long lines of cars being held up by bottlenecks, with no attempt being made by the traffic authorities to straighten out the tangle.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Who is responsible?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not know; but surely the time is ripe for us to have one overall traffic authority in order to end the muddle.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is probably due to shortage of labour.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The Tramways Department and those in charge of the Government buses are an authority entirely to themselves in traffic matters, and can disregard completely all other traffic authorities. If Gilbert and Sullivan were alive today and could write the story of the City of Perth, somebody might at last take notice of what is going on.

Hon. E. H. Gray: We have a Gilbert with us now.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I doubt if he could solve the problem. I was delighted recently to hear that the Government had in mind a definite idea really to tackle town planning and put its house in order. One of our most urgent requirements, if we are to solve the traffic problem, is a sound basis of town planning. The problem will require the introduction to this State of an authority capable of giving some real help in the matter. We need a Town Planning Commission with a breadth of vision that has been sadly lacking in the past. I have previously commented on the absence of any sound town planning here, and that is exemplified when one sees areas being defined with no sort of continuity, contiguous with one another but lacking effective transport services and civic centres. In view of these things, one wonders what the City of Perth will eventually be like.

Hon. G. Fraser: A famous town planning authority who was here recently praised our Town Planning Commission.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am willing to take the hon. member around some day and show him what the position is.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Mr. Fraser mentioned what the town planning authority who recently visited us had said.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I have seen similar conditions in other cities of Australia, but we must do something about it. I am glad that the Government has said it definitely has this matter in mind, and that the Premier, on his return from England, saw the necessity to take action in this regard. I will leave the problem to him.

I come now to the question of our hospitals, and desire to refer to the statement, recently made, that the Government intends to build a 500-bed hospital at Fremantle. I do not know whether anyone realises just what that entails, but it will cost the best part of £2,000,000 to erect such a hospital today and equip it properly; and even then I doubt whether we could possibly get sufficient staff to run it.

In the north of Tasmania, I recently saw a hospital that had been built at a cost of £4,000 per bed. That institution is open to criticism, as I believe some points about it will make for difficult working on the part of the nursing staff, though the home for the nurses is beautiful and above comparison. But there is one point that I wish to make about hospitals generally. There exists at present a wonderful opportunity for the Federal Minister for Health to appoint a central advisory body on hospitals and make its services available to the States, when necessary, for hospital planning. The members of that body should be men with a lifetime of experience of the organisation and planning of hospitals. They should be able to search the world for what is needed and then, on their return, advise the States in that regard. I am certain that the hospital in Tasmania, to which I have referred will be expensive to run from the nursing point of view.

A 500-bed hospital at Fremantle would entail the housing of at least 400 nurses; and yet we still have not completed the second wing of the Royal Perth Hospital, or the necessary nursing quarters. A nurses' home for 400 nurses would be equivalent to the biggest hotel in Australia today, and that is the kind of institution we must contemplate building to service the Royal Perth Hospital. I do not think we can afford a 500-bed hospital in Fremantle. The Royal Perth Hospital must be looked upon as the key centre of medical treatment for at least the whole of the metropolitan area. A survey should be made of the actual bed needs of Fremantle, bearing in mind that while hospital beds provided in that area could take patients requiring up to a certain standard of treatment, those needing all the resources of a main hospital should be sent to the Royal Perth where specialists and specialised equipment are available for the job.

Hon. H. K. Watson: But the Royal Perth cannot hold all the patients requiring treatment now.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The second wing has not been built.

Hon. G. Fraser: What will its capacity then be?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: About 600 beds. I think we should build hospitals of 100 or 150 beds, where necessary, in different parts of the metropolitan area, and they could then be staffed by general practitioners. A 500-bed hospital would call, in the main, for specialists to do the work. It will be found in this city that the main staffing of the larger hospitals is done by specialists, and the general practitioners' services are not availed of to anything like the extent they should be. Hospitals of from 100 to 150 beds, built in various parts of the metropolitan

area under a co-ordinated plan, could use the Royal Perth as a central station to which could be sent patients requiring the most highly skilled treatment.

Hon. G. Fraser: Would a 150-bed hospital be sufficient for Fremantle?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I would rather two such hospitals were built at Fremantle than one of 500 beds, because I do not think one such hospital could be staffed. An institution of that kind would require the most costly equipment.

Hon. G. Fraser: Would it not be easier to staff one 300-bed hospital than two of 150 beds?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: No, because the general practitioner could do more of the work in the smaller hospitals. If we have to build a hospital of 10 or 11 storeys, it will prove much more costly than building hospitals of perhaps 100 or 150 beds and only two or three storeys. The smaller type of hospital could be spread out on the cottage plan, if necessary, and that would make a great saving in capital. Since I first came into this House, I have asked both the present and past Governments to put the whole problem of hospital accommodation into the hands of a hospital commission, the duty of which it would be to concentrate on the hospital needs of the metropolitan area and the State in general.

We hear a lot about country hospitals being short of beds, but I think I am right in saying that recently the Royal Perth Hospital and the metropolitan area generally were as many beds short of requirements as were the country hospitals in excess of their requirements. That is because the country hospitals are scattered about in an uneconomic way. The problem must be tackled. Our country hospitals are understaffed because they are too small. Some of them have a daily average of five beds or less, and we are still trying to staff them. Before the Government contemplates spending £2,000,000 on a 500-bed hospital at Fremantle, really expert attention should be given to the question of hospital distribution throughout the State.

Hon. G. Fraser: If that is not done, you would not expect Fremantle members to refrain from pressing for a hospital.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not mind what members press for, but I think the responsible authorities should take an intelligent view of the matter.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [6.13]: Not being in a talkative mood this afternoon, I shall not indulge in a marathon speech. Practically every subject under the sun has already been dealt with fully during the debate, and I have enjoyed the many interesting speeches to which I have listened. Every part of the State, from Esperance to Wyndham, has been covered and I suppose members are expecting me to give them a trip round the Fremantle harbour.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The inner or outer harbour?

Hon. G. FRASER: I would not mind giving members a trip round the outer harbour, but not the inner. I will set the minds of members at ease, as my references to Fremantle harbour will be short indeed. During this session, I have asked questions with regard to the proposed harbour extensions at Fremantle, but so far have not received much real information in reply. I suppose, however, that with perseverance one might eventually obtain something definite. I desire to deal with the attitude of the Government on this question.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. FRASER: Prior to the tea adjournment I had commenced speaking about the Fremantle harbour; but before I continue along those lines, I would like to join with other members in the congratulations that they have extended to you, Sir, and to Mr. Sparks and Mr. Roberts. I also want to say how deeply I regret that this year we are without the presence of the late Mr. Mann and the late Mr. Tuckey. It was not on many occasions that they and I agreed. Our views generally differed, but even so there was a great bond of friendship between us.

It is one of the outstanding features of Western Australian public life that although we can differ considerably in this Chamber, such differences of opinion have never, during my experience here, interfered with our friendships outside, and I hope that that state of affairs will continue for a long time to come. I repeat that I regret very deeply that we have not the presence of those two late hon. members here this session. However, that does not, in any shape or form, dampen the welcome that I offer to their two successors; and if they act similarly to their predecessors, we will have no complaint to make about them.

Both the late members were men who, when one struck them, were prepared to turn the other cheek; and I think if Mr. Henning and Mr. Murray learn to carry on those principles—I know they are laid down in the Good Book—we will take kindly to them. However, that does not suggest that they should not go further and perhaps strike us in the solar plexus. I do not want to turn this House into a stadium. Nothing is further from my mind, and I am only dealing with wordy warfare. So I repeat that if the successors to the late members of this House follow the principles that have been set down for them, we will be well satisfied and pleased that they have been elected to this House.

Reverting to the Fremantle harbour, I know that members would expect every member for the district to make some reference to it. But all I am concerned about tonight is not the existing harbour but

the proposed extensions to it. I happen to live in an elevated position, and when I walk to the front of my residence to view the scene before me, it is a very pleasant one. I look over a township that is composed of hard-working people; men and women who have struggled to get their little homes together, doing a hard day's toil and enjoying it; and enjoying, too, their leisure hours. I have often been sorry that I am not a poet so that I could put the scene into verse, because it is an extremely beautiful one.

When one reflects that that scene will not exist much longer, it gives one cause for great regret. Its disappearance will be due entirely to the ruthlessness of a Government which, notwithstanding the protestations of those who know the area best, and notwithstanding all the efforts that have been made to prevent its action, proposes to proceed with the scheme it has in mind. However, Premantle members intend to continue right to the very last their efforts to stave off what they consider will be a great catastrophe.

I know that several members will say, "Progress must go on." We quite admit that, but the point at which we cross swords is in the way the progress shall be made. I would expect that all Governments, irrespective of their political colour, would take into consideration whether schemes they propose to embark on are in the best interests of the community. It is extremely debatable whether the Government's proposed harbour scheme is the better one.

I am not going to delve into the merits and demerits of the scheme as I did previously; I do not want to weary members with all that again. But I want to appeal to the Government to reconsider its decision. When I first spoke on this question, I quoted no words of mine, but words of one engineer as to the opinion of another engineer on this proposal. The Government is quite happy to say it has an expert who has decided that what is proposed is the correct thing to do. But I would remind the Government that a further expert would probably condemn the opinion of the latest expert and that of previous experts on this particular subject.

One of the questions I asked concerning this matter was about certain activities that had taken place. I asked if the Government had information on its file as to site borings that had been made at Point Brown where the proposed bridge is to be constructed. Strangely enough, the reply I received was that there was no information available whatsoever. It certainly seems peculiar to me that work on testing for the bottom of the river should have been performed by a Government department for a proposed bridge, and that the work ceased because it could not obtain a satisfactory bottom until it transferred its

bores further up the river to Preston Point and until finally, near Bicton, it found a satisfactory bottom and placed in that spot a cylinder which was there for many years.

Notwithstanding that, the answer I received to my question was that the department had no information on its file relating to that work. Is not that a strange thing? Borings are not works of a minor nature; they are expensive items. Surely there must be something on the Public Works file which refers to the work that was done on that occasion. Members might question me when I say that I know the borings were unsatisfactory, although the department has said it has no knowledge of them. However, I have information from the man who did the boring. His information is that boring went to 80 feet and failed to reach a satisfactory bottom. In spite of that, I repeat that the department has advised it has no information about the matter, which contradicts the report I received from the man who did the job prior to 1929.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Prior to when?

Hon. G. FRASER: Prior to 1929. Last year I asked questions as to when the boring at Point Brown had taken place, in view of the fact that Mr. Tydeman had made mention of those bores. I can see Point Brown from the front of my house all the time; and, as I did not observe any activity there, I was curious to know whether any work had been done. When I did ask questions on the matter, I was told that the boring, upon which the present bridge proposal is based, had been done in 1929. That is why I said, "prior to 1929." It was prior to 1929 that the previous boring took place.

When I asked at what depth the department had touched bottom following its borings in 1929, I received what, to me, was an astounding answer. The reply was, "From ground level to 80 feet." That is a complete contradiction of the report of the man who was on the job when the work ceased prior to 1929. So it seems to me that there is something screwy somewhere—to put it very plainly.

Further on in my question, I asked why the borings had ceased at a point approximately two-thirds of the distance across the watercourse, and I was told that the report was not extant. I would point out that most Government departments generally use some word out of the ordinary; and as I did not know the meaning of the word "extant," although I had a rough idea, I consulted the dictionary, and found that the word meant, "still existing." Why the department could not have used a simple word instead of the word "extant," I do not know. Instead of saying that the report is not still existing they said, "The report is not extant."

Hon. H. K. Watson: In other words, they "hornswoggled" you, which is a Yankee expression for "pulling the wool over your eyes."

Hon. G. FRASER: I did not hear what the hon. member said, but I know it must be correct. However, the department says that the report is now not extant and has referred me to Appendix II of Mr. Tydeman's report. Strangely enough, it was because I had referred to that Appendix previously that I asked the question; because if members will peruse Appendix II, Volume 3, of Mr. Tydeman's report they will see that what I have said is correct, and that the borings have started on the land on the North Fremantle side of the river, and proceed only two-thirds of the distance across the watercourse and then cease. It seemed to me that the borings had suffered the same fate as those prior to 1929 which were discontinued because a satisfactory bottom could not be reached. Yet the information is that it has been struck at ground level. As to ceasing the work approximately two-thirds of the way across the river—they replied that they had covered the proposed bridge area—it is rather strange to me that the bridge will finish at that point.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Does not the other part of the river consist of shallows?

Hon. G. FRASER: I have a fairly good knowledge of that part of river and I should say that the borings have been put down mainly in the shallow area. They commence on the land well back from the foreshore and continue out a little more than half-way across the river, where they cease. And from there to the other side of the river, I should say would be the greater portion of the deep water. The whole thing seems to me to be rather peculiar.

I am curious to know what type of bridge it is proposed to put across the river. I am not an engineer and do not profess to know anything about engineering. It might be possible to put bridges across without having a satisfactory bottom.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: They might put pontoon bridges across. There is one in Hobart.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope that something better is intended here. I should like the Minister, if he possibly can, to give me some enlightenment as to what type of bridge is intended. The engineers do not worry about the expenditure, but posterity will have to bear the burden of the cost of this scheme. I wish to see the scheme introduced at the most economical cost. Whether there is a satisfactory bottom or not does not worry the engineers; they will be prepared to put a bridge across.

I recall the late Hon. W. D. Johnson's telling us that, at the time when the bottom of the projected graving dock at Fremantle fell in, he called the engineer to him and asked, "Cannot you make a bottom?" The reply of the engineer was, "Mr. Johnson, engineers are prepared to

make a bottom in the middle of the ocean so long as you provide the money." I am wondering whether something of the sort is going to happen at Fremantle and whether the engineers will put the bridge across the river regardless of the cost incurred. I hope the Minister will oblige by giving information on that point.

I do not want an expensive and unsatisfactory scheme foisted on the people. I want the most economical scheme; and the most economical scheme to my way of thinking and that of many other people is the outer harbour. In arriving at that conclusion, I would quote no better authority than Mr. Tydeman himself. He says that the only way to assess harbour construction costs is by calculating the cost per berth up-river and outside. He showed that the cost would be about £200,000 per berth more outside than up-stream in the preliminary stages, but he also stated what the cost per berth would be for an outer harbour when completed, and it was about £200,000 less than for the up-stream berth. I have quoted those figures previously and shall not go into further detail on this occasion.

Apart from the cost angle, there is the dislocation that will occur. I have checked fairly carefully the site of the proposed harbour and I should say that the streets that will be disorganised are at present carrying not fewer than 350 houses. I do not say that the dislocation will occur immediately; I am referring to the complete scheme. But contemplate wiping out up to 350 houses! Is not that something worthy of consideration?

At the moment what are we doing? We are rushing men from one job to another and getting them to work on other jobs on Saturday in order to complete a few houses to accommodate people who have been evicted under the increase of rent Act. What will happen to the people at North Fremantle when the Government starts the harbour scheme and puts the railway right through one of the most populous portions of the district?

I should like to know what the Government's intentions are and I do not want the Minister to say in reply, "We will compensate those people." Most of the houses have been standing for many years, and if the owners are compensated at twice their actual value, it will cost not less than twice that amount to replace them with homes further from the port. So there are aspects that call for earnest consideration before a scheme of this sort is undertaken.

So far, we have had no indication from the Government other than that it proposes to proceed with the scheme. I suppose the Minister will inform me that the Government has considered the question from all those angles and intends to go on with scheme. Well, it will only be for want of breath if we fail to remind him that we are still opposed to this scheme.

I wish to direct the Minister's attention to a matter dealt with in the Health Act. I have examined it fairly closely because more than one case is involved. Will the Minister explain why portions of the Health Act, particularly those relating to the connecting of properties with the sewerage and drainage system, should mention both the owner and the occupier of the premises? These references start with Section 72 and continue to Section 84. Section 72 (1) states—

As soon as any sewer or any part of the sewer is complete and ready for use, the local authority may by notice in writing demand that the owner or occupier of any land situated in its district and capable, in the opinion of the local authority, of being drained into such sewer, shall construct such drains and fittings from and in connection with such land to connect with the sewer as the local authority may determine.

Possibly I should have raised this question years ago when the measure was before us, but the point did not strike me at the time. Why is the local authority empowered to compel the occupier to make these connections? There might be a good explanation. The only logical conclusion to my mind is that it is a sort of saving provision and that if the owner objects to having the work done, the local authority may compel the occupier to have it done. If that is so, it is not satisfactory, to my way of thinking.

Other sections mention the owner or occupier, but when we get to Section 80 (3) only the owner is mentioned. Therefore, apart from its being wrong to include the occupier, the Act appears to be a little contradictory in that in most instances it includes both owner and occupier. Section 80 covers practically the same ground, but refers only to the owner.

The Minister for Agriculture: For the same purpose only?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. I understand that no amendment of the Health Act will be introduced this session, so there will be plenty of time to check up on the matter and give an explanation. Section 84 provides for the recovery of expense incurred by a local authority in making any sewer or drain, and there again only the owner is mentioned. It seems peculiar that in several parts of the Act dealing with the same matter, both owner and occupier should be included and, in other parts, only the owner. My contention is that the owner alone should be responsible. If it is a matter of installing sewerage connections, I cannot see why the occupier should be compelled to do it. That is the prerogative of the owner.

The Minister for Agriculture: The owner might be oversea.

Hon. G. FRASER: Then there would be somebody here with the power of attorney or, in any event, the local authority would have the right to claim on the property. Consequently the local authority would be safeguarded, no matter what the position was in that respect.

I have been told—and this is one of my reasons for mentioning the matter—that the local authorities are not worrying so much about orders for installation and so forth. In the main, they would naturally go for the owner, but they are rather perturbed that while the Act gives power in relation to the installation, there is no power in relation to maintenance. They say that if it were a matter of water supply, they would naturally look to the owner to install it, although the Act says that the occupier is equally liable.

After the water has been connected for some years and the pipes have become rusted and a suitable quantity of water cannot be provided by the rusted pipes, the local authorities gravely doubt as to whom they can serve notices on or take action against. The Crown Law Department, I believe, stated that the local authorities could sue either the owner or the occupier, whereas their own solicitor advised against taking any action in such a case because it might be thrown out of court. In a case that went to the court, the local authority lost and appealed to the High Court and, for various reasons, the case was thrown out by the High Court. Thus, local authorities are not prepared to run the risk of being involved in fairly high costs without obtaining any satisfactory result.

There was an instance recently where the washing facilities were quite unsatisfactory. The local authority thought of serving a notice, but, in view of the experience in the previous case, it was not prepared to do so. Under Section 99 (1), (2) and (3), the owner and occupier are held responsible for the provision of sanitary conveniences, bathroom, laundry and cooking facilities. I should like to hear argument to convince me that the occupier should be obliged to provide bathroom and laundry facilities. Consequently, I ask the Minister to consider those points and see whether it is not possible to eliminate the reference to "occupier". If that were done, it would overcome a difficulty—not an imaginary one, either—confronting local authorities.

Recently, there was a case where a verandah came down and cut off the electric light. The bathroom facilities in that place were unsatisfactory; and, although the Chief Medical Officer considers that notice should be served on the

owner, the local authority, having had experience of the previous case, was not game to take action.

I would like an investigation into that phase of the Act so that, if possible, the word "occupier" could, where necessary, be eliminated. I do not want the word taken out of the Act altogether, because I realise there are several matters for which the occupier should be responsible from a health point of view. I think, however, that the phase I have mentioned should be purely the prerogative of the owner. I hope something will come from my remarks.

I was surprised that so many members referred to the social services of this country. I have always worked for social services, and I shall endeavour to improve the ones we have. I went through the depression years as a member of Parliament, and I do not want such a period again in my life. I will go to the limit of my capacity to improve our social services. Members have advanced the excuse that by this means we take away incentive. How ridiculous to say that we take away incentive from a man when we give him 25s. a week unemployment relief! I appraise the workingman at a higher value than that. I have had a lot of experience with the workers, and I have not yet come across an individual who was prepared to slack on the job so that he could get 25s. a week social service payment.

If ever again we should experience such years as those of 1930 to 1933—and God forbid that we should!—there will be something for the workingmen, and they will not have to exist on 7s. per week per person. While a man is working, he is paying for social services by special taxation. Because he does that, when and if he requires such assistance, the money will be there for him. The trashy arguments that have been advanced do not hold water with me. I have had too much experience of workingmen not to know that they would not stoop to such a level, although I admit that in every community there are some no-hopers; but they are just the odd ones. It ill becomes the Country and Democratic League members to voice such criticism. Mr. Jones, who made some complaint about the social services and spoke of taking away a man's incentive, represents a community which would have been pretty badly off but for the assistance received from the Government in years gone by. The people there had more than social services.

The Minister for Agriculture: Did not the farmers suffer in the depression?

Hon. G. FRASER: Did not everyone suffer? The farmers did not get down to 7s. a week, as did some individuals.

The Minister for Agriculture: Some farmers were starved off their farms.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. I know some did not even get 7s. a week. Although the assistance given them was not called social service, it was social service, just the same as the help given to the worker. How many men today would be successful farmers but for the Government assistance they received when they first went on their farms? That is something I will support every time, and I want members to be a little consistent in their arguments against other people. Have not we set up the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Board, and the Industries Assistance Board? Have not the farmers received assistance from the Agricultural Bank in the early stages of their farming career?

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes; and they pay interest to the bank, too.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. But the workers are paying for their social service in advance, because they pay their social service tax. Yet a great number of them will not gain any benefit from it. However, they are prepared to pay the tax because it is an insurance for them. It ill becomes members representing people who have had greater assistance from the Government than have the workers to argue as they do. I ask them to be a little more charitable in their outlook. Yesterday, Mr. Craig said that an impressive speech was one that dealt with subjects that the listener believed in. I am going to deal with subjects that most of my listeners, I know, do not believe in, so that my speech will not be impressive to them. I am pleased indeed that I am not a member of the Liberal and Country League or the Country and Democratic League.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: We are sorry you are not.

Hon. G. FRASER: If I were, I would hang my head in shame because of the performance of both the State and Commonwealth Governments. Some years ago, these parties went on the hustings and toured Australia. The people at the time were sick and tired of controls, and of queueing up for this and that. Many commodities were in short supply, and these political parties went to the people and said, "Return us and we will lift all the controls and make this a free country." Naturally enough, the people supported them and they were returned to power.

Where have they led us today? What chaos there is in Australia today because of the actions of these two parties, as Governments! The basic wage is sky-high, and prices are such that people cannot afford to buy many commodities. That is all because the public listened to the policy put forward by these parties. I was hoping that some members might realise their mistake. I like a firm man who stands up to his opinions, but only until such time as he is proved wrong. I do not like an obstinate man, but I am afraid most members here have got to the obstinate stage. They will

not admit that they made a mistake in their policy. Almost every day they say that this is a free country, and there are no more controls. Of course, they regard the present price-fixing system as a control; but I call it a shandy-gaff one, and I told members so when the relevant measure was being introduced, and also at the time when the various parties were on the hustings endeavouring to get the people to return them to office.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Do you not like controls?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, I do, when they are needed, and I am not afraid to stand up to them when I think they are needed. But these people on the hustings said to the public, "Get rid of Federal price-control. The States can manage it just as well."

The Minister for Agriculture: Better.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: So they can.

Hon. G. FRASER: The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Members might consider the percentage increase in prices during the war years, which were difficult years—

The Minister for Transport: There was wage-control then.

Hon. G. FRASER: We have wage-control always.

The Minister for Transport: Wages were pegged then.

Hon. G. FRASER: Even in normal times, wages are controlled. A man has to go before the Arbitration Court before his organisation can get the wage which the judge considers is suitable to the man's occupation. Is not that control? The basic-wage earner—the person who has no margin for skill—has to present a case to the State Arbitration Court every 12 months, and then the court fixes the basic wage. That is control. Under Federal control, prices were held in bounds. They increased slightly.

The Minister for Transport: Wages were pegged.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, for a period they were; but, even though wages were pegged, there were certain increases in prices, but the percentage increase was small. Since the control has been lifted, however, where do we find ourselves?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Since wages have been unpegged!

Hon. G. FRASER: Of course wages are unpegged. Some members think wages go up, and prices follow. It is the other way round.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Wages are three months behind, all the time.

Hon. G. FRASER: Exactly. The basic wage is fixed on prices ruling during the three months preceding the time of fixation.

Hon. G. Bennetts: If the big business section did not go after extra profits, it would be all right.

Hon. G. FRASER: I was hoping that some members would have given up their foolish ideas and relented. I do not say that proper price-control will solve all evils, because I know there are other things to be taken into consideration.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: How are you going to control imports?

Hon. G. FRASER: No attempt is being made to exercise proper control. With all due respect to those controlling prices in this State, I say they have not got the facilities that the Federal people had. Here we have about six or seven different price-control factors, whereas before we had one, and there was some unanimity. The decision then must naturally have been better, as, at the time, we said it would be. Mr. Jones spoke against controls, and almost in the next breath said he wanted to control the manner in which some people spent their money. He said they were not buying the right things, but were spending their money foolishly. I cannot understand that inconsistency. That does not dovetail, to my way of thinking; nor does it when one member of the present Ministry is even trying to control or say how a member of Parliament shall do his job. I have received a letter from the Minister for Housing, and I know other members have, too, so I shall not read it all, but only portion of it.

Hon. J. Murray: Read the lot.

Hon. G. FRASER: Very well. It is as follows:—

In an endeavour to centralise information available to members of Parliament and to relieve busy individual section leaders of necessity to check up in particular cases, I have arranged for the appointment of a Parliamentary Liaison Officer, whose sole duty will be to attend to the inquiries of members.

Mr. A. G. Irvine, who has been with the Commission for several years, has been selected initially and he will examine and advise upon each case submitted, and pass on for decision of the proper authority, those matters outside his province.

This centralisation of information will allow me to be kept conversant with all housing inquiries by members of Parliament and I would like you, therefore, to address all inquiries, either by phone or in person, to Mr. Irvine, as I believe this will be in the best interests of members and of the Commission.

Yours sincerely,

G. P. WILD,

Minister for Housing.

I do not take second place to Mr. Wild in deciding how I shall carry out my job. I have been a member for over 23 years and, when the State Housing Commission was known as the Workers' Homes Board, I used to go into the office and interview the officers of that department. I have been interviewing various section officers since the Commission has been in its present premises. My relations with those officers have at all times been most cordial, and I think those employed there are extremely efficient. I have always been able to obtain satisfaction in every way.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: The Minister wanted to help you.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am the best judge of how I can be helped. If I want any information on a tenancy question, I go to see Mr. Riley, Mr. Lang or Mr. Lewis. I deal with Mr. Fullarton for the hut section, with Mr. Prince for eviction cases, and Mr. Edwards on small-unit-home applications and McNess Housing Trust matters.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That accounts for the great number of employees down there.

Hon. G. FRASER: With regard to welfare matters, I deal with Mrs. Eichorn. On the question of war service homes and workers' homes, I contact Mr. Graham, Mr. Hillier, or Mr. Burton; and in the materials section, Mr. Christie and Mr. Hyman for cement. Then if I have any problems associated with the architectural section, I contact Mr. Limb. At times I see Mr. Bond, Mr. Telfer, Mr. Irvine, or Mr. Butler; and, on rare occasions, Mr. Brownlie. I have dealt with all these people, and now I am asked to deal with one man. That means I will get the information secondhand and perhaps even a week or two later than I used to be able to obtain it. Now I can go in, do my business and come out as quickly as possible. That system is entirely satisfactory to me and to my clients and does not disrupt the service of these officers.

Hon. H. K. Watson: If you see all those officers down there, I would be inclined to say that you were disrupting the organisation.

Hon. G. FRASER: Not at all. Those officers do the same thing for anybody else. I have a wonderful opinion of Mr. Irvine. I think he is one of the most able men in the State service, and the Civil Service is lucky to have him as a member. I have dealt with him on many occasions, but I do not want to have all my dealings with him. I want to deal with the particular section concerned and not have to go through some other person. I resent the Minister's telling me how to do my job. It is not right.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: I think you are taking it the wrong way.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not taking it the wrong way. There are occasions when Mr. Irvine is not available. My colleague could tell members a story about that.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Have you been down there since the date of the letter?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, and I have followed the same methods I have always used. I intend to do what I have always done until I am instructed to do otherwise.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: You say that Mr. Irvine is not always available. I question whether you have proved that since the date of the letter.

Hon. G. FRASER: I know other members who have been down there to see him since the date of this letter, and he has not been available.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Since that letter was sent out?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. I want to do my work in the way I have always done it. I do not want anybody to dictate to me how I am to do that work. If I overstep the bounds and, even though I am doing my work honestly and conscientiously, create a nuisance, and am asked to do something about it, I will be quite willing to do so. I resent the Minister's telling me how I should do my work.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Everybody else thought it was a good thing.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Some never go there.

Hon. G. FRASER: Some members might think it is a good thing, but I am merely expressing my point of view. For instance, only on Monday one of my clients received a letter asking him to go down and see a particular person in the Housing Commission about a home.

The Minister for Agriculture: Did you say a client?

Hon. G. FRASER: I meant one of my constituents, if that term will suit the Minister.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Are you getting a rake-off?

Hon. G. FRASER: I thank the Minister for the correction and I will alter the word to "constituents."

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why not say one of your patients?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not a professional man. This man received a letter asking him to interview a certain person in the State Housing Commission. The applicant is a waterside worker, and if he loses a day's work he is stood down for 48 hours. So I said to him, "It will probably be only a preliminary inquiry, and I will see whether it is necessary for you to go down." So I did the job and interviewed the person with whom the appointment would have been made. If it had been necessary for me to see Mr. Irvine, several days would probably

have elapsed before I received an answer. As it was, I was able to get the job done straightaway.

The ridiculous part about it is that all the officers I have mentioned can be interviewed by any member of the public. A member of the public has only to ask to see one of those officers and he can do so. I am not going behind the counters or backdoors to see these people. They are all available to members of the public. Yet I am debarred, as a member, from seeing these section leaders. Members of the public are not prevented from seeing them, but members of Parliament are denied that privilege. There is another archdeacon against controls, the Press. I have with me the rules of the Newsagency Control Board, issued in August, 1950. This book of rules is issued by the people who are always talking about free enterprise, a free country and everything else. Yet a person cannot sell a newsagency business unless the board permits him to do so.

Hon. E. M. Davies: And at a price, too.

Hon. G. FRASER: The other evening, Mr. Dimmitt used the expression "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." That aptly describes this business. I ask members to listen to me while I read the rules of this Newsagency Control Board.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Who is it?

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not know. That is all that appears on the cover of this booklet—"Newsagency Control Board Rules."

Hon. E. M. Davies: The newsagents will tell you.

Hon. G. FRASER: As I am not in the inner circle, I cannot tell the hon. member who controls this organisation.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Have you any more clients?

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not know whether the Press will report my remarks on this point, but I sincerely hope it does.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Get on to the "Broadcaster." They are the people.

Hon. G. FRASER: The rules state—

(1) Authorised newsagents, sub-newsagents, general stores, mixed businesses or any other person handling the sales of publications of the members of the Perth Newspaper Proprietors' Association—

That tells members who is responsible for the board. I think it would be "The West Australian" and the "Daily News."

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: There might be one or two others.

Hon. G. FRASER: The first rule continues—

—and desiring to sell their business must lodge with the board a "vendor's disposal notice."

(2) A "vendor's disposal notice" may not be cancelled after it has been lodged with the board except with the approval of the board whose decision shall be final and binding.

That means that if a man wanted to sell his business, and he notified the board that he intended to sell, then changed his mind, he could not withdraw unless the board gave him approval.

(3) A "vendor's disposal notice" shall be in the form from time to time prescribed by the board and shall contain full particulars of the newsagency; details of circulation; stock; fittings; plant; estimated gross profits and weekly net profits and the approximate total valuation.

(4) On receipt of a vendor's disposal notice the goodwill of the business shall be valued by the board by a method based on the unit system prescribed from time to time by the board.

That means that a person has no right to say what his own business is worth.

(5) The board shall advertise the business for sale in "The West Australian" and the "Daily News" (at least twice in both newspapers).

Hon. E. M. Davies: Apparently the "Sunday Times" is not in it.

Hon. G. FRASER: The rules continue—

(6) Applications shall close seven (7) days after the final advertisement has appeared.

(7) Applications to purchase shall be lodged on the official application form provided by the board.

I am sorry that I have not an application form with me. I saw a form and one of the questions asked of the proposed purchaser was how much he could provide in cash, how much in mortgage and where he intended to get the money from.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You seem to be a member of the L.C.L. now.

Hon. G. FRASER: Those are questions asked of the buyer and yet these newspapers are always talking about free enterprise.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: You will reform.

Hon. G. FRASER: The rules continue—

(8) Applicants shall be advised in writing by the secretary to appear before the board.

(9) Selected applicants shall be notified in writing and informed of arrangements for the inspection of the agency concerned.

(10) Applicants who are not successful shall be notified in writing that the board does not desire to proceed with the application.

So the board has the right to say whether a man can buy a newsagency or not.

The Minister for Agriculture: Who are the members of this board?

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not know; the book does not say. Apparently it is sponsored by the Perth Newspaper Proprietors' Association. I do not know whether I am right or not, but I think that would be "The West Australian" and the "Daily News." I will continue with the rules—

(11) Should a selected applicant, after inspecting the agency, prefer not to proceed with the purchase, he must notify the secretary in writing within the time specified by the board. In default of any such notification a selected applicant shall be deemed to have elected not to proceed with the purchase.

I am not going to read them all but merely pick out one or two others.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Should you not pass that on to the local Chamber of Commerce?

Hon. G. FRASER: Here is another one—

The chosen applicant shall be notified in writing by the secretary and of the time within which the contract of sale shall be executed by both parties.

It goes on—

A contract of sale between the vendor and the purchaser shall be prepared in triplicate by the vendor or his solicitor. Each party shall hold a copy and the third copy shall be held by the board. Such contract of sale shall be executed by both the vendor and the purchaser and approved by the board within the time specified by the board. In the event of the purchaser failing to execute such contract of sale within the time specified the board may select another purchaser.

Rule 15 states—

The successful applicant shall purchase the business at the price fixed by the board.

So it does not matter if a person has his own business and he considers it is worth so much; his opinion does not count because the board says what he can charge for it. To continue with Rule 15—

He shall pay a deposit of £100 on the execution of the contract of sale and on the day of settlement ten per cent. of the full purchase money shall be deducted from the balance of purchase money and retained by the board for a period of 35 days by which time, if no appeal (in accordance with the terms of the contract) has been lodged by the purchaser, the moneys held by the board (that is the deposit and the ten per cent. of the purchase price) shall be paid to the vendor less any assessing fees, valuation fees, advertising charges and any outstanding debts in relation to the newsagency business being sold.

Later on it states—

The board shall appoint a panel of five (5) valuers for the purpose of assessing stocks, together with a panel of three (3) valuers for the purpose of assessing plant and fittings.

The board will recognise only such stock valuers as are approved by the board.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Is this something new?

Hon. G. FRASER: It came into operation in August, 1950.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: These might be part of the conditions of the granting of an authorised newsagency.

Hon. G. FRASER: They are.

Hon. E. M. Davies: What right have they to do that?

The Minister for Agriculture: Does that relate to the whole business or just the newsagency side of it?

Hon. G. FRASER: The whole business.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Businesses, the essence of which are agency contracts from the respective newspapers.

Hon. G. FRASER: There is another one, No. 24, which states—

No purchaser shall sell, assign or transfer the newsagency for a term of three (3) years without the permission of the board in writing first having been obtained. The board may in its absolute discretion refuse to approve of the sale, transfer or assignment of an agency or may grant such approval subject to such terms and conditions as it may deem fit. Except in special circumstances approval will not be granted for the sale of an agency within three years of its purchase at a price or for a sum in excess of the price at which it was last purchased—

That means that a person can have a business for three years, and he cannot charge any more for it at the end of that time, no matter how he may have improved it.

Hon. E. M. Davies: It may be an expanding district.

Hon. G. FRASER: It continues—

—with necessary adjustments to provide for the difference in the value of the stock and any alterations or additions to the plant and fittings.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: I think it is based on the unit distribution of the particular newspaper.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but they will not permit a person to charge the price he wants.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It is provided for; you read it out.

Hon. G. FRASER: It states—

Except in special circumstances, approval will not be granted for the sale of an agency within three years of its purchase at a price or for a sum in excess of the price at which it was last purchased . . .

Hon. H. K. Watson: That is to prevent exploitation.

Hon. G. FRASER: That comes from one of these papers which is always writing about free enterprise. It just makes me wonder how people get away with this sort of thing.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: They have probably got a very good answer.

Hon. G. FRASER: They may have; but it would have to be a very good one. I wonder how the hon. member would like it if he had a business which included some newspapers, and he was dictated to and told to whom to sell them.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Price-control.

Hon. G. FRASER: There is price-control. There is no doubt about that! These are the people who want to have it both ways. It comes from the wrong source when it comes from people who scream out about interference and the liberty of the subject.

There are one or two things that I would like to say about Fremantle. I do not know whether I will be encroaching on business that might be put forward by Sir Frank Gibson; but in case he is not going to deal with this subject, I think I ought to give the House some information about a matter that has been in the Press quite a lot, namely, the cost of the change of frequency at Fremantle. If I may say so, it has been a burning question for some time. So far, we have not had a definite answer from the Minister in regard to his intentions. I notice that, in answer to questions, he said in the Press that there is no change in the Government's policy.

Let me give members a little of the history. This matter was first suggested by the late Hon. John Curtin in 1944 or 1945. He mentioned the scheme, but I do not think anything very definite was done prior to his death. He said, however, that if the changeover from 40 to 50 cycles took place, the Commonwealth Government would be prepared to contribute, I think up to £300,000 towards it. The late Mr. Chifley carried out the suggestion made by Mr. Curtin; and in 1946, I think it was, an agreement was reached between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government by which this changeover in frequency was to take place, the Commonwealth Government being required to contribute on the lines indicated by Mr. Curtin. Those transactions were between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government.

Somewhere about 1946 or 1947, the State Electricity Commission came into being. We find that when the South Fremantle Power House was established, and the question of 50 cycles was again proposed, the State Electricity Commission, which was not even established when the agreement was reached between the two Governments, tried to alter that agreement by means of a threat that Fremantle would have to pay for the changeover if it did not agree to some fresh agreement. The matter of 50 cycles is one between the two Governments, not between the Government and a Government department. The agreement between the State Electricity Commission and the Fremantle Tramway Board is a separate matter, and not one that can be linked up with the other. I could not imagine that Mr. Curtin would have agreed to advance up to £300,000 if it was not going to benefit his own district at Fremantle.

The Minister should make a clear statement—not a statement that Government policy has not been altered—that the cost of the frequency changeover at Fremantle will be borne by the Government, irrespective of any other agreement. If he makes that announcement, I feel sure that the other matter will adjust itself. It should not be used as a lever to force an alteration in the agreement. I realise the State Electricity Commission will lose a lot of money by that agreement, and I have no doubt that the Fremantle Tramway Board will agree to some alteration in the price it is paying. I do not think we should allow the other business, which is entirely foreign to the agreement between the Commonwealth and the State, to bludgeon us into an alteration of the latter. They are two different matters. I thought it wise to give that little bit of history of the position to the House, so that members can better judge what this trouble between the Tramway Board and the Electricity Commission is.

I would like to mention the matter of kindergartens. I referred to this last year, and I do not want to go over the ground again. At that time, I said that Government assistance as well as going to the kindergarten unions, should go to the committees handling kindergartens in the various districts. At one time the procedure adopted was that the local committees paid the teachers' salaries and to offset that the State Government made a grant of £2 which was later increased to £4 per year per child. This was paid to the committees to help with the teachers' salaries. Last year, a change was made which was purely a domestic affair between the Kindergarten Union and the branches whereby the payment of teachers' salaries was taken over by the Kindergarten Union, and the branch

committees had to find £1. 11s. per child per term. There are three terms, which means that £4 13s. per child per year was paid to the Union. I mentioned this last year, and said what a strain it was for the committees to advance this amount as there were various other expenses they were up against, and I suggested that the Government should consider the payments to the kindergarten committees rather than to the union. The committees should receive some assistance from the Government. In reply, the Minister told me it was a domestic matter between the Kindergarten Union and the committees. It was nothing of the kind. It was asking for something to be done between the Government and the kindergarten committees.

A couple of months ago the amount of £4 13s. per child per year was increased by the Kindergarten Union to £6 13s. The decision was only made prior to the third term, which means that all kindergarten committees in that term of this year have to find £3 11s. per child. The whole year's rise has been put on to the last term. It means that the bill of the committee of which I am President will go up from £47 in the third term to £107. It is very difficult for voluntary committees to raise amounts like that when they have so many other extras to bear. Many of these committees will, I fear, not be able to carry on, and this is not meant to be a threat. It has been most difficult; and, with the added expenses these local committees have to bear, we will find that many of them will not open after Christmas.

I know that my committee will certainly have great difficulty in doing so, though I am not yet in a position to say whether or not we shall be able to open. I appeal again to the Minister and I do not want the department to misinterpret my appeal. I do not want it to interfere in the domestic affairs of the union and the committees, but I do want it to give a grant to the committees to help them with the schooling of these children. I will leave the matter there, and I hope something in my speech will be agreed to. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 5th September, 1951.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions: Workers' compensation, as to State Insurance Office profit	523
Fremantle harbour, as to taking of test samples of sea water	524
Health, as to departmental inspection of milk bottling	524
Transport, as to extending Floreat Park trolley-bus service	524
Bricks, as to supplies to small builders	524
Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act, (a) as to protection for tenants	524
(b) as to protection for servicemen	525
Bills: Parliament House Site Permanent Reserve (A1162), 1r.	525
Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment, 1r.	525
Hospitals Act Amendment, 1r.	525
Motions: Fremantle harbour, as to upstream or seaward extension	525
Lime-super mixture as fertiliser, to inquire by Select Committee	546
Censure, butter, as to Commonwealth subsidy towards increased cost—defeated	551
Speakers on Censure Motion—	
Hon. A. R. G. Hawke	551
The Premier (Hon. D. R. McLarty)	561
Mr. Needham	567
Hon. J. T. Tonkin	569
The Minister for Education (Hon. A. F. Watts)	574
Mr. Bovell	574
Mr. Hoar	575

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

QUESTIONS.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

As to State Insurance Office Profit

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Attorney General:

What profit or surplus was made by the State Insurance Office on workers' compensation for the annual periods of:—

1946-47; 1947-48; 1948-49; 1949-50; 1950-51?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

Year.	Surplus. £	Deficiency. £
General Accident—		
1946-47	39,327	—
1947-48	47,165	—
1948-49	80,630	—
1949-50	92,148	—
1950-51	77,608	—
Industrial Diseases—		
1946-47	—	57,538
1947-48	—	32,174
1948-49	34,472	—
1949-50	54,355	—
1950-51	108,711	—

The industrial disease surplus is not a true surplus and is transferred to a specific reserve and held against the huge potential liability for claims not yet notified.