to fight one's way out. Up to date that has not been necessary in this Chamber. Yet apparently I am not capable of taking the Chair in the Legislative Council, and of presiding over the nice-mannered gentlemen in this House!

Hon. W. J. Mann: We did not know your capabilities.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I did not know my own until I came here. In conclusion, I wish members well. I have not spoken for a long time, but if I am here after the next election I will have another go. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.36 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 9th August, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

STATE LOAN INDEBTEDNESS.

As to Average Rate of Interest.

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

1, What is the present average rate of interest paid on the loan indebtedness of the State Government?

2, What was the average rate of interest payable in respect of the Agricultural Bank and the transferred activities controlled by the Commisisoners of that Bank in respect of loan money for which the Bank was responsible as at the 30th day of June, 1945?

The PREMIER replied:

1, £3 16s. 8d.%, plus exchange 10s. 3d. Total, £4 6s. 11d.%

2, £4 7s. 0d.%

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to Proposed Charges in South-West.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

1, Has any estimate been arrived at as to the charges that will be made for electric current for domestic power and industrial purposes, respectively, if and when the South-West Electric Power Scheme becomes operative?

2, If so, what are the estimated charges?

3, Will they be uniform, or will they vary in respect of different districts?

4, If so, what are the estimated variations?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2, 3 and 4, All of these matters are receiving consideration and will be decided prior to the necessary legislation being introduced during the current session of Parliament.

STATE SCHOOLS.

As to Providing Modern Desks.

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Education:

1, How many State schools are not yet equipped with modern dual desks?

2, How many of these schools have an enrolment of fourteen scholars and more?

3, Does he concur in the desirability of replacing, as speedily as possible, the existing obsolete furniture, particularly desks and seats, with modern types?

4, Are dual desks now being manufactured at the State Implement Works and, if so, how long, at the present rate of output, will it take to equip all State schools?

5, Have any contracts been placed, or have attempts been made to place contracts for these desks with private manufacturers?

6, If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 93.

2, 17.

3, Yes.

4, Dual desks are being manufactured at the State Engineering Works, but the output is restricted by the necessity for the

completion of orders directly concerned with war work, and because of the extreme difficulty being experienced in securing a sufficient quantity of suitable timber.

5, No.

6, The practice of placing orders with Government departments, where possible, conforms with Government policy. However, inquiries which have been made indicate that there is little likelihood of orders being placed with private firms owing to the high costs of pattern and plate mouldings and the impossibility of securing suitable timber.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Country Road Motor Services.*

Mr. TELFER asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Is he aware that the now last available report on the working of South African Railways, viz., year 1940-41, reveals that their road motor passenger and goods service, which operates as part of the railway system, includes in its traffic carried 7,500,000 passengers and 1,000,000 tons of goods freight over its 16,000 miles of routes and that the income from this service is £860,000?

2, Would he give consideration to the establishment at the very earliest opportunity of a country road motor service of the most modern type to operate jointly with the railway service?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

1, Yes, but the hon. member, whilst giving the revenue obtained from the service, omits to quote the expenditure figure of £916,000.

2, This matter is already having departmental consideration.

(b) *As to Boxes for Racehorses.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Is it correct that owners, desiring to send their racehorses to Kalgoorlie for this year's annual carnival, were informed that no proper horseboxes would be available for transport and that cattle trucks only could be supplied?

2, If it is correct, what has become of the horseboxes that were in the possession of the Railway Department pre-war?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

1, Transport of racehorses by rail is controlled by the Commonwealth Department of Transport.

2, If that department's approval to transport of racehorses to the annual Kalgoorlie Carnival be given, a limited number of horse boxes will be available. Of our pre-war stock of horse boxes a proportion have been converted to vans for general purposes.

(c) *As to Ellson and Watts Inventions.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Has he any knowledge of the Ellson joint which it is claimed has been successfully tried on the English railways?

2, Does the Ellson joint resemble in any way the trussed sole plate invented by Mr. Walter Watts and submitted to the W.A. State Railways a few years ago?

3, If not, seeing that each invention is claimed to overcome the same railway defect, can he explain the difference between the two inventions?

4, Has further trial been given to Mr. Watts' invention as recommended by the Select Committee?

5, If not, why not?

6, If there is no very great difference between the Ellson and Watts' inventions will further trials be given to Mr. Watts' invention?

7, If not, why not?

8, If there is a vital difference between the two inventions, rendering the local one unsuitable, will he arrange for a trial in this State of the Ellson joint?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

1, Yes.

2, No.

3, The Ellson joint is a means of obviating the effect of the expansion gap on smooth running, and reducing deflection at the joint. The Watts trussed sole plate aims at reducing the deflection at the joint but does not eliminate the expansion gap.

4, Yes.

5, Answered by No. 4.

6, There is a material difference.

7, Answered by No. 6.

8, The Ellson joint has been under trial on test sections of the Southern Railway and the London Midland and Scottish Railway

in England. Up to date there is no evidence of its general adoption by railways in Britain. Progress of tests is watched by means of current technical literature and there is therefore no need for a test of the joint on the Western Australian railways.

GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE, ALBANY.

As to Renovation and Use.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier:

1, What use is being made of the building in Albany that was formerly used as a summer residence for the State Governor?

2, When was it last renovated, and by whom?

3, If by the State Government, what was the cost of such work?

4, If the building is let, what rental is being obtained for it, and for what term is it let?

The PREMIER replied:

1, The Albany Government cottage is let for residential purposes.

2, In 1941, 1942 and 1945 by the State Government. Improvements have also been effected from time to time by various tenants.

3, £176.

4, Present weekly rental is £2 5s., the premises being let on a weekly tenancy.

WHEAT TRANSPORT BY ROAD.

As to Damage to Bitumen Surface.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Works:

1, Is he aware that the very heavy trucks carting very big loads of wheat for the Commonwealth Government on the Perth-York-Quairading-road are cutting through the bitumen surface and doing severe damage to that road?

2, If so, will the Commonwealth Government give a priority in manpower and materials to enable that road to be restored speedily?

3, Will the Commonwealth Government recompense the Main Roads Department for the damage caused by its agents engaged in this abnormal wheat cartage on roads not designed to carry such very heavy loads?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2 and 3, These matters are receiving consideration.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. P. Collier (Boulder) on the ground of ill-health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [4.38]: Before proceeding to deal with some of the items contained in the Governor's Speech I would like to extend my congratulations to the new Premier (Hon. F. J. S. Wise), while regretting the loss of the former Premier. I feel that, with the undoubted ability possessed by our new Leader, he will be able to adopt an enterprising and progressive policy, and that the State will prosper under his guidance. I particularly regret the loss of the former Premier, because I knew Mr. Willcock well when he was in the loco. service with me many years ago, long before I had any idea of becoming a member of the Legislature of this State. But I think he has chosen wisely, for, after all, there is no compensation, no remuneration and no honour that will compensate a man for the loss of his health. It is particularly regrettable that Mr. Willcock had to relinquish the reins of office because of ill-health. Still, I think he has chosen wisely, and our hope is that his health will improve and that he will be spared for many years to represent the electorate of Geraldton. I am sure he will prove to be a fund of information and knowledge for us to draw upon.

I congratulate the Deputy Leader of the House (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke), who is a man of undoubted capacity. The people of this State should consider themselves particularly fortunate in having two men of such outstanding ability in those positions. I feel sure that, during the absence of the Premier from the State, the affairs of his office will be ably and capably handled by the Deputy Leader. I also congratulate the member for Murchison (Mr. W. M. Marshall) on his elevation to Ministerial rank. It would appear that he has been given a full-sized man's job. When hostilities cease, the departments of railways and mines will probably be the most extensive over which any Minister could be called upon to pre-

side. The member for Murchison, however, has shown that he has ability and progressive views, and doubtless he will prove quite capable of handling any problems presented to him for consideration. Finally, I congratulate the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) on his appointment as Chairman of Committees. I believe he will make a good chairman and will maintain the dignity and prestige that were attached to the position during the term of his predecessor.

This should be a very important session. With the successful conclusion of the European conflict, we can more or less get down to preparing in a substantial way for the time when the world will again be at peace. My opinion—and it is buttressed by that of experts—is that the war in the Pacific will not last much longer. We are all hopeful that that will be the case. With the return to peace, big problems will arise and call for solution. I doubt whether the return to peace will be less hazardous than was the sudden switch-over from peace to war. Our greatest problem will be to find employment for something like three-quarters of a million Service personnel of both sexes who will be demobilised, and for a similar number who will have to be diverted from the manufacture of commodities essential for the prosecution of the war, in which work they have been employed for some years, to the manufacture of commodities necessary to the civil life of the community.

The first 12 months will probably be the most difficult period. Some people say that we shall have to keep many men in uniform for a time. If the war with Japan ended tomorrow, we would be in sore straits to find work for the 1½ million people who would be released from the Army and the industries connected with the war effort. I do not think it would be possible to keep men in uniform.

Mr. Mann: They will certainly not stay there.

Mr. STYANTS: I am afraid that is the trouble. Men who have been subject to regimentation, discipline and hard living for three, four or five years, such as the majority of those in the Army have been, will not be prepared to remain in uniform.

Mr. Doney: You know how the Canadian soldiers reacted to that.

Mr. STYANTS: We have read of how Canadian soldiers in England rioted and caused considerable damage because they were not quickly transported from England to their home country. Consequently, I believe that the first 12 months will be the most difficult period. After that, I have confidence that, during a number of years, employment will be found for everyone.

The first matter of importance with which I wish to deal is the principal industry carried on in my electorate. I believe that this industry offers the best scope for the rapid absorption of labour, provided some planning is done beforehand, but small numbers of men only will be re-employed unless a definite plan is made; and the planning should start now. The industry was denuded of men from a total of something like 16,000 to about 4,200 employees. Especially were the mines in the outback areas affected. The Kalgoorlie mines at present are and for some years have been working only one shift, and unless men are released in considerable numbers within a short period, it will not be possible to put on another shift or to re-employ those men. What actually is required is the release of a large number of men—a sufficient number to enable another shift to be worked. Otherwise, if the men are discharged in dribs and drabs, there will not be the employment offering for them. That is the case on the Eastern Goldfields to a large extent today. Many of the men who have grown old in the service of the mines are now being displaced because of their advanced age in order to make room for returned soldiers.

What really is required is that a fair number of skilled miners—machinemen, engineers and tradesmen of all kinds—should be released to get the industry shipshape, so that when large numbers of miners are released from the Army and other services, work will be ready for them to start on. On most of the mines of the Golden Mile, little or no development work has been done since the commencement of the war; certainly this applies to the years since Japan entered the war. They have used up the reserves of broken ore, and unless a very extensive programme of development is undertaken, a large number of men cannot be re-employed immediately on the Golden Mile. Some people imagine that, in the course of three or four months, it

would be possible for the Golden Mile to re-absorb all the men who have left the industry. Another important factor is that, upon the abatement of mining activity, due to the withdrawal of manpower from the mines for defence purposes, much of the mining machinery was taken by the Commonwealth Government and dispersed to various parts of Australia. That machinery, even if it were available to us, would probably be in a depreciated condition. Probably it would not be worth the transport fees and re-installation costs if it were sent back to the Golden Mile.

I notice from Federal "Hansard" that the Commonwealth Government is endeavouring to manufacture in Australia a lot of machinery that will be necessary for the rehabilitation of the mining industry; but I think that will take a very long time, and that the mining industry should be given a very high priority—the highest possible priority—for the importation of necessary machinery from oversea which will be required to get the mines working again. The prospectors—who, after all, are the pioneers of mining in any country or locality—should be given a great deal of encouragement, much more than has been given to them in the past. They have more or less had to fend for themselves. It is true that for a considerable time what is known as the Munsie prospecting scheme was in operation, under which prospectors received assistance; but that was probably on account of the great amount of unemployment. Altogether the prospector has more or less had to battle for himself. He has suffered all kinds of hardship and isolation; and when he has found what appeared to him to be a likely prospect he has had to set about proving it with the most primitive instruments it is possible to imagine.

The Government should provide a light mobile power plant, with up-to-date appliances for testing finds. There should be provision for drilling, which seems to be the most modern method of testing gold-bearing reefs and bodies. These appliances should be provided on the recommendation of one of the mines inspectors who could be deputed to go out and inspect any place a prospector considered to be worthwhile. It would, of course, be left to the inspector to say whether the find warranted the use of the mobile power plant for testing purposes. To ask the prospector to develop a show now with a pick and shovel is something like asking navvies to provide earth-works or shift earth with a pick and shovel and barrow instead of by the use of a steam shovel or a bulldozer. I hope some consideration will be given to this matter, because we will require new finds. Even though nature has fairly effectively covered up many gold-bearing ore bodies, they can be discovered if up-to-date means of locating them are provided for the prospector.

Allied to the mining industry is the wood industry which, of course, is in just as parlous a position as far as manpower is concerned as is the mining industry. In 1938, the year prior to the outbreak of war, 200,000 tons of firewood and mining timber were produced for the Golden Mile. Last year only 100,000 tons were produced. At present, there is a production of 340 tons a day, and the demand is something like 400 tons. With the expansion of the mining industry and a return to normal activities, the demand for wood will be doubled, and probably trebled; so that, in addition to men being provided for the mining industry, men will have to be made available for the ancillary industry of wood-getting. I am very pleased to know that the former Minister for Mines has had a conference with those interested in the mining industry in Kalgoorlie with a view to evolving some definite basis on which to rehabilitate the industry.

It was with pleasure that I read in to-day's paper the Prime Minister's answer to a deputation which travelled from Kalgoorlie to see him. He was very sympathetic with regard to meeting the requirements of the goldmining industry, and he spoke highly of the generous manner in which the goldmining industry had responded to the demands for machinery and manpower to prosecute the war. But at both of those conferences something which, from my point of view, was a discordant note, crept in. I refer to the opinion expressed by the representatives of the Chamber of Mines that men should be directed to certain localities as they were released. I want to say here and now that with every power in my possession I will oppose any direction of manpower after the war. It may be that through economic circumstances a man will be compelled to go to a locality he does not like. That he may be permitted to do as an individual; but I

am not going to be a party to agreeing that any board or any other authority shall have the right to direct a man as to where he shall go to work. If a man is in Kalgoorlie and there is no employment for him there, whereas there is a job in Leonora or some other outback centre, he may be compelled by economic circumstances to go there despite his aversion to doing so. That is a different matter. During the war years, we have perforce had to agree to the direction of manpower. That has been tolerated; but it would be entirely wrong for us to agree, now that the emergency has passed, that power to direct labour should be vested in any authority. I intend to oppose the suggestion wherever and whenever it is made.

I was very pleased to note that the price of gold had been increased. The mining industry—by which I mean both the producers of gold and the owners of the mines —will benefit only to the extent of 50 per cent., because on all gold over a certain price there is a Commonwealth levy of 50 per cent. Allowing for that, however, I consider that the increase will tend to stabilise the industry, because costs of mining commodities have gone up tremendously. I am not satisfied that the Australian producers of gold are getting all they are entitled to so far as the value of the commodity is concerned. We read in the paper from time to time that the price offered for gold in India is as high as £16 an oz., while in certain parts of Europe as much as £25 an oz. can be secured. The Australian producer of gold receives only the standard price. He has no say regarding the methods of disposal of his product. Within 30 days of production, the gold must be handed over to the Commonwealth Bank, but the producers receive no particulars from the Commonwealth Bank or from the Commonwealth Government concerning the expenses involved in realising on the gold when it goes to America or to whatever oversea market it is sent.

Just how the price of gold is fixed, who does it and where it is done have always been mysteries to me. I have heard that there is a committee consisting of eight persons, four Englishmen and four Americans, who fix the price. However, I do not know whether that is right. But it is interesting to know just how the English price for gold is fixed. Who sets it I do not know, but a ruling authority in a very reliable commercial journal that I have been reading lately states that the method by which the English price is arrived at is that in the event of gold being transported from any other portion of the world to England it is re-transported to the Mint of America. The Mint of America, after deducting a small charge, decides what it is worth. The price which is decided upon by that Mint, less the transport charges from the country of origin to England and from England to America, is the standard price of gold which is 34.9 dollars per ounce. It is 35 dollars without any charge from the American Mint. That in turn is converted into the currency of Great Britain and becomes the standard price of gold.

The Breton Woods Conference on international monetary policy decided that the rate of conversion should be four American dollars to the pound sterling. If that is applied in order to establish the English price it would be considerably in excess of what is being paid under the system which is adopted, namely that of accepting the bank rate for remitting money between England and America, which is 4.03 dollars to the pound. If the rate, which was agreed upon by the Breton Woods Conference on monetary matters, was adopted it would mean that the gold would be worth £10 18s. 1½d. when applied to English standards, whereas by the bank rate of exchange, which is 4.03 dollars to the pound, it works out at £10 16s. 8d. which is 1s. 5½d. an ounce less than if the dollar conversion rate to the pound sterling was adopted. It is interesting also to work out the Australian equivalent on the new price of gold, which is £8 12s. 3d. sterling. That price is equivalent to £10 15s. 3½d., or 1s. 9¾d. an ounce more than is being paid to the producers of gold in Australia. While it may not appear that 1s. 9¾d. per ounce is a great deal, when the production amounts to hundreds of thousands of ounces, or, as in pre-war years, to a million or more ounces, it means that someone is getting a fairly substantial rake-off at the expense of the producer of gold in Australia.

Some people were of the opinion that gold would be of little use after the cessation of hostilities. They believed that the lend-lease method would probably supersede our established and orthodox mone-

tary policy which operated in pre-war times. I do not hold that view. We must remember that prior to the war America owned, or possessed, 80 per cent. of the gold of the world. The British Empire produced a vast amount of gold and so did Russia, although it is difficult to get any authentic figures as to the production of gold in Russia. When these facts are considered it seems to me unlikely and very illogical to expect that when the war is completely over some other monetary policy will be inaugurated by these three countries, the first of which owned most of the world's gold, and the others were the biggest producers of it. It is difficult to imagine that they will adopt any method to make gold valueless as a medium of exchange or as a medium to attach their currencies to. It must also be remembered that the supplies of gold are much better distributed now than prior to the war, because America has disgorged much of her immense reserves of gold for the purpose of buying commodities from countries that were not gold producers to any great extent. Those gold stocks will be valuable for the purpose of establishing international credit between those countries and others when the war is over.

I feel that there is a rosy future for the goldmining industry of this State. The cost of mining, which has risen enormously, will have to be reduced if our industry is to expand and provide employment to the extent we hope it will. It was the only industry, prior to the war, that had an unlimited market for its product at a payable price. I do not want to be a pessimist, but I feel that, because of what the position may be in a few years' time in our agricultural industries, particularly wheatgrowing, we should proceed with caution and not indiscriminately place men in the wheatgrowing areas of this State. Prior to the war every country in the world had a surplus of wheat. Many countries produce more wheat than they require for their purposes, and they have exportable surpluses. The Argentine, the United States, Canada, and Russia were in this position, and even China was producing a considerable amount of wheat. Many people are of the opinion that Australia, because of her large production of wheat should, in some measure, be able to control the world market for wheat. But when we realise that Australia produces only three per cent. of the world's wheat we see how ridiculous is such a contention.

When the European countries, which have been devastated, have re-established their agricultural industries—perhaps in four or five years' time—we shall arrive in exactly the same position, in regard to finding a buyer for our wheat, as we were immediately prior to the war when wheat was bringing about 2s. a bushel. Even then it was not so much a matter of getting 2s. a bushel, as getting any price at all because, as I have said, every country had a surplus and no-one wanted to buy wheat. If the nations can get together and co-operate it will probably be found necessary to restrict the acreage sown to wheat, so as to prevent us from arriving at the position in which we were just prior to the war when each country had an exportable surplus and there were no buyers at any price. We should face facts. If we indiscriminately place these men in our wheatgrowing areas we are going to lead them into a dead end. Mixed farming is a much better proposition, particularly for those who like country life and the type of work it involves.

Those who are prepared to go out and live and produce for their own consumption, rather than with the idea of making large profits, by sending their produce to the markets, whether they be the local markets or the export markets, will be much better off on the basis of mixed farming. These remarks apply to wool production, although perhaps to a lesser extent. I have been reading some journals that have been furnished by a Federal authority in connection with the production and processing of wool. I feel that in the post-war years our wool is going to have very serious competition from synthetic fibres. Even our Governments are prepared to subsidise the production of these materials. While I do not think that the condition of the wool-producing interests will be jeopardised to such an extent by over-production or a lack of payable markets as will the wheat industry, I feel that mixed farming is the best proposition for our returned men.

I was struck by the remarks made by certain members on the opposite side of the House in connection with the demand for greater and better amenities for those living in the country. I endorse those sentiments

100 per cent. I have great sympathy for the person who goes on to the land in an endeavour to make a living for himself and his family. I was born on a timber mill and, until I was 19 years of age, was reared on a farm in the South-West. I know what a hardship it is to get a decent living from farming. I was so disgusted at that age that I went sleeper-cutting on one of the timber areas. When some people think of those on the land their minds do not go beyond the palatial residences, which we see every 20, 30 or 50 miles, and which are possible because of the financial resources of their owners. Those houses have all the amenities and comforts of a town house. In many cases they have their own power and lighting plant, refrigeration and everything else that is to be found in the metropolitan area. But those places are not a fair indication of the average life or conditions under which the people on the land are working and toiling in this State.

If we want settlers to remain on the land we shall have to provide better facilities and amenities for them. We shall have to go in extensively for providing electric power, and all that it means, for these people. We must try to simplify, lessen and lighten the work they have to do. Amenities should be established for the housewife. I have a particularly tender spot in my heart for the housewife on the land. She works under conditions that we should not ask our womenfolk to suffer. We shall have to provide better educational and recreational facilities if our people are to remain on the land. Because of the advances that are being made in the conditions under which the town and suburban workers operate and live we will not get our people to stay in the country areas unless we are prepared to provide similar amenities for them.

I propose to deal for a few minutes with the position of our railways and tramways, and my remarks will apply to the post-war period. I realise that during the war it is utterly impossible to do anything towards modernising our railways. We have been put to our wits end to provide not finance but manpower and materials necessary for the maintenance of even reasonable transport facilities for the people. Personally, I do not agree that the whole of our troubles from the standpoint of the inadequacy of the railway service have been due to the war. In this House, over a period of many years, members have drawn the attention of Parliament and of the Government to the obsolete nature of the locomotives and rolling-stock generally. Only in the past two or three years have the railway officials admitted that their plant is obsolete and that 50 per cent. of the locomotives are over 50 years old. The tramway system is just as obsolete as is the railway system.

The Premier: Are many of those old engines very inefficient in working or are they efficient?

Mr. STYANTS: They are maintained at a standard of efficiency by being continually taken into the workshops for overhaul, and they have been rejuvenated to such an extent that in most instances very little of the original engine is left. The "N" class of suburban engine is probably the most expensive to operate in Australia with respect to the haulage per ton mile, and it is 50 per cent. more expensive than any other engine operated by the Government. I should say that the locomotives generally here are much below the standard of engines used in progressive countries where money is provided for the purpose of maintaining efficiency and where those engines are run on a similar gauge to our own, namely, the 3ft. 6in. gauge. With regard to the suburban system, we will have to decide whether the passenger service is to be electrified or whether we are to retain any suburban railway service at all. That is what the position will resolve itself into. People will not continue to patronise a service that is taking longer to travel over a given distance now than it did 40 years ago. That refers particularly to the Kalgoorlie express. It takes 45 minutes longer today to do the journey from Perth to Kalgoorlie than it did 35 years ago.

Mr. Seward: That applies to the Albany train as well.

Mr. STYANTS: That is probably so. With regard to the metropolitan service, after the war is concluded and road transport is again available, unless we are prepared to electrify the system, irrespective of whether it will be payable or not, it will certainly not be worth while running the service that we are endeavouring to maintain now. Most people continue to blame the 3ft. 6in. gauge

for the slowness of our trains, but that contention will not bear investigation.

Mr. Watts: Hear, hear!

Mr. STYANTS: Other countries where a similar gauge is adopted, can run their trains safely at a speed in excess of 60 miles an hour. There are many factors that tend to slow down trains. One is that too much roadside traffic has to be dealt with. Prior to the passing of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, a large proportion of the smaller parcels were handled by road. When the full effects of that legislation were felt, the parcels traffic was taken over by the railways which endeavoured to cope with it on the passenger trains. Ordinarily the stop at a station is for one minute only, but when the additional parcels traffic had to be dealt with it meant that a train had to stay for at least three or four minutes at a station. Twenty years ago each driver of an express train had his own engine and he looked after it like a man looks after his own motorcar. He was able to maintain it at a pitch of efficiency. Under existing conditions that is not the position, and it is impossible therefore to make up any time. He has all he can do to maintain his engine in running order so as to keep on schedule time.

The railway officials of this State have always had a mania for overloading their tractive effort. In other countries express trains are given a great reduction on the full haulage capacity of the engine. Take the position regarding our "P" engines, which haul the Kalgoorlie express and the train to Albany. On a one in 60 grade the full hauling capacity of that engine is 380 tons; yet the railway officials persist in maintaining a 335-ton load for the express train, with the right of district traffic superintendents to put on an additional corridor coach, which increases the haulage load to 356 tons. The effect of that is that the engine has no margin when it has to negotiate hills. If it is slowed down to seven or eight miles an hour on the upgrade, it is often necessary, in order to maintain the timetable schedule, to run the train at an excessive speed downhill. The same applies to the Diesel coaches. In my opinion, if we want a fast service they are not suitable for hauling one or two trailers. If there is one trailer on the journey between Midland Junction and Chidlow or anywhere else where there is any appreciable length of a grade of one in 50 or more, the Diesel coach will have to slow down to from 12 to 15 miles an hour. It is impossible to run a fast passenger service over a journey 50 per cent. of which is uphill-going under those conditions.

Mr. Seward: I have seen 120 passengers carried where the accommodation provided is for 80.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, the trains and coaches are grossly overloaded. A much better type of locomotive has been produced in recent years. I refer to the "PR" class, which is known to railwaymen as the "River Class." It is a particularly good type of engine; but, because it is grossly overloaded, it is impossible for it to provide a better service. The railway authorities here have what is known as the "momentum load." That means to say that an engine may have a heavy load to haul and it may strike a slippery patch on an upgrade with the result that it is brought to a standstill. With the "momentum" load the train is run downhill at such a speed that it gathers momentum that will help to carry it over the top of the rise and so continue on. That is an entirely wrong principle, and if there is any endeavour to provide a better system, it will be found that the engine load will have to be considerably reduced.

If a train is proceeding uphill, a reasonable speed is 30 miles an hour and the maximum speed downhill should be 45 miles an hour. By that means a reasonably fast timetable could be maintained. Take the position with the goods table: In any table issued by the department the maximum speed for a goods train in any part of the State is 30 miles per hour. I issue this challenge to any official of the Railway Department: I will show him certain grades—they are known as "banks"—between here and Bunbury, and between here and Chidlow on the Northam run where it is impossible to maintain that speed limit and get over the banks at all. The department knows that rule is not observed. The same applies in other parts, and when the train reaches the bank between Perth and Wongong, no engine in the service with a full goods load will negotiate that bank if the speed limit is adhered to. As a matter of fact, the trains come down at a rate of 45 miles an hour in order to get over it. There is another hill between Chidlow and Mount

Helena where it is impossible for any engine to haul its load unless it exceeds the speed limit considerably on the down-grade.

If we are to provide a better service, the policy of the officials of the Railway Department will have to be materially altered, and they will have to give the tractive power available to them an opportunity to be used to the best advantage and not overload their trains down to a speed of ten miles an hour or so on the trip. It stands to reason that if we have an upgrade of three miles there will be a downgrade of a similar distance. It is not a matter of rehabilitation that is required in connection with the railways. That would merely mean getting back into the position in which we were previously, and I certainly would not like to see the railways revert to conditions that obtained before the outbreak of war. What should be sought is the modernising of the system. That is one of the major problems Parliament will have to decide in the future. The question will arise whether we should build a standard gauge line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle.

There is a proposal to standardise the whole of the main railway gauges throughout Australia, and Parliament will have to decide whether that will be in the best interests of Western Australia. We will have to determine whether we will embark upon a project that will involve the expenditure of £47,000,000 in order to standardise the railway gauges or to modernise the existing 3ft. 6in. gauge system. I do not think there can be any great objection to modernising the 3ft. 6in. gauge system. I believe we could by that means provide an excellent service, if only the necessary funds were available In order to accomplish that, better road beds would be required. In South Africa the railway gauge is 3ft. 6in. and in Japan there is one length of line out of Tokio over which the distance is about five miles less than that separating Perth and Kalgoorlie and yet over the 3ft. 6in. line there the journey is done in eight hours out and eight hours five minutes back, as against 15¾ hours for the journey by the Kalgoorlie express. It is quite evident that if funds are provided our railways could be modernised and provide a particularly good service. The express from Capetown to Durban has a run of some 900 miles. The gauge is 3ft. 6in. and the average speed is comparable to that of the expresses on the standard gauges of the Eastern States of Australia.

The Premier: Do you know the comparison between the weight of rails and the ballast in both cases?

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. I have the main essentials. In Western Australia we have a 7ft. sleeper for a road bed. In South Africa a 9ft. sleeper is used. In the prewar years, large numbers of those sleepers were exported from this State. The poundage of the rails in this State varies from the ridiculous weight of 45 lbs. to the yard to 80 lbs. to the yard, the latter being the heaviest. In South Africa, the weight is 120 lbs. to the yard. It is therefore evident that if we are to modernise our railway service, we must start with the road bed. It is impossible for us to attain higher speeds at present. We have in the State almost as much length of 45 lbs. to the yard rails as we have of the other kinds. The length of the 60 lbs. to the yard rail is slightly greater. We shall be returning to the days of Adam and Eve if we endeavour to run our railways on 45 lb. to the yard rails.

Much of the trouble in this State on our railways can be accounted for by our retaining the 45 lb. to the yard rail instead of using the 60-lb. or 80-lb. to the yard rail. In the latter case, all our locomotives could run over the system. Instead, the department is endeavouring to build a special class of engine, like the ASG, to run over 45-lb. to the yard rails and haul a big load. We should scrap the 45-lb. to the yard rail. All the suggestions I am putting forward I know cannot be adopted until the war is over, but after the war we should scrap all the 45-lb. to the yard rails, and modernise the wheatbelt lines so that all classes of locomotives can run on them. Instead, we go on using an abomination like the ASG engine. Its sole merit is that it will haul a load and run on a 45-lb. to the yard rail. It is idle to say that that engine is not giving any greater trouble than are the other locomotives being used on our railways. That was the answer given by the railway officials to the question which I asked in this House last week.

Those engines have been responsible for outbursts of indignation by the men who have to work them. In my opinion, their design is fundamentally wrong, in one par-

ticular at all events. I refer to the steam pipes which lead to the hind engine. If one has a look at a Garratt engine, one will see big steam pipes leading from the boiler down to the hind engine, for a distance of 15 to 20 feet. One can easily imagine the result on a very cold morning. Condensation takes place in the pipes, the cylinders become full of water and that is why they are knocking the steam chests and cylinder chests by hydraulic pressure. They are also bending the driving rods. Realising the defect in the construction of the locomotive, the department is endeavouring to overcome the difficulty by putting a release cock in the cylinder of greater capacity. That did in a measure overcome the difficulty, but the rods are still being bent and the knocking out of the ends of the cylinder continues. In addition, it is causing trouble to the men operating the engines, because the valve is never thoroughly steam tight. The men are working in a cloud of steam which obscures the shunter, as well as the view of the road when running.

I leave it to members to decide upon the correctness of the answers supplied to me by the Minister for Railways last week. He said these locomotives cost £24,000 to manufacture in the Eastern States, and £18,000 in Western Australia. Some three months ago the Minister for Railways told me that the department was buying these engines for £12,000 each. Is it likely that we would get a locomotive, which in the first place was intended for the Queensland Government railways, for £12,000 if it cost £24,000 to manufacture it and if it was the success which our department claims it is? These engines were virtually condemned by the Queensland Government. Then Western Australia, because of our acute shortage of tractive power, decided to purchase these engines. As I remarked, the only thing to be said in their favour is that they will haul a load. One of the troubles in the designing of a locomotive is that a mechanical expert does the job and he does not consult with the men who must work it. He may design a fairly good job from the mechanical side, but the controls installed in the engine are totally unsuitable for those who have to operate it. That applies to the Garratt engine.

The department is running an ASG engine on the Bunbury passenger service. There is no turntable at Bunbury big enough on which to turn the engine when it gets there, so it has to run back bunker first. That imposes great hardship on the two men who have to bring the engine back from Bunbury to Perth. It is a fast train, running with the engine bunker first. The coal is continually blowing into the men's eyes. Dust and grass-seeds have also to be contended with. The driver, in keeping watch on the road, has to stand for the whole journey, because he cannot sit and drive the locomotive as he drives other locomotives. It may be said, "Well, you can easily wipe the dust out of your eyes," but it must be remembered that these men depend upon their eyesight for their living. Should it become impaired, they are relegated to some less important position in the service and so lose a considerable amount of pay.

Mr. Needham: They must undergo periodical examinations for eyesight.

Mr. STYANTS: That is so. The examination is a severe one. Each driver and fireman has to pass such an examination once every two years, so that if his eyesight has become impaired he may be removed for the safety of the travelling public. In addition, there is so much open space between the hind engine and the bunker and the cab of the engine that the men are practically working in the open. The wind whistles down through the big coal door in the tender. There are other openings and so the men have practically no protection at all. The position is becoming acute. There is a report in this morning's "West Australian" in which it is stated that the secretary of the organisation considers serious trouble is likely to occur if some of these defects are not remedied. It is idle for the railway officials to say that this particular engine is not giving any more trouble than any other locomotive is giving.

It is true that new locomotives have what is called their "teething troubles." But these troubles are more than teething troubles; there is something wrong with the construction of the engine, and the quicker the department cuts its loss with them, the better. It might be said that we are not expert in this matter, but I wish to draw the attention of the House to one matter which has been before it on a previous occasion. Many years ago, on the advice of the Chief Mechanical Engineer, the "E" class engines were altered. The "E" class engine was

scientifically balanced in weight and tractive effort to carry a 17-inch saturated cylinder. Our Chief Mechanical Engineer, with the object of getting a little more tractive power, decided to superheat them: and not only to do that, but to put a 19-inch cylinder on them. The result was that the engine was out of proportion: it had too much tractive effort and was slipping. Almost every one of the "E" class engines broke its frame within 12 months after being altered. It was generally admitted that that was because the maker of the engine scientifically designed it to carry a 17-inch saturated cylinder and a 19-inch superheated cylinder was installed instead. Now, after many years, the opinion of men like myself has been justified.

The present Chief Mechanical Engineer admits now that it was a mistake to put the 19-inch superheated cylinder into those engines. Of course, he is not the Chief Mechanical Engineer who effected the change. I believe something of a similar nature is occurring at the Midland Workshops today with respect to the all-steel boiler. On the recommendation of one of the high officials there, it is being incorporated in our new locomotives. I candidly admit that I am not a boiler expert. All I was taught in the railway service as an enginedriver was how to rectify a leaking tube on the road, so as to be able to get my locomotive and train back to the depot. The boilermakers tell me that the all-steel boiler is 90 per cent. a failure. A Select Committee of this House should be appointed to inquire into the suitability of those boilers for incorporation in our locomotives. I am told that the engines are scarcely out of the shop before they are returned with as many as 90 of the tubes leaking. They are then laid up for weeks for repairs to the boiler and tubes.

Mr. North: Are the African engines better designed than ours?

Mr. STYANTS: I should say, judging from their performances, that they are. They run at a very high speed and, of course, it must be borne in mind that they run on rails 120 lbs. to the yard. We have to keep our weight of engine down because we must adhere to a certain axle load. Should that load be exceeded, it is dangerous. Some inquiry is, I think, justified and would be worth while, as it might save the State many thousands of pounds in expenses so far as the all-steel boilers are concerned. I wish to remark that anything I say here with regard to the railways and tramways must not in any way be regarded as a reflection on the staff, who are performing excellent service with the material at their disposal.

Mr. Seward: Do you mean the wages staff?

Mr. STYANTS: We find that notwithstanding the reduction in locomotive power and rollingstock available to the staff, they are always able to get a little more out of them. Many engines have been taken over by the Commonwealth Government and sent to other portions of Australia. Much of our rollingstock has been lent to other States, yet, when the emergency was created in connection with water carting, the Railway Department rose to the occasion and carried our agricultural areas through the crisis. The department did an excellent job with the material with which we supplied it. A very important matter I want to deal with is that of standardising the Australian railway gauges. It would appear from Press reports that the method of financing the standard gauge from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle has not been decided. The estimated cost, including rollingstock, is £9,000,000. That, of course, is well beyond the financial capacity of this State. From Western Australia's point of view the conversion can only be justified by reasons of defence. That being the case the Commonwealth Government should be called upon to foot the bill for the line.

The Premier: Is that without rollingstock?

Mr. STYANTS: No, I think that includes rollingstock. An amount of £1,047,000 is considered to be necessary for the purpose of providing locomotives and rollingstock.

The Premier: For locomotives and rollingstock an amount of £1,087,000 has been allowed.

Mr. STYANTS: I have not been able to get hold of an official document so far. The figures I have show that £1,047,000 has been estimated to cover the cost of rollingstock, and is incorporated in the gross estimate of £9,000,000. An amount of £30,000 is not much when we are dealing

with millions. It is certainly well beyond the financial capacity of this State to meet such a cost. The only justification for the conversion, from Western Australia's point of view, is that of defence, and I think that the Commonwealth should be called upon to pay at least the major portion of it. In addition to the £9,000,000 for the line, losses on operational costs of something like £300,000 a year will be involved. Sir Harold Clapp, the Royal Commissioner who inquired into this matter, recommended that that amount be paid for a number of years by the Commonwealth Government. It seems that whilst the constructional issues have been decided the financial issues have not received a great deal of consideration. I understand they are to be discussed at the Premiers' Conference to which our Premier is going this month. I think the Commonwealth Government should pay the major portion of the cost, but in that case it would, I think, be natural for that Government to want to control and operate the line. I would not be agreeable to that.

The Commonwealth Government controls too many things in this State at present. We have a precedent in this matter. I refer to the time when the standard gauge of 4 ft. 8½ in. was constructed from Kyogle to South Brisbane. The question of cost was then brought up. The original idea was that the Commonwealth should pay one-fifth and the States the remaining four-fifths. Western Australia stoutly objected to this. It could not see that it would get any great benefit from the standardisation. The result was that the Commonwealth Government paid three-fifths, and Queensland and New South Wales each paid one-fifth of the cost. The construction of rollingstock will involve 23 locomotives, 40 passenger cars and vans and 250 freight wagons. Sir Harold Clapp said that the amount of £1,047,000—or, as the Premier has corrected me, £1,087,000—should be debited to Western Australia because the whole of that money would probably be retained in this State as most of the rollingstock would be built at the Midland Junction Workshops. The Midland Junction shops have not a hope of building the locomotives, the coachingstock or the freight wagons because the whole of their time and capacity will be necessary to rehabilitate the Western Australian railways so that they can handle the whole of the traffic offering on the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge.

The sole merit of standardisation in this State, as I see it, is that of defence. Had we been invaded by Japan we would have been in very sore straits. From an operational point of view the virtue of a standard gauge through Australia is that the freight wagons could work from one end of the country to the other without the necessity of trans-shipping. The disadvantage of not being able to do that was felt very considerably during the last two or three years. The standard gauge is constructed from Albury to South Brisbane but the 5 ft. 2 in. gauge operates from Albury to Port Pirie. The standard gauge rollingstock and tractive power of New South Wales were badly needed between Port Pirie and Kalgoorlie for the purpose of establishing an efficient service from the civilian and also the military point of view, but they were not available because of the change in gauge to 5 ft. 2 in. in Victoria and South Australia. Lack of funds, in my opinion, is the chief reason why our railway system is putting up such a poor and inadequate service.

It would be a better proposition, compared with the construction of the standard gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, to modernise our 3 ft. 6 in. gauge. It would be much better to do that than to endeavour to standardise the gauge at an estimated cost of £47,000,000. I believe we could modernise our railways at a quarter or a fifth of that sum, and give a particularly good service by doing so. The passengers have suffered no great inconvenience because of the break of gauge. Very often they get a little enjoyable exercise at the break-of-gauge stations. The real disadvantage is in the matter of trans-shipping goods and heavy traffic such as guns, motor trucks, tanks, etc. To do that is a serious disadvantage and we were particularly lucky that we did not have to suffer as a result of it. That disadvantage was brought about by our shortsightedness in not having the standard gauge right through.

I am 100 per cent. in favour of the extension of the standard gauge from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, but I believe that in the immediate post-war years there will be much more important work to be undertaken. The provision of homes for our people, schools for our children, and hos-

pitals for our sick should have first priority. I think there is sufficient commonsense amongst the leaders of the nations of the world to arrange matters so that there will not be another major war for at least a quarter of a century. Provided that the broad standard gauge from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie can be constructed without interfering with the other important works I have mentioned, I am 100 per cent. in favour of that line being built, but I do not think there is any great emergency in connection with it at the present time. The emergency has practically passed and is not likely to occur again in our time.

Another important matter is housing, though it is a hackneyed proposition at the present time. It has not only been a national problem in the immediate past and the present, but for the last 20 years. At the commencement of this war statistics showed that we were 120,000 houses short of requirements. If those serving in the Defence Services at present were all discharged or released I do not think that within 12 months a very comprehensive building programme could be undertaken. It is no use releasing building artisans from defence works and from the Army unless we have the material ready for them to construct the houses; and we have not those materials. At present there is a shortage of bricks, tiles, seasoned timber, and all the fittings necessary for the building of houses. Much has been heard about the pre-fabrication of houses, but if members can tell me how to pre-fabricate a brick house to any greater extent than is being done at the present time, when all the fittings such as window and door-frames and so on are built away from the job and brought to it, I will be much obliged. I have no objection whatever to the prefabrication of houses, if by that means we will get first-class houses, as good as those we could get under the old methods of building. I hope that no jerry building will be permitted, such as took place after the last war, when many Servicemen were given houses that were run up in a short time and had continually to be repaired.

Mr. Watts: I think the same type of house is being built now, in some places.

Mr. STYANTS: Probably! I think every married man should be encouraged to own his house. It gives him a stake in his country and he has pride in the possession of that home, which is not the case when the home is owned by a landlord. I think it makes for contentment on the part of both the husband and wife when they realise that, even if the home is not yet their own, it is in the course of becoming theirs. The housing shortage is not confined to the metropolitan area; there is an acute shortage of houses in Kalgoorlie. A friend of mine at Kalgoorlie had a house which recently became vacant. He put an advertisement in the Press, saying that the house was to let, and there were 34 applicants for it.

When a new scheme of building houses is inaugurated in Kalgoorlie I think a type of house should be built different from that which has been built there under the Workers' Homes Board scheme. The type of house which was provided in Kalgoorlie under the workers' homes scheme, though quite comfortable in many respects, does not meet the requirements of the peculiar climate of the Goldfields, where intense heat is experienced in summer and intense cold in the winter. I suggest that the Principal Architect be requested to go into the matter of making a design for a dwelling suitable to the climatic conditions in the Goldfields. If one goes to Queensland, where there is a severe summer, one finds a type of house quite different from that found in Victoria, where the conditions are so different from those in Queensland. The house built under the workers' homes scheme in Kalgoorlie is an orthodox four or five-roomed wood and asbestos home, such as one might build in the metropolitan area.

If the Principal Architect were commissioned to do this work I think he would make a particularly good job of it, and if one such house were built on the Goldfields, to the design of the Principal Architect, I think many more would be built there which would be much more comfortable and congenial than those already erected. My remarks concerning the unsuitability of the houses on the Goldfields do not refer only to those which have been built by the Workers' Homes Board, as many of the houses built there prior to the board's extending its activities to that area are considerably more uncomfortable and unsuitable than those built by the board. I do not want it to be thought that the houses built by the Workers' Homes Board are more unsuitable than those built prior to

the board's commencing operations in the Goldfields.

I had intended to deal with the inadequacy of the basic wage, but as I have already taken up so much time I will leave that subject until the Estimates come down. There are many other matters which could be discussed, such as coal supplies, the indifferent quality of the coal being supplied to the railways in this State, education, and so on, but, having taken up something like one hour and twenty minutes of the time of the House, I will leave those matters to be dealt with on some future occasion.

On motion by Hon. N. Keenan, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 14th August, 1945.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. C. B. Williams, leave of absence for twelve consecutive sittings granted to Hon. J. Cornell (South) on the ground of ill-health.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT.

To Disallow Bagged-Wheat Charges Regulation.

Debate resumed from the 7th August on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter:—

That new regulation No. 148, made under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, 1902, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 20th April, 1945, and laid on the Table of the House on the 31st July, 1945, be and is hereby disallowed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.34]: In dealing with the speech made by Mr. Baxter when he moved for the disallowance of the regulation, I feel that I must repeat to the House a few remarks that I made on previous occasions because, as Mr. Baxter has done from time to time when moving for the disallowance of regulations dealing with the charges for the handling of bagged-wheat, he did not spend very much time on the actual facts of the case but, on the other hand, devoted quite a lot of attention to describing the disabilities under which wheat-growers are labouring. With his remarks in that connection I find no fault but, with reference to his statements regarding the regulation under discussion, I must admit that I found it very hard to follow him. Perhaps it is not surprising that that should be so because the regulation deals with quite a number of operations that are necessary in the handling of bagged-wheat at Fremantle. In addition to that, there have been so many different rates in operation during recent years that we can understand it is easy for any member not to be quite as clear as he might otherwise be with regard to those particular rates.

In the first place, I want to emphasise clearly that the regulation deals solely with the handling charges imposed by the Fremantle Harbour Trust in connection with bagged-wheat. Those charges represent an effort on the part of the Harbour Trust to endeavour to recoup itself for the actual expenditure upon services rendered in the handling of bagged-wheat. In the main, those charges represent wages costs which the Harbour Trust has to pay at the time the services are rendered. As I have remarked on previous occasions, I consider it only reasonable to expect that when services are rendered on that account, the least the trust can anticipate is that it will be recouped the actual cost under that heading. I have previously given to members some illuminating figures regarding the quantity of wheat handled at Fremantle by this method.

It may not do any harm to repeat now that in the early history of the operations of the Fremantle Harbour Trust the whole of the wheat exported from the State was bagged, and always a special rate applied to the handling of wheat in bags. So much was that so that when the bulk handling