

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 13th July, 1954.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. May and War Service Homes Applications.

Mr. MAY: I desire to make a personal explanation. On the 30th June, as recorded at page 175 of "Hansard," I made

a statement that applications for war service homes were being held up for a period of 12 months before being proceeded with. The member for Mt. Lawley said that statement was incorrect, and asked me to confirm it. The confirmation is contained in the following letter, dated the 18th June, 1954, and numbered J2/19316:—

Dear Mr. May,

re Mr. R. Hargreaves, Prinsep Street, North Collie.

I have pleasure in advising that the application submitted by the above-named for assistance under the provisions of the War Service Homes Act has been admitted.

His application will be recorded and will be dealt with in accordance with Government policy. It is expected that his turn will be reached by approximately June, 1955; but this cannot be regarded as a commitment in that, in addition to other considerations, it depends on the number of applicants with higher claims who withdrew their applications in the meantime.

Yours faithfully,
(Sgd.) H. V. TELFER,
Secretary.

QUESTIONS.

HOSPITALS.

(a) As to Cost of Government Institutions.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What was the cost to the State of conducting Government hospitals in the country districts for the following financial years:—

Year ended the 30th June, 1950;
year ended the 30th June, 1951;
year ended the 30th June, 1952;
year ended the 30th June, 1953;
year ended the 30th June, 1954?

(2) What was the cost of conducting Government hospitals in the metropolitan area during the same years?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Year ended the—

	£
30th June, 1950	271,074
30th June, 1951	312,511
30th June, 1952	447,822
30th June, 1953	456,541
30th June, 1954	446,974

(2) Year ended the—

	£
30th June, 1950	53,829
30th June, 1951	63,951
30th June, 1952	111,595
30th June, 1953	126,890
30th June, 1954	150,161

(b) As to State Subsidies to Committee Institutions.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Health:

What was the total amount of subsidies paid from State funds to committee controlled hospitals during the following financial years:—

Year ended the 30th June, 1950;
year ended the 30th June, 1951;
year ended the 30th June, 1952;
year ended the 30th June, 1953;
year ended the 30th June, 1954?

The MINISTER replied:

The subsidies paid to country committee hospitals were:—

Year ended the—	£
30th June, 1950	186,210
30th June, 1951	213,926
30th June, 1952	286,223
30th June, 1953	240,560
30th June, 1954	254,620

AGRICULTURE.

As to Details of Dairying Industry.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Would he inform the House of the manner in which the Dairy Industry Investigation Committee is constituted and name the present personnel of this committee?

(2) Would he tell the House the extent to which the average cost of production of butterfat in Western Australia exceeds the Commonwealth average?

(3) Are there any other factors in the method of assessing the cost of production which might work to the disadvantage of Western Australian butterfat producers?

(4) What is the average size herd on a Western Australian butterfat dairy farm?

(5) What is the average size herd on butterfat dairy farms in Australia?

(6) Does he agree that the general conclusion that might be drawn from the remarks of the member for Leederville during the Address-in-reply debate ("Hansard" page 85, col. 2) that dairy farmers in Western Australia can absorb additional costs of production, is well founded?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Dairy Industry Investigation Committee is appointed by the Commonwealth Government to advise it regarding various aspects of the industry, particularly in respect of costs and prices.

The present committee is comprised of Messrs. A. Fitzgerald, J. P. Norton and H. Clark.

(2) The Dairy Industry Investigation Committee, reporting to the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture on the 15th

July, 1953, recommended that "a new survey of the industry be made to collect data which would serve both as a basis for assessment of costs and to initiate action to increase net incomes of high cost producers by cost reduction or increased productivity." This survey has been carried out. However, the reports are not yet available and therefore the information regarding comparative levels of cost of production is not available.

(3) No answer can be given without a study of the method of assessment of final costs and the management data collected in the survey, as this information is not yet available.

(4) Different answers to this question can be given depending on the interpretation of what is a butterfat producing farm. In the South-West Statistical District No. 1 there were, at the 31st March, 1953, 113,887 cows and 5,602 farms with dairy cows, i.e. 20.3 cows per farm. However, many of these farms have very few cows and although they are producing butterfat, they cannot be considered commercial producers. There is no basis for segregating those who may be considered commercial producers from those who are not.

(5) It is even more difficult to reply to this question for Australia.

(6) I have been unable to conclude from a perusal of the remarks made by the member for Leederville that he implied further costs could be absorbed by the dairying industry.

MIDLAND JUNCTION ABATTOIRS.

As to Slaughtering Charges.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What are the new killing charges at the Midland Junction Abattoirs for cattle, calves, sheep, lambs and pigs?

(2) What were the charges prior to the introduction of the chain system?

(3) What do the killing charges amount to per lb. on an average weight animal as above?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) See schedule in "Government Gazette" No. 31 of the 25th June, page 1151.

(a) Cattle.

Dressed Weight	Per Head
From 201-249 lb.	25s. 0d.
From 250-400 lb.	30s. 0d.
From 401-600 lb.	35s. 0d.
Over 600 lb.	40s. 0d.
Over 600 lb.	40s. 0d.

(b) Calves.

Dressed Weight	Per Head
Up to 100 lb.	7s. 6d.
From 101-150 lb.	10s. 0d.
From 151-200 lb.	21s. 0d.

(c) Sheep 4s. 0d.

	Per Head
(d) Lambs	3s. 6d.
(e) Pigs	
Dressed Weight	Per Head
Up to 110 lb.	9s. 0d.
From 111-179 lb.	11s. 0d.
Over 179 lb.	13s. 0d.

Extra Charges.

Bulls and stags	9s. 0d.
Rams and ram lambs	9d.

(2) No killing charges were made prior to the take-over at Midland Junction.

(3) In the case of cattle, calves, and pigs, an accurate figure is difficult to quote due to the fact that the proportion of total kill in each weight range according to the schedule quoted in reply to Question No. (1) is not known. For the following weights, however, the charge per lb. would be:—

Per Head	Per lb.
Cattle 470lb.	35s. 0d.=.89d.
Calves 95 lb.	7s. 6d.=.946d.
Sheep 42 lb.	4s. 0d.=1.14d.
Lambs 30 lb.	3s. 6d.=1.2d.
Pigs 125 lb.	11s. 0d.=1.056d.

DRAINAGE.**As to Legislation for Comprehensive Scheme.**

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

What progress has been made with the preparation of legislation covering the proposed comprehensive drainage scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

Proposed legislation is in the hands of the Crown Law Department for the drafting of a Bill.

CAUSEWAY.**As to Cost and Additional Bridge.**

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What is the estimated total cost of the Causeway and its approaches, including roundabouts?

(2) In the event of a decision to build another major crossing of the river, will he consider calling tenders—within and outside the Commonwealth—for this work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £841,000.

(2) The calling of tenders will be considered.

GRAPES EXPORTED.**As to Trade Commissioner's Report.**

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Would he lay on the Table of the House the departmental file containing the Commonwealth Trade Commissioner's report on the consignments of grapes exported from this State last season?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

EDUCATION.**(a) As to Site for High School, Busselton.**

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Education:

Concerning the closing down of the Commonwealth aerodrome at Busselton, will he give consideration to the fact that this is a suitable site for a high school, having in mind that the Education Department intends to erect a third year high school at Busselton and has not as yet selected a suitable site for this school?

The MINISTER replied:

The School Sites Committee has already given consideration to the aerodrome at Busselton as a high school site but for various reasons has considered it unsuitable.

(b) As to Erection of New High School, Fremantle.

Mr. HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has there been any revision of the plans and schedule for the erection of a new Fremantle high school?

(2) Is it considered that there is a need for such revision?

(3) Is the schedule for the construction of the high school proceeding according to plan?

(4) Is the new high school to be co-educational in character?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) No. Plans are at present in course of preparation.

(3) Yes.

(4) Yes.

(c) As to Ministers' Statements and Premier's Attitude.

Mr. HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) In the Press report published in "The West Australian" of the 10th July, 1954, headed "Union Joins Attack on Teachers' Pay," wherein the present Minister for Education, in answer to a question, is reported as having said that in future Public Service Appeal Board decisions regarding teachers will be observed by his Government, and the statement of the Minister for Police when addressing the Police Union Conference on the 11th May, which says: "Put briefly, the Government's policy is that what its employees hold they shall at least keep,"

and the statement following a little later which says, "You need have no fear that the department will be permitted by way of claim or counterclaim to worsen your conditions by reducing wages, hours or holidays," is it not a fact that these statements directly contradict the Deputy Premier's action, taken when Minister for Education, in withdrawing women teachers' long service increments, because this action, in one fell swoop—

- (a) defied and reversed a 1951 Public Service Appeal Board decision;
- (b) worsened women teachers' conditions by reducing their pay;
- (c) took away from Government employees that which they had held?

(2) With which of the two diametrically opposed views, as expressed in statements by the Minister for Education and the Minister for Police, as against the words and actions of the Deputy Premier, does he agree?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) The Deputy Premier will make his attitude on this matter clear in a speech which he proposes to make during today's sitting as his contribution to the Address-in-reply debate. I understand that during his speech the Deputy Premier will, in one fell swoop, prove that the hon member has indulged in a considerable amount of misrepresentation in dealing with allowances to female teachers.

(d) As to Observance of Appeal Board Decision.

Mr. HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Premier:

How does he reconcile the statement of the present Minister for Education that, in future, Public Service Appeal Board decisions regarding teachers will be observed by his Government, with his support of the Deputy Premier who insists that he was correct in reversing an appeal board decision which had granted long service increments to women teachers?

The PREMIER replied:

The hon. member's question is based on an assertion that is not correct.

(e) As to Correctness of Assertion.

Mr. HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Premier:

Which particular assertion in my last question is the incorrect one?

The PREMIER replied:

I would point out that I have not supported or opposed the Deputy Premier who insists, according to the member for Cottesloe, that he was correct in reversing an appeal board decision. At no time have I taken sides in this argument.

Mr. Hutchinson: But he is your deputy leader.

The PREMIER: The member for Greenough is the hon. member's deputy leader, but I do not see what bearing that has on the question.

Mr. Hutchinson: You are responsible for any action he takes.

The PREMIER: Am I? I think that is another assertion which is not altogether correct.

Mr. Hutchinson: I should have said, any political action he takes.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I think he is very near the mark there, you know.

The PREMIER: I have not studied this problem at all—

Mr. Hutchinson: You have had plenty of time.

The PREMIER:—because I understand it is the subject of an appeal by the Teachers' Union on the teachers' behalf to a specially constituted tribunal. In all the circumstances, it seems to me that it should take its course in that direction.

(f) As to Necessity for Appeal.

Mr. HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is the Premier aware that the appeal to this specially constituted tribunal appears to be a little unnecessary in view of the fact that the Public Service Appeal Board granted the long-service increments to teachers in 1951?

The PREMIER replied:

I think, in all the circumstances, the appeal is necessary.

Mr. Hutchinson: Yes, it is, because of the action of the Deputy Premier.

The PREMIER: He will argue that in a moment.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

As to Machine for Combating Bush Regrowth.

Mr. OWEN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is it a fact that regrowth of eucalypts and scrub is a very serious problem on the war service land settlement farms in the Mt. Many Peaks and Rocky Gully districts?

(2) Is there any satisfactory method of dealing with this problem at present?

(3) Has he heard of the Arthur rotary slasher, which, when fitted to an ordinary farm tractor, is claimed to successfully handle this type of regrowth at the rate of seven acres per hour?

(4) Will he endeavour to secure one of these machines with the object of testing its capabilities in the areas referred to?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Regrowth of eucalypts and scrub is a problem wherever similar country is being developed.

(2) Use of special rollers, burning, and cultivation are giving satisfactory results.

(3) No.

(4) The Land Settlement Board is inquiring into a rotary flail reported to be in use in South Australia, also a rotary cutter in the United States of America. Similar inquiries will be made regarding the Arthur rotary slasher, if the hon. member will supply further information.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) *As to Area to be Served, Kalamunda.*

Mr. OWEN asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Has a recent check survey been made of the area to be supplied by the Kalamunda water supply?

(2) If so, has there been any significant increase in the number of houses and their annual rental value?

(3) What is the percentage increase in these figures?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) In the area to be supplied, the houses have increased from 532 in September, 1947, to 814 in May, 1954. Rental values of properties have not been checked recently.

(3) Houses increased 53 per cent. in last 6½ years. Rental value increases not assessed.

(b) *As to Levels of Weirs.*

Mr. MOIR (without notice) asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Can he inform me what is the present water level in—

(a) Mundaring Weir;

(b) Canning Weir;

(2) How do the respective water levels this year compare with the levels in the two weirs 12 months ago?

The MINISTER replied:

The hon. member was good enough to tell me earlier that he intended to ask these questions, so I had an opportunity to obtain the information. The replies are as follows:—

(1) and (2) The position at Mundaring Weir is that at 8 a.m. today there was in storage 6,825,000,000 gallons and the height of the water below the overflow was 22ft. 6½ ins. At this date last year the water in storage was 6,820,000,000 gallons and the height of the water below the overflow was 22ft. 6½ in. With regard to Canning Dam, which has a capacity of 20,550,000,000 gallons, the water storage on the 13th July last year was 14,580,000,000 gallons and the height of the water below the overflow was 19ft. 5½ in. Today, up to 8 a.m., the water in storage was 12,572,000,000 gallons and the height of the water below the overflow was 27ft. 10in.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Bus Seats, Perth-Hopetoun Service.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he arrange for investigations to be made by the railway road services section into what cost would be involved in substituting aircraft type seats for the present seating in buses used on the Perth to Hopetoun route, in view of the long distance and time taken for the trip?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

Inquiries have been made and it has been ascertained that the cost of a double seat of this type is £70. The cost of fitting out the Hopetoun bus would be £350, plus the cost of installation.

(b) *As to Freight on Super and Wheat.*

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What was the freight charged on superphosphate on the 23rd February, 1953, for—

100 miles;
150 miles;
200 miles;
250 miles?

(2) What was the freight charged on wheat on the 23rd February, 1953, for—

100 miles;
150 miles;
200 miles;
250 miles?

(3) What is the freight charged on superphosphate at present for—

100 miles;
150 miles;
200 miles;
250 miles?

(4) What is the freight charged on wheat at present for—

100 miles;
150 miles;
200 miles;
250 miles?

(5) What is the percentage increase in freight on—

(a) super;
(b) wheat?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

(1) and (3)—

Distance Miles.					Wheat and Super per ton.	
					s.	d.
100	...	....	....	....	24	9
150	...	...	....	....	28	11
200	...	....	....	....	33	1
250	...	....	....	....	37	3

(3) and (4)—

100	....	33	5
150	....	39	0
200	....	44	8
250	....	50	3

It has to be borne in mind that railway rates vary with the length of haul and, therefore, the impact of the tariff on the wheatgrower is best measured by the charge which was actually made per ton mile. Relative figures for 1953 and to date were:—

Wheat 2.36d. in 1953 and 2.83 in 1954, subject to audit (average earnings).

Super 2.17d. in 1953 and 2.92d. in 1954, subject to audit (average earnings).

(5) Thirty-five per cent. was the "M" class tariff variation, but the classification had been adjusted in 1951.

(c) *As to Metropolitan Passenger Service and Fares.*

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What, if any, increase has been made in passenger fares in the metropolitan area from the 23rd February, 1953, to the present time?

(2) How many passenger trains were running in the metropolitan area at the 23rd February, 1953?

(3) How many passenger trains are running in the metropolitan area at present?

(4) Does the revenue received from the metropolitan passenger train service justify this increase of passenger train service?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

(1) There have been no increases in passenger fares in the metropolitan area since the 23rd February, 1953, but a short time previously—on the 6th October, 1952—suburban fares had been singled out for special increases at a time when all other freights and fares remained constant.

(2) One hundred and fifty-nine.

(3) One hundred and seventy-nine.

(4) Yes.

(d) *As to Passenger Miles, Perth-Merredin Service.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Railways:

What is the passenger miles to potential percentage for the Perth to Merredin route for rail passenger trains, either diesel or steam, running between Perth and Merredin and excluding any trains running to beyond Merredin for the last year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

The Perth-Merredin passenger service is operated by diesel-electric units, for which the details sought are not recorded. However, departmental passenger returns are being examined with a view to supplying the hon. member with such information as can be ascertained.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Commission Homes for Evictees.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

How many families who were evicted by order of the court were housed by the State Housing Commission in each of the weeks since the 1st January of this year?

The MINISTER replied:

Families evicted by court order housed week by week from the 1st January, 1954, were:—

Week ending the 2nd January, 5; 9th January, 3; 16th January, 1; 23rd January, 10; 30th January, 1; 6th February, 10; 13th February, 10; 20th February, 7; 27th February, 14; 6th March, 14; 13th March, 9; 20th March, 5; 27th March, 12; 2nd April, 10; 10th April, 10; 17th April, 6; 24th April, 4; 1st May, 9; 8th May, 12; 15th May, 5; 22nd May, 2; 29th May, 6; 5th June, 9; 12th June, 1; 19th June, 2; 26th June, 12; 3rd July, 11.

In addition to the above, there were 57 families granted accommodation from the 5th June to the 3rd July as evictees by virtue of the fact that they were in receipt of valid notices to quit (including some who had received court summonses) which would have resulted in eviction had they been allowed to go to court.

These families were allocated accommodation either because their turn had been reached by virtue of date of application or had been treated as emergent cases. Families of this nature were housed as follows:—

Week ending the 5th June, 16; 12th June, 16; 19th June, 13; 26th June, 5; 3rd July, 7.

(b) *As to Details of Evictee Families.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

In connection with people housed by the State Housing Commission, following eviction by court order during June, 1954—

(1) What were their names and addresses prior to eviction?

(2) The number, sex and age of children in each family?

(3) The approximate weekly income being received by each family?

(4) The date they first applied to the State Housing Commission for a Commonwealth-State rental or war service home?

The MINISTER replied:

Name and Address.	Children.				Approximate Weekly Income (from application form or interview).	First Date of Application.
	No.	Sex.		Ages.		
		M.	F.			
E. F. Ford, 98 Stuart Street, Inglewood	3	....	3	10, 12, 15½ years	£17 per week	26-11-53
K. O. Griffen, 42 Chester Street, Fremantle	1	....	1	9 years	£12 per week in 1952	22-9-52
R. J. Templeton, rear 63 Quarry Street, Fremantle	1	1	....	23 years	Husband and wife £7 per week	8-5-54
H. V. Potger, 51 Murray Street, Bayswater	2	1	1	6 months and 6 years	£19 7s. 3d. gross per fortnight in 1950	20-2-50
A. P. Powell, 49 Bellevue Terrace, Fremantle	3	....	3	5, 7, 11 years	Not stated but allows wife £14 per week	4-4-54
J. Siddons, 9 Eglina Street, Mt. Hawthorn	4	2	2	7, 11, 6, 9 years	£18 per week	16-3-54
H. G. Clayden, 24 Bourke Street, North Perth	2	1	1	30 and 11 years	£12 per week	8-3-54
J. F. Tonkin, 97 Hubble Street, Fremantle	4	2	2	6, 9, 7, 11 years	£16 per week	12-3-54
B. Blackman, 206 South Street, Beaconsfield	2	2	....	2 and 4½ years	Not stated but paid tax on £1,003 for financial year 1951-52	26-1-53
E. J. Mapstone, 61 Daley Street, South Fremantle	3	2	1	3, 6, 14 years	£650 per year in January, 1954	21-1-54
T. Clarke, 15 Salisbury Avenue, South Perth	2	1	1	18 and 15½ years	£18 3s. 0d. per week	6-1-53
S. H. Clarke, 47 Wasley Street, North Perth	2	2	....	15 and 13 years	Basic wage plus £1, plus 10% war pension	12-12-51 (C.S.R.H.)
J. E. O'Byrne, 347 Orrong Road Kewdale	4	2	2	7 and 8 years (nephews)	£14 per week	13-2-51 (W.S.H.)
R. Caporn, 3 Raleigh Street, Bayswater	1	....	1	16 years	Approximately £10 per week	26-6-52 (C.S.R.H.)
W. J. McLachlan, 3 Cambridge Street, Maylands	3	....	3	15, 18 and 20 years	£12 18s. 0d. per week; War Pension £2 12s. 8d. per fortnight; children's earn- ings not known	10-9-51 (W.S.H.)
W. S. Moody, 30 Subiaco Road, Subiaco	4	3	1	2, 5, 10, 7 years	Basic Wage plus 35s. Child Endowment	10-12-46
W. R. Goddard, 60 Gloster Street, Subiaco	1	....	1	11 months	£16 6s. per week in December, 1953	8-12-53
E. J. Voak, 102 Walter Road, Inglewood	2	1	1	6, 8 years	£6 per week plus £3 per month Child Endowment	5-8-53
R. C. Christesen, 16 East Parade, Mt. Lawley	3	2	1	12, 19, 8 years	£2 10s. 0d. over the basic wage; children's earnings not known	28-7-53
P. Tombolini, 22 Collie Street, Fremantle	2	1	1	26, 25 years	£14 5s. 0d. at time of eviction	5-5-54
H. J. MacPherson, 55 Hovea Terrace, South Perth	2	1	1	6 years (grandchild) 17, 19 years	Husband, £11 10s. per week; son, £2 15s. per week; daughter, £3 1s. per week; pension, £1 19s. 9d. per week, in May, 1952	13-5-52
N. H. Holland, 76 Hampton Road, East Fremantle	5	2	3	6, 9, 3, 14, 15 years	Husband, £15 per week; daughter, 15 years, £4 16s.; daughter, 14 years, £3 9s.	4-5-54
H. V. Leahy, 186 Nicholson Road, Subiaco	2	2	....	2, 9 years	£15 6s. per week	22-3-54
J. H. Cowell, 77 McMaster Street, Victoria Park	1	....	1	9 years	£15 per week	4-2-52
W. E. Black, 3 Scarborough Beach Road, North Perth	3	1	2	Invalid sister (Adult)	Not known, but husband was earning £10 per week in June, 1951	31-1-51
J. B. Ryan, 15 Russell Street, Fremantle	3	2	1	6, 8, 16 years	£27 per week	18-1-54
G. Menner, 35 Gresham Street, Victoria Park	5	2	3	0, 21, 16 years	Not known, but applicant gives own wages as £16 19s. 6d. in January, 1954	7-1-54
H. A. Mather, 1026 Wellington Street, West Perth	2	....	2	15, 16½, 10, 18, 21 years	£14 6s. per week	21-8-52
H. G. Andrews, 43 Northwood Street, Leederville	2	....	2	10, 12 years	Approximately £10 per week	4-10-49
A. L. Wilson, 19 Holland Street, Fremantle	2	2	....	15, 21 years	£14 6s. per week	27-1-54
A. McLeod, 25 Samson Street, Beaconsfield	2	1	1	34, 40 years	Applicant, £4 10s. War Widow's pension; daughter, £7; son pays applicant board, £2 10s.	23-4-53
W. Nicol, 78 Glyde Street, East Fremantle	....	....	....	....	£7 per week (Pensioner)	10-12-53 (C.S.R.H.)
J. I. Harris, Railway Property, 57 Scaddan Street, Bassendean	2	1	1	3, 6 years	£4 12s. 6d. Child Welfare assistance	8-4-54 (McNess)
L. M. McKinley, 57 Scaddan Street, Bassendean	2	1	1	3 years, 8 months	£4 12s. 6d. Child Welfare assistance	29-9-52
H. McAnuff, 22 Caxton Road, Claremont	2	1	1	10, 9 years	£13 per week (T.P.I.)	5-10-53
						12-2-54

(c) *As to Rent Reduction for Austrian Homes.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Was he correctly reported in the "Sunday Times" of the 4th July, when it was stated that tenants of Austrian houses were to have their rents reduced by 10s. per week?

(2) How many Austrian houses were erected in W.A.?

(3) In what towns and suburbs were they erected, how many in each, and what are the rents?

(4) Why were these houses not grouped with other houses in the same area and the rents averaged out, in accordance with the First Schedule of the Commonwealth-State housing agreement?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Number of houses erected—895.

(3) (a) State Housing Commission—774.

	T.I.U. 1's.				T.I.U. 2's.		
	No.	Rent Paid.			No.	Rent Paid.	
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Willagee	176	3	2 0	46	3	7 6	
Hilton Park	32	3	4 0	16	3	7 6	
Belmont	62	3	2 0	70	3	7 6	
Killarney	6	3	2 0	120	3	7 6	
Kwinana	10	3	4 0	17	2	9 0	
Kwinana (A.P.R.L.)				30	3	3 6	
(Rates and Maintenance paid by Company.)							
Narrogin	3	3	5 0	17	3	10 0	
Katanning	5	3	5 0	10	3	7 0	
Northam	30	3	5 0				
Collie	37	3	5 0	13	3	10 0	
Albany	6	3	5 0	40	3	8 0	
Geraldton				28	3	10 0	
	367			407			

(b) *Railway Department—121.*

		£	s. d.
Midland Junction	49	3	7 6
Ashfield	46	3	7 6
Willagee	12	3	7 6
Wexcombe	14	3	7 6

(4) The houses were not grouped with other types of houses in the same area for rental purposes as the imported homes were of a different kind of construction.

(d) *As to Resumptions near Subiaco Flats.*

Hon. DAME FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Does the Government intend to resume land on which homes have been erected for many years, adjacent to the Subiaco flats?

(2) Is he aware that the present owners of such homes have already been threatened by his officers with compulsory resumption?

(3) Does he consider it morally right or economically wise to demolish existing homes for the purpose of erecting garages to serve such flats?

(4) Did he not announce, as one of the reasons for erecting the flats on this particular site, the close proximity of public transport?

(5) If so, why are a number of garages to be erected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Such a proposition has not been considered by the Government.

(2) I am not aware of officers of the State Housing Commission having threatened anybody.

(3) This would depend entirely upon the circumstances, although it might be added that private enterprise engages in this activity to some considerable extent.

(4) Yes.

(5) As in the case of very many people living near public transport, it is likely that numbers of tenants will own motor vehicles and the Subiaco City Council specially requested that action be taken in order to obviate cars being parked in streets and on footpaths as occurs in Subiaco at present in so many instances.

RECREATION GROUNDS.

As to Provision at North Perth.

Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Is he aware that sporting bodies in the North Perth area are seriously hampered in their activities by lack of recreational grounds?

(2) Is he aware that the only remaining vacant land suitable for a recreational ground is an area known as Smith's Lake fronting Charles-st.?

(3) As the Perth City Council has indicated its inability to convert this area in accordance with the request by joint sporting bodies, will he encourage the council to counteract the lack of foresight by the defunct North Perth Municipal Council in not reserving land for sport by arranging Government co-operation to overcome this lack?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

(1) and (2) No.

(3) The Minister for Local Government will examine this proposal and will advise the member for North Perth later.

TRANSPORT BOARD ROYAL COMMISSION.

(a) *As to Minister's Alleged Statement.*

Mr. CORNELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the allegation made by the Minister for Railways in the House the other evening, concerning the meeting between the member for Moore and a member of another place, in connection with the Royal Commission appointed to inquire

into the activities of the Transport Board, and in view of the denial of that allegation by the member for Moore, does the Premier propose to let the matter rest or does he propose to ascertain which of the two statements is correct?

The PREMIER replied:

The Minister for Railways made no allegation. My recollection of what he said was in the form of a question and he asked the member for Moore if it were true that he, the member for Moore, and I think Mr. Jones, had had a discussion with Mr. Smith, the magistrate who was the Royal Commissioner, in King's Park in relation to the transport bribery allegation. The member for Moore interjected and said, "No, there had been no such discussion." My further recollection is that the Minister for Railways accepted that interjection and denial by the member for Moore without question.

(b) *As to Minister's Implication.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the reply given by him, does he not think it improper that a Minister of the Crown should, even in the manner he has just stated, make an assertion of that nature concerning a magistrate who was a Royal Commissioner, because the implication, I would suggest, in that statement was that the Minister believed that the Royal Commissioner had had a private talk in a secluded place with the members in question.

The PREMIER replied:

The Minister made no assertion at all on that matter. In open debate he asked the member for Moore who was present at the time whether he had had a discussion with the magistrate in question in company with Mr. Jones concerning this matter. There was certainly no reflection intended on the magistrate in his capacity as a Royal Commissioner, and he is well aware of that fact.

ELECTORAL.

As to Redistribution of Assembly Seats.

Mr. YATES (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) As more than five Legislative Assembly seats are out of balance, is it the intention of the Government to arrange for a redistribution of seats this year.

(2) If not, when is a redistribution likely to take place?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) A considerable amount of detailed information has been obtained by the Government in connection with the present enrolments in the Legislative Assembly districts in all parts of the State, and this information will be considered by the Government in the reasonably near future.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 8th July.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [5.2]: Unfortunately I was not present during the period of discussion on the Supply Bill, when the member for Stirling made some reference to an application by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. for a site at Fremantle for the provision of additional storage facilities. Had I been present I would have taken advantage of that opportunity to reply to the statement of the hon. member. I propose to deal with the matter briefly.

Being a lawyer the member for Stirling is trained in argument, and whilst others might be excused for jumping to conclusions, there is no excuse for a man trained in argument because he ought to know that in this direction lies the greatest possible number of pitfalls. In suggesting to the House that the Minister for Works was the "big bad wolf" in this matter and that he was behind the refusal of the Harbour Trust to make a site available, the member for Stirling jumped to a conclusion which is entirely wrong, because the Minister for Works had no hand in the matter at all. He did not know of the refusal until after it was made, and he did not know of the request for a site until after the refusal was given.

But the Minister for Works did have an opportunity subsequently of satisfying himself concerning the whole matter, and there is no doubt whatever—and this was the opinion of the Bulk Handling Committee—that, in the circumstances, the decision of the Harbour Trust was quite correct and the proper one. The Minister for Agriculture has made several references to this matter and so has the Minister for Railways. It seems clear that had Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. been satisfied to accept a somewhat smaller site than the one it was trying to get, it could have been accommodated at Fremantle: but because the company stuck out for a site of the size it originally required, it was not physically possible to provide such a site at Fremantle without seriously disrupting other proposals and arrangements.

When I looked into this matter subsequently, I saw no reason for endeavouring to change a decision already made. The member for Stirling said that the action of the Government called for the strongest criticism. Of course, there is not the slightest justification for that whatever. Any impartial observer who examined the facts of this matter, could only conclude that the decision was a reasonable one and that the Government did everything which could be expected of

it in order to meet the needs of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. for the provision of storage facilities. However, I have referred to this subject only in so far as it concerns myself. Other Ministers whose departments are more directly concerned, will, I have no doubt, successfully answer the contention that the Government should be strongly criticised for its action. Quite the contrary is the case.

There is only one other matter to which I desire to refer this afternoon, and that is the one raised by the member for Cottesloe and the member for Stirling. It deals with the increments which certain female teachers in the Education Department enjoyed following the classification prior to the last one—a classification which was issued when the member for Stirling was Minister for Education. I am surprised that the member for Stirling and the member for Cottesloe did not know the exact nature of the increments and the circumstances under which they were given.

Both of them were in error in stating to the House what the increments were. That is absolutely inexcusable on the part of the ex-Minister for Education, and I think it is also inexcusable on the part of the member for Cottesloe who is an ex-teacher, because if the member for Cottesloe did not know, he should have made it his business to find out before he started to criticise. The point is that both the member for Cottesloe and the member for Stirling told the House certain things about the increments which were not true, showing that neither of them was aware of the true position.

Mr. Hutchinson: Oh, rubbish! You are just trying to get out of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What, starting to squirm already!

Mr. Hutchinson: That is quite unimportant, and you know it is unimportant.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Cottesloe says that it is unimportant to correctly state the case. That is what he thinks, and that is why he went to no trouble to get the facts because, to him, the matter is unimportant. In other words, a member can say what he likes. To me it is most important as a basis for argument, that one should correctly state the facts with which one is dealing.

Mr. Hutchinson: What are the increments, then?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall tell the hon. member. He said that the increments were £25 per annum after 20 years, and £30 after 25 years. He was wrong as regards the period of time, and he was wrong as regards the amounts. In other words, he did not know what he was talking about. The member for Stirling was also wrong, although not quite so far out, but wrong nevertheless. The member

for Stirling said that the increments were £25 after 25 years, and £50 after 30 years. The member for Stirling was right as to the amount, but wrong as to time. He should have made it his business to find out the true position in regard to the increments before he started to criticise me.

Mr. Hutchinson: Does it make any difference?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It makes a lot of difference because it shows how irresponsible the member for Cottesloe is and indicates that he will get up in this House and say anything. The increments which were granted by the appeal board amounted to £25 after 20 years' service, and a further £25 after a further 10 years of service.

Mr. Hutchinson: I was wrong to the extent of £5!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member was wrong as to the amounts and he was wrong as to the period of time. In other words, he was totally wrong.

Mr. Hutchinson: This will read well! If this is all you can hang your argument on, it is not very much.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I see the hon. member cannot take it. I shall remind him that throughout the whole of his speech when he was hopping into me as fast as he could, using the most extravagant and extraordinary language, I did not utter a syllable.

The Premier: And all I said was, "Hell!"

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yet the member for Cottesloe has started to interject from the very commencement of my speech. I do not mind if he cannot take it. He can interject as much as he likes, but I would remind him that I did not utter a syllable when he was doing his worst to criticise me. These increments were not given by any Minister. It was a decision of the appeal board which lays down what the provisions of the particular classification shall be during the period of that classification. That is all. Because it is quite possible that circumstances can so change after a classification is issued, that when the following classification takes place, there can be a reduction in salary.

If the other salaries have gone down, if the basic wage has dropped, if prices have been lowered, a situation could arise where a classification issued, say in 1954, provided for lower salaries than a classification made in 1951, 1950 or 1948. The classification covers the period for which it is issued. There is no appeal against the decision of the appeal board. Whatever the board decides, the Government accepts, because it cannot do otherwise even if it wanted to, and those are the conditions covering the period of classification until the service is again reviewed.

If the appeal board gives some concession which the Minister did not grant, and subsequently, when the Minister issues another classification, he does not embody it in the new classification, and the appeal board thinks it ought to be included, the appeal board can put it in again and can continue doing so, so that teachers can continue to receive what the board wants them to get if it so thinks fit. The member for Cottesloe, no less than eight times, accused me of reducing the salaries of teachers, and, to make the matter clear, he once said "reducing salaries and withdrawing increments." So it is obvious he was not confusing in his mind the withdrawing of increments with the reduction of salaries.

Mr. Hutchinson: You be more precise!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am being exactly precise. The hon. member said no fewer than eight times that I had reduced teachers' salaries.

Mr. Hutchinson: You repeat what I said.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will repeat it all right. No fewer than eight times! I will read some of that.

Mr. Hutchinson: It is worth repeating.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member referred to the action of the Deputy Premier in reducing salaries. Then further on he said, "reducing salaries and withdrawing increments."

Mr. Hutchinson: I said, "or to be precise."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; the hon. member did not. He said, "reducing salaries and withdrawing increments." Eight times the member for Cottesloe accused me of reducing teachers' salaries.

Mr. Hutchinson: That is quite correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He admits that is quite right. I am going to tell the House I have not reduced the salary of a single teacher. As a matter of fact, I gave the union an assurance that no teacher's salary would be reduced; and to remind that body of that undertaking, I sent it a letter before the meeting and told the union I would pay whatever money was necessary by way of a special allowance if the new salary was below the salary the teachers were receiving when they had the increments.

Mr. Yates: Is that in writing?

Mr. Hutchinson: I did mention that, if you remember.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member never mentioned it at all. He accused me of reducing salaries and withdrawing increments. That is what he said. I am telling the hon. member that I did not reduce salaries. There is not a single teacher in the service today who, as a result of my classification, is getting

a lesser salary than that teacher received before the classification. So I did not reduce teachers' salaries.

Mr. Hutchinson: How about those who would have qualified?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: How about nothing! I did not reduce teachers' salaries, but the hon. member said eight times that I did. On the contrary, I gave an assurance—which will be kept; steps have been taken to keep it—that whatever difference there might be, would be made up by a special allowance so that the teachers would not get less than they were receiving before.

Mr. Hutchinson: How about those that qualify this year and next year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They were not getting it.

Mr. Hutchinson: No; but their salary is reduced because of your action.

Hon. A. F. Watts: They would have got it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will deal with that aspect, too. The member for Cottesloe said that this was a step forward on behalf of the teachers in their fight to obtain equal pay for equal work. He said it was an important milestone passed in the progress towards equal pay for equal work. He has a queer idea of equal pay for equal work. The provision of increments immediately made a difference between female teachers doing the same work, because there could be female teachers side by side doing the same work who previously got the same pay; but when the increments were provided, there would be inequality of pay for teachers doing the same work.

That is the very negation of the idea of equal pay for equal work. So to say that it is an important milestone along the path towards equal pay for equal work is a lot of nonsense. It is true that although the union asked the tribunal for equal pay for equal work, it did not receive it. But the tribunal gave these special increments to certain women teachers who had been for a long period in the service. At the time, the department had no opportunity to put forward its idea of the effect of such increments, because it was not aware that they were proposed, until they were made.

So the purpose of not including such increments in the classification this year was to enable the point to be argued before the appeal board; and if, after it had heard such argument, the board was of the opinion that the teachers should still receive the increments, it would grant them. Thus the teachers would lose nothing. They should appeal to the tribunal that gave them the increments in the first place. That is all they have been asked to do—to go again to the tribunal that gave them the increments; and if

the tribunal thinks it good that the increments should continue, then I have no doubt they will again be awarded. But at least an opportunity will be afforded to argue the merits of the case.

It would be highly improper of me to argue the merits of this proposal now, because the matter is sub judice. I am astonished that the ex-Minister for Education argued the merits of it in this House, knowing that the case is the subject of an appeal. He even went further and almost gave a direction to the appeal board to grant the increment again. I regard that as highly improper.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Not a direction!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It almost amounts to that. Let the hon. member read his final words. I think it is highly improper, when this matter is the subject of an appeal, at which the department's arguments and the teachers' contentions will be put forward, for us to argue the merits of the case in this House before the appeal board deals with the matter. That is what the member for Cottesloe and the member for Stirling did.

Mr. Hutchinson: Tell us something of the reasons for doing that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not propose to discuss the merits of the question now. That will be argued before the appeal board. The teachers sought to come to me by way of deputation for the purpose of discussing this action; and when they first asked me to receive them, I agreed. Then I was advised they had lodged an appeal.

Mr. Hutchinson: It was a protective action; they had to do it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said that I cannot argue the case now, because I have to argue it before the appeal board, and the teachers will argue it there also. So I notified the teachers that I could not see them. I think the member for Mt. Lawley will uphold me in that action. How could I, knowing full well that the matter had gone to an appeal, argue with the appellants?

Mr. Hutchinson: Could you not have come to an agreement with them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Could I have agreed to what?

Mr. Hutchinson: Could you not have come to an agreement and granted it? Have not such agreements been reached before?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We wanted to argue the matter before the appeal board, to put up the department's point of view, which we have a perfect right to do. What is the appeal board for? The teachers do not accept the classification of the Minister with regard to salaries. They did not accept all that

the previous Minister gave them. Would he have received a deputation to discuss some aspects? Of course he would not!

Mr. Hutchinson: The reasoning was sound in this instance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was all part of the classification. The representatives of the union wished to come and see me about some aspect of the classification which was to be dealt with by the appeal board. Before I knew they were going to the board on this question, I agreed to see them. As soon as I knew they were going to take the matter to the appeal board, I said I could not see them because the matter was sub judice and would have to be argued before the board.

If the union considers it has a strong case, what has it to fear? It goes to the very tribunal that provided the increments in the first place, and asks that tribunal to continue to provide them; and the department then argues against their provision. Each side is entitled to put up its reasons; and the appeal board having heard those reasons will decide whether or not the teachers shall get the increments.

In the meantime, this terrible, tyrannical ex-Minister for Education to whom the member for Cottesloe has referred, has guaranteed that they will not lose any pay. Those who were getting the increments will not lose anything. There was no attempt to take away from those enjoying the increments that which they had, but an attempt to introduce an entirely new principle into the classification. That is as far as I will go with regard to arguing the merits or demerits of this question.

The Premier: What has the member for Cottesloe been making all this fuss about?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He was on wrong premises, because he accused me eight times of reducing teachers' salaries.

The Premier: Inaccurate assertions!

Hon. D. Brand: I should think the premises would be the same in your case if the position were reversed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We would not come here and talk about salaries having been reduced if they had not been reduced.

Mr. Hutchinson: Your statement is untrue.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What statement?

Mr. Hutchinson: That you did not reduce their salaries.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; it is not.

Mr. Hutchinson: It is quite untrue.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; it is not. I challenge the hon. member to give the House a single example and to name one teacher who has had a reduction of salary.

Mr. Hutchinson: May I reply, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SPEAKER: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Cottesloe had the whole of the time at his disposal on the Address-in-reply debate, and he dealt with nothing but this subject. Then this afternoon he attempted to make a further Address-in-reply speech by asking questions without notice. And now he wants another go.

Mr. Hutchinson: You did reduce their salaries.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not reduce their salaries at all. If the hon. member persists in saying that, I will have to ignore him completely—

Mr. Hutchinson: May I—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —because I am telling him that I have the assurance of the Director of Education—and I have it in front of me—

Mr. Hutchinson: Do you deny—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS—that in no case has a teacher's salary been reduced.

Mr. Hutchinson: Do you deny that you withdrew these increments and took away some money that had been granted to teachers and it was lost for a period and you then restored it by a special allowance?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am asking the member for Cottesloe whether any teacher is getting less salary now.

Mr. Hutchinson: You are quibbling.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cottesloe has had his opportunity.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I ask the hon. member whether any teacher is getting less salary now than she got before the reclassification; and the answer to that is "No." Does the hon. member say it is not "No"? If no teacher is getting a lesser salary now than before the reclassification, then no teacher has suffered a reduction in salary. That is the true position. But the member for Cottesloe referred to my reducing salaries and withdrawing increments.

Mr. Hutchinson: That was in one part.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is what the hon. member said, and it is not true, and he knows it.

Mr. Hutchinson: I—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows it is not true; and if he persists in making the statement, he must go down as one who deliberately attempts to mislead this House—

Mr. Hutchinson: Rubbish!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —because he knows that statement is not true. There is no mistaking his language.

Mr. Hutchinson: You are only talking on half the subject.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He said I reduced salaries and withdrew increments. He said I was guilty of two actions—withdrawing increments and reducing salaries. I did not do that at all. I issued a reclassification which made no provision for these increments after 20 years or 30 years. I gave as my reason that I considered it introduced a principle which was bad.

Mr. Hutchinson: You know it was never my intention to refer to two actions in reducing salaries and withdrawing increments.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, why did the hon. member do it?

Mr. Hutchinson: What about the other eight occasions that you are talking about?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On seven other occasions the hon. member accused me of reducing salaries.

Mr. Hutchinson: You are distorting it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not do anything of the sort.

Mr. Hutchinson: You withdrew increments.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not.

Mr. Yates: It is the same thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Who said, "It is the same thing?"

Hon. D. Brand: They got less money, anyway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member gets the same salary next week as he got last week and thinks he has a reduction, then he has a strange method of reasoning.

Mr. Hutchinson: Why did you withdraw them? Tell us the other half of the story.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The appeal board, when this matter comes before it, will be told why the Minister did not include the increments in the new classification because the department will put forward the reasons why they were not, and the union, I take it, will put up the reasons why they should be. The appeal board will then decide whether the new classification will provide for increments or not.

The Premier: And the board's decision will be final.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And it will be accepted, as it always has been in the past, and will continue to be in the future. If there is any hardship in that, and anything to get all het up about, as

the member for Cottesloe did, I cannot see it. He used the most irresponsible and extravagant language.

Mr. Hutchinson: That was to fit your action.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is what the hon. member thinks. His case would have been much stronger if he had taken the trouble to get his facts right instead of coming here and saying, from the time he opened his mouth, things that were not true.

Mr. Hutchinson: Rubbish!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: To start with, he did not even know the correct amounts of the increments or when they were granted. That is the position the hon. member was in, but he made a great song about reductions in salaries. I suggest to the member for Cottesloe that, instead of cluttering up his mind with things that are not true, he should, when he has a case, present it here on a factual basis. Is it to be assumed that any Minister in charge of a department will, on a question like this, act entirely on his own initiative and without advice? Of course it is not.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: The teachers did it, too. They all took the matter up.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You have to take the responsibility, of course.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and I am not attempting to shirk it. I take the full responsibility, but I think I am entitled to say that only after the strongest advice and the fullest discussion on all aspects did I decide to take the action that I did, and to accept the responsibility. So, this was not an irresponsible act on the part of the Minister, who did not care about the teachers, or who wished to do them an injury.

If the teachers are fair—and I know they are—they will admit that I, in giving them the new grading upon which their salaries are now based, have effected an improvement in their promotional possibilities that was never previously there. But no mention has been made of that aspect. In effecting these new gradings, we have removed the bottleneck which previously restricted the avenue of promotion for teachers. Therefore, we have made it easier for a greater number of them to reach more quickly the higher positions in the service.

Is it likely that I, after having done that at some considerable cost to the State, would then turn around and withdraw increments if I did not have very sound reasons placed before me for doing it? I accept the fullest responsibility in this matter because I did not act hurriedly; I did it after inquiring into all the aspects. The member for Cottesloe has gone to some pains to show that the service can be

in nowise affected because certain teachers did not apply for promotion; because they were not expected to apply for it. I need only mention that the department has had the greatest difficulty in finding teachers to take over the position of practising assistants, which would entitle them to an extra £48 a year.

A large number of such positions remain unfilled, as only 87 appointments for 160 vacancies could be made; and, as I said, the job carries an additional salary of £48. That is a position which no Minister can view with equanimity, or without endeavouring to deal with it by taking some remedial action. I am not going to spend any more time on the subject. In due course, this matter will come before the appeal board, and that is the desire of the Government. The point of view of the Department of Education, which must view this matter in the light of the interest and the welfare of the service, will be placed before the board, and the teachers will have an equal opportunity to place their arguments in support of the retention of the increments before it.

They have this in their favour, that it is not an appeal from Caesar unto Caesar, but to the very board that was responsible for giving the increments in the first place. So they are in the strongest possible position and should not hesitate to go before the board—without kicking up a lot of row about it beforehand—so that the case can be argued on its merits. Whatever the decision, the Government is bound to accept it, and there is no appeal, so that the board's decision will remain unchanged until a new classification is issued. At that stage, the Government of the day will be entitled to include in the classification such provisions as it thinks right and reasonable, knowing full well that there exists the right of appeal to the tribunal, whose decision is final.

If there is anything despotic or tyrannical in that, I fail to see it. The action of a despot is an action taken by one who knows there is no appeal against what he does, and that what he does is final. Surely a Minister who is advised that the exigencies of the service require certain action, and then takes that action, is acting in a way that any responsible Minister should, knowing full well that the action he takes is subject to appeal to a tribunal the composition of which has been acceptable to the persons concerned. There are no grounds whatever for the language used by the member for Cottesloe, who lashed himself into a fury over something he knew very little about, and who made things worse by accusing me of having done something that I did not do.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [5.40]: It is with a great deal of pleasure that I speak this evening on a matter that is in no way controversial. Indeed, I feel that my comments will find unanimous agreement

in this House. My subject matter is the National Safety Council of Western Australia which has, of recent months, received a considerable amount of notice in the Press for the developmental work which it is now carrying on throughout the State. While there are many matters that must of necessity engage the attention of the Legislative Assembly, I am not blind to the fact that there is an aspect of our national life which closely touches the welfare of all our people in every part of the State, and that is the problem of national safety, which should receive more attention.

To many, the term "national safety" conjures up pictures of Commonwealth responsibility, the Defence Department and all the requirements of protecting the nation in a state of war. There is, however, another side to this picture. There is the necessity to provide for industrial safety, home safety; and, because of the alarming accident rate on the roads, of paramount importance is the question of road safety. I am led to this subject because of the appalling nature of some of the disasters which have occurred in this State in recent months.

There was the tragedy by electrocution at Bridgetown not long ago. There has been a series of road tragedies which might well have been averted if the principles of road safety had been reasonably applied. Only the other day we had yet another serious road accident at the Bayswater-Guildford railway crossing when 28 people were injured in a collision between a bus and a train. The seriousness of this mishap was somewhat mitigated by the fact that what might have proved to be a major fatality resulted in 28 people being only slightly injured. This occurrence must be taken as another warning that we must give more attention to the question of safety in Western Australia.

In referring to these accidents, I do not wish to convey the impression that accidents, either industrial or on the road, are on the increase. On the contrary, they are on the decrease. The fact, however, does remain that accidents of all types are, by way of death and casualty and economic loss, a serious drain on the population of this State. It may be said without fear of contradiction from any quarter that the time has arrived when there should be greater co-operation by all authorities, organisations and the general public with those agencies which are devoting their time, energy and finances to the reduction of the alarming accident rate in this State.

These agencies may be generally classed under the broad headings of education, engineering and enforcement. Obviously, the educational authorities and the police in this State, linked with other bodies, are instrumental in conducting an educational programme. Grouped under engineering we have, of course, the Main Roads Department, the various local authorities, the

Chamber of Automotive Industries and other engineering agencies, all of which are turning their attention towards making the roads and vehicles safer for transport. In the final analysis of the enforcement we have, of course, the Police Department and the various traffic authorities throughout the State. It must be apparent that all of these contributing factors towards the safety of our roads and the prevention of accidents in the industrial and domestic fields do not devote their full time to the safety campaign.

This full-time application to the reduction of accidents in Western Australia is the work of the National Safety Council in this State and on the executive committee there are three members representing the three parties in this Chamber. While the McLarty-Watts Government was in power, approaches were made to have a member from each of the three political parties on the executive committee. That proposition was agreed to and at present the member for Leederville, representing the Labour Party, the member for Darling Range, representing the Country Party, and myself, representing the Liberal Party, are members of the National Safety Council executive.

The National Safety Council of Western Australia was formed in 1946 by a band of enthusiastic individuals desiring to stem the rising tide of needless waste of human life. It is a voluntary organisation of accredited individuals representing the Commonwealth and State Governments, local authorities, political parties, the churches, and industrial, commercial, educational and social undertakings. It is supported by the voluntary contributions of individuals, firms and organisations, and its funds are supplemented by a Commonwealth grant. In its eight years of existence it has received from the State Government and local authorities in the metropolitan area contributions totalling only £1,200. It is a constituent member of the Australian Road Safety Council and it is through that body that it receives an annual grant from the Commonwealth Government to carry out a road safety campaign in Western Australia.

I feel that the work of the National Safety Council should be more widely known because there is no doubt that through promotional activity and, acting as a co-ordinating factor, it has been largely responsible for the reduction of accidents in every phase of the communal life in this State. Because its activities are of such importance I propose to devote a little time to the subject of the growth and development and the work of the National Safety Council in Western Australia.

When the council started its work in 1946, its objective of carrying out a life-saving campaign appeared to be only the pious hope of an enthusiastic few. With

comparitively meagre funds it carried on a "safety-first" campaign which was directed at safety in industry, safety in the home; and because of the alarming toll of the road, it gave emphasis to the need for road safety. This publicity campaign was carried on through the Press, over the radio and by a wide distribution of posters. It was supplemented by lectures in schools, addresses to public meetings and gatherings of all kinds where these could be arranged. The council sought the co-operation of the police, the educational authorities and, in the field of engineering, the Public Works Department and industrial organisations of all kinds.

It would now appear that the work of the past eight years is coming to fruition. The accident rate in the State in those years has shown a marked drop; the tide of death on our roads, which was turned last year, is now slowly receding, while the number of organisations and individuals engaged in the lifesaving campaign, in co-operation with the National Safety Council, is rapidly mounting. There is no doubt—the results unquestionably indicate it—that the council's educational and public relations campaign, ably backed by education, enforcement and engineering agencies, is effectively reaching the people in this State. With these encouraging advances, the National Safety Council of Western Australia feels that it stands on the threshold of success and has only to reach out to the whole of the people to bring them into co-operation and thus make a really spectacular reduction in the number of accidents each year in this State.

During the course of eight years' study of national safety, the National Safety Council of Western Australia has discovered that there are two—among others, of course—important psychological reactions by the public in respect of road safety which have an important bearing upon the accident rate—particularly on the roads. The first is that the man or woman who can beat the traffic laws, evade conviction for a traffic offence, or even obtain publicity by being fined, is a sort of hero. These sins of omission and commission are considered to be somewhat clever; men are frequently heard boasting that they have travelled from one point to another in well under the record time. The greater the speed, the greater the admiration. Few hearing this dim-witted blather-skite will dare to brand him as a social pariah, a menace to the community, a potential killer upon our roads. The public must be conditioned to consider such a driver anti-social, below the normal standard of intelligence and a worthless individual having no consideration for the lives of others.

The second interesting observation in psychological reaction is that as soon as a man becomes in any way connected with an authority or an organisation which is responsible either for traffic or road safety, he becomes more acutely aware of his own

responsibilities when using the road. Of course, there are cases where this does not apply but they may be considered in the pathological class; the normal reaction is to pay more attention to the highway code, the traffic regulations, the giving of signals and, above all, courtesy and carefulness in driving and using the road. It is most important that this psychological reaction should be noted because it is the basis of the thought that lies behind the creation of a State-wide chain of road safety co-operative, which the council is now engaged in forming.

The work of the National Safety Council must be considered in the light of the magnitude of the problem with which it has to deal. Although the accident rate in this State, both as regards fatalities and casualties, has been reduced in recent years, it is still unduly high. It is, however, when one considers the alarming aspects of the toll of the road, that the real tragedy of these accidents, in relation to national safety, become so apparent. Although fatalities and casualties as a result of road accidents in the Commonwealth last year dropped by almost 10 per cent., the number of casualties was still 41,261 for the year, and of these 1,856 were fatal; the remaining 39,405 people were injured, some of them seriously, being totally incapacitated for life.

In addition, the statisticians estimate that the economic loss to the Commonwealth was £26,000,000. We cannot attempt to assess the amount of human suffering that went into this largely unnecessary waste of life and limb; and this all happened in one year—last year. If comparative figures are studied it will be seen that the casualties on the roads in Australia for a given period were larger than the total number of casualties sustained during the war; I refer there to World War II.

It is against this background that I see the National Safety Council of Western Australia and I feel that it should receive more encouragement. It should be assisted financially to a greater degree. I say this emphatically because the work of the council in Western Australia is of vital importance to this State and, on the national basis, of the utmost importance to the whole of the Commonwealth. Reduced to its essentials, the work of the council is to carry on a constant campaign directed towards the preservation of the lives of the citizens of this State and the prevention of accidents, with all the suffering and economic loss which they bring in their train.

At this stage I want to say a word about the finances of the National Safety Council. The council receives a grant amounting to £9,900 per annum from the Commonwealth Government to carry on its road safety campaign in this State; its total income last year was £10,676 while its expenditure was £12,857. It will be seen

that in the past 12 months its income has been exceeded by its expenditure to the tune of £2,181. This deficiency of income is all the more pronounced as it is in evidence on the eve of developmental work in national safety that is of the greatest importance to this State. I may say that no question arises as to the wise administration of the council's funds. Its executive is made up of men who have had long years of training in administration and who have become known throughout Western Australia as individuals of the highest ability and integrity. Under the chairmanship of Sir Thomas Meagher, the executive not only scrutinises matters of policy but also exercises the greatest care in expenditure so that the greatest amount of national safety may be carried out at a minimum cost.

As I have already mentioned, the executive of the National Safety Council last year considered that the continued and successful development of the work of the council was dependent on the creation of a State-wide organisation of voluntary personnel the activity of which would be co-ordinated and guided by the council. In the opinion of the executive, such an organisation would provide the essentials necessary for the full development of many projects already initiated by the council. It was then proposed that the organisation should be based upon district road safety co-operative committees. These committees were to be supplied with an instructional kit which would include all the necessary aids and information to carry on effectively the work of the council in any particular district. The idea was that the kit would be kept up to date so that there would be uniformity of timing and action in the road safety campaign throughout the State.

In view of this development, I would like to review briefly the various activities of the National Safety Council which are to be co-ordinated within this vast network of co-operative committees throughout the State of Western Australia. The council has always subscribed to the view that one of its long-term projects of major importance was the instruction of children in road safety measures. It held strongly to the opinion that if the principles of road safety were inculcated at an early age, the caution so necessary to be exercised by all road users would be second nature to our children when they grew up. For this reason it has been energetic and practical in its approach to instruction to schoolchildren from the primary stage upwards.

Members will be aware that the instruction of children in road safety measures has been going on in metropolitan schools for many years and this educational function is carried on by the police in co-operation with the National Safety Council. That body makes available such aids

as projectors, films, posters and other propaganda material so that the work may be effectively carried out and the maximum advantage obtained from this educational effort.

The establishment of road safety co-operative district committees will enable this system of lecturing in schools on the principles of road safety to be extended to the country and in those districts it will be carried out wherever possible through the co-operation of the police. Where this is not possible, the function will be carried out by a member of the local road safety committee who has proved himself capable of doing this work and is acceptable to the Education Department and approved of by the National Safety Council of Western Australia.

At this stage I would like to say that the National Safety Council of Western Australia has promoted a number of features in the Australia-wide road safety campaign which have been adopted in other States as valuable aids in promoting road safety. Among these is the high school driver-training scheme which developed here through the enthusiasm of the executive director of the council, Mr. Leo Mayberry, M.C. It has grown to such proportions that it is attracting attention from all parts of the Commonwealth. This scheme recently received considerable impetus from the generosity of the Ford Company of Australia, which has placed cars at the disposal of the National Safety Council of Western Australia for the purpose of carrying on behind-the-wheel driver-training in schools in a number of our centres to which I will refer later on. I feel at this juncture that I might well pay a tribute to the executive director of the National Safety Council, Mr. Mayberry. For six years he has devoted himself to the crusade for road safety, and national safety generally, in a manner which is not always evident in the everyday run of supply and demand when services are rendered and paid for.

The high school driver training scheme is the next logical step from school lecturing on road safety towards the goal of making all road users acutely and constantly aware of the need to practice the principles of road safety. The importance of this feature of the National Safety Council's work cannot be over emphasised. It has been in operation in this State for the past four years and has been carried out successfully in Albany, Bunbury, Kalgoorlie and Northam; in the near future it is to be introduced at the Collie High School.

Selected classes of high school students are firstly instructed in the elementary mechanical principles of the motor vehicle. In effect, this ground work teaches them just what happens in the internals of the machine when the driver makes an operative action at the wheel. It may be said

that this training gives the students a far better grounding in the operation of a vehicle than many adults have even after they have been driving for many years. The next step is to instruct the students in the actual driving of the car. They learn the proper way to reverse, the correct method of easing the car from stand-still into motion, and why and how to change gears.

It is really amazing to see these young girls and boys, after a few hours' instruction, sitting at the wheel of a large car, and moving it steadily forward and backwards into a correct position, with an efficiency and smoothness which is rarely apparent among adult drivers. While this interesting training is going on, the students are absorbing the principles of safe driving, they are learning the correct hand signals, the highway code, the travel regulations and are being taught that courtesy, carefulness and constant caution are the hall marks of a good driver and, incidentally, a good citizen. Since the introduction of the high school driver training scheme in Western Australia, 290 pupils have passed through this training; the scheme has been commended by the educational and police authorities, and it is enthusiastically supported by the teachers.

Another auxiliary of the National Safety Council of Western Australia is the motorcycle school. Commenced four years ago, it was originally based on the Claremont show grounds, but to obtain the advantages of actual road conditions, it was removed to the Metropolitan Market Trust area. It operates each Saturday from 2.30 to 5 p.m., usually from February to November. The course takes five weeks, of which four are devoted to instruction, and the fifth to examination. In the examination the police play an important part and it is as well to note that graduates from the motorcycle school automatically receive their motor cycle rider's license. Some idea of the potential of this school, as it relates to road safety, may be gathered when it is known that on the opening day four years ago 65 pupils were enrolled, and since then some 525 have passed through the school.

There has been a remarkable record of achievement, for not one accident has been recorded in which a graduate from the motorcycle school has been the blame-worthy party. Here again it is recognised that the full potential of the motorcycle school cannot be reached unless it is reorganised within the framework of a State-wide organisation of enthusiastic voluntary road safety co-operatives, so that the benefits of the school will be brought to every centre in the State. The very limited staff of the National Safety Council makes it impossible for the motorcycle school to be extended and carried on every week-end, and at the same time allow for the growing demands of the council's staff in the field work throughout Western Australia.

I feel that there is no other auxiliary of the National Safety Council which so demonstrates how the work of the council is expanding and effectively reaching the people in this State as the Motor Cycle Proficiency League. Its growth is very good evidence of the success achieved by the council's public relations campaign over the last 12 months. It also demonstrates how the accumulative work over the past eight years is now rapidly coming to fruition. Since last year the membership of the Motor Cycle Proficiency League stood at 125; today it has a little over 700 members, and the league is undoubtedly providing an effective medium for obtaining not only the right psychological reaction from motor cyclists in the road safety campaign, but also of providing an example to all road-users.

In home safety the council has played an active part, and its home safety activity is comprised of women's organisations of all kinds with their various affiliations throughout the State. Early last year the council participated in a home and family week organised by the World Council of Churches. It organised a series of "home safety" lectures to trainee nurses and the general public, and co-operated with the good neighbour policy and the foreign language Press in having distributed "home safety" literature, which has been translated into the various languages and is thus reaching our new Australian friends.

In the field of home safety, as in the industrial sphere, the National Safety Council not only has to take into consideration a great deal of developmental work, but it also finds it necessary to make provision, through the instrumentalities of the district co-operative committee, for the message of "Safety First" to be spread in every centre throughout Western Australia. It will be seen, therefore, that in many fields the National Safety Council is carrying out a work vital to this State, and that, in addition to the auxiliaries which I have particularly mentioned, its educational work is going on through the medium of advertising in all forms, and through the literature which is distributed to make our people more acutely aware of the need for caution if accidents are to be avoided.

I now want to say that, quite apart from the humanitarian aspects associated with the National Safety Council, there are the very tangible economic factors which are inseparable from the effective promotion of national safety. As the accident rate falls, State expenditure, which comes about as the result of accidents, also drops. There is a reduction in hospitalisation. There is an easing of the economic loss which results from a diminution of production, and there is a reduction of disbursement of many other services, the cost of which is ultimately, directly or indirectly, cast upon the State Government.

The efforts of the National Safety Council of Western Australia have been applied in the beneficial way I have indicated and have been demonstrated, as I said before, by the marked drop in the accident rate in this State. This reduction in accidents is not only in evidence in the industrial field, but also in the road accident figures. The decrease shows out with satisfying significance in the comparison between deaths from accident in 1952 compared with 1953. In those 12 months nine lives were saved in Western Australia. I feel sure that, with the development of co-operation by the general public through this State-wide chain of road safety district committees, which the National Safety Council is promoting, it can be reasonably forecast that an even greater reduction in accidents will result in the coming year.

It must be obvious that the cost of administration and field work entailed in the administration and establishment of these committees has sharply increased the financial responsibilities of the council and, as the figures I have already given the House indicate, in the past year its expenditure exceeded its income by £2,000. It would appear essential for the council to appoint another field officer to carry out works in various parts of the State in the establishment of these proposed district committees and, therefore, if the executive continues to exercise the same vigilance in respect of the council's finances as it has done in the past, it cannot escape an additional expenditure of £2,000 per annum. This amount is required to pay the salary of a field officer and keep him on the road.

I think members will agree that all I have said has shown that the council is carrying on a work in this State which is generally recognised as being for the public good, and that it is a task in the hands of a responsible efficient body with which are associated the elected representatives of the people; those who by their record have demonstrated their outstanding abilities as leaders of the community. In addition, we have associated with it the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party in this State. It will be seen therefore that this is neither a sectional nor a party matter.

The members of the executive of the National Safety Council are doing a grand job of work and it is interesting to record the names of those who give up their spare time and work in an honorary capacity on behalf of the general public of the whole of Western Australia. They are as follows:—

Patrons: Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, M.L.A., the Premier of Western Australia; Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, K.B., M.M., M.L.A., Leader of the Opposition; Hon. A. F. Watts, C.M.G., M.L.A., Leader of the Country Party.

President: Sir Thomas Meagher, K.B.

Vice Presidents: T. H. Andersen, M.V.O., Commissioner of Police; J. W. Young, Director of Works; Dr. T. L. Robertson, M.A. Ph. D., Director of Education.

Hon. Treasurer: S. A. Mortimer, Esq., Secretary Royal Automobile Club W.A. (Inc.).

Hon. Auditors: Messrs. Hendry, Rae and Court, Chartered Accountants (Aust.).

Executive Director and Secretary: L. P. Mayberry, M.C.

Public Relations Consultant: R. G. John Clark, F.P.R.

Field Officer: Ray Warman.

The members of the executive committee are as follows:—

Sir Thomas Meagher, Chairman.

Hon. H. H. Styants, M.L.A., Minister for Transport.

T. H. Andersen, M.V.O., Commissioner of Police.

J. W. Young, Director of Works.

Dr. T. L. Robertson, M.A. Ph. D., Director of Education.

S. A. Mortimer, R.A.C. of W.A. (Inc.).

T. S. Edmondson.

Inspector C. Richardson, Inspector of Police Traffic.

M. S. Brooking.

J. D. Leach, Commissioner of Main Roads.

N. H. Perrin, Railway; Advertising.

H. Dettman, Superintendent Primary Education.

Mrs. R. E. Pratt.

G. H. Yates, M.L.A.

S. E. I. Johnson, M.L.A.

R. C. Owen, M.L.A.

Lt.-Col. M. Austin, D.S.O., Department of Army.

There we have the executive committee that controls the activities of the National Safety Council, and has done throughout the years. Changes are made from time to time on that executive but only because of the changes within the Government departments. In the main, the members on that committee have taken an interest in its activities since its inception. I read out the names to the House with a view to impressing on members the need for the work carried out by the National Safety Council to be continued in Western Australia, as is being done in the other States of the Commonwealth. It was also done to let members know that, although the accident rate is rising throughout the Commonwealth, that is due only to the increased population and the increased number of motor vehicles on the road.

But in proportion to all those increases a great saving has been made in Western Australia, so much so that it is estimated that nine lives were saved in the past year through the efforts of the National Safety Council both in the high schools and through the activities of the Police Traffic Branch. On all occasions that schools are visited by instructors from either the National Safety Council or from the Police Department, there are attentive audiences and it has been proved conclusively that the accident rate among schoolchildren has greatly decreased in the past 20 years because of the specialised instruction given to the children in these schools, by specialists who are sent out on this mission of mercy either by the Traffic Department or by the National Safety Council.

The work of the council has been going on quietly and unobtrusively during the past six or eight years, though often we read of the activities of the National Safety Council in the columns of the Press. We have listened to "scatter ads" over the radio dealing with the saving of lives, and we have seen the council's safety signs both at this end of the Causeway and in other prominent places. Those who have visited the Royal Show must have been greatly impressed by the grand exhibition put on by the National Safety Council whose exhibits drew thousands of visitors to witness the instructional films; after which they took away pamphlets relating to national safety.

Mr. May: Are the taxi drivers represented on the council?

Mr. YATES: No.

Mr. May: I think they should be.

Mr. YATES: That is a matter which can be taken up with the National Safety Council; I see no reason why the taxi drivers should not be represented, and I will discuss the matter at the next executive meeting to see if it is not possible to have a representative of the taxi drivers on the council.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. YATES: I desire to inform the House of the financial obligations undertaken by the other States in connection with the National Safety Council movement, compared with the provision made in Western Australia. In New South Wales the State Government provides £7,000 per annum towards the upkeep and future progress of the council in that State. It also makes available a sum of £40,000 per annum to the various Government departments to assist in this vital work. This money is mainly spent on safety lectures delivered throughout the State by expert officers of the New South Wales Police Department.

Victoria, which has a much smaller road mileage than Western Australia, provides, in addition to the Commonwealth grant, a

sum of £1,500 per annum. In South Australia the amount is similar. In 1953-54 the Tasmanian Government provided £1,500 towards the cost of administration of the council's work in that State. The Queensland Government makes no direct contribution because the National Safety Council work in that State comes under the Transport Department. In Western Australia the position is somewhat different from that in Queensland. Here the National Safety Council is a complete body in itself, except that there is Government representation on the executive to assist in the good work it is doing. This work has been recognised by past and present Governments, and I believe that all members will agree that this vital work should continue. The executive has great plans for the future of the council's objectives.

The work has become so intensified that the staff, which is very small today, should be increased. To meet the needs, another field officer is necessary and the council should receive some finance in addition to that provided by the Commonwealth Government in the way of a safety council grant. When that grant was first made some six or eight years ago, the value of the pound was greater than it is now, but the amount has not been increased. That is the reason why the council feels that the time has arrived when the Government should be approached to assist in keeping the work on the high plane it has reached and on which it hopes to continue in future.

In summarising the position, I would say that the National Safety Council of Western Australia is engaged in a life-saving campaign, the development of which has brought it to the point where it desires to bring a large proportion of the people of the State into more active co-operation. Having reached the very threshold of success, it is now obvious that some further financial assistance is necessary to ensure that the promotion of this life-saving campaign may be carried to its logical conclusion.

The goal is the establishment of an enthusiastic road safety co-operative committee in every centre throughout the State. To reach this objective and bring the work of eight years to complete success, the safety council needs, on the figures which I have given, an additional income of at least £4,000 per annum. On these grounds and realising the vital importance of its work in this State, I commend the National Safety Council for the further favourable consideration of the Government with a view to assisting its finances to an extent that will make possible the continuance of the good work already done and a continuance of the necessary development.

MR. MAY (Collie) [7.35]: In making my contribution to the Address-in-reply debate, I wish to preface my remarks just as

I have done on the last two or three occasions by referring to the provision in the Legislative Council of accommodation for members of this Chamber when summoned to hear the Governor's Speech. It is true that on this occasion more comfortable chairs than usual were provided, but four Assembly members were not able to obtain seats and one of them was a man on crutches. I noticed that in the space on the floor of the Legislative Council Chamber between the part where Assembly members were accommodated and the seats provided for visitors, there were some vacant chairs. I again maintain that greater consideration should be extended to members of this Chamber when summoned to another place to hear the Governor's Speech.

I have studied His Excellency's opening Speech and noted the references to various phases of the State's industries. The Government has intimated its intention to introduce a Bill to consolidate the closer settlement legislation. It is easy to appreciate the need for such a measure. In view of the fact that it is now necessary for people wishing to settle on the land to take up blocks of very second-class and even third-class quality, the splitting up of large estates has become essential in the interests of the State, and I am glad that a Bill to this end has been foreshadowed.

The overall mineral production of the State has improved considerably. This is a very pleasing feature because Western Australia has such a wide range of minerals in unknown quantities. I am glad to note that the activities of the Mines Department are on the up and up and that increases in all mineral production have been recorded.

At present, oil is occupying the minds of most people, more particularly those of the oil speculators. As to what occurs on the rumours that oil has been discovered in the North, I am not so much concerned if the shares appreciate in value and somebody makes a fortune. I am more concerned to ensure that the oil is there and then make double sure that the State will receive the full benefit of any discovery of oil in commercial quantities. I have no sympathy with the people who take advantage of the fact that the State is on the point of beginning oil production, and I have no time for the people who are prepared to use that knowledge for their own ends by upsetting the share market. The great point to be borne in mind is that the State should benefit to the utmost.

According to the Speech, there has been a big improvement in the housing position, but in spite of that, there is still plenty of scope for further improvement. A great proportion of the population is concentrated in the metropolitan area, and I have wondered why some scheme has not been initiated to ensure that when the head of

a family in the metropolitan area has obtained a permanent job in the country, immediate steps have not been taken to see that the family is properly housed. If the surplus people in the metropolitan area could be guaranteed good housing conditions in the country, I believe that they would be encouraged to undertake work there and so relieve the bad congestion that exists in the metropolitan area.

I do not know whether the Government proposes to proceed with the work of increasing the capacity of the Wellington Dam. This is a very important project and one that should be proceeded with at the very earliest opportunity. When we think of what the transport of water means to the Railway Department in dry seasons, we should appreciate that within the State there is ample water for requirements provided it is properly conserved and directed into the channels where it is most needed. I can envisage what the storage of water at the Wellington Dam would mean in the event of the height of the wall being increased by 50ft.

Of course, the water will back up a long way, owing to the increase in the height of the dam wall and may even inundate a few farming properties, but I think that possibility is outweighed by the needs of the farmers and the towns of the Great Southern and the districts out towards Bruce Rock. Our country roads are in need of considerable attention and I know of one district, called Macalinden, about 30 miles from Collie, where the settlers have been on the land for about 40 years. They are sheep-farmers and are mostly well-established now, but even at the present time the roads by which they must travel to Collie, Boyup Brook and Donnybrook are completely washed out in the winter-time.

It is impossible for the road board concerned to keep those roads in order as most of them run through country controlled by the Forests Department which does not pay any rates on that land. I am hopeful that by arranging a conference between the West Arthur Road Board, the Collie Road Board and the local authority in the Boyup Brook area something will be able to be done for these people who are in the unfortunate position, in winter-time, of not having a road by which to get into town.

Hon. D. Brand: You will have to get in before they make up the main roads programme for the year.

Mr. MAY: The same thing applied when the previous Government was in power. I will be surprised if nothing is done in this matter during the first three years of the present Government.

Mr. Oldfield: I think Guildford-rd. is more important.

Mr. MAY: One of our troubles is that some people become too parochial. I feel that all of us—particularly metropolitan members—should adopt a State-wide outlook and not worry about a few yards of Guildford-rd. or some other metropolitan highway. I think that all members should go out and see for themselves how the people in the country areas fare.

It seems to me that the Health Department has a weird manner of assessing what should be the capacity provided for a maternity hospital. On one occasion the Minister for Health said to me, "They do not average one baby a day at Collie." but he forgot that the mothers of the babies do not set themselves out to work according to averages.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: We did not have such nice men as you there.

Mr. MAY: It seems to be the idea of the Health Department that the mothers should have their babies to suit the convenience of the accommodation at the hospitals. During the last 12 months Collie has averaged over one baby per day, but I would remind the House that they do not come one every day but sometimes seven or eight in one day. It is no use telling me that an extension of the maternity ward at Collie is not necessary because births at that centre do not average one per day. I work on a different system from that, and so do many other people.

I would point out to the Minister that we do not rely on the Public Health Department to supply all the requirements of the Government hospital at Collie. The people of that centre have formed a committee to supply many needs of the hospital which the Minister and his department overlook. The function of that committee is to provide comforts, amenities and equipment at the Collie District Hospital; to arouse community interest and to press for the provision of adequate hospital facilities in the area. The committee is comprised of delegates from the churches, the road board and other interested organisations and persons.

For the information of members, I will outline what this organisation has done for the hospital, with no help from the Public Health Department. It has purchased bed-screens for every bed, cane furniture, meal-trays, electric polishers, 56 inner-spring mattresses, electric blankets, four "Wonderheat" units, a vacuum cleaner, ash-trays, card tables, games, clocks and so on, as well as providing comforts for the Christmas season, all to a value of £1,500. That is another form of indirect taxation to the people of the district.

Mr. Nalder: They do that in almost all country towns.

Mr. MAY: I am speaking of my own town.

Mr. Oldfield: Do not be parochial!

Mr. MAY: If people are prepared to do the same sort of thing in other towns and not press for their members to raise their voices in this Chamber, that is not my affair. In addition to the £1,500 already spent, work approved by the department and paid for by the people of Collie includes the installation of bed lights, bell plugs and power points to each ward bed at an estimated cost of £450. That has been the effort of the local people and I think they should be given some encouragement by the department whose duty it is to look after such matters. Of course the Minister tells me he has not the money, and my reply to him is that the people of Collie will soon run out of money if he cannot do something to help a bit in the near future.

It is high time that we had a complete reorganisation of the existing arrangements for the mining of coal. When a desperate shortage of coal developed before the end of the war and in the direct postwar years, a frantic effort was made to locate coal that could be won quickly, and the result was that the open-cut system of mining was embarked upon on the Collie field. That system was introduced on the distinct understanding that while coal was being won by open-cut methods, the companies concerned would have the responsibility of developing their deep mines—the best class of coal can come only from deep mines—so that the production of coal from that source would eventually catch up with the demand, allowing the open-cut method to be discontinued.

Whether by accident or design, it so happened that the Mines Department did not place its foot tightly on the neck of those companies privileged to develop open-cuts, with the result that, finding they could produce third, fourth or fifth grade coal—I would not give most of it any grading—much more cheaply than that won by deep mining, and sell it at the price which had been established for deep-mine coal, they have done everything possible to continue mining by the open-cut method.

Mr. Yates: Is all that is open-cut mined, bad coal?

Mr. MAY: No, but I shudder to think of what was done in the early stages of the development of the open-cuts. It was a wicked shame what the engine drivers and firemen on our railways—together with private consumers—were forced to use as a substitute for coal. We have heard it said many times—it was said to me by the ex-Minister for Mines, when in office—"We must use this coal some time or other," and my reply was, "Very well. Let us use it when all the good quality coal is finished, and by that time this country may not be using coal at all." At all events, should another crisis develop, we would still require to win coal by the quick open-cut

method, and if we allow the companies to continue as at present without developing their deep mines, all the coal available by the open-cut methods may be gone by the time the next crisis overtakes us.

Hon. D. Brand: I would remind the hon. member that there is a very large tonnage of coal that has been discovered as the result of boring and that is available by open-cut mining methods.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member is referring to the seams discovered in the Muja area, but that is not a good class of coal.

Mr. Oldfield: We know which Government the Collie miners would rather have.

Mr. MAY: They are concerned, as we all should be, about the quality of coal supplied to the consumers of the State. It is our job to see that the State Electricity Commission, the Railway Department and private consumers are able to order and obtain the quality of coal most suitable for the use to which they wish to put it. All the coal produced should not be bulked and handled by a distribution committee of the Mines Department. If I were a user of coal, I would certainly want to be able to order the grade of coal I wanted for my industry. The result of the present system is that the customers are not getting coal of the right grade to suit their requirements but have to put up with whatever is supplied to them.

Hon. D. Brand: Would it be possible to alter that system?

Mr. MAY: Yes, before the war there was open competition between the companies.

Hon. D. Brand: What authority would the State have in the matter?

Mr. MAY: I think the regulation of the industry came under the wartime security measures but they have outlived their usefulness. It is time we returned to the old system so that the purchaser could obtain the grade of coal required. I repeat that the open-cut system of mining coal was put into practice at Collie only on the understanding that the deep mines would be sufficiently developed so that the open-cut production could gradually be decreased. I am waiting for that time to arrive.

We have a State coalmining engineer, a senior inspector of mines, an assistant inspector of mines, and a workmen's inspector, and yet we are unable to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the companies to deal with our coal mines in the manner they should be developed. After all is said and done, coal is a national asset and, as it belongs to the State, it should be controlled by it. We had the ridiculous position of this State having advanced £1,500,000 to the coalmining

companies for the development of the mines on the Collie coalfields, and then those companies saying to the State, "You must take 80 per cent. of our coal production." That is too silly for words! In view of the non-development of the Collie coal mines by the companies, I would say to them, "You have got the sack, and the State is going to run the mines."

Hon. D. Brand: What was the result of that in England?

Mr. MAY: I am not interested in England.

Hon. D. Brand: You should be.

Mr. MAY: This State has been very generous to the coalmining companies. If all the deep mines had been properly mechanised, as they should have been, they would have produced all the State's coal needs as quickly as they are being produced under the open-cut system at present. However, we find today that the money the companies received for mechanisation of the mines has not been put to that use. A great deal of that machinery has never been used because it is totally unsuited to the type of country it is supposed to deal with. As a result, we have engineers trying to make those mines fit into the mechanisation system, which cannot be done. It is too ridiculous for words, and I can quite understand why.

Mr. Brady: What Government advanced the money to do that?

Mr. MAY: It has been done by all Governments. For many years, there was only one company operating on the Collie coalfields. It had no competition or opposition. If we went to that company—as we did during the metal trades strike—and asked it to use some of the reserve profits it had made over the years, it would reply, "We have an overdraft at the bank." I do not know why it is not possible to have proper control over our national asset at Collie. Much of the machinery that has been brought to Collie was bought at the cost of hard-earned dollars.

I recollect that four years ago I objected to the machinery being stacked in crates on the surface for two or three years. What happened? That machinery was gradually stowed underground so that no one could see it. Yet the State still continues to provide funds to the companies for the development of these coal mines. It is time someone took a firm grip of the activities of the coal industry and ensured that at least 80 per cent. of the production, used for the State's requirements is good-quality coal. I know that engin drivers have been told, "You must burn that coal because we cannot get any other." On one occasion I saw eight trucks of coal condemned by the inspector. What happened? They were returned to the Co-operative Mine and an instruction was issued that they were to be completely unloaded.

The inspector said, "You must take all that coal out and refill the trucks." However, they did nothing of the sort. The men were ordered to take off only the top coal and the trucks were topped up with deep-mine coal. Those trucks were sent off again, and consequently that is the type of coal the engine-drivers are asked to use. It is time such a system ceased and some responsible official had the guts to stand up to these companies and say, "No, we are not going to take that coal. You can produce better coal than that, and I refuse to accept it."

That is the type of man we want in the industry. I have heard members complain of the time spent by them in travelling between the House and their homes during the weekend. I know the reason for that. It is not the fault of the engine-drivers or the W.A.G.R.; it is because of the poor-quality coal issued to those men who are asked to keep up steam on the locomotives. There are now three companies operating on the Collie coalfields, and the position should be much better than it was in the past. Western Collieries Ltd. and the Griffin Coalmining Co. are developing deep mines. I know that Western Collieries Ltd. particularly, is developing two deep mines on modern lines, and also the Griffin company is endeavouring to do the same.

When these companies have reached total production, I feel sure that they will be only too ready to cease coalmining on the open-cut system, as is being done at present. If stricter supervision had been exercised over the mechanisation programme, the new mines could have been opened up by now and the old mines, which could never be mechanised, could have been closed down. In fact, that is being done now, because they have been forced to do so as a last resort. We could then dispense with the open-cuts, the coal from which is creating havoc in the State's industries. In fact, many industries are using sawdust as a fuel and there is no need for that because it is quite possible, even now, to give any consumer the quality and the quantity of coal that he requires. I hope that some effort will be made by the Mines Department to bring that about.

Some years ago, Mr. Wallwork was appointed a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the coalmining industry. In 1946 or 1947 he produced an excellent report on the conditions of the coalmines at that time and he submitted certain recommendations. However, in the main, they were never put into effect. On two or three occasions, I quoted from Mr. Wallwork's report, and suggested that some of his recommendations, if adopted, would benefit the industry. When the Labour Government took office it appointed Mr. Wallwork as coal co-ordinator. We all hailed that appointment as something that would put us on the right track for the

proper development of the mines with a maximum production of coal. It was also hoped that he would give some direction to the companies in regard to development.

However, it would appear that the co-ordinator was not given sufficient authority to carry out his duties to the fullest extent. When his resignation was announced in the Press recently, Mr. Wallwork gave as his reason that the job did not keep him sufficiently occupied. I maintain that if he had been given the powers he should have held, he would not have been able to give this reason for his resignation. On the contrary, he might have had to put forward the excuse that he had been given too much work to do. This is what some of the people at Collie think of the reason given by Mr. Wallwork for his resignation—

This resignation has caused a lot of ill-feeling in the district here. It is the opinion of the rank and file that it was the lack of powers given to Mr. Wallwork which caused his resignation. He did not have the powers he expected.

Hon. D. Brand: Was that so? Were certain powers offered to him, and was that promise not honoured?

Mr. MAY: I do not know what powers were offered to him. However, it would appear that he did not have sufficient power to be able to say to a company, "That must be developed," or, "That should be done." Mr. Wallwork has had wide experience of the Collie coal industry and knows it from A to Z. He has been mixed up with it for years and he would not be in the same position as a stranger who would have difficulty in arriving at a decision. Continuing to quote—

For this reason, he retired. The members of the union feel that there should be plenty of work in the capacity of coal co-ordinator, particularly as head of the Advisory Boards.

There is also a lot of concern about the development of the various pits in the district. At the Proprietary the development is certainly not what it should be.

The union considers that Mr. Wallwork is a man much needed, particularly in this period when production has caught up with the demand. We feel that a coal co-ordinator is a necessity to the industry.

Furthermore, the McLarty-Watts Government appointed an advisory committee. Its job was to meet and discuss matters appertaining to all the mines in Collie. The members of the committee were supposed to make recommendations for the development and smoother running of the industry as a whole. It consisted of the State Coal Mining Engineer, a union representative and an executive of one of the companies. What did we find? We found that

the other two companies in the field were not prepared to appear before the advisory committee and disclose their policies because the committee included an executive of a rival company—in this case a very powerful company, by the way.

They were not prepared to submit their programmes showing how they intended to carry out their work. As a consequence, we found that the committee could not function as was intended. The union feels that advisory boards are very necessary. Here is one example: Some ten months ago at the Neath Colliery, quite a new colliery that has been opened, a bord was shot out ready to be filled. But the eight men concerned were given definite instructions not to touch the place because it was to be visited by officials. Because of this, the eight men were put on other quite unnecessary work for one week until the visit had taken place. The union branch officers discussed this matter at great length.

This is the type of thing that is going on. I say it is high time that an inquiry was made into the industry and I am going to advocate strongly the appointment of a Royal Commission for the purpose of investigating the industry completely to see whether it could be tightened up, whether methods could be found to reduce the price of coal below its present price and bring coal within the reach of potential consumers who at present are unable to use it on account of the high cost.

I am sure that if some proper direction had been given for the mechanisation of the mines, those that could not be mechanised would have been closed down, and the results I advocated would have been brought about. As a result it would have meant a saving of at least 40s. per ton to consumers in this State and to the Government, which takes 80 per cent. of the Colliery output. For that very reason the appointment of a Royal Commission is fully warranted. By this I do not mean a scalp-hunting commission, but one that should start right from the top and investigate each mine, see the conditions operating and provide the requisite technical advice to the companies so that they could produce coal more efficiently.

Instead of the companies considering nothing but profit, the interest of this State should be safeguarded by proper development of the mines. I have another instance of maladministration. Some twelve months ago, at a conference presided over by the State Coal Mining Engineer, Mr. Morgan, we agreed to the closing down of No. 11 section of the Proprietary mine to taking men off contract and putting them on a mechanical unit, to give the company an opportunity to further develop the mine. It is now trying to develop three seams. Each and every one of these has been mechanised and is a dirty seam. We have an inspector condemning the

coal day after day. We are aware of this. But with proper mining methods, the dirty coal could be cleaned. The time has arrived when something drastic needs to be done at the mine. It could be mined but not under the present conditions.

That is the opinion of men who have worked in the industry, some of them all their lives. I know the companies do not take kindly to the opinions of the men working in the pit. I guarantee that some of the men working there know more about mining methods and development than the executives of the companies. In the instance I mentioned regarding the three dirty seams, it is a positive fact that one day's output from those three seams was condemned completely by the coal inspector and was never used. I want to see that sort of thing stopped. I want to see the industry put on a proper footing. I want to see the people who purchase coal get the full benefit of the price they pay, and get the quality of coal they require.

All those aspects should be safeguarded by persons appointed to responsible positions to look after the coal industry on behalf of the State. From my point of view and from that of the men, we can see nothing but good arising from the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the work, production and particularly the cost of the coal after it is produced, so that the State and those who are trying to develop secondary industries, will get the full benefit of a natural mineral which is present at Colliery in any quantity. It has to be mined properly and cleaned after it is mined, and put into the hands of the consumers in the condition they want the coal.

There is no need at this stage for any open-cut coal. Let us keep that class of coal and its method of production for an emergency. Let us get back to where we were before the war when we over-produced and, as a consequence, the purchasers could demand what quality they wanted, and to a large extent they got it. I appeal to the Government to agree to the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into all the ramifications of the coalmining industry not with the idea of putting anyone on the spot, but simply with the object of giving the consumers in the State the best possible coal for the particular requirements of their industries, and at the lowest possible price at which it can be produced.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [8.24]: A very wide range of subjects has been discussed during this debate on the Address-in-reply. Of course, this has been the case every year. I was particularly interested in the remarks of some speakers, for instance, those of the member for Guildford-Midland, about the evil effects which the rise

in the cost of living in Australia is likely to bring in its train. The member for Leederville also said something on the subject. If I interpret their remarks correctly, those two speakers stressed the necessity for the producers of food to be efficient and to accept the smallest possible margin of profit in order to keep the cost of living down. None of us has any quarrel with that view.

Mr. Nalder: Are the workers at the Midland Junction workshops doing that?

Mr. PERKINS: It does raise a very much greater problem. It raises the whole question of efficiency in industry. So far as food producers in industry are concerned, particularly meat, wheat and fruits, they have to maintain efficiency. If not, they are likely to be in queer street very quickly, because some portion of their production has to be sold in competition with the other countries of the world, in which labour might be highly paid or coolie labour, or whatever conditions of production may exist there.

So it is self-evident that there is not much of a margin for the industries I have enumerated if they are to maintain their export market. I am not saying that we could not have some increased efficiency. If an increase can be brought about, obviously it is to the advantage of the producers as well as to Australia as a whole, but from investigation I have been able to make, and I think from the opinion which most members in this Chamber hold, the comparative lack of efficiency is in industries other than those producing food.

Mr. Lapham: Don't the retailers get too much?

Mr. PERKINS: That is a separate question. I am talking about the production side. This is a subject which is extremely important. I have very grave doubt as to whether sufficient attention has been given to it in some industries. I understand that in some overseas countries, particularly the United States of America, special courses are provided at the universities in business administration, and, from the comments which one hears from time to time from people who are in a position to judge, in a comparison of the efficiency of some of the industries overseas with similar ones in Australia, the comparison is not in our favour. Therefore the very welfare of Australia and the whole of our standard of living is at stake in this question of efficiency of industry.

I have obtained the latest report of the Tariff Board for the year ended 30th June, 1953. There are four paragraphs in that report which I intend to read to the House. The whole of the report is well worth reading, and I would advise members to have a look at it when they have an

opportunity; it is on the files of the House. The first portion I will read is paragraph 16, on page 8, as follows:—

8. With the gradual relaxation of import restrictions a new pressure has arisen. There have been suggestions that present activity in secondary industries in Australia is due solely to the effects of import restrictions, with accompanying fears that when the restrictions are removed there will be a flood of importations that will extinguish local industries. The Board can neither confirm nor dissipate these fears. There has been nothing in the evidence tendered to the Board at recent inquiries to support the view of hopelessness suggested by some public statements. On the other hand the evidence of rising costs in Australia does little to encourage belief in the existence of a sound competitive position.

Mr. Brady: You would not want to see Japanese goods coming in with our own people out of work, would you?

Mr. PERKINS: Apparently the member for Guildford-Midland has no objection to seeing our primary producers of foodstuffs in Australia competing with Japanese labour producing foodstuffs and selling in markets where that Japanese labour has actual freight advantages against Australian competitors.

Mr. Brady: You do not think the financial institutions are exacting too much tribute from primary producers?

The Minister for Lands: In what branch of foodstuffs would that apply?

Mr. PERKINS: The next paragraph I intend to read is on page 10—

42. A point which should not be overlooked in Australia is the fact that factory workers generally are paid for a 52-week year but really only work a 47-week year. This reduction is accounted for by two weeks' recreation leave, one week of sick leave which is extensively taken and the equivalent of two weeks of public holidays, since most States recognise ten paid public holidays on working days forming part of the five-day working week.

Mr. Moir: You do not think they should have any? You think it is too much!

Mr. PERKINS: These are not my remarks, but those of the Tariff Board. The paragraph continues—

The Board does not suggest that the provision of leave for recreation and sickness is unnecessary. It does point out, however, that the competitive position of industry is weakened to the extent that competing countries have not similarly reduced hours of labour over the whole year. The total number of hours worked each year in Australia

has been considerably reduced as a result of reductions in standard working hours and in the number of working days. At present the total hours worked annually can be as low as 1,888 in a 40-hour week spread over 47 working weeks and one day, assuming that the full five days' sick leave is taken.

43. The Metal Trades Employers' Association has put forward the following comparison of standard hours of work in the United Kingdom and Australia:—

	United Kingdom	Australia
1939	2,397	2,212
1948	2,193	1,928
1953	2,149	1,928

These figures were arrived at by converting the nominal weekly hours of work to an annual basis and deducting from them the number of hours of paid annual leave and public holidays. Paid sick leave in Australia could reduce the total by another 40 hours.

Then, paragraph 45 reads as follows:—

Added burdens are imposed on Australian industry by the conditions which arise from the following:—

- (a) The system of paying high penalty rates for week-end and holiday work or for other reasons;
- (b) the unwillingness of some unions to permit continuous production.

Mr. Brady: That would be the Farmer's Union?

Mr. PERKINS: The paragraph continues—

- (c) the introduction and the proposed extension of long service leave;
- (d) industrial disputes and stoppages.

Although industries in other countries are affected in varying degrees by these or similar conditions there is a limit to the additional burdens which can be safely carried in this country.

The Minister for Lands: What do you hope to prove by that?

Mr. PERKINS: I am dealing with the question that was introduced in this Chamber by the member for Guildford-Midland—and I think the member for Leederville had something to say about it, too—concerning the necessity of keeping down the cost of living in Australia in order to maintain Australia's competitive position. I am reading some of the remarks of the Tariff Board appearing in its report for last year apropos this question.

Mr. Brady: Why do you not read some of the banks' balance sheets at the same time?

Hon. L. Thorn: Listen and you will learn something!

Mr. PERKINS: Paragraph 56, on page 12, reads as follows:—

With regard to basic iron and steel prices, Australian manufacturers now enjoy a cost advantage over overseas manufacturers. This was the case at the end of 1951-52, except for pig iron. The relative cheapness of steel in Australia is now in striking contrast to the position with other Australian basic materials. The improvement in the Australian pig iron price, however, still leaves much to be desired when it is remembered that as late as 1949 it was only 53 per cent. of that in the United Kingdom. At present the Australian price is 87 per cent. of that in the United Kingdom; this, however, is better than the position at the end of last year when the Australian price was 108 per cent. of the British. The favourable situation regarding Australian prices for the basic forms of iron and steel is not maintained in later stages of manufacture such as castings and special grades and forms of steel.

The last paragraph I wish to read is No. 74, which appears on page 14—

From the point of view of costs of materials and labour the competitive position of Australian manufacturers deteriorated still further during the year. This is obvious from the tables in Appendix 1 which show that Australian labour costs are still increasing, although at a reduced rate, while the wholesale prices of most raw materials are still much in excess of those overseas. The only important material costs where Australia is at an advantage relate to iron and steel. Australian shipping costs on both raw materials and finished goods have increased during the year and are now a substantial element of the expanding total costs.

75. High capital costs of new enterprises and of plant renewals have increased the volume of capital requirements and have added to the profit per unit of production necessary to service that capital, whilst plant maintenance and other costs have contributed to higher overheads.

I do not think that any member in this Chamber will call into question the expert nature of the Tariff Board. If there had been anything wrong with it, I take it that when the Labour Party was in office, it would have taken some steps to deal with the situation. I think we may take it for granted that there is no properly-constituted body within Australia that is in a better position at present to express a considered opinion on this subject than the Tariff Board. I suggest to members that if they read the reports of the board, those reports will give them a great deal of food

for thought, and I am sure they will convince both the member for Guildford-Midland and the member for Leederville that this question of the rising cost of living goes far deeper than any question of the price of some particular foodstuff.

Apparently the present State Government has rather a touching faith in its ability to handle the situation by price control. We have had a statement in the Governor's Speech, which expresses the considered views of the Government, stating that a price-control measure is to be introduced. I suggest that if the Government has any hope that price-control measures will deal with the situation, it is only chasing shadows, and it would be very much better to get down to some of these more fundamental points.

I am not suggesting that trade unions or the labouring part of industry only are concerned. I consider that the employers also have a responsibility. But I think that members must realise it is to the advantage of both employers and employees to see that efficiency in industry is maintained; and it often amazes me that the trade unions, and those men who appear to be the leaders of the Labour movement are not giving more thought to the serious nature of this particular question.

Mr. Brady: Do you know that the basic wage and margins are already pegged and men are not getting justice?

Mr. PERKINS: I believe that is only one phase.

Mr. Brady: The farmer expects his full costs.

Mr. PERKINS: The hon. member is still twitting the primary producer.

Mr. Brady: I said that he expects his full costs.

Mr. PERKINS: I have already indicated that I do not believe that the primary producers are 100 per cent. efficient; there is still room for increased efficiency. But they compare very favourably with those engaged in secondary industries. At least they are able to compete with their most efficient competitors throughout the world and against all sorts of cheap and coolie labour, and to compete very successfully in many industries.

The Minister for Lands: That is not a very sound argument.

Mr. PERKINS: To show some of the drawbacks operating against the primary industries, and to prove even further my point that they are not doing so badly, I will quote to the House some of the items in the tariff schedule I obtained from the Customs Department in the last couple of days. These figures are taken from the latest tariff schedules and were given to me by the department in William-st., so I think members can take it that they are correct. I gather that these duties are not imposed unless there is a necessity for

that measure of protection for these particular industries, because if members will read the Tariff Board's reports, they will find that exhaustive inquiries have been made into a great many manufacturing industries to see whether they need these high protective duties. Here are some of the rates of duty—

Item	British Preferential Tariff per cent.	Most Favoured Nation per cent.	General per cent.
Refrigerators	30	47½	65
Tractor Wheels	22½	47½	47½
Radiators, toasters and kettles	27½	45	50
Wireless parts	27½	45	50
Spark plugs	27½	50	50
Dry cells	17½	37½	47½
Hand tools	27½	35	47½
Rabbit traps	22½	47½	47½
Motor car bodies	27½	52½	52½
Springs & Shock absorbers	27½	45	52½

These figures cover a fair cross section of commodities, some of which are domestic requirements and others are basic costs in industry. Hand tools, for instance, are a basic cost in practically every industry in Australia. So many cars are being imported into the country with the bodies as an integral part that the duty on motor-car bodies applies to an increasing proportion.

It must cause some concern to any person who considers the future of Australian industry to know that it is necessary to give such high rates of protection to industries which have, in many cases, been established here for many years. So I think that the member for Guildford-Midland, and other members of this Chamber who have been worrying about the rising cost of living are certainly moving along the right lines, but I do think it is necessary to probe the question a little bit deeper than many members who have spoken on this subject appear to have done.

Getting back to the question of food prices, some years ago I was chairman of a select committee appointed by this Chamber to inquire into meat prices, and the committee recommended the decontrol of meat at that time. It has since been suggested to me by various members sitting on the other side of the House that I, in particular, and some other people, led them up the garden path in getting them to agree to the recommendation for the decontrol of meat. I think you will agree, Mr. Speaker, that there must have been some serious reasons indeed for that select committee to have recommended the decontrol of meat prices when I remind you that two of the members of the committee were the present Minister for Labour and the present Minister for Railways.

These particular members may think that they made a mistake, but I feel certain that if what is stated to be the present high cost of meat to the public is one of the reasons why the Government contemplates bringing down new price-control

legislation, then nobody is likely to be any better served by this new legislation than they were by the old. I suggest that before the Government brings down any such legislation it should have a look at some of the evidence tendered to that select committee and also to some of the remarks made by some of the members of it.

I do not think any member could read that evidence without realising how futile price control was as it operated at that time. It has been suggested to me that the price-control organisation was not efficient then. That must be a matter of opinion, but in my judgment no matter what price-control organisation was set up today, it still would not have a much greater measure of success than the earlier set-up had. My reason for saying that is that whenever there is a severe gap between supply and demand, price control is not an effective way of bridging it. The only real method of bridging it is to increase the supply.

Mr. Brady: Is the retail butcher entitled to 125 per cent. more than the wholesaler is charging?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know that he is getting that.

Mr. Brady: He is charged 1s. 11d. a lb. and is selling at 4s. 6d.

Mr. PERKINS: If that is the case, the way is open for the consumers to rectify the position themselves; particularly in view of the new set-up at Midland Junction.

Mr. Brady: It is easier said than done.

Mr. PERKINS: There is no reason why the retailer should not buy his supplies on the hoof in the yards at Midland Junction and have the stock killed at the abattoirs there, and then have the meat delivered into his shop. The other question is whether there is too great a margin between the cost of stock on the hoof and the price of meat available to the housewife in the butcher's shop. I do not know whether members opposite are going to say that the killing charges are too high, but if so it is a rather severe criticism of their Minister for Agriculture who has been responsible for establishing this new set up. If they think that those charges are too high, they had better have some discussion with the Minister. I notice he is not coming forward with any interjections which would suggest that any improvements could be made in that direction.

The Minister for Lands: In what direction?

Mr. PERKINS: In the matter of the killing charges at Midland Junction.

The Minister for Lands: You do not have to worry about them.

Mr. PERKINS: We have the assurance of the Minister that the killing charges at Midland Junction are all right.

The Minister for Lands: I did not say that, but that they will be.

Mr. Nalder: They have been considerably increased.

Mr. PERKINS: If there is anything wrong about the arrangement, the present Government is responsible for it and had better get busy and do something about the position. The next point is whether the retailers are making too big a profit. I know that one of the planks of the Labour Party is the promotion of co-operative enterprise; and I know that the member for Guildford-Midland, in particular, is extremely interested in the co-operative movement. If he thinks that there is such an exorbitant margin between the price of stock on the hoof at Midland Junction and the cost of the meat made available in the shops to the housewife, then this is a golden opportunity for the Labour Party, or the trade unions, to organise the consumers into some sort of a co-operative undertaking in order to test whether or not these charges are too high. If the margin is there, one would think that a co-operative store to handle meat would be a wonderful success.

The Minister for Lands: Would it get the support of your party?

Mr. PERKINS: It would get my support.

Mr. Brady: The Arbitration Court does not allow enough money for capital investments today. You should know that.

Mr. PERKINS: That is a peculiar argument. I do not know where the member for Guildford-Midland is getting now. On the one hand he suggests the margin is too great, and then he says the Arbitration Court does not allow a big enough margin for the capital costs of these retail enterprises.

Mr. Brady: How much do you think it costs to start a butcher's shop?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know and I would not like to make a guess at it, but I would think that with £3,000 capital the member for Guildford-Midland could certainly start on quite a reasonable scale.

The Premier: That would hardly pay for the chopping block.

Mr. PERKINS: If there is that margin, there should be a strong incentive for the consumers to put some money by in order to start a co-operative store: I believe that is the way to test the position rather than to be continually harping on the unreasonable profits which the butchers are making. It might easily be found, when the position is tested, that the profits the butchers are making are not nearly so unreasonable after all. I do not know whether they are reasonable or unreasonable because I have not any concrete information to test the position.

When price control operated previously, about all that the Prices Branch did was to legalise increases that would have taken

place anyhow. I am very doubtful whether price control ever has very much ultimate effect on the price of a particular commodity.

Mr. Nalder: What about the black market?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know much about that aspect. I want to say something about the basic question of meat supply. In nearly every other country of the world, with the possible exception of the Argentine and New Zealand, meat prices are much higher, comparatively, than those of other commodities. The reason is that in most countries, during a considerable portion of the year, stall feeding of stock is necessary in order to produce fats; and in many cases even to carry store stock through. But in Australia, during the flush season, stock can be marketed off ordinary pastures; and that is the period when stock is produced for the export market. During that period of the year, the meat consumers of Australia get their meat at export parity, which is the price the overseas consumer would pay less freight costs and all other costs in getting the meat to that overseas market.

So the Australian consumer is considerably better off financially than consumers of meat in most other countries. During other times when special feeding is necessary in order to produce fat stock, it is only natural that the producers must be given some price inducement to market their fat stock then; and that is the reason why meat prices vary between those applying in the flush period of the year and those that operate in the more difficult supply periods. Of course, the Prices Branch always recognised that particular fact.

Western Australia is in a rather peculiar position as compared with the other States because of the comparatively short growing period, the long summer and the period in winter which elapses before good pastures are again available. That period is greater in Western Australia than it is in the other States. The difficulty in the supply of suitable meat in Western Australia, compared with the conditions in the other States, is also accentuated by the fact that in those States, particularly New South Wales and Victoria, they have big areas of irrigated country where fat stock can be produced almost as cheaply as they can be from natural pastures.

Of course, that has the effect of maintaining a big supply of fat stock—something more than is necessary to meet the domestic consumption in those States—for a longer period of the year than applies in Western Australia. Therefore in this State it is necessary to allow for that fact in considering the period of the year in which the public has to pay a higher price for meat in order to induce the producers to cater particularly for the difficult supply period. The alternative is for the

wholesale butchers, or any other interested party, to put meat into cold storage during the flush supply period and use it during the time of short supply. That, of course, is done to a greater or lesser extent.

If the Government intends to bring down legislation to re-establish price control and monkey round with meat prices, I would suggest that it carefully considers the position, because it could easily cause many of the producers—who at the present time, because of the price inducement offered, are prepared to feed stock especially for the difficult supply period—to turn to other lines of production. At present, the production of wool, from a financial point of view, is most attractive and we cannot expect people to produce something, especially at an added cost, if they have alternative lines of production. Members opposite would not suggest that any trade unionist should work for one employer while at the same time some other employer was prepared to offer him an increase of £1 a week. It is only natural that the same thing applies to other sections of industry.

The Minister for Lands: You agree that the people must be fed.

Mr. PERKINS: Of course I do! But I counsel the Minister to use some reason in deciding what is a fair return to producers. Because of a reference to price-control in the Governor's Speech I am rather fearful that the Government intends to re-institute the price control of meat. It is a touchy subject and the result could easily be an insufficient supply of meat in Western Australia to feed our own population. In that case the State might be forced to import meat from other parts of the Commonwealth and that, in turn, would mean that the consumers would pay a higher price for their meat than they are required to do at present. They would be paying the cost of the meat in the other States plus the high charges incurred in importing a perishable commodity.

I thought it necessary to discuss that particular question at some length because I regard it as most important and I sincerely hope that it will not be necessary, at some later stage of this session, or during next session, to discuss the same subject while speaking to the second reading of a Bill which the Government might bring down. I would remind the Government that it is a dangerous subject.

Next I wish to discuss a question that is of an entirely different nature. I have been reading the Auditor General's report, which is always an interesting document. Some parts, of course, are naturally more interesting than others, according to a person's tastes; but the particular subject which struck my eye on this occasion was the charcoal iron works at Wundowie. This is a matter in which

I have always been interested and I can remember when the present Premier—he was Minister for Industrial Development at the time—introduced the Bill which authorised the Government of the day to establish this industry.

We were sitting in Opposition at the time and although I was only a new member of this House, I took the adjournment of the debate. The then Minister was extremely helpful and gave me access to all the data which the department had at the time, and it was most interesting to follow the various reports which the Government had obtained before introducing the measure. Many of the present members were not here in those days and have no recollection of what took place. In order to acquaint them of the position I will read some short extracts from "Hansard" and I shall then quote from the Auditor General's report.

At p. 427 of "Hansard" volume No. 1 of 1943, the then Minister for Industrial Development—the present Premier—introduced a measure entitled "Wood Distillation and Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry Bill." During his early remarks the Minister paid a tribute to the Broken Hill Pty. Co. Ltd. for the great help it had given the Government in preparing reports and working details of the industry. This may seem rather strange to some members opposite because they are accustomed to hearing nothing but abuse of B.H.P. Yet a company of that nature was quite prepared to help the State Government to establish a secondary industry which would operate in opposition to it.

Mr. Andrew: I have not criticised the B.H.P.

Mr. PERKINS: I am very glad to hear it. But some of the people who belong to the same party as does the member for Victoria Park do not hold the same views. At page 432 of the same volume of "Hansard" the then Minister for Industrial Development said—

Estimated capital cost. Working drawings of the layout of works and details of the blast furnace, accessories and charcoal retorts are sufficiently advanced to enable construction to be commenced at once. From these drawings, the cost of the blast furnace and accessories, including charcoal retorts, condensers and storage tanks, is estimated at £95,000. In addition to this a refinery to purify the products of wood distillation is estimated to cost £30,000 making in all a total of £125,000. The cost of £35,000 has not been taken out in detail, but it is estimated from the costs of modern American refineries. Details of such plants were not available when this report was drawn up, but they have since come to hand.

Economics. In the study of the economics of the project it has been thought desirable to compare cost of production with normal market prices in pre-war years bearing in mind that early establishment would give an initial advantage of prices which are greatly inflated by war demands. In the case of cast iron, however, it is thought that the present price will be maintained for many years, and this has been accepted as the ruling price. The estimated annual income is £101,230, made up as follows:—

	£
Pig iron, 10,000 tons at £6 17s. 6d. per ton	68,750
Acetic acid, 480 tons at £56 per ton	26,880
Wood naphtha, 112,000 gallons at 1s. per gallon	5,600

My remarks, in the speech that I made when following the Minister, appear at page 570 of the same volume of "Hansard," and they are as follows:—

The committee set up to do the preliminary work consisted of the Under Treasurer, the Government Analyst, the State Mining Engineer, and the Director of Industrial Development. Its report is also comprehensive and it apparently submitted detailed reports to the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. The report of that company's officer, Mr. Young, is a most comprehensive and instructive one.

One cannot but be struck by the very helpful attitude adopted by the company, and the tribute which the Minister in his second reading speech paid to it is apparently well deserved. Some puzzling questions arise in my mind. Over the years, and in the few weeks immediately preceding the 21st August last,—

That was an election day, by the way. Continuing—

—particularly, I have heard a good deal of the iniquities of big business. We have been told that in politics big business is the villain of the piece, and some of the most critical opinions have come from members of this Parliament sitting with the Minister for Industrial Development on the Government side of the House. I cannot say that I am very conversant with such matters, but from what I can gather the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., together with its subsidiary companies, controls the major part of the heavy industry in Australia as well as other important industries. In other words, it is big business spelt with a capital B. Yet this company has placed its best technical advice at the disposal of a Labour Government which aims to set up an iron industry to compete directly with the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd.

Our Minister for Industrial Development, is not the sort of man who falls for the first confidence trickster to place his wares before him. I cannot believe that he would put before this House a project that had so little hope of success that the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. would consider giving it every possible assistance, without fearing that that industry would ever become a danger to it. I prefer to take the Minister's words at their face value and accept the implication that the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. has been actuated by the very highest motives, and that its assistance has been given with a sincere desire to promote the industrial development of Western Australia, even though that entails some new competition for itself. We can, therefore, only assume that some of this information, which colleagues of the Minister for Industrial Development in the Labour Party have given to the people, in connection with the selfish parochial and narrow outlook and policy of big business interests, is only partly true and that much of it is cooked up for political purposes.

So much for the introduction of the Bill to the House. I now propose to quote some details from the sixty-third report of the Auditor General for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1953. I think a copy of this report will be found on all members' desks.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There are some good ones in the 1952 report.

Mr. PERKINS: At page 44 of Section "B" of that report, there will be found the Auditor General's comments on wood distillation and the charcoal-iron and steel industry at Wundowie. Members will recall the previous figures I quoted from "Hansard." The estimate by the Minister for Industrial Development at that time of the pig iron production was 10,000 tons at £6 17s. 6d. a ton, making a total of £68,750; acetic acid, 480 tons at £56 per ton, a total of £26,880 and wood naphtha, 112,000 gallons at 1s. per gallon, a total of £5,600, for a capital cost of the works established of £125,000, plus £25,000 working capital, making a total capital loss of £150,000.

What is the result as detailed by the Auditor General? At the bottom of page 44, he says—

Funds provided by the Treasurer.
£1,249,501.

He then sets out various other capital items used by the Government, including the interest of loan fund moneys charged in accounts such as sundry creditors; provision for holiday and sick pay, superannuation and so forth. That brings the total capital cost to £1,599,679. Further down will be found the expenditure on fixed assets, which was £842,251, less depreciation and provision for blast furnace relining, amounting to £178,207, giving the total

net figure of £664,044. The various other capital expenses which have been capitalised are also set out, such as research and experiment, interest during construction and so on. Members can read the figures for themselves on page 45 of the Auditor General's report. On that page they will find the figure of £466,285, which is the total deficiency at the 30th June, 1953.

Mr. Lapham: Broken Hill Pty. Co. Ltd. was not actuated by the highest motives there.

Mr. PERKINS: Is the hon. member going to suggest that the Broken Hill Pty. Co. Ltd. led the present Premier up the garden-path? I do not think it did. I believe that the reports prepared by that company were perfectly sound. However, those reports have this difference. They were prepared on the basis of how the B.H.P. would establish the works and how it would run them, and not how the project was established, and how it has been run to date. That is the difference. I have no doubt that the reports prepared by the officers of B.H.P. were perfectly honest and good reports and would stand investigation at the present time.

I propose to read one or two further items from the Auditor General's report. At page 46, under the subheading of "Funds Provided by the Treasurer," he says—

With the exception of a grant of £30,000 made by the Commonwealth Government in 1945, income derived from the business, and the loss (£33,084) recouped from the Revenue Fund in 1952-53, all moneys necessary for carrying on the Industry have been provided from General Loan Fund.

That is loan money. The report continues—

Further loan fund drawings during 1952-53 (including plant transfers of £16,737 3s. 2d.) amounted to £88,238 4s. 5d. Allowing for the variation in the balance in the Treasury banking account a net of £109,182 10s. 8d. was expended during the year of which £57,059 19s. 2d. was on fixed assets, £4,793 14s. 9d. on research and experiment and the remainder, £47,328 16s. 9d. on cost of operation.

Interest charges were raised at 4 per cent. on Loan Fund drawings. Section 20 of the Act provides that such amounts of interest and sinking fund as shall be fixed by the Treasurer, shall be debited in the Industries Account at the Treasury. This has not been done.

That is the comment of the Auditor General. To continue—

Depreciation charged.—In accordance with the provision contained in Section 25 of the Act, this, in previous years was determined on certified

schedules of assets, showing costs, lives and residual values. In 1951-52 the estimated life of the main sections of the plant was increased by the Management from the original 20 years to 25 years, and the depreciation charged for the year was assessed on the extended term. No adjustment was made to the depreciation assessed in previous years and charged in the accounts. The assessed lives for Staff Buildings, Town Assets and the Mill were also similarly extended for considerable periods.

It was again noticed during the audit examination that the total cost of replacing defective, worn out or corroded equipment in the Refinery had been charged to Plant and Buildings Asset Account and no allowance had been made for the remaining book value of the items replaced. The asset figures are thus overstated.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The member for Fremantle will have something to say about this.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is nearly as bad as the other.

Mr. PERKINS: To continue with the report on page 47—

Refinery products on hand at the works at 30th June, 1953, were valued at approximately 25 per cent below selling prices and those on consignment at slightly lower than selling prices. Iron was valued at the cost price delivered and timber at slightly above the cost price delivered. Materials and process were valued at the average cost for the year as extracted from the costs ledger.

That is all right. But it continues—

The values shown in the accounts for unsold finished products on hand at Wundowie increased from £106,344 10s. 8d. at 30th June, 1952, to £192,337 10s. 3d. at 30th June, 1953, the major increases being in pig iron, £65,948 2s. 6d. and sawn timber, £15,381 18s. 11d. Of a total revenue credited in the manufacturing and trading account for the year for pig iron, viz., £234,655, unsold stocks represented £120,066.

Mr. Johnson: There is nothing abnormal about that.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: A good asset.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Is it a good asset?

The Minister for Lands: You have unsold stocks of wheat.

Mr. PERKINS: I asked some questions about the present figures of unsold stocks. According to replies given to me by the Minister for Industrial Development, the latest figures for pig iron are 6,641 tons,

an increase of 3,634 tons for the year. Accordingly it is perfectly clear that there is a considerable stock of unsold—

The Minister for Lands: Wheat!

Mr. PERKINS: —manufacturing goods building up at the refinery, and it is quite evident from some of the replies given to the member for Stirling, also by the Minister for Industrial Development, that the works will find considerable difficulty in selling their products which they have on hand at the figures at which they are included in their books.

Mr. Andrews: It is very little.

Mr. PERKINS: If it is so little, I would ask why there has been such a considerable increase over last year.

Mr. Johnson: Is not the wheat industry in the same trouble?

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

On motion by Mr. Andrew, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.26 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 14th July, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S SOCIETY.

As to Allocation of Land.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Has any progress been made in re-allocating land to the Crippled Children's Society?