

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 18th August, 1953.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Electoral : Swearing-in of member	129
Obituary : Letter in reply (late Hon. A. A. M. Coverley)	129
Bill : Kalgoorlie and Boulder Racing Clubs Act Amendment (Private), petition presented, intro., 1r., referred to Select Committee	129
Questions : Rabbit proof fence, No. 2, as to cost, etc.	129
Health, as to medical inspection of school children	130
Electoral, (a) as to enrolment records (b) as to action against offenders	130
Forests, as to qualifications of advisory committee	130
Government advertising, as to cost	131
Beer, as to alleged pillaging at Fremantle Guildford-rd., as to Mt. Lawley-Garrett Road section	131
South Perth Ferries, as to replacement Drainage, as to swamp areas, Maylands Fremantle railway bridge, as to expenditure on renovations	131
Traffic, as to congestion, Barrack and Beaufort-sts.	132
Tram tracks, as to expenditure on renewals	132
Police, as to provision of summer uniforms	132
Betting, as to Minister's attitude to two-up	132
Loan funds, as to allocation and use	132
Education, as to financing prefabricated school units	133
Address-in-reply, fourth day	133
Speakers on Address—	
Mr. Johnson	133
Mr. Hutchinson	138
Mr. Heal	143
Mr. Hearman	146
Mr. Andrew	152

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

ELECTORAL.

Swearing-in of Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am prepared to swear in the member for Murray.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

CONDOLENCE—LETTER IN REPLY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that I transmitted to Mrs. Coverley the motion of condolence that was carried by this House in regard to her late husband, Hon. A. A. M. Coverley. Mrs. Coverley has acknowledged my message and asks me to express her thanks and gratification to this House for the action taken.

BILL—KALGOORLIE AND BOULDER RACING CLUBS ACT AMENDMENT (PRIVATE).

Petition Presented.

Hon. H. H. Styants presented a petition from the agents for the Kalgoorlie Racing Club and the Boulder Racing Club, praying for leave to bring in a private Bill for "An Act to give effect to the amalgamation of the Kalgoorlie Racing Club and the Boulder Racing Club in a new club formed for the purpose of such amalgamation styled 'The Kalgoorlie-Boulder Racing Club' and to vest the assets of the first mentioned club in such new Club and to confer on such new Club power to acquire by purchase or otherwise and to hold and otherwise deal with real and personal property for the purposes of the Club and for other purposes."

Petition received and read.

In accordance with the prayer of the petition, leave given to introduce a Bill.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

Referred to Select Committee.

Bill referred to a Select Committee consisting of Mr. McCulloch, Mr. Moir, Mr. Perkins, Mr. Hearman and Hon. H. H. Styants (mover), with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned and to report on Tuesday, the 1st September.

QUESTIONS.

RABBIT PROOF FENCE, No. 2.

As to Cost, etc.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What was the cost per mile of erection of the No. 2 rabbit-proof fence?

(2) What is the price per mile at which the fence is being offered to adjoining farmers?

(3) Who was the officer responsible for arriving at the above figure?

(4) Where the fence runs through salt-affected country, and is in poor condition, will he give consideration to a reduced price?

(5) What does he intend to do with the half chain reserve land adjoining the fence?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) According to a report submitted on 15th July, 1902, by Mr. H. M. Wilson, Secretary of the Rabbit Department, the cost ranged from £80 to £90 per mile.

(2) £120 per mile.

(3) Mr. W. W. Brinkworth, who was Assistant Chief Valuer of the Rural and Industries Bank and Chairman of the Emu and Grasshopper Advisory Committee. The price was recommended by the Advisory Committee and the Protection Board.

(4) This matter is being considered.

(5) This matter is being considered.

HEALTH.

As to Medical Inspection of School Children.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Health:

Following my question of the 12th instant, relative to medical inspection of school children, as there is, to my knowledge, at least one case in which an eye defect was recorded on three occasions before the parents of the child knew of it, will he take steps to ensure that the method of informing parents is more effective?

The MINISTER replied:

It is not considered that the method employed by the Department could reasonably be made more effective.

If the Hon. Member will give specific instances where parents were not informed, departmental investigations will be made.

ELECTORAL.

(a) As to Enrolment Records.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) Is it a fact that no official records of State Assembly and State Legislative Council enrolments, etc., are now available at the State Electoral Department at Kalgoorlie, and that all business (minor and important) is now dealt with at the State Electoral Office in Perth?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is in the affirmative, what is the reason therefor, insofar as Goldfields electorates are concerned?

(3) Have not Crown Law Department officers, who have heretofore attended to state electoral matters at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, been satisfactory?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. The official rolls for Legislative Assembly districts of Eyre, Hannans and Kalgoorlie are kept at the Court House, Kalgoorlie, and that for Boulder at the Court House, Boulder.

The official rolls for the North-East and South-East Provinces are kept at the State Electoral Office, Perth. This applies to all Legislative Council rolls.

Copies of the latest printed rolls are available at Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) The Clerks of Courts at Kalgoorlie and Boulder are carrying out their electoral duties satisfactorily.

(b) As to Action against Offenders.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) What number of electors enrolled on State Assembly electoral rolls failed to record their votes during the State election for contested electorates on the 14th February, 1953?

(2) What action was taken by the Electoral Department against such offenders, if any?

(3) What were the maximum and minimum fines inflicted, and the total thereof, if any?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 13,419.

(2) The requisite notices were sent to all electors who failed to vote, calling upon them to give valid truthful and sufficient reasons for such failure. As a result, penalties were imposed by the Chief Electoral Officer on 196 electors.

(3) A maximum penalty of 10s. was imposed in each case. The total amount was £98.

FORESTS.

As to Qualifications of Advisory Committee.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Would he inform the House of the forestry qualifications held by members of the Forestry Advisory Committee?

(2) Have any members of the committee any special qualifications in relation to land development and agriculture?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The chairman Mr. A. C. Harris, was appointed as a person with sound professional training and long experience in forestry.

He is a Bachelor of Science in Forestry of Adelaide University (1923) and a full member of the Institute of Foresters of Australia, being chairman of the West Australian Division, 1946-1948; also an associate member of the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.

Following a period of two years in the South Australian Forests Department, he had 20 years experience in classified positions in the Forests Department of Western Australia, being Divisional Forest Officer from 1929 to 1946. He resigned to join the charcoal-iron industry, Wundowie, in 1946, and has been its general manager for the past five years. His first hand experience in forestry and timber industry generally extends to N.S.W., Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. Mr. Harris is also an experienced practical sawmiller.

Mr. F. Gregson was appointed as a representative of the larger sawmilling interests, and as a person with a sound knowledge of Forestry and the timber industry. He is a bachelor of engineering of the University of Western Australia (1928). This was followed by a special one year course in forestry at the Australian School of Forestry, Canberra. He is an associate Member of the Institution of Engineers of Australia, and an associate member of the Institute of Foresters of Australia.

He had 19 years' experience in classified positions in the Forests Department of Western Australia on timber utilisation, and held the position of Utilisation Officer when he resigned from the Forests Department in 1947. For the past 5½ years he has been executive officer of Associated Sawmillers and Timber Merchants of Western Australia, the principal timber trade association in this State. His experience in timber extends to Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

Mr. W. Hayes, was appointed to represent smaller sawmillers generally and is a chartered accountant. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia and was for some years on the State Council of that body.

As secretary of the Operative Sawmillers' Association of Western Australia he has had considerable contact with smaller sawmillers.

(2) Members of the committee have been chosen for the reasons already stated, and do not claim to have special qualifications in relation to land settlement and agriculture. As a professional forester, Mr. Harris has been required to keep himself advised on the relative merits of forestry and agriculture in land utilisation. He also has consulted with the Director of Agriculture and Land Settlement.

Mr. Hayes was reared on a farm, has had farming interests and numbers primary producers among his clients. On professional qualifications and general experience, the committee is well balanced and competent to advise on any matter likely to arise within its terms of reference.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING.

As to Cost.

Mr. HEAL asked the Premier:

(1) What is the present rate per line, or per inch, paid for Government advertising in "The West Australian"?

(2) What sum was so expended in advertising in "The West Australian" during the financial year ended the 30th June, 1953?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The present rate for advertising in "The West Australian" is 3s. per line classified and £4 4s. per inch for Public Announcements (double column). W.A. Government Railways have a contract rate of 2s. 8d. per line for 9,000 lines and the W.A. Government Tramways have a contract rate of 2s. 11d. per line for 1,000 lines.

(2) The amount paid to "The West Australian" by the Government for advertising for the year ending the 30th June, 1953, was £17,112 17s. 1d.

BEER.

As to Alleged Pillaging at Fremantle.

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister, representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping:

(1) Is the report in "The West Australian," of the 12th August, regarding shortage of beer at Derby due to pillaging of two cases at Fremantle wharf correct?

(2) If so, what steps have been taken to find the culprits?

(3) If and when they are found what steps will be taken to deal with them?

The MINISTER FOR FISHERIES replied:

(1) The Minister is not aware of any shortage of beer at Derby.

(2) The normal action was taken to find the pillagers, but so far without success.

(3) The usual course of justice.

GUILDFORD ROAD.

As to Mt. Lawley-Garrett Road Section.

Mr OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware of the shocking state of Guildford-road between the Mt. Lawley subway and Garrett-road?

(2) If so, when is it anticipated that work will commence on this section?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. It is not considered that such a description is appropriate.

(2) Answered by (1).

SOUTH PERTH FERRIES.

As to Replacement.

Mr. YATES asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he indicate when the present old and costly ferries are to be replaced by modern ones as recommended by a special committee appointed by the previous Government?

The MINISTER replied:

The report of the special committee was presented to the previous Government and that Government made no provision for replacements.

Because of the appreciable falling away of ferry business, it is not proposed to adopt the special committee's recommendation to replace all vessels.

DRAINAGE.

As to Swamp Areas, Maylands.

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to drain the swamp areas adjacent to Caledonian Avenue, Maylands, per medium of deep drainage?

(2) If so, when will work commence?

(3) If the answer to (1) is in the negative, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Consideration will be given to drainage in the Caledonian Avenue area when loan money for drainage work can be made available.

(2) and (3) When funds are available, priority of this work in relation to other urgent drainage works must be determined. No funds are available for drainage work this financial year.

FREMANTLE RAILWAY BRIDGE.

As to Expenditure on Renovations.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works:

What amount has been spent, since 1st January, 1952, in renovations to the Fremantle railway bridge?

The MINISTER replied:

As this is a question which should have been directed to the Minister for Railways in view of the fact that the Railway Department does its own repairs and they are not done by the Public Works Department, I intend to reply to the hon. member. The answers are as follows:—

- (a) Strengthening, £15,365; (b) maintenance repairs, £8,300. Total, £23,665.

TRAFFIC.

As to Congestion, Barrack and Beaufort-sts.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

In view of the increasing number of motor vehicles using Barrack and Beaufort-sts. and the already considerable traffic congestion in those streets caused by trams, what steps does the Government intend to take, if any, to relieve this congestion?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied:

The Government has plans for gradually relieving the heart of the city from tram traffic. In pursuance of this policy trams in William-st. will be replaced by trolley-buses before the end of the year. The relief of traffic congestion in Beaufort and Barracks-sts. is receiving consideration.

TRAM TRACKS.

As to Expenditure on Renewals.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What expenditure has been incurred in renewing tram tracks and lines during the last six months?

(2) What expenditure has been budgeted for during the present financial year in connection with renewing tram tracks and lines?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £3,035 renewal and £30,464 to the 31st July on maintenance.

(2) Renewals, nil. Maintenance is expected to absorb £30,000.

POLICE.

As to Provision of Summer Uniforms.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Has the material for the proposed summer uniform for the Police Force arrived in Western Australia?

(2) If not, when is it expected?

(3) Is it anticipated that the new summer uniforms, approved for use by the Police Force, will be available during this summer?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Yes.

BETTING.

As to Minister's Attitude to Two-up.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Premier:

(1) Will he carefully study the replies given by the Minister for Justice to the several questions asked of him concerning his attitude to the playing at Kalgoorlie of the illegal game of two-up, and the action taken by the Police Department in relation thereto, and having done so, advise the House whether, in view of the laws relating to the matter, he is of the opinion that such Hon. Minister has shown a proper intention of carrying out that portion of the ministerial oath of office which requires him to "do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this realm without fear or favour affection or ill will"?

(2) If he is not of that opinion what action does he consider should be taken?

The PREMIER replied:

I would like to thank the hon. member for asking these questions. The replies are as follows:—

(1) and (2) In his replies the Minister for Justice has generally discussed what he considers to be the merits of the game, and has expressed the view that the game at Kalgoorlie might have been allowed to continue as it had done for 50 years. The Minister's utterances had no bearing on his intentions regarding his oath of office. He as well as every other Minister agrees that no instructions should be issued to the Police Department to allow any illegal practices to operate.

LOAN FUNDS.

As to Allocation and Use.

HON. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

(1) What were the total loan funds allocated to Western Australia for the year ended the 30th June, 1954?

(2) Do the figures given in answer to No. 1 include amounts of loans approved to be raised by the Electricity Commission and, if so, what are such last-mentioned amounts?

(3) What amount is included in the answer to No. 1, which is expressly set aside for housing only?

(4) Referring to a statement made by the Acting Premier and appearing in "The West Australian" on the 23rd May last, will he state how much of the £3,000,000 originally deferred in England was included in the £11,344,000 mentioned in such statement as required to meet Australian and oversea contractual commitments?

(5) Referring to the same statement, what number of houses in the Kwinana area is included in the £1,447,000 mentioned for housing in that area, and how much of this sum should be met out of the amount expressly set aside for housing as referred to in No. 3?

(6) How much of the balance mentioned in the Acting Premier's statement as being required for Kwinana area development, namely £1,447,500, is it considered can be spent this current financial year?

The TREASURER replied:

The hon. member was good enough to supply me with a copy of the questions he has referred to, and I am able to give him the following replies:—

(1) £17,750,000.

(2) The figure of £17,750,000 does not include an approved borrowing programme for the State Electricity Commission of £2,000,000.

(3) £3,750,000 for Commonwealth-State agreement houses.

(4) £1,669,000.

(5) It is estimated that 750 houses will be completed by the 30th June, 1954, of which 50 were completed at the 30th June, 1953. None of the expenditure on these houses will be met from the amount of £3,750,000 provided for Commonwealth-State agreement houses.

(6) The whole amount.

EDUCATION.

As to Financing Pre-fabricated School Units.

Hon. A. F. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What was the amount owing in England for Bristol pre-fabricated school units as at the 14th February, 1953?

(2) How much of this sum was at that time included in the deferred commitments?

(3) How many of such units were in store in this State on the 14th February, 1953?

(4) What was the amount owing in England for such units on the 1st July, 1953?

(5) How many of such units were in store in this State on the 1st July, 1953?

(6) How many, if any, of such units were delivered here between the 14th February and the 1st July?

(7) Is the cost of the units referred to in No. 6 included in the sum mentioned in the answer to No. 4?

(8) How much money was paid by the State to vendors of such units between the 14th February, 1953, and the 1st July, 1953?

The MINISTER replied:

The hon. member was considerate enough to give me prior notice of his questions, which afforded me an opportunity to procure the necessary information. The replies are—

(1) £248,710. 2s. 8d. sterling.

(2) £214,710 2s. 8d. sterling was deferred for payment in July, 1953, but was actually met in June, 1953.

(3) 78 units.

(4) Nil.

(5) 69 units.

(6) 28 units.

(7) Answered by No. 4.

(8) Approximately £138,243 sterling.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 13th August.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [4.54]: On Thursday last, when the House adjourned, I had the unusual experience of being congratulated by members on both sides of the House respecting the speech I made. What I said was, "I move: That the debate be adjourned." That seems to be the most popular speech anyone can make in this House at the moment, so I do not expect the same type of congratulation today. I feel that perhaps there may be interest of another description because, if I do not speak, someone else will, and that situation has to be put up with. I shall do, if anything, a little worse than that, and will suggest that political speeches should be listened to by an even wider audience than we have in this Chamber, consisting, as it does, of members themselves, the staff and the Press.

I wish to suggest that the Government should investigate the possibility of having debates delivered in this Parliament broadcast. As we know, those in the Federal House are broadcast, to the great benefit of people who live at immense distances from Canberra. We are aware that the A.B.C. has channels available for the broadcasting of Federal parliamentary debates, although I am not suggesting that

the debates in this House should take precedence on the air over those that take place in the Federal Houses of Parliament. What I am suggesting is that, to the people of this State, debates in this Parliament are of considerable importance and a great deal of interest to them. It has been my experience, and no doubt it is that of other members who come in contact with their electors, to be asked, "When are we going to hear you on the air?"

Numbers of electors, although interested in politics to some degree, are not completely aware of the divisions between State and Federal matters. Undoubtedly, many folk imagine that all that takes place in connection with law-making occurs in the Commonwealth Parliament. It must be admitted that that Parliament is of greater importance than this Chamber, because it is there that the control of the purse lies. Every married man knows that the keeper of the housekeeping purse has control of the house, and in a similar manner the Government that controls the public purse has control of our economy. For that matter, and largely for that reason, there is no doubt that Federal matters are of greater importance and interest than are State matters, but a large number of questions are raised in this House that are of great public interest, matters that affect people who are not within reach of this Chamber, and those individuals would like to hear our debates.

Questions have been raised here recently of great importance and interest to people on the Goldfields, especially when there are references to mining matters. Similarly, when statements are made about coal, the people of Collie feel they are underinformed regarding the debates, because there is no doubt that, owing to restrictions of space and other considerations, full reports of debates cannot be given by the present organisations disseminating public information, such as the Press and the broadcasting services. References to wheat and wool are of equal importance to people interested in those commodities, whether the discussions take place in this Chamber or in Canberra. I am certain that this suggestion—that an effort should be made to have the debates of this House broadcast—would receive the support of all country members. They have a very great desire to ensure that their efforts to put forward the views of their constituents and defend their interests are made clear.

There is a special audience for parliamentary debates in the aged and the sick. A great number of people are tied to their beds or confined to their homes for long periods, and many of them are keen to listen to political debates and find a greater interest in them than in the normal fare submitted by wireless stations.

Some of those people are folk who for many reasons cannot spend all their time in reading. There is no doubt that in that section alone there is quite an audience not only willing but reasonably anxious to listen to such debates. It may be that some of them look upon such debates as a form of entertainment and to such folk our standard of behaviour here would be too high. I know that many of them like to listen to speakers who draw interjections. If such interjections were supplied—and I have no doubt they could be without any great deal of organisation—the debates of this House could be made at least as interesting as a great number of items that are heard on the wireless.

There are special debates which, if notice of them were given in the Press and in news sessions, would draw large audiences, particularly those concerned with the agricultural industries. We have the spectacle in this Chamber of members preparing lengthy, informative addresses containing a great deal of information that never gets any further than those people who read "Hansard," and that group is far smaller than that which would be prepared to listen to debates if it were known that they were to take place. Further, I feel that although the standard of speaking in our House is possibly better than that of the Parliament whose proceedings are at present broadcast, there is no doubt that it would be considerably improved if speakers knew that there was an unseen audience, as well as members in the Chamber and others who are required by the nature of their employment to listen to what is said here. The unseen audience would be better informed and we might then have a greater interest displayed in parliamentary matters.

Undoubtedly in a democratic country the most effective government is one that rests upon an informed population; and where there are persons who do not know or realise the difference between a State Parliament and the Commonwealth Parliament, it is certain that we have an uninformed population. The result is that we have amazing results at times when we go to the people and seek their opinion on legislation. It would be in the interests of government as a whole, and definitely in the interests of an improvement in democratic machinery, if an effort were made to inform electors on just what does take place.

My second subject is one that is somewhat allied to the first in that it deals with the possibility of giving more information to the people of Western Australia. During the war there was, under the care of the Department of Industrial development, a Western Australian Industries Expansion Committee. The chairman was Professor Mauldon and the executive officer was Mr. G. B. Lancaster. Those gentlemen, both of whom had theoretical training in the subject of

economics, produced, with the information and assistance that were available to them, an annual report on the economics of Western Australia. At present there is no body doing that. Various interests study various sectors of our economy for their own purposes. The statistical branch produces a great deal of information on which forecasts of economic weather can be based, but there is no independent body concerned with the investigation of the economy of Western Australia. There is no body forecasting the economic weather of this State, and I feel that there should be.

It is most important that some group of persons should be charged with the responsibility of keeping an eye on our economy; of telling us not only where we have been, but where we are likely to finish if we continue on our present course. It may be that our economy is tending to be unbalanced in some particular aspect. Perhaps there are gaps in our economy which could be filled quite readily if we knew precisely where they were. I consider that such a body should be established, charged with that responsibility, and required to issue reports annually, setting out information such as could be expected from such a body.

There should be an annual report of the general economy and periodical examinations of individual industries. Just recently there came into my hands a review of a section of the wheat industry in New South Wales setting out the expectations and intentions of wheat farmers in that State. It was a detailed report, the conclusions of which were somewhat different from those normally expressed by folk who reputedly speak as leaders of that industry. I think that a similar review in this State might—or again it might not—produce a similar divergence of opinion between the rank and file of the industry and those elected to be its leaders. Such information is of great interest and should be available to us, with respect not merely to that industry but to all industries.

Such a committee should be independent of control and influence by anybody. It should be free of control and of the suspicion of control by the Government; by any section of the State; or by any of the State's interests. For that reason, I would like to see it established with Government support and blessing. Preferably it should be housed at the University where there is a Department of Economics; where the gentleman who was chairman of the committee during the war is the professor in charge of that particular section; where there are a number of students and graduates who would be most willing to co-operate; and, furthermore, where a great deal of the information which would be necessary for the purposes of the committee has already been collated and is available in various forms. Such a committee would need a personnel of about

three, and possibly the assistance of a small clerical staff. The cost would not be very high and should be met by the persons who would benefit from the reports and findings made.

Hon. C. F. J. North: Would it advise the Government or just issue reports?

Mr. JOHNSON: I feel it should issue reports by which the Government, if it were an intelligent Government, would be advised. But I do not feel it should be required to instruct the Government. A government's job is to govern and to take advice from where it can get it, but it is the responsibility of a government to see that the advice is the best available; and I am trying to show that at present there is a gap in the advice that is available or in the advice that should be available.

It is particularly because I feel governments should take advice and not instruction, and that such an economic committee should be completely independent, that I put forward the proposition that it should not even be financed by the Government but that the Government should be one of the contributors. The persons or groups that I feel would derive the greatest benefit from the reports of such a committee are those who invest in Western Australia in various ways; in particular, banking interests, which are greatly concerned with security of investment, insurance and assurance companies who have very large sums invested in Western Australia and who might, by a slightly better informed background, be able to make these investments of even greater value to the State, and, for that reason, to themselves.

Such bodies as the Chamber of Manufactures and the Chamber of Commerce would benefit from this organisation. They would be better informed if they drew their information from a group that was independent, not only of the Government but of themselves. The matter of independence is perhaps the most important factor apart from the actual information. It could be that such a body reporting to the various organisations I have indicated, could show methods whereby it would be not only in the interests of Western Australia, but of the various sections of investors, to decentralise the industries and works of the State.

It is necessary that the State should develop in a balanced manner. I feel, and have felt for a long time, that it is not in its interests to develop purely as a primary producer. Whether that idea is well based is hard to say. I know there are people who believe that primary production is the State's main aim. It could be that they are right: it could be that they are wrong, but without some source of unbiased information it is difficult to know just who is right. The cost of such a body would not be very great. At a rough estimate—I admit it is pretty rough—a subscription of £20 from each of the associated banks, insurance companies, assurance companies, and the various members of the Chamber

of Manufactures and the Chamber of Commerce, Retail Traders' Association and so on would more than meet the cost for one year.

If these same people were prepared to make a donation of, say, £500 each, it is my opinion that the organisation could be established and be permanently independent. It would not then be dependent on anybody for its income, and it would be able to make completely independent judgments and statements. I am not suggesting that any one is required to act upon those statements, if they are made, but I am certain that many people would act upon them. It could be that the people who took notice of them would be those who would make the greatest profits and thereby the greatest contribution by way of taxation etc., to the good of the State and indirectly to its general expansion. As a banker, or an ex-banker—I am not sure which I am at the moment—I would like to feel that the members of the Associated Banks would be the first to start such a project in this State. I feel they should do that because it is in their interests to do so. I am convinced that an independent body examining the affairs of the State could advise them clearly on their best programme for ensuring the safety of their securities, which is a matter of great interest to them. I have not asked anyone at the University whether they would be prepared to act in any capacity on this committee. In fact, I have not discussed this idea with them, although I will say that it has arisen out of discussions I have had with various people there; but the idea is my own. I believe that if any body, person, or group likes to take this matter up, the Economics staff of the University would be wholeheartedly behind them and would, perhaps, knock the idea into slightly more practical form than I have put forward. This is, however, a matter which I feel should go forward and therefore I commend it.

The third subject on which I wish to touch shortly is the matter of industrial accidents. This is a question on which one could speak for the full three-quarters of an hour allowed at this stage of the debate. I bring it forward in the hope that it will prove to be of great interest, not only to the industrialists, and the people who represent them in this House, but to those who represent the employing interests. As members will recall, there was published in "The West Australian" about eight weeks ago the report of an address by Dr. Henzell, the Commissioner of Public Health, to the Annual Conference of Health Inspectors. Accompanying that published report was a graph showing the comparative causes of death and the wasted years of life brought about by those various causes. The fifth in number of deaths is "other accidents," and that is accompanied by the greatest wastage in useful life.

The only other accidental cause of death listed is "Automotive accidents", which comes second in the years of wasted life. But "other accidents"—that is, accidents other than automotive accidents—were the cause of the greatest number of years wasted. Of course, some of those accidents took place in the home, but a great number of them were industrial accidents. Among the statements that occur in that report is one from Dr. Henzell, which I quote—

He said that deaths from accidents had the greatest impact upon the State's economy.

Another quotation reads—

Other accidents were responsible for 6,500 deaths, and that accounted for 11,090 years wastage of life.

That, of course, is a matter of grave concern to the State as a whole, and it is most important to those who were dependent upon the persons who unfortunately died. This was followed by a special report in "The West Australian" of the 29th July. This was a report on industrial accidents as a general matter based on reports from the Federal Labour and National Service Department, and deals with industrial accidents in particular—accidents other than fatal ones. It goes on to say—

Our worst cases—absent from work three days and over—represent 65 out of every 1,000 in our work force. Even America, which strives to do most things bigger and better than everyone else, cannot come within cooee of matching us here. The United States figure is 49 a 1,000. In England, the rate is under 40 a 1,000.

That shows a definite wastage, and if our accident rate could be reduced to the English figure—and there is no reason to suppose that the Australian working man is deliberately less careful than his English counterpart—an important amount of production would be saved to the State. This accident rate involves an important source of loss of profit which would be saved to the various employing bodies if such accident rate could be reduced.

Industrial accidents are not only painful to the people concerned but also they are a plain straight waste to the employers. If our industrial accident rate could be reduced from its present level of 65 to the 40 of England, the rate of insurance premiums in relation to industrial accidents would be considerably reduced. There is a further charge which falls upon the people, either in the form of a State or Commonwealth Government, and that concerns finding employment for those who have been involved in industrial accidents, or the retraining of victims of more serious injuries. There were approximately 110,000 accidents throughout Australia, involving injuries to

the arms, wrists, hands and fingers. A large number of these accidents necessitated amputations, and this must have had a serious effect in reducing the industrial capacity of the workers concerned. In many cases the victims would need retraining. In some instances it means the placing of a man who has served five or seven years apprenticeship in some special trade in a different field of employment.

A great responsibility rests on the employer. A large proportion of factories are not enjoyable places. Many of them are dirty, draughty and have bad lighting. The conditions are definitely not ideal and many improvements could be made. There are regulations setting down the minimum standards of safety in such establishments and inspectors to police them, but they have not the power to enforce anything but the minimum standard. With a few outstanding exceptions the minimum standard is the most that the majority of employers are prepared to adhere to. That is a mistake on their part because, although the accident rate is spread over the whole of industry and not confined to any single phase of it, there is no doubt the employers could be more aware of how this wastage affects their balance sheets.

If they could reduce the number of accidents in their factories by something under 6½ per cent. to about 4 per cent. and thus reduce the payments made for workers' compensation the benefit would reflect in their dividend rates, that being the principal factor in which most employers are interested. I would like to see regulations introduced to increase the powers of inspectors who police the safety regulations. I would also be pleased to see greater pressure brought to bear on employers to ensure that the health factor is fully considered by them. Many factories are draughtier than is necessary and there is no doubt that at present, apart from accidents, there is a great deal of absenteeism caused by colds, influenza and other illnesses which are brought about, to some extent, by the lay-out of the premises in which the workers are employed.

I stress that greater importance should be placed on the reduction of wastage in industry caused by accidents. No employee wishes to be the victim of an accident, but workers are human and they do err at times, often suffering severely as a result. Sufficient safety engineering in employment would reduce the incidence of accidents very greatly. It is in the interests of all concerned that this matter should be made of paramount importance. I consider it is the responsibility of the employer to make the employee conscious of his duty to himself and to his place of employment in order to avoid getting hurt. However, that is strictly a matter for leadership and one

cannot ask employees to lead. It is the employer's responsibility and privilege and, what is more, he could benefit from it. There are one or two other matters to which I wish to refer.

In the speech made the other day by the member for Stirling, who is the Leader of the Country Party in this State, praise was given to the Commonwealth Government for its handling of finance. I could not help but feel that that praise was given not so much in the belief that the Federal programme has been a good one, but because, as is well known, there is now a very great need for a little praise for those persons in charge of Federal finance. After all is said and done the Leader of the Commonwealth Country Party is the Commonwealth Treasurer. The policy that the member for Stirling supported was one that was recommended by theoretical economists about 1900, but it has suffered a considerable change in the same way as many of the ideas and theories of that age.

The main point the member for Stirling made was that it was a good plan to raise the interest rate. I am not the only one who disagrees with that point of view because some very eminent economists, including probably the only woman economist of any importance—Professor Joan Robertson—also disagree that the raising of interest rates is a sound plan. There is a good deal of factual evidence available to those who would care to study it to show that subscriptions for the Commonwealth Government loans are not influenced by the interest rates. The main factor taken into consideration when subscribing to such loans is security, and the principal cause of the falling off of subscriptions to the Commonwealth loans was the uncertainty as to their future.

It will be remembered that shortly after the present Commonwealth Government came to power it made many changes in the financial policy of its predecessors, the results of which we are reaping now. Even before it came to office the present Commonwealth Government, with the support of members opposite, took steps to ensure that it did not retain power over price control. But one of the first things that happened after it assumed office was that it took the floor from under the Commonwealth loans. For the benefit of those who do not follow that particular term I would point out that prior to that time there had been established the practice, with Commonwealth Treasury support, of purchasing in the open market every Commonwealth bond that came upon the market if the price fell below the fixed figure. As a result of the removal of that floor there was a movement in the price of Commonwealth bonds which was not very large at first but which grew.

Then we had public discussions on the virtues of the interest rate and, knowing the form of government which was in

power, people who had large sums available undoubtedly put pressure upon the Government to raise the interest rate and, in the hope and expectation that that rate would rise, they refrained from subscribing to current loans, waiting, quite naturally, for the rate to rise. It did not rise that fast but loans were less well-subscribed than they had been. When the rate rose there was a better form of subscription but to claim that was because the rate rose is a mistake in fact.

Those funds had been held pending the rate rising; pressure had been put on to get the rate to rise and had there been, as there should have been, no doubt that the rate was remaining stable, those funds would have been available a great deal earlier because, as I said before, the major subscribers to those loans are people who are investing trust funds of various kinds. The major subscribers are principally insurance companies and assurance companies that require a great deal of security because the funds with which they are dealing are not, in fact, strictly their own. I would like to quote a couple of short paragraphs from "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money" by J. M. Keynes. This is one of two copies in the library. On page 148 he states—

The state of confidence, as they term it, is a matter to which practical men always pay the closest and most anxious attention.

[*Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.*]

I have referred to the fact that confidence was destroyed by two things, namely, uncertainty as to the course of the Government in regard to the rate and the removal of the floor from under the price of Commonwealth bonds. There is a quotation in regard to uncertainty and the future of interest rate which is as follows:—

Uncertainty as to the future course of the rate of interest is the sole intelligible explanation of the type of liquidity—preference which leads to the holding of cash.

I have referred to that in the statement that these assurance and similar trust funds were held because of uncertainty and would have been available had there been no uncertainty. In reference to the theory which was espoused that interest rates gathered funds, Keynes has this to say on page 375:—

The justification for a moderately high rate of interest has been found hitherto in the necessity of providing a sufficient inducement to save. But we have shown that the extent of effective saving is necessarily determined by the scale of investment and that the scale of investment is promoted by a low rate of interest, provided that we do not attempt to stimulate it in this way beyond the point which corresponds to full employment. Thus it is to our best advantage

to reduce the rate of interest to that point relatively to the schedule of the marginal efficiency of capital at which there is full employment.

On that I would like to say we are having some slight employment trouble, particularly in regard to the older men. There is certainly something less than full employment at the present moment. Keynes goes on to say—

Our criticism of the accepted classical theory of economics has consisted not so much in finding logical flaws in its analysis as in pointing out that its tacit assumptions are seldom or never satisfied, with the result that it cannot solve the economic problems of the actual world.

I would like to close with this final quotation with reference to the power of economic ideas. This has reference also to matter contained earlier in my speech on the value of an economic committee. Keynes has this to say—

I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas. Not, indeed, immediately, but after a certain interval; for in the field of economic and political philosophy there are not many who are influenced by new theories after they are 25 or 30 years of age, so that the ideas which civil servants and politicians and even agitators apply to current events are not likely to be the newest. But, soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil.

The reference is an authoritative one and I feel it has full application.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [5.50]: The Speaker is not in the Chair at the moment, but I should like at the outset to extend my congratulations to him on his elevation to that high office. I have observed the hon. member's work during the last three years while he was sitting on the Opposition side of the House and have no doubt that the respect I gained for him will increase still further while he occupies the Chair. I should also like to offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees.

[*The Speaker took the Chair.*]

The election in February last brought about the downfall of the McLarty-Watts Government and led to the taking over of the administration of affairs by Labour under the Premiership of the member for Northam. This change was significant inasmuch as it marked the end of an era of real achievement in State political management. When the Government took office in 1947, it had been in the political wilds for a period of 14 years, and consequently it was no easy task for the members appointed to ministerial office to take charge.

Because of this fact, if for no other, the Government's achievements in those six years were most meritorious.

In many respects, the six-year period was one, not exactly of boom, but of prosperity and appreciation of the real future that lies before the State. In many ways the political future was assured. In the fields of industrial development and migration, the State has shown remarkable progress. Although I mentioned that the month of February ended an era of real achievement, I did not mean to imply that progress has been arrested because I feel sure that the future of the State is assured.

Naturally I have some regrets that the electors, in their wisdom, rejected the McLarty-Watts Government. When I entered this House in 1950, I recall that the present Minister for Education advised me that I was unfortunate in one respect, namely, that I had not entered Parliament on the then Opposition side as so many more opportunities were forthcoming for backbenchers on that side of the House. At the time I was not prepared to agree with all he said, perhaps owing to my inexperience of these matters, but subsequently I discovered and now believe that to the individual member sitting in Opposition, opportunities are presented to formulate and express ideas in greater measure than are available to backbenchers on the Government side.

On this occasion I propose to offer some remarks about the stage reached by our transport system, deal a little with history and possibly look into the future. By way of introducing the subject, I shall quote from the State Transport Co-Ordination Act, as some portion of it will have a close bearing on what I am about to say. Section 10 deals with the powers and duties of the board and states—

Subject to this Act, the board may of its own volition or under the direction of the Minister, shall—

- (a) make investigations and inquiries into transport matters. In making such investigations and inquiries the board shall give consideration, among other factors, to all or any of the following factors, namely:—

- (i) The question of transport generally in the light of service to the community;

- (ii) The needs of the State for economic development;

- (iii) The industrial conditions under which all forms of transport are conducted;

- (iv) The impartial and equitable treatment of all conflicting interests.

As I view them, those are admirable objectives for the board to pursue in its endeavour to co-ordinate the various components that make up the transport system of the State. The reason that we have not achieved anything like the results so piously hoped for, or even come anywhere near to achieving them, is probably due to a variety of factors, the principal ones, I suggest, being the influence brought to bear by pressure groups and generally speaking, resort to political expediency. Possibly there has been a lack of driving force or exercise of real imagination to bring about transport reform, such as is obviously needed as a result of modern developments throughout the world and existing conditions locally.

The fact that action that should have been taken has not been taken is probably due to the influence of pressure groups, and so far we have not had anybody with a policy strong enough to withstand the influence of such groups. Under the Act, the board was enjoined to consider the impartial and equitable treatment of all conflicting interests. Upon that one point alone, the board has not been able to put into effect the measures desired in order to make the transport system as economical and efficient as circumstances would permit. The objective that the question of transport should be viewed in the light of a service to the community must not be taken as meaning that an un-economic phase of transport should be conducted at the expense of other component parts of the transport system as a whole. The four points I have quoted from the Transport Co-ordination Act must each be viewed as being dependent upon the others.

I come now to the discussion of the position of the railways of this State, as upon them depends the future of the transport system. Actually the railways are the keystone upon which rests the future policy of the Transport Board and the administration that must be put into force in order to bring about an efficient and workable transport system. I do not think there is anybody who denies the importance of the railways in the past. The railway system of this State has played an enormous part in developing widespread regions which, but for the existence of railway lines in those areas, would have remained in obscurity. Although some lines may not be an economic proposition, it must be realised that they have been very valuable in assisting the development of primary, secondary and tertiary industries in Western Australia.

The railways will play a big part in the further development of our State, but we must not bog down on the thought that upon the railways rests the main responsibility of continuing the development of the outback regions. It has become increasingly apparent as the years have gone

by that modern practice suggests there are other forms of transport that must be co-ordinated with the railways in order to achieve anything like an efficient transport system. People have known for a considerable time that the financial set-up of the railways has been most alarming. The point has been reached where a breakdown of the system is not beyond the bounds of possibility. It required the refreshing candour of the Railways Royal Commission of 1947 to bring home some of the facts that have led to this shocking state of affairs.

I would like to read an extract from a leading article in "The West Australian" of the 21st July, of this year which in essence, gives some facts and figures regarding the losses suffered by the railways over past years. The article is headed, "Appalling Losses" and is as follows:—

Between 1945-46 and 1951-52 the six State railway systems, after meeting an annual interest charge of about £11,000,000, managed to accumulate an aggregate deficit of £72,000,000. In 1951-52 they failed to meet working expenses by £8,500,000. During the same period taxation reimbursement and supplementary grants paid by the Commonwealth to the States rose from £34,000,000 to £120,000,000. It is not suggested that there is a precise relationship between State railway deficits and Commonwealth taxation reimbursement, but there is no doubt that the Commonwealth has had the unpleasant task of taxing people to cover up the political mismanagement of State-owned utilities. That the States should find uniform taxation to their liking is not surprising.

Later, the editorial has this to say—

What has happened to the railways—and also to wages, costs and taxes—is simply another manifestation of the great post-war boom. Obviously the present situation cannot continue indefinitely and any State politician who cannot see the writing on the wall must be blind. The railway tragedy does not end with annual losses; every State is still seeking millions of pounds for rehabilitation. The Commonwealth might well call the States together and, using reimbursement as a weapon, force them to adopt a programme of transport reform.

This gives some idea of what are described as the appalling losses suffered by the six railway systems of the States. We in Western Australia are not alone with regard to our problems of railway finance.

Here we find that our annual deficits continue to increase alarmingly, and I think most of us realise that something should be done in the way of railway reform. What is alarming, too, is that we

are not able, under the present system, to carry out the proper maintenance of our railroads and rollingstock. It is a big headache to the Commission to find means to finance even this angle of its affairs. It appears that, as the years have gone by, successive Governments have been too prone to handle the day-to-day problems with which the railways have been confronted instead of looking to the future and endeavouring to form a co-ordinated policy which would incorporate the best features of the component parts of transport, such as railways, road, air and shipping.

The time has come when we must no longer be complacent. I do not believe in endeavouring to sheet home to any particular person or political administration the blame for the state of affairs that has arisen. The various Governments have done something towards instituting railway reforms, but I submit that those that have been instituted have only been such that they have toyed with the overall problem. Until we reach the stage where real courage is displayed and the influence of pressure groups is disregarded, our transport system will gradually continue to decline; or we will, rather, tend to bolster up a system which is highly inefficient, to say the least.

It should be remembered that the problem of the railways is not parochial. It does not affect only the farmers, mines and industrial projects it serves, but every person in the State; and it doubly affects the taxpayer through his pocket. So it is a matter of concern to everyone that something should be done to overcome the shocking state into which the railways have fallen. Possibly, at this stage I could pay a tribute to the previous Government for its attempts to rehabilitate the railway system.

Mr. O'Brien: It pulled up the Mt. Magnet-Sandstone line.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: In many ways the previous Administration did attempt to reform the railways and bring about a more efficient working of the system, but I still do not think it went far enough. Possibly it was not long enough in office to put into practice all the potential ideas it had. However, that is by the way.

I emphasise that the matter of railway finance is of great concern to all taxpayers, and it would be well for the man in the street to interest himself in the welfare of the railways. I suggest, too, that for years now we have received allocations from a beneficent Grants Commission to assist us with our railway finance. Much of that money—many millions of pounds—that has been received to assist us in bolstering our railway system could have been well spent on various developmental projects throughout the State, such as on various public works and the construction of hospitals and schools, which would have been of real value.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I was pointing out that it behoves all taxpayers to be fully cognisant of and realise the implications of the inefficiencies of our railroads as one of the component parts of our transport system. The taxpayer pays heavily in hard cash for those inefficiencies and it is well to remember that parents and citizens' associations, hospital boards, progress associations and the like could well utilise the money that is being drained and frittered away on a railway system that is not functioning as it should and is not playing its appropriate part in a co-ordinated transport system. The money that is being spent to bolster up our railways could well be expended in fostering the educational, health and developmental requirements of the State.

Many solutions have been offered to the problem of co-ordinating transport so that it may become more efficient and economic than it is at present. There are two extreme schools of thought, one of which suggests that all restrictions on road transport should be lifted and all methods of transporting goods should be given an open go. It is said that under such a scheme each of the components would begin to play its appropriate part in the transporting of passengers and goods, to the economic welfare of the State. The other extreme school of thought desires that not a single inch of railway line, no matter how useless or uneconomic it may be, should be torn up and that there should remain practically a rail monopoly of transport in this State.

I contend that somewhere between those extremes lies the real solution, but no-one has so far been able to hit upon it or follow such a policy to its logical conclusion. We find that pressure is brought to bear in matters such as the retention of railway lines and opposition to increases in freights and fares, as well as questions pertaining to road transport. It is largely because of this that we have not been able to implement a firm policy. I cannot agree with those who advocate the removal of all transport controls. America has often been cited as a country in which there are practically no restrictions on transport and where the community is well served on that account. Road transport interests often hint largely at that, but there is a certain amount of misunderstanding as to the position in America because there is in that country an interstate commission which fixes the fares and freights of the rail systems, and lays down the conditions under which road transport must operate.

Mr. May: Surely you would not compare America with this State!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I am endeavouring to prove a point and am not doing what the hon. member suggests. I am trying to illustrate why I cannot agree with the interests which advocate the abolition of all controls over road transport. This interstate commission that I have mentioned

fixes rail fares and freights and lays down the conditions under which road transport shall operate in competition with the railways. America cannot therefore be quoted as a country where no restrictions are placed on any form of transport.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: Who imposes the restrictions?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The interstate commission that I have mentioned. It is a Federal body. In recent years that commission refused to permit the amalgamation of two large road transport organisations which desired to merge in order to increase the length of their road haulage. I will quote part of a report associated with that refusal as the remarks made there have some bearing on the question with which I am dealing. It reads—

In refusing to permit an amalgamation of two road carrying organisations—the Keeshin Freight lines and the Pacific Intermountain Express Company—which would have enabled them to haul greater distances in interstate road traffic, the Interstate Commerce Commission stated:—

“Transcontinental traffic, including the commodities most susceptible to motor truck competition, when moving in large volume, can be transported more economically by rail than by motor carrier. The record indicates that this would still be true for hauls at distances much less than coast to coast. To the extent inroads are made by motor carriers on this type of traffic, the volume available for mass transportation by railroads will be reduced, and the advantage of rail transportation in this field would eventually be undermined.

I wish to emphasise that point “the advantage of rail transportation in this field would eventually be undermined.” To continue—

The cumulative effect of the loss of such traffic to motor carriers would necessarily be felt by the railroads, and would impair not only their service on commodities which motor carriers normally solicit, but also on commodities which must necessarily be transported by rail.

The shipping public would suffer from a decrease in rail services and it would be faced with demands for increased rates on commodities which must move by rail. In the administration of the national transportation policy, the inherent advantages of rail transportation on volume movements of transcontinental traffic must be preserved.

So I am not alone when I suggest that it would be unwise to wipe the field clean of all restrictions on transport because of the advantages which railway transporta-

tion has in certain respects; and the railways of this State must be preserved for obvious reasons. They still have to carry a large part of our developmental work and, in order not to take a short-term view by endeavouring to economise and perhaps give a better service by existing road transport, it would be folly to jeopardise the future of the railway system.

Then, too, I cannot agree with that school of thought which says that all railway lines, or 99 per cent. of them, should be retained irrespective of whether they are unpayable, uneconomical or even plain useless. A great number of these lines must be abandoned. However, I am not so sweeping in my remarks as to include those lines that service areas which could not be so well or effectively serviced by road transport. As I said previously, the railways in this State over past years have played an enormous part in our development and they will do so in the future. But we must take the middle road and realise that the railways cannot function if they are preserved in their entirety, and we continue to suffer the appalling losses that have been suffered in past years.

As regards freights and fares, we should, if possible, impose them on a scale approximately commensurate with operating costs; that should be fairly obvious to all members. One finds that if a system such as the railways functions inefficiently and uneconomically it brings about a wider inefficiency among its employees, and if it were possible to increase the general efficiency and improve the economy of the railway administration I am sure there would be a better return from all the employees. It is unfair, uneconomical and entirely illogical for the department—let alone a poverty-stricken department like that one—to be called upon to subsidise industry. By such an action the industries mask their costs to the community and in the long run little advantage is gained by those who seek subsidies through low freights and fares because, when all is said and done, the taxpayers pay for it.

I have here a report and, as it is most interesting, I think it would be appropriate to read it to the House. It is written by Mr. John Elliot who, four or five years ago, wrote a report on the Victorian Railways. This man is now a chief regional officer on the Southern Region, British Railways and in his report he states—

The only sound and lasting basis for transport service, on which both industry and the public alike depend, is that it should be as impartial as possible, as all-embracing as possible, as efficient as possible, and as self-sufficient as any other industry; above all that it should be separated from the State Budget, and so from political "ups" and "downs" which rarely, if ever, have any logical connection with it. The physical state of transport will otherwise be dependent on the outlook

and difficulties of the State Treasury (as has for so long been the case with the Victorian Railways).

The services which it provides should be paid for in full by those industries and those people who use them (so ensuring that the true cost of transport service to the community is not masked) and that its charges shall be sufficient to provide not only for the operating costs of service, but for adequate annual charges against revenue for renewals. There are always plenty of voices demanding that transport rates should be lowered, or kept low, to benefit this industry or that section of the community. This is illogical, and, if listened to, will render a lasting solution impossible. There is no more reason for transport services to be provided at an overall loss than for any other essential commodity. Muddled economy and semi-bankrupt transport can be the only result of such a policy. It is always open to any government to assist a particular industry, in the national interest, by means of an open subsidy; it cannot be in the national interest for one vital industry to subsidise another, and destroy its efficiency in the process of doing it.

That tends to give weight to the argument that low fares and freights should not be used as a method of subsidising industry. All in all, there should be an appreciable cutting down of uneconomical lines and a substitution of proper road transport—preferably road transport run by private enterprise—where it can be effected. There should be a more proper co-ordination of transport in order to ensure that its service to the community will be better effected.

At this stage, too, I want to hark back for a moment to the retention of railway lines, uneconomical though they may be, as was suggested by the member for Murchison. This was the inference one must draw from the remarks he made when he showed his disapproval of the late Government's action in discontinuing the Sandstone line. That is an excellent example of how a member of this House can endeavour to bring pressure to bear upon the Chamber so that he might serve his community as he thinks best. It is all very well to serve a certain section of the community but service to the whole community must also be taken into consideration. It is rather difficult to draw a line as to whether one section of the community should be serviced to the detriment of the whole. I feel that if that member had been in the House when the Bill was introduced for the discontinuance of the Sandstone railway, his protest would have been loud and voluble. Briefly referring to the possible future of the transport system of our State, I believe we should delve deeply into the possibilities of air transport because the large-scale car-

riage of goods and passengers by air is attaining great prominence and I am sure will become more important in the near future.

I am wondering whether we have paid sufficient attention to this mode of transport in Western Australia. I consider that air transport in conjunction with feeder road or rail services could be used to a greater extent. By that I do not mean the use of glamour aircraft on long-distance flights at great speeds, but I am referring to an economic proposition with the use of aircraft, such as helicopters. I see no reason why they should not become an integral part of our transport system. On the continent at present very efficient helicopters carry goods and freights over short distances, and in this country I believe they could be used to great advantage. There are two good reasons why they could be incorporated into our transport system. One is that they would be economical because they require no roads or runways and the servicing of them would be quite simple.

Mr. May: There is the question of capital cost attached to it, though.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I cannot agree with the hon. member as to that. The capital cost would be fairly high but not nearly as high as the provision of roads over any distance. I consider that if the costs were gone into thoroughly it would be found that over a period of years the cost of incorporating a helicopter service into our transport system would prove of great benefit to the community and the finances of the State. I think our rail services must be reduced as far as possible and road transport substituted, and that road and rail services should be co-ordinated to a degree that has not been achieved in the past. I emphasise again the value and importance of air transport in conjunction with the road and rail feeder services of our transport system. We should investigate this question extremely closely because I consider that much advantage could be gained by such an inquiry.

In about 1911 in South Africa some far-seeing gentleman foresaw the co-ordination of road and rail transport and this has been done to such a degree in that country that its road and rail services are far more efficient than ours. That has been due to the fact that somebody realised the part that road transport would play in that dominion. In South Africa at present I think there are about 22,000 miles of road routes as against approximately 14,000 miles of rail route. That shows to what degree South Africa has improved its transport system to the benefit of the community. I hope that we do not "miss the bus" by failing to take into consideration the large part that aircraft may play in the future development of this State. In order that Western Australia may advance we should improve our transport system to the highest possible degree.

MR. HEAL (West Perth) [7.57]: Firstly I wish to thank the constituents of West Perth for granting me the opportunity of having the honour of making this my maiden speech in the Legislative Assembly, and also to thank the officers and members of this House for the assistance they have given me. It has been interesting to listen to the previous speakers, especially those representing country and North-West electorates. I am in agreement with them when they say that the metropolitan area could not exist without the country and that the people in the outback play a major part in the development and progress of this State. However, I would point out to them that we in the metropolitan area and the port of Fremantle also play a part. I venture to say that I do not think one could exist without the other.

In the West Perth electorate, which is the smallest in area, we have our troubles but not on such a large scale as those suffered by the people in the country and the North-West. The most disturbing factor in the metropolitan area at present is the large numbers of people who are being evicted from their homes. Those evictees realise that if the owner is genuine and desires his home or warehouse space for his own use, he must be given possession; but unfortunately many owners are not so genuine when serving notice upon these people. What I mean by that is that the owners evict the tenants from their homes, leave the premises vacant for two or three months, and then place new tenants in them at increased rentals. It is no wonder that under the rents and tenancies Act judges and magistrates have very little power. Their hands are more or less tied and they have no alternative but to give way to the owners of the properties.

I would suggest to the Government, if it is going to bring down amending legislation to the Rents and Tenancies Act, that it incorporate a section to give a judge or magistrate more power to use his own discretion. Where most of these people are affected is just north of the railway line. They realise they are in an industrial area, in which a large number of factories and businesses are situated. They understand that it is for the good of the State that they have to move out of their homes.

Another disturbing factor, about which members may have read something in the papers, affects those people in the vicinity of James and Fitzgerald-sts. In this case the City Council has resumed four or five acres of land on which it is going to establish its city yards. The people concerned are naturally annoyed that their land and their homes have been taken away from them and that the council proposes to use this ground, which is so close to the city, for its yards. The

local residents know there is very little they can do under the Resumption of Lands Act. They realise that the City of Perth must expand in the years to come, and that this City Council yard will then be in the heart of the city.

I should have thought the City Council could have resumed land further out in some suburb. Everybody realises that the City Council must be near a central spot to cut down its overhead expenses in order to carry out its work. It is unfortunate, however, that a new hospital building is to be erected where the City Council's depot now stands.

Another disturbing feature is, (I am given to understand), that people are to be evicted from their homes at the corner of Harvest Terrace and Hay-st. so that the dwellings may be turned into offices. These people have, in some cases, lived in these homes for the last 50 years. We know that our city is getting too small and that businesses are springing up which require more office space and accommodation. But surely there is enough vacant space in the heart of our city and enough room to build further storeys on to the present buildings.

One very heartening feature is that at long last a building has been commenced for an infant health centre for the West Perth mothers. This building has started in Hay-st., west of Harvest Terrace. Up till now mothers have found the centre very inconvenient as they have had to use the Ross Memorial Hall, which is most inadequate both for the mothers and the staff concerned over there. It is interesting to note that this infant health centre is to cost in the vicinity of £11,500. In it will be incorporated the infant health correspondence scheme which provides for the mothers of the outback areas; it is to provide for the mothercraft section and is also to contain an infant health section for West Perth mothers.

I feel sure members will be interested to know how the money was raised, so that this building could be erected. In the first place, the Apex Club was approached and asked if it could raise some money. The club did a remarkable job and raised £2,000. The Perth City Council donated £1,100 and the Government has donated £4,000. The Lotteries Commission has subscribed £2,800 odd and the infant health correspondence scheme had £1,500 in hand. Apart from this, the committee that was formed in West Perth, raised £150. That is a splendid lead for the several other districts in Western Australia; a lead which should encourage them to do something for themselves in regard to matters such as this.

I have had many letters recently from my constituents in West Perth about the deplorable state of the Observatory grounds. On making some inquiries concerning the Observatory I uncovered some

very interesting facts. In the first place the Observatory was established in 1898, and since then all Governments have apparently considered it a liability rather than an asset. Why I say that is that in 1929 negotiations were initiated with the Commonwealth Government to take over the Observatory, but those negotiations fell through. Following this, in 1938, the University was approached to take over the Observatory, but the Government of the day refused that.

The Observatory carries out many essential duties in regard to the State. Firstly it gives out the weather information each day—unfortunately it is not always correct—it gives out time signals, and the time of the day; it carries out educational research work and supplies information as to tides and currents on the North-West coast. So members will see that we are indeed fortunate to have some source from which to obtain that information. Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria have no Observatory, and I believe in South Australia the Observatory is controlled by the University.

I would like to quote the amounts granted to the Observatory to enable it to carry out its work each year. When I have done so the House will see the reason why the grounds are in such a bad state. The salaries Vote for 1952-53 is £2,738, of which £1,259 is for the Government Astronomer's salary. The balance of £1,479 is supplied for the other salaries. A contingency Vote of £360 has to cover all other expenses which include £25 for fuel, light and water; £50 for telephones, £15 for postage and cables, £30 for photographic equipment, £40 for time fuses, £100 for instruments and repairs, £25 for books and papers, £35 for travelling and transport, £15 miscellaneous and £30 for the upkeep of the grounds. The total amount is £3,098. The buildings and the site of the Observatory are valued at approximately £60,000.

If the Government, having an asset like that, is not able to provide for the upkeep of its grounds, so that they may be kept in decent order, it should hand it over to the State Gardens Board or the Perth City Council and make an "A" class reserve of it. It could be converted into one of the show places of Western Australia, particularly in view of the fact that it stands between King's Park, Parliament House and Hale School. If a little attention were given to that matter, something adequate could be achieved. In addition, the Commonwealth Government, which uses portion of the premises, pays the State annually £500 in rentals. The Premier has stated that the Commonwealth has treated this State harshly with regard to finance, but in this respect surely the Commonwealth Government could pay an increased rent to the extent of £200 or £300 per annum, and the extra money could be devoted to the upkeep of the grounds.

Next I would like to touch briefly on the native question. Many people have discussed this subject with me to ascertain what are my views on the matter. I am in complete accord with the proposal that the natives should be granted citizenship rights, if they are capable of carrying out the duties entailed. No doubt many arguments will be raised against the application of that principle, if adopted by the Government. The general opinion in the first instance appears to be that the natives cannot hold their liquor, and run amok when under its influence. I think if we, as white people, had to drink as they are forced to do, you, Mr. Speaker, and I would run amok in similar circumstances.

We all know that if we are deprived of something, the urge is immediately created to obtain it. If the natives were allowed to visit hotels and have their schooner of beer or some other drink, I do not think they would imbibe to excess. If they did, the police officers would exercise control over the situation, just as they do with respect to white people. One phase that has caused some worry to politicians is the possibility of natives exercising the franchise. That would not affect us in the metropolitan area, but in country centres, where the native population is large, their votes might have some effect. Of course, if the Electoral Department considered it necessary, for one reason or another, to deal with the situation, it could move to have the law amended.

Recently, I visited the native camps at Bassendean and Belmont, in company with the welfare officer of the Department of Native Affairs. I was surprised to see some of the natives there and to appreciate how conversant they were with matters happening about them. It was interesting to note that there are quite a few elderly people there who are drawing pensions and receiving benefits of various descriptions. Some of them own the blocks of land on which they have erected their shacks. I am sure that if the Government were to give those people some incentive to help themselves, they would be only too agreeable to avail themselves of the opportunity. I noticed some deplorable instances of little old tin shacks, inhabited by natives with three or four kiddies, the families having nothing to sleep on but the bare ground. It is pleasing to know that the State Housing Commission has allocated 25 homes for natives. It would be all to the good if those natives were approached in the matter and the Housing Commission were asked to build a small type of house for their accommodation.

In the metropolitan area, we have at least three hostels for the accommodation of native girls, boys and women. Bennett House is mainly for women who come to Perth from country areas for medical treatment or for some other specific purpose. Alvan House is used for native girls from the missions, who are sent to

the city to further their education, while McDonald House, which is situated in the West Perth electorate, fulfils a similar service in the interests of native boys. In this regard, I wish to read a letter I received from the present Minister for Native Welfare as indicating what is being done now. The letter is as follows:—

The premises known as McDonald House, in Carr street, were opened at the beginning of February, 1952, by the Department of Native Affairs, to accommodate aboriginal boys qualified to receive secondary and special technical and vocational education. The need for a home of this nature had constantly been stressed by the department, and the Public Works Department eventually made available the present McDonald House which was Government-owned property, and previously had been used as school teachers' quarters, and later as an apartment house tenanted by private families.

The intake of boys was arranged on a limited scale as the accommodation facilities were inadequate and unsatisfactory and considerable renovations and alterations were required before the full quota of boys could be admitted. Minor adjustments were immediately made and up to six boys have been accommodated, including educational scholarship and bursary winners.

In June, 1953, the Government gave approval to the expenditure of £3,000 on improvements at McDonald House.

These improvements when completed will allow for the accommodation of twenty boys. A modern diningroom and kitchen will be installed and laundry and ablution facilities improved and extended to meet the requirement of a larger number of residents.

Like its counterpart, Alvan House for girls, McDonald House has been an unqualified success.

I think it will be agreed that that letter indicates the great step forward that has been made towards effecting improvements respecting the welfare of our native population and the better education of the young people. Possibly members read a report in "The West Australian" recently which set out that Mr. W. N. M. McDonald, of Fossil Downs Station in West Kimberley, had provided for the erection of a building to enable natives to be looked after in a better manner than they are at present. The native question is one that needs a lot of thought, and all former Governments have not done nearly enough regarding it. I sincerely hope the present Administration will go fully into these matters and extend to the natives all the consideration they deserve.

In the course of his contribution to the present debate, the member for North Perth referred to the inadequate tram service in his electorate, with its single line and a loop. I would like to mention the tram that runs through the city, on through the West Perth electorate and out to Subiaco. In the interests of the metropolis, the sooner that tram service is dispensed with and buses substituted that could by-pass the centre of Hay-st., the better it will be, and there will be much less congestion experienced with traffic there. I understand that the Minister concerned has that matter in hand, and I am sure the people of Perth and West Perth will greatly appreciate an altered service being operated there within the near future. In conclusion, I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment to your present high office. Being fully aware of your capabilities, I know you will carry out your duties in this House in a most creditable manner.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [8.20]: First let me add my congratulations to those already extended to you, Mr. Speaker, on your election to that high office. I also desire to congratulate the newly appointed Chairman of Committees, the member for Middle Swan.

In the somewhat short time that I have been a member of this House, I have endeavoured to take a close interest in the matters that members have presented for consideration and extend my knowledge and equip myself the better to carry out my duties as a member. To that end, I took an opportunity earlier in the year to pay a visit to the Kimberley electorate during the by-election campaign, the result of which is known to us all. At this stage I would extend my congratulations to the candidate who was successful on that occasion. Although the political result was not all I had hoped for, my visit gave me some appreciation of the problems that present themselves in areas other than my own.

One of the things that struck me rather forcibly during the campaign was the fact that no party had any very clear-cut policy for the development of that territory. The records over the last 50 years appear to be indicative of deterioration, and it seems to me that very little has been suggested that would be calculated to arrest that deterioration or give a service that might lead to a brighter outlook. I appreciate the political difficulties; I know that a large proportion of the electors are people who come and go and who have no stake in that part of the State, and that it is possible for a candidate to appeal to such electors rather than focus attention on the problems that really confront the area and apply themselves to a solution of those problems.

It seems to be a popular idea to criticise and castigate the pastoral companies and pastoral lessees, but it seems to me that while the vast areas that have to be handled are perhaps being dealt with inadequately, none the less the only people dealing with them are the pastoral lessees. Let us consider the action of the present Minister for the North-West who, as a private member in another place, introduced measures having for their object the restriction of the leases and the widening of the franchise to include half-castes. So far as I can judge, neither of those actions is likely to bring any momentous improvement in the existing situation. In fact, any suggestion to restrict the pastoral leases is bad because at present the pastoral industry is the only one that is investing money in that area and any effort to restrict it, in my opinion, should be deplored.

I do not wish to devote all my time to the Kimberleys, but I have stated my impressions in passing because my visit was interesting and made me realise that we have a responsibility to endeavour to grapple with the problem of developing the North as well as other parts of the State. It seems to me that the greater study devoted to the problem, the better it will be for the State, irrespective of the Party that might take this particular action.

The present need is for some form of agricultural research and investigation to be carried out, particularly from the laboratory aspect, and I believe that the production of hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of wealth would result if such work were undertaken. Regardless of what promises may have been made at the by-election or at previous elections, until the problem of getting a greater production per acre in that area is solved, no Government will be able to spend the large sum of money that will be required to make the Kimberleys attractive for settlement.

The South-West, too, has problems, many of them very difficult of solution, but again there is the need for increased production per acre to make the economic development of the South-West attractive. In the past there has been a tendency to regard the dairying industry as a developing industry, but I think that if we are perfectly fair, we must admit that dairying alone cannot develop that part of the State. Two other industries are carried on by the small men and carried on successfully—fruit-growing and potato-growing—both forms of intense culture that produce a high return per acre and make economically sound the spending of the large sums of money necessary to develop the land.

We shall have to revise our ideas a little regarding the dairying industry as being the principal instrument of development in that area. There has been some talk about developing another thousand dairy

farms. This might seem to be a sound idea, but I direct attention to paragraph 54 in the report of the dairy industry investigation committee recently made available by the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, and I think this is calculated to lead one to question the wisdom of further expanding the dairying industry. The paragraph reads—

It is also suggested that the desirability or otherwise of expanding total production of butter and cheese beyond the stage of optimum development of existing areas should be closely examined in the light of long-term market prospects and of the likely effect of increased production on the standard of living of the producers.

The contents of that paragraph should be thoroughly assimilated by all members and particularly by those sitting on the Government side. It raises the whole question of the future of the industry, and if this problem is to be solved, it will be solved only by members—and particularly those on the Government side—applying themselves to a study of the position rather than attempting to side-step it. Most of us know that a consumer subsidy has been paid on dairy products by the Commonwealth Government from 1940, and that the actual price the producer receives has been determined by a costs survey based on different formulas. But in all cases—I do not think this is so generally known—the actual cost formula has been such that the dairyfarmer in Western Australia has never at any time received an adequate recompense for his labours as determined by that survey.

The last survey indicated that the cost was worked out on the basis of a 50-cow farm and the survey dealt with farms that produced between 8,500 lb. to 12,000 lb. of butterfat annually. However, there are very few farms in Western Australia which reach that figure. The average farm in Western Australia is one of 25 cows; and it should be fairly apparent to all members that Western Australian dairyfarmers have for a good many years been placed at a disadvantage, although the recent survey indicates that the actual production per cow in Western Australia is about the average of the Australian production, from which it might, perhaps, be assumed that, generally speaking, the standard of efficiency of the dairyfarmer here is no better or worse than that of dairyfarmers in other States.

One of the difficulties that confronts the dairying industry is that there seems to be a great tendency on the part of anybody who endeavours to discuss it to deal with the matter on the basis of the production per cow, whereas I feel that production per acre is the most important economic factor to be considered. I would illustrate that point by drawing attention

to the fact that as late as the last day of last session, in a discussion on the report of the Select Committee on War Service Land Settlement, the present Minister for Lands and Agriculture, who had represented the Warren electorate for some eight or nine years—and that is one of the areas which presents one of the most difficult problems in the industry—did not apparently appreciate the importance of calculating production per acre, and in his report made no mention of it.

Although the data was provided in the report on which to calculate that production, in the specific case he mentioned and based his argument on, he did not calculate it. I know he has appreciated the importance of production per acre since then, because I have had discussions with him; but at the time, after having represented the Warren electorate for eight or nine years, he still apparently had not devoted sufficient thought to the matter to enable him to appreciate fully the importance of this factor. That illustrates the fact that members of Parliament do not go into these questions fully enough.

In the South-West we must increase the production per acre on existing farms as well as the area. The one, I think, is just as important as the other. There are various means by which it could be done but I do not propose to discuss all of them this evening. One problem that must be tackled is the rabbit menace, which has reached such a stage as to have become the greatest single retarding factor. Greater strides in pasture improvement are not likely to occur unless this problem is dealt with.

The Minister for Health: What is the average acreage of the dairy farms?

MR. HEARMAN: It is about as easy to answer the question, "How long is a piece of string?" I think the Agricultural Department estimates that with proper management, under present conditions, a cow can be milked to every four acres of developed land. If we have a State average of 25-cow herds it means about 100 acres of developed land. There can be considerable variations. There is one man in my electorate—who incidentally has the whole of his property rabbit-proofed—who milks 46 cows on 150 acres. He is doing a lot better than others, and is carrying his cows well. He has as much feed as anybody this year. That illustrates that emphasis on production per acre is just as important as emphasis on the actual area concerned. I might add that that man's property is not a picked farm. I do not think there is a level acre on the land, and it has no swamp. Though it is watered by creeks, the banks are steep. I do not think he can be regarded as a man with a picked area. We will not have solved our developmental problems to a very great extent until our dairyfarmers can reach that standard.

Of course, costs do come into the question of production. There are a lot of costs over which the farmer has some control, but many more over which he has no control at all. I suggest that something in the nature of the co-operation mentioned by the member for West Perth might be considered. There have been far too many times when farmers have done a considerable amount of work but have experienced difficulty in exporting their produce because of shipping troubles, wharf strikes and things of that kind. It is a serious matter for people who produce only one crop if that crop, or the best part of it, is lost. Whatever the industrial issue concerned might be, it is unfair that farmers should be penalised in the manner in which they are, particularly when their produce is perishable. And a good deal of such perishable produce comes from the South-West.

This matter of costs was dealt with adequately by the member for Roe recently, and he mentioned the question of averages in connection with the costs survey, on which I have touched tonight. Concerning the dairy investigation committee's report, it is of interest to note that not only is the average farm on which costs were based practically non-existent in Western Australia but, in making its latest survey, the committee did not even visit Western Australia. Although I do not suggest that the members of the committee did not make the best effort possible to arrive at a fair finding, I think that in the circumstances they would be the first to agree that that finding was not possibly as well founded as they would have liked it to be. It is most important that the State Government should tackle this question of the cost of production to dairy farmers and particularly butterfat dairy farmers in Western Australia.

I discussed this matter with other members of my party this morning and it was decided to suggest that the State Government and the Commonwealth Government should be requested to make an immediate survey of butterfat production in Western Australia for the purpose of determining, firstly, what the present actual average cost of production in Western Australia is; and, secondly, to what extent the cost of production is affected by the lack of development of existing farms—and quite obviously when our herd average is about one-half of the Australian average there is a developmental problem involved; and thirdly, what areas of the State are suitable for butterfat production on a reasonably economic basis. The last matter requires some attention. I touched on it briefly on the last day of the last session, I think. We suggest that such a survey is necessary before any sound developmental policy can be evolved because, until we really know what the problems are, we cannot develop a policy to meet them.

I submit that the present Government, and for that matter past Governments, have not comprehended the problems that beset the South-West as fully as I would have liked them to, or as the necessity for the development of that area required. I hope that the Premier and the members of his Cabinet will closely examine the suggestion that has been put forward. I and other members of my party feel it is essential that there should be a sound developmental policy not only for the South-West but for other areas in the State. I believe quite frankly that references to policy speeches, and things of that nature, in past elections indicate that there has not been the degree of detailed thought devoted to this matter that there might have been.

I consider, particularly in reference to the South-West, that additional efforts will have to be made to develop a sound policy because, unquestionably, additional money will be required, and our past experience of establishing dairy farms there cannot by any stretch of imagination be described as one of unqualified financial success. In fact, large sums of money have had to be written off. The whole question calls for fresh study with a view to determining just what type of farm is best suited to develop the South-West. I think all members, particularly those in the Cabinet, should have a clear conception of the sort of farm they think should be established. If they have not such a conception I suggest they do some thinking and endeavour to get an idea in their mind. It is not just a case of which particular industry we want to foster, but of what sort of agriculture is best suited to the country concerned.

The mere fact that we might need more dairy farms, wheat farms, orchards, or whatever it might be, is not of itself enough. We really have to apply the particular form of agriculture to which the land is best suited. It would be a waste of time, for instance, trying to establish an orchard at Merredin; and, equally, we cannot do something in the South-West that can be done so much better at Merredin. If we do need an expansion of the dairy industry—and I believe we do in this State because the Superintendent of Dairying has indicated that we should be looking for an increase of 10 per cent.—a good deal more thought must be devoted to the question. There will be serious consequences if an increase does not take place. It is a matter, perhaps, not so much of vote-chasing as of better leadership and constructive thinking.

Nearly everyone in the course of his speech on the Address-in-reply has dealt with rail transport in one direction or another. I do not wish simply to reiterate what has already been said, but I do feel it is no use suggesting we can do without rail transport. Whilst we have our railways, all parties might just as well face up to the fact that the existing de-

ficits will be crippling to any Government. We might give up chasing votes on the question and apply ourselves to finding a solution to it. There has to be a completely new approach to the matter. For a start, it is up to members to disseminate a good deal more information about railways than they appear to have disseminated in the past.

I have had requests from road boards, and such bodies, to attend their meetings and discuss the question of freights with a view to giving advice about increases and things of that nature. When I have explained the relationship existing between the State Government and the Grants Commission, I have not found, when the facts have been placed fairly before the farmers, the completely unreasonable attitude that has sometimes been attributed to them. When we are told that it is a matter of reducing the railway deficit or receiving a reduced disability grant, we know it is something to be pondered, and most reasonable men will ponder it. I think all members appreciate the necessity of sending as much as possible by rail without completely ignoring the advantages of other methods of transport, particularly where rail connections are not convenient. I do think, however, that farmers should be encouraged to use the railways, and that the railways should endeavour to meet their requirements.

I am a little disturbed—I hope I am not attributing something to the Minister for Railways that I should not—at the Minister's tendency, during the couple of sittings we have had this session, by way of interjection almost to snarl at the farmers and complain they do not use the railways, and so on, when I do not think it is good business to snarl at your cash customers; and, after all, the farmers are I suppose, the biggest cash customers the railways have. If we could find some reasons why the farmers do, perhaps, prefer to use other methods of transport, those reasons might be worth studying. I quote the example in my own electorate of fruit transport to local markets. This has been a hardy annual for as long as I can remember, and probably longer.

I am aware that Mr. Lantzke, the President of the Fruit Auctioneers' Association, who is about 76 years old, has known of this hardy annual as long as he can remember. Nevertheless, by approaching the people concerned—the growers, the auctioneers, the railways, the carriers, the Market Trust and others—and getting them together, a new system has been evolved as a result of which in the last two years I have received no requests from the fruitgrowers for the right to transport fruit by road, despite the fact that previously many requests of that nature had been made. In the last two years the Fruitgrowers' Association in my electorate has, at the conclusion of the

fruit season, written to the Railway Department thanking it for the service given and the co-operation shown.

It is interesting to note that the special trains provided to meet requirements have been good profit earners. The scheme started off with two trains per week and has now developed to three trains per week, which indicates to me that, providing real service is given, the farmers are willing to support the railways. The best basis upon which to secure such support is to point out to the farmers that the railways can give them better service than can any other form of transport, as has been the case in connection with the fruit transported from the South-West to the metropolitan market.

The growers now have a cheaper freight rate than obtained previously and the railways are hauling more fruit than ever before, added to which the grower is getting better service. I see no reason why the difficulties that previously existed could not have been overcome had the effort been made years earlier, and I believe that if I had done the same as past representatives of my electorate who tackled the matter, we would have obtained the same negative result. It was just a question of getting those interested together and seeing what could be done instead of saying, "It is no use approaching the railways." I desire to pay particular tribute to the assistance given me by the present Chief Traffic Manager in this matter.

I will now instance a case brought to my notice by the District Traffic Manager in Bunbury recently. Requests had been made to alter stock train times in order to afford more convenience to people loading stock and provide better times of arrival at Midland. A request was made for a stock train to be put on a certain line and that was done, but a survey shows that about two trucks of cattle are going by road to every one by rail. As the request was made by the Farmers' Union, I think there is a moral obligation on the farmers to use that stock train and, if the department were to discontinue the service, I personally would find it difficult to take up cudgels on behalf of the farmers in the area concerned.

If, having been provided with a suitable service, they did not support it but continued to send their stock by road, it would be hardly reasonable to ask the railways to continue to run trains at a loss for the benefit of the few who patronised them. Members should endeavour to appreciate the problems confronting our rail system and spread a wider appreciation of them among their electors. Where possible we should try to secure better services which will consequently earn more revenue, thus helping to overcome our rail deficit. The matter is sufficiently serious to warrant the best endeavours of all members on either side of the House to secure as much freight as

possible for the railways. It is clear to anyone who studies the question that the railways are now in a position to carry more goods than has been the case in the past. If we agreed to the alternative of allowing all freight to be transported by road it would be necessary to increase rail freights and fares considerably and even then the system would still be faced with a crippling deficit.

In cases where primary producers have made an effort to patronise the railways, the department should do everything possible to provide a better service and, when increased freights or fares are contemplated, consideration should be shown to those who have done their best to patronise our rail services. On one day this year, during the fruit season, no less than 34 tons of fruit were railed from Donnybrook to the metropolitan market. I think that scheme could be extended to other fruit growing areas with advantage to both the railways and the growers. The question of discontinuing the service on certain lines seems to have captured public imagination, but when we speak of pulling up railways it is well to realise that they were laid down as a developmental service and, if the areas they serve have not developed as quickly as they should have, the first consideration should be the agricultural potential of the districts concerned.

If that potential is considerable it should be given time to develop rather than that the railway line should be ripped up, thus increasing the difficulties of the farmers now served by it. A decision to tear up a railway line amounts to a confession of failure to develop the area served by it and the cessation of the service will simply delay further that development. I am pleased to note in His Excellency's Speech that it is the intention of the Government to bring down a veterinary drug Bill. I did approach the Premier on this question earlier and gave him a considerable amount of literature to read. I do not know whether he read it or passed it on to the Minister for Agriculture, but at all events the Government has indicated willingness to bring down this legislation. I cannot comment on it as it is not yet before the House, but it is certainly due, if not overdue and I have no reason to suppose that it will not be quite satisfactory.

It might surprise members to know that the only two centres in this State, at present under water restrictions, and served by Government water supplies, are in my electorate, which is generally regarded as a heavy rainfall area. One such centre is Boyup Brook where the restrictions at the moment are not serious as they apply only to the watering of gardens. It is appalling to think that the railways are still carting water to Bridgetown. Not only is the dam in that town not full but also water from what is known as the golf

course is being pumped into the dam to enable the service to be continued. This becomes all the more galling when it is realised that an excellent source of water is available to supply not only Bridgetown but also Balingup and Greenbushes. There are no engineering difficulties involved, and although the cry of "no money" is always put forward, I wonder how much longer this stupidity of the railways having to haul water to Bridgetown is to continue. It seems farcical that water should have to be carted to a town that receives a rainfall of 34 or 35 inches a year and I hope the Government will be able to make a start on the scheme this year.

I know that a number of people, and many past Governments, have felt that there are no water problems in the South-West. Although we have a heavy rainfall, the rain falls only over about six or seven months of the year and, if water is not conserved when it falls, there is a water shortage at the end of summer. If the position were not so serious in Bridgetown, it would be almost Gilbertian; to cart water to a place with a 35-inch rainfall is almost like carting coals to Newcastle. I point out to the Minister for Works that there are no water restrictions in Donnybrook only because there is no water scheme in the town. I suppose one could say that is a solution to the question of restrictions! There again, a bore has been put down and it is completely satisfactory and would be able to supply water to that area. There are no technical difficulties involved because only a low pressure scheme would be required.

The Hume Pipe Co. has a branch in Donnybrook and would supply the necessary piping, and if we are not careful we shall be placed in the ridiculous position of having to haul water by rail to that town. That happened this year because the river at Donnybrook was low and the quantity of water is likely to become less every year. More farmers are putting in pumps for irrigation, and the more water they pump out of the river the less there is available. They have reached the stage where, towards the middle and the end of summer, the railways will have insufficient water at Donnybrook for their own purposes. Despite the fact that there is a bore in the town that would be capable of supplying sufficient water for the needs of the district, water still has to be carted at the end of summer. People do get some right through the summer, but not nearly sufficient for their needs. I hope the Minister for Railways is listening to this, because he may see some possibility of reducing railway deficits if he can only persuade the Minister for Works to go ahead with a water scheme.

The question of the overall utilisation and conservation of water throughout the State is something that should receive the attention of the Government. Although

we are pushing ahead with a comprehensive scheme, to me it seems anything but comprehensive. Apparently those who drew up the scheme did not consider the amount of water required for irrigation, and the scheme itself touches only a relatively small area and does not cover many districts where water is urgently required. It is time we drew up an overall plan for the conservation, distribution and utilisation of water, in much the same way as it is desirable for the Town Planning Commissioner to produce an overall plan for the metropolitan area.

Future buildings and roads are fitted in as parts of a greater plan, and I suggest that it is necessary to deal with the question of water supplies in much the same way. At least the southern portion of the State should be dealt with in this manner. If this were done, water would be conserved in the right places and it could be piped to those areas where it is needed. There would be no unnecessary duplication of services, and no area would be left without a water supply. Millstream, which will ultimately supply Bridgetown, can be used for water conservation purposes. At the end of summer, approximately 400,000 gallons of water are flowing to waste and, if it could be conserved, there would be an ample supply.

Hon. C. F. J. North: The population cannot grow without adequate water supplies.

Mr. HEARMAN: That is so; it is one of the limiting factors, and is one of the reasons why the planning of water services is so important. It is apparent to me that the time will come when full use will have to be made of our catchment areas, and Millstream will have to be used to supply the towns I have mentioned—Bridgetown, Greenbushes and Balingup.

I think it would be wise at this juncture to endeavour to develop something in the nature of a blueprint to determine where we should conserve our water and for what purposes it should be used. It is not a matter of trying to develop one area of the State before another, and it is not an argument between one section and another; it is an overall problem that covers the whole State, and I hope the term "comprehensive scheme" will really mean something instead of being a misnomer, which it is at the moment. It is comprehensive, with considerable limitations. I would like to see a much more comprehensive survey made not only of our catchment areas but also of our underground supplies as well, so that we can plan for the future on sound lines.

There is another question that I mentioned earlier, and that concerns farmers pumping from the rivers. A number of farmers have installed pumps for irrigation purposes and to supply water for stock during the dry period. They are to be commended for the work they have

done, but I am a little concerned about the legal position, because the farmers further down the creek claim they are at a disadvantage. I do not think the legal position has been clarified, and the Minister for Works could give some consideration to this matter, because it might raise difficulties. Already, farmers have had a meeting to discuss this question and it must be realised that, when everybody starts pumping, there is not enough water to go round. When the South-West power scheme comes into operation, more pumps will be installed, and I think it will be necessary to draft regulations to control it.

If people all start pumping at the one time, the Minister for Railways will have to cart a lot more water to Donnybrook and other places because at the end of summer there will not be sufficient water in the river. Some say that the river starts to run backwards, and at times it does appear that that is happening. I hope that the Minister for Railways and the Minister for Works, as well as the Minister for Agriculture, will give this matter some consideration and that inquiries will be made in an endeavour to try to determine some means of overcoming these problems. I think farmers are to be encouraged to increase production and if pumping water from the rivers can increase that production, as unquestionably it can, no unnecessary obstacles should be placed in the way.

Finally, I would stress the importance of sealing roads in the heavy rainfall areas as soon as possible. It is bad enough seeing these roads deteriorate in the summer through wind erosion, but when serious water erosion takes place in the winter the position becomes alarming. It grieves me to think of all the thousands of pounds that have been spent on good gravel roads in my electorate which could have been kept in good condition for many years by sealing them with bitumen, but which, unfortunately, have been allowed to deteriorate to the state where there is no gravel on them whatsoever and they are almost back to the natural surface, making them nightmares in the summertime and quagmires in the winter. There is no doubt the only solution is that roads in heavy rainfall areas should be sealed.

As a result of the metal trades strike last year heavy loads were carried by motor transport to all parts of the State and this traffic did tremendous damage to the roads but, generally speaking, the sealed roads stood up to it remarkably well. Nevertheless, that strike did accentuate the need for increased mileages of sealed roads. One road board in my electorate which has a total of approximately 1,500 miles of roads to maintain, has only 12 miles of sealed road within its boundaries. Although, of course, that total consists of a fair mileage of main roads the road board has to assist in their maintenance

which not only imposes additional work on the local authority and its plant, but also means that such machinery cannot be used on other maintenance work in the area for which it is responsible.

Another problem confronting local authorities, regarding which representatives of the South-West Road Board Association have approached me, is the supply of blue metal. At present the source of supply is Brunswick Junction. In most instances in my electorate the cost of carting the blue metal is greater than that of the metal itself. Assistance could be given by the Government in this matter without a great deal of expenditure because the Government itself has to use considerable quantities of blue metal. I point out that this metal could be obtained at Bridgetown and it is only a matter of overcoming the problems of quarrying and crushing. If that source at Bridgetown were exploited not only would local authorities obtain their blue metal requirements considerably cheaper, but the Main Roads Department and the Railway Department would also benefit although, normally, blue metal is not used for ballasting.

There is one last point I would like to make. I was rather disappointed, after putting forward the suggestion to the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture that we may possibly obtain the services of American research workers by requesting them to make a visit to this State, that such an opportunity was not availed of. I made the opportunity available to the Government in this way: I have a sister who is a research worker and who won a scholarship in America and whilst in that country she discovered that Americans are not only anxious to assist visiting research workers, but also are prepared to send their officers to such places as Western Australia to give us assistance on the spot.

However, they are finding that these research workers and other people of that nature are not appreciated in other countries because they are not able to take advantage of the facilities offered, but a country such as this could do so. The suggestion I put forward was one that would not involve the State Government in any expenditure. All that was required was that the State Government should show some interest in the matter, get in touch with the people concerned in America and ascertain what could be done. However, nothing was done about it. It seems to me that the Government should be more aware of the necessity of agricultural research in this State than it seemed to be when dealing with this particular matter.

MR. ANDREW (Victoria Park) [9.17]: You, Mr. Speaker, may have noticed that earlier this evening there was quite an audience in the gallery and I was beginning to flatter myself that they had come along to hear the member for Victoria Park make his maiden speech in this Chamber, but I can say now that I am

very disappointed. However, returning to a more serious vein I wish to congratulate the member for West Perth on the very interesting speech he made this evening. There is no doubt he must have spent a considerable amount of time in the preparation of it and it also shows that he travels around his electorate a great deal. I also wish to extend my congratulations to the member for Gascoyne on the extremely fine speech he made last Thursday evening. I, for one, knew a considerable amount more when he finished than when he started.

I am thinking that in both those electorates the constituents will have very good representatives who will look after their interests well. When I contemplated making this, my initial speech in this House, I was going to speak only on Victoria Park, but sooner or later I will have to enter into general debate and, to some extent, I intend to do so tonight. Earlier last week the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a statement in which he said he hoped the new members—he spoke in the plural so he must have meant those on the Government side—would not feel frustrated. I was wondering why he should make such a statement, because I assure him that no pressure was placed on us to speak or to refrain from speaking and I am sure that such pressure will not be brought to bear on us in the future.

Of course, we intend to assist the Government in any way possible. For example, when members of Cabinet desire something put through quickly they do not want members to become verbose. In that way we will co-operate and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition can be assured of that. Another point in the Deputy Leader's speech which rather intrigued me was that he said, "I hope that new members are not biased politically." I was wondering what he meant by that. Does he mean that we are not biased if we think much along the same lines as he does or that we are biased if we do not? I think an unbiased person is one that obtains all the facts he can, makes his deductions from them and arrives at a conclusion. If he does that correctly he must have come to the correct finding and I think that is why we are in the Labour Party; we do just that.

The member for Maylands, and I think the member for Claremont, mentioned main roads. I am rather interested in main roads and I do know that the Albany Highway which passes through my electorate is much too narrow and will have to be attended to as soon as possible. While in the Eastern States I made a few inquiries and saw some of the highways in those States and was extremely interested in what was done in South Australia.

They had the same trouble with their highways out of the capital as we have with ours, in that they are not wide

enough. They have made some wonderful highways and the Clerk of the Council sent me the Act under which this was done. In some of the streets they have the building alignments set back a number of feet. In one street it may be seven feet, in another 14 feet, and in another 16 feet. There is one that is 17 feet back and I think the greatest number of feet at which the buildings are set back is 20. Those figures are, of course, doubled and this gives an extra width to the highways.

We will have to make similar provision in Western Australia for the highways leading out of Perth. When I first gave thought to this problem I said I was thinking only of Victoria Park but my ideas have expanded since then. I believe we will have to widen that particular highway considerably and will have to set back the new building alignments at least 12 feet giving an extra width of 24 feet. That is the minimum; it could be more with advantage. The member for Maylands spoke about Guildford-rd. To all intents and purposes that is a highway because it carries a tremendous volume of traffic.

In my opinion an overall plan should be prepared for the highways leading out of the capital so that we will have something to work on in the future. The excuse cannot be offered that there is not enough money at present because it will cost very little to set back the building alignment of new buildings. When that is done and the time arrives to widen the highways, only the fronts of old buildings will have to be broken down.

There is another matter in which I am interested and which I took some trouble to investigate, and that concerns traffic lights. The member for Claremont mentioned that a traffic light should be installed at the corner of Bayview Terrace and Stirling Highway and from what I have seen of it I agree with him entirely.

Hon. C. F. J. North: I am glad you support that.

Mr. ANDREW: I will support anything I believe to be right. I have the impression, and I think I am right in saying that most people have it too though I may be mistaken, that once traffic lights are installed it is not necessary to have pointsmen, and that the traffic lights will do the entire job, but that is not so. Every capital in Australia I visited had pointsmen and in some of the spots where they had traffic lights. That is certainly so in Melbourne. It was found necessary to have pointsmen in addition to the traffic lights during the heavy peak periods.

While I was in Sydney I spoke to several taxi drivers who, as we all know, are men with a great deal of experience in heavy street traffic. I said to two of them, "Which do you think is better, pointsmen or traffic lights?" My friend who was a

passenger with me was all in favour of traffic lights, but the taxi driver said: "If anything, the pointsman are better than traffic lights." I replied that he must have a reason for saying so and asked what his reason was. He said, "Pointsmen are able to use their discretion whereas, of course, automatic traffic lights cannot. For instance, if the traffic is heavy in one particular direction he may allow a little more time for it to get through. There may also be the case of a lorry coming up a fairly steep slope and the pointsman seeing the vehicle approaching will let it go through more often than not, whereas the lights would automatically turn to danger and prevent the lorry from proceeding. This, of course, would cause considerable difficulty to the driver as he would have to re-start the vehicle and possibly hold up the traffic behind him."

I am not against traffic lights; I do not want to give that impression. They will serve a good purpose but they are not the be-all and the end-all of our troubles. For instance, I think they would be very advantageous at the corner of Bayview Terrace and Stirling Highway. At that corner there is practically a continuous flow of traffic along the Highway and they would be able to control the traffic coming in from either side. In New South Wales quite a number of green trip lights are in use. They are most effective, but the odd person who wants to cross the highway has sometimes to wait a long time to do so especially when there is a continuous stream of traffic.

There is another type of light which I think would be very useful in such places as the East Victoria Park School and across the Albany Highway. I refer to manual lights. They are used during the busy periods when the children are entering or leaving school. They are operated by monitors—most of the monitors are girls—who go out and work these lights manually. When the children are about to cross the operator turns the red light on and the kiddies are able to cross safely. The monitor has been given her instructions in that direction and after the children have got across she then switches the light back again and the traffic proceeds, and so on. In the outer suburbs this is sometimes done by means of flags and I believe there is a heavy penalty for any motorist who disregards these signals. In these cases the children merely wave the flags and are thus able to cross the road.

I have been very interested during the debates on both the Supply Bill and the Address-in-reply to note the very good speeches that were made. The Leader of the Country Party, the member for Stirling, made an excellent speech, and while I did not agree with some of his arguments and his conclusions, I did appreciate the manner in which he spoke. He

was clear and concise and made his points very well. He is well worth listening to. On the other hand, some members did not tell the whole story and I wish to place it before the House, particularly with reference to what was said about the large part played by country folk.

We have heard it stated very often—I have listened to candidates deliver their speeches during election campaigns—that the town lives on the country. As I suggest, that is only part of the story, and I will tell the House something more about that later on. When I was living in Herne Hill—that centre is in the member for Toodyay's constituency, and that hon. member was present at the time—a Federal Country Party member, in the course of his electioneering campaign, made a speech in the local hall. He repeated the statement about the town living on the country, about the country folk not receiving adequate consideration, about the effect of tariffs and so on. In the course of his speech he said to those who were listening to him, "You are here producing wealth for the country. Why do not the people of Perth come out here and produce, too?"

After the meeting, a friend said to me, "That was quite a good speech, was it not, Hugh?" I replied, "Do you think so?" My friend said, "I do." I said to him, "What about when he said the city people should come here and produce like us?" He said, "What is wrong with that?" I replied, "You know that at present we cannot sell our products. Yet he says that they should come here and produce as well. If we had two Perths, we would be better off. It is no good producing unless there are consumers and we get our consumers mostly from the towns".

There is another factor, which is that a great many of the amenities enjoyed by people in the rural areas would not be available unless the towns existed where the amenities were manufactured. People living in the towns are producers in that respect, and that all tends to help the people in the country districts. I will illustrate what I mean by that later on. Suffice it to say that the country would be poorer off were it not for the amenities manufactured in the towns. All powerful countries are industrial countries. America is a great agricultural country but she derives her power from her industrial production. That applies equally to England and Germany, as well as to Russia. The last-mentioned country has attained its power because of its industrialisation. It is a huge country but when its activities were primarily agricultural, it was not powerful, despite its immense area. The more it became industrialised, the more powerful it became. So it is that Australia must become industrialised if it, too, is to become powerful. The argument that applies to other countries is applicable equally to Australia.

Throughout the world today attention is being devoted to the development of destructive aids. We have the atomic bomb and now we have another more dreadful weapon—the hydrogen bomb. It is stated that if we have another war and we have maniacs silly enough to make use of these weapons, whole towns will be destroyed, and there are those who, on the other hand, would outlaw war itself. It has also been stated that in countries where the towns are destroyed as a result of the use of these bombs, the people will go back to a primitive state of living. I think this is correct and demonstrates the reliance of the country on the towns for much of its requirements. I want to make it clear that I do not desire to criticise Country Party representatives, but I think they should present the whole story and I have stressed this particular point for that reason. If we had only farms, our people would revert to the most primitive state of living. We must have men living in towns who are also producing commodities that both the country folk and the townspeople are needing. One section is of no avail without the other.

Next I would like to say a few words regarding the Victoria Park electorate and the adjoining districts south of the river in general. When the metropolitan area commenced its development, progress was made on the northern side of the river to a greater extent than elsewhere. The main railway line was from Fremantle, through Perth to Midland Junction, and most of the development and settlement proceeded along that line. Very few people were resident south of the river. In consequence, there was developed, at government and local government levels, the thought that the areas south of the river were unimportant. That is why we have not received the consideration we should have, which arises from the fact that the authorities have got into that way of thinking.

I believe Victoria Park is the largest suburb in the Commonwealth. At any rate, it is certainly the largest in Western Australia. It has the largest population and within its confines are undertakings that are necessary to the economy of the State. Taking the area from Victoria Park to the Canning River, and along Guildford rd. to Armadale, that district contains about one-third of the population of the metropolitan area, and about one-sixth of the population of the State. The residents have practically no amenities to speak of, apart from schools and such-like. In Victoria Park we have the largest primary school—I refer to the East Victoria Park school—and another large school at the city end. I am subject to correction when I say that we have the largest secondary school in that area. It is situated in the Canning electorate although it is in Victoria Park.

As I indicated earlier, we have a very large population in my electorate, yet we have not south of the river any hospital, apart from one at Belmont which has 27 beds. The member for Canning and I took a deputation to the Minister for Health a little while ago to discuss the question of securing a hospital site. The Minister has promised that he will acquire one for a major hospital to be built at a later date. We know that it cannot be provided for some time to come because of financial considerations, but I am glad that the Minister for Health recognises the necessity of making provision for that institution and that we shall ultimately attain our objective. The people of the area I refer to certainly have a right to the facilities provided by a major hospital.

I have already mentioned the Albany Highway and I shall next refer to Shepperton-rd. Ever since I have been member for Victoria Park, I have endeavoured unsuccessfully to obtain the provision of safety approach signs for that road. The local branch of the A.L.P., of which I was president for some years, also made endeavours to secure the provision of signs along Shepperton-rd., which is one of the most dangerous in the metropolitan area. For the amount of traffic carried, there are more accidents on that two or three miles of highway than on any other highway in the State. The accidents number over 100 a year.

Some years ago I endeavoured to get post signs erected warning people of the major highway. The Perth City Council was communicated with, but refused to acknowledge any responsibility in that direction. The Main Roads Board adopted a similar attitude, and the Traffic Branch disclaimed jurisdiction in the matter. I understand that the Traffic Department did put stencil signs 50 yards back from the intersection. There is a move to get that road restored to a class "B" thoroughfare, but I do not think that would provide a remedy. Albany Highway is comparatively narrow and we must have the other highway to relieve the traffic.

I think the best approach to the problem would be to make the road safe. Recently I saw men putting up some signs and I asked them who they were. They said they were acting for the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and I told them I considered they were doing a good job. I think it is a reflection on the responsible authorities that another body should have to undertake this work. However, the Junior Chamber of commerce has done it and deserves our commendation.

In 1947, we were told that the Causeway would be built in three years, but it is a long way from being completed even now. I do not know the cause of the hold-up, but I have been told that the engineers are waiting for the silt to settle. I do not claim to have any knowledge of engineering, but it seems to me that if they completed the building up process, the greater

weight would cause the silt to settle much more quickly. It is important that this work should be completed because there is considerable congestion of traffic going to and coming from the south side of the river.

I have given instances of how Victoria Park has been neglected. We have the Perth football team which is really the Victoria Park team but we have not an enclosed oval to accommodate it. The only part of Perth that comes into it is the playing field itself. We have bowling greens which can accommodate only one third of those wishing to play, but as for tennis courts, excepting for a few on the river front, we have none. We have practically none of the facilities that a district like Subiaco has. That district has playing field amenities, but if our young men and women wish to indulge in sport, they have to go out of Victoria Park to do it. What I am aiming at is to get the local authorities to take action in this direction.

Drainage is a problem that does not affect Victoria Park very greatly. There is some low land at the other end of the district that cannot be drained except by deep drainage, but I think that would affect the Canning and Middle Swan areas more than Victoria Park. However, that drainage work must ultimately be carried out. I am hoping that the authorities concerned will take notice of the needs of Victoria Park which should receive sympathetic consideration. It seems to me that when these matters are being considered, the attitude is, "They think of this side of the river but not of the other side."

One thing that should make Victoria Park of greater importance as time goes on is that it lies between the capital city and the richest and most prosperous part of the State, namely the South-West. If we can get good wide highways and have the foreshore beautified and be provided with the other amenities that I have mentioned, it will be a very important centre. When that time comes, many people will not bother to travel to Perth to transact their business but will do it in Victoria Park.

I believe that in time huge apartment houses will be built along the river front because they will be so convenient to Perth. It is only two miles from the near side of Victoria Park to the Perth Town Hall, and I feel sure that in years to come we shall witness such progress that this district will ultimately come into its own. At any rate I hope that it will; for my part, I have done my best to that end.

On motion by Mr. Ackland, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.