

Mr. TONKIN: What does the Minister consider it is worth?

Mr. Court: I am not going to answer your questions one by one. I will answer you in my own way.

Mr. TONKIN: When one tries to obtain the opinion of the Minister he always evades the issue!

Mr. Roberts: No; he is abiding by Standing Orders!

Mr. Graham: When was the Dwellingup mill opened?

Mr. Court: It was a headache to us.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): Order!

Mr. Graham: You do not know the first thing about it!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): Order! One member must speak at a time. I am not attempting to apportion the blame for this; but if there is any more of it, I will have to take some action.

Mr. TONKIN: One aspect of this which has been completely overlooked is that the Government found it necessary to raise the freight rate last year to the tune of over £1,000,000. That was necessary when the Railways Department owned a sawmill of its own where it was able to obtain its sleeper requirements at a basic cost. Now if it is obliged to pay more for its sleepers because it can no longer provide them itself, a burden will be placed on its operations.

Mr. Court: It only ever supplied 20 per cent. of its sleeper requirements.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes; which is a pretty big slice of its requirements.

Mr. Court: You are implying that it supplied the lot.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister declined to answer a question I asked him earlier as to the value of the mill because he knew why I wanted the information. He admitted that the mill was an asset to the department, and I have no doubt that if we could gain access to the figures we would find that it would mean an appreciable amount. That is why the commissioner expressed his view purely from the railway aspect. What other viewpoint was he expected to take? That is why he objected. I would like to know what he said about this when he was informed of the proposal. It seems to me that, without the slightest doubt, this will throw an additional burden of cost upon the railways, and that this cost will have to be recovered through freight charges. So the people in the country will be penalised because this mill, which was a great asset to the department, is no longer available to the department for its use.

Mr. Court: It will be peanuts compared to the cost of operating the railways.

Mr. TONKIN: Every mickle makes a muckle.

#### *Amendment to Motion*

In order to afford members an opportunity of discussing this question as it ought to be discussed and debated, I consider that some amendment should be made to the Address-in-Reply. I therefore move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion:—

Finally we strongly condemn the action of the Government in selling State Building Supplies and the railway mill at Banksiadale at bargain prices and on extremely generous time payment conditions to an enormously wealthy private company, and consider a Royal Commission should be set up thoroughly to investigate the transaction.

Debate (on amendment to the motion) adjourned, on motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development).

*House adjourned at 8.48 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Thursday, the 10th August, 1961

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The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1 and 2. *These questions were postponed.*

### IRON ORE

*Tonnage Shipped from Cockatoo Island, and Royalty Received*

3A. The Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What tonnage of iron ore was shipped from Cockatoo Island during the financial year 1960-1961 to—
  - (a) Western Australian ports;
  - (b) Eastern States ports;
  - (c) overseas ports?
- (2) What royalty was paid to the Western Australian Government for such ore?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) (a) Nil.  
(b) 1,059,096 tons.  
(c) Nil.
- (2) Royalty payable at 1s. 6d. per ton = £79,432 4s.

As Royalty payments in No. (1) are received half-yearly, not all the amount in No. (2) has yet been received.

### MANGANESE ORE

*Tonnage Shipped from Port Hedland, and Royalty Received*

3B. The Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What tonnage of manganese ore was shipped from Port Hedland during the financial year 1960-1961 to—
  - (a) Western Australian ports;
  - (b) Eastern States ports;
  - (c) overseas ports?
- (2) What royalty was paid to the Western Australian Government for such ore?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) (a) Nil.  
(b) Nil.  
(c) 45,912 tons.
- (2) Royalty payable at 1s. 6d. per ton = £3,443 8s.

### ORD RIVER CLUB

*Cost, Source of Money, Ownership, and Use*

4. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What is the total cost of the structure, plant, and furniture of the splendid club-cum-hotel which was erected by the Government at Kununurra?
- (2) From which fund is the money provided?
- (3) Who owns the premises?

- (4) Are the premises open to the population at Kununurra or the travelling public requiring refreshment, board, and lodgings?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) A lump sum building contract was let at Kununurra which included a power house, administrative building, on-site office, canteen block, hostel block, and four houses at a total cost of £256,811.
- (2) Mainly from State loan funds, part of the cost of the power house being provided from Commonwealth funds.
- (3) The Western Australian Government.
- (4) The premises are open to the population at Kununurra by arrangement, subject to the constitution of the club; but travelling public may only procure board and lodging if available.

### GERALDTON HOUSING

*Roofing Materials*

5. The Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Minister for Mines:

Further to my question on Thursday, the 3rd November, 1960, in relation to Geraldton Housing, will the Minister advise—

- (1) Has the Housing Commission had any change of policy as to whether all local cement tiles are to be used on the roofing of commission houses in Geraldton?
- (2) Has a scheme been put into operation, as was envisaged last year, to give the purchaser of a house for sale the right to choose the type of roofing material?
- (3) If the answer to No. (2) is "Yes," what types of roofing materials have been requested?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The scheme has recently been put into operation for a trial period in the metropolitan area, and will be extended to the country in the near future.
- (3) Answered by No. (2).

### KUNUNURRA HOUSES

*Number Built, Cost, and Source of Funds*

6. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) How many houses have been built by the Government at Kununurra?
- (2) What is the total cost of each house?

- (3) From what fund are the costs provided?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Nine houses completed and occupied. Contract let for erection of a further four houses.
- (2) Contracts were—  
 2 only £5,213 10s. 0d. each.  
 1 only £5,782 0s. 0d.  
 1 only £5,821 0s. 0d.  
 1 only £5,810 0s. 0d.  
 4 only £12,000 approximate (part of £256,811 contract).  
 4 only £5,871 10s. 0d. each, being erected.
- (3) State loan funds.

#### JETTY FACILITIES AT BROOME

##### *Early Cabinet Decision*

- 7A. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

While at Broome, the Premier promised to refer for early Cabinet decision, the local road board's request that a jetty in deep water be provided, instead of Maunsell and Partners' fabulous port scheme. The Minister is asked to explain latest developments on the subject.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

An investigation has been made of the proposal to provide a jetty in deep water at Broome. A preliminary estimate of cost for a type of construction similar to that provided at Wyndham has been completed and the financial implications are under consideration.

#### JETTY FACILITIES AT NAPIER BROOME BAY

##### *Provision, and Tabling of Surveyor's Findings and Recommendations*

- 7B. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

Since the hydrographical survey of Napier Broome Bay is completed—

- (a) what is the intention of the Government towards providing jetty facilities to service the area; and
- (b) will the surveyor's findings and recommendations be laid upon the Table of the House?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (a) Preliminary studies of survey information indicate that jetty facilities for coastal and overseas shipping could be provided at reasonable cost. Financial implications and economic aspects are under consideration and as yet no firm decisions have been taken.
- (b) This work is not yet complete and at this stage no definite answer can be given.

#### SUPPLY BILL, £25,000,000

##### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 9th August.

**THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND** (North—Leader of the Opposition) [2.43 p.m.]: With other members I listened closely to the Minister's speech when he introduced the Bill, and he described to us how the financial requirements of the State are increasing each session of Parliament, and that the authorisation requested from Parliament is gradually rising year by year. We know that under all circumstances costs are rising, and that more money is required to finance the State's services and undertakings as the years roll by. But as I have said previously in this House, this Government has been fortunate to have showered upon it many more millions of pounds per annum than any other Western Australian Government in history. Despite the fact that the Minister told us in his speech that the increase in requested authorisations is due to the expansion of the State, I believe that that increase has not shown any appreciable expansion in the State during the last two years.

We know that there have been some large works and undertakings started, and we know that they will take some considerable time to complete. But we know also that, by virtue of the fact that there are 6,000-odd unemployed registered for work in this State, the distribution of the money which the Government handles is apparently not providing a sufficient labour content gainfully to employ the labour force which is at the Government's disposal.

After looking through the great sums of money which the Government has had at its disposal during the last two financial years, I feel that there has been some mismanagement somewhere in the administration. It is my view that a Government's duty is to provide as much work as possible for the people of the State with the finances it has available; and not only has Premier Brand appealed for extra finance from the Commonwealth to provide employment, but it is a well-known fact that Premier Hawke before him also made successive appeals to the Commonwealth Government for money to commence works which would provide for a large expenditure on labour. We know, of course, that those projects did not all materialise. I think, speaking from memory, the last urgent request which the Hawke Government made to the Commonwealth Government for a large undertaking to be started was for a broad-gauge railway line from Kalgoorlie to Perth. That would have involved a large number of men, and the work could have been started immediately from the Kalgoorlie end—it can be started now from the Kalgoorlie end.

When the Minister spoke in reply to something I said earlier this session, he claimed that the Hawke Government, during its term of office, also had a large number of unemployed. I do not deny that for one minute; nobody can deny it, because the figures are there to prove it. But we did not have the money, such as this Government has had, and is still getting, to absorb them. I hope the Government gets two or three times as much as it has got in the past; but I also hope that it will turn its attention to undertakings which will not only absorb the largest number of employees, thereby helping workers and their families, but will also mean the distribution of the money through the small traders who exist throughout the State.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What are we not doing in your opinion?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I would like to know what the Government is doing, apart from blowing its bags, or blowing its trumpet, about what it is going to do in the future.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: They have to get their propaganda ready for the elections.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is what I would like to know. Ever since the Brand Government came into office I have been reading of the spectacular developments which are taking place in Western Australia. We know an extensive land settlement scheme, or general development, is under way in the Esperance area; but that would have been under way in any case.

History shows that no matter how many blocks we might advertise for selection in the Esperance area, or in any other agricultural area in Western Australia for that matter, they will attract large numbers of applicants from throughout Australia. There is no trouble at all in attracting land settlement. In my opinion, land settlement is something that should be pursued with the utmost vigor, because land settlement and development spread expenditure very widely throughout the community.

The products from the land also spread their wealth widely throughout the community. When the Minister asked me to tell him what the Government is not doing, it made me feel that if all the undertakings the Government proclaimed are being done were actually being carried out, there would be no unemployment in this State at all. I also feel that by overstressing its intentions and its policies into a focus of things actually about to take place, it means that the Government is attracting workers to this State who, on arrival, find that there is no work here for them at all.

I feel the Government may be making a mistake by over-publicising the future development of Western Australia. I have no doubt that that development will

eventuate and that the Government's intentions are just as genuine as were the intentions of any other Government to hurry along and develop the State as fast as it possibly can; because every Government knows that its life depends on the economy of the State at the time of an election. The more stable and buoyant the economy, the better chance the Government has of remaining in office.

I feel, however, that some of the expenditure of money could have been put to more reproductive use. I would like to touch now on a particular type of expenditure of Federal Government moneys in this State which will attract nothing. I have in mind the new airport terminal at Guildford. I do not say that it should not go there, but let us put first things first. The terminal which is there evidently was sufficient to accommodate and cater for some 5,000; 6,000; or 7,000 people who welcomed the Western Australian footballers back to Perth. I read nothing about any part of the functions of the airport terminal breaking down on that occasion.

Most of us, if not all of us, were at the terminal to welcome the Queen Mother, Her Majesty the Queen, and also His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh. I do not recollect any part of the aerodrome facilities which were not able to cope with those auspicious occasions. But, we find, even though they are doing the job required of them, the Commonwealth has decided to find an estimated amount of £750,000 to enable them to "keep up with the Joneses," and to enable a large and imposing structure to be built. When this is completed it will not bring one more shilling to Western Australia than do the existing facilities. It may leave visitors with an impression, and it may be instrumental in their thinking that it is a magnificent building, but that is about as much as it will accomplish.

I feel that expenditure of that nature could have been used for some more reproductive work such as a dockyard, or a slipway and ship repairing facilities, which this Government, and nearly every other Government, has asked the Commonwealth to provide over very many years.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What about the airport extensions themselves?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The airport extensions are a necessity; that is a different proposition altogether. The purpose of those extensions is to keep up with modern aircraft; there is no objection to them, because it is just as necessary to make them as it was to build a railway line from Coogee to the B.H.P. works at Kwinana.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: And much more necessary than the new terminal.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Very much more necessary. We find that the Commonwealth, while it haggles with the

States about providing funds for essential developmental and reproductive works, does itself waste very large sums of money. Only a few weeks ago I had a look over the ghost town of Talgarno, which is situated between Port Hedland and Broome.

There we have a fully air-conditioned town built, I understand, at a cost of some multimillion of pounds—money which was found by the British Government and the Australian Government. Yet we find that there are only five persons living in this air-conditioned town. It is not of much use, either, built where it is; absolutely no use whatever. It is located in an area where it cannot be put to any other possible use. The sea is only six or seven miles away and there is an 80-mile beach running along it.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And the desert on the other side.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is so. It is absolutely worthless, apart from a narrow strip which runs along that coastline and is occupied by pastoral properties. The rest of the land behind it is the Canning Desert, and is absolutely useless. The ocean in front of it is the same because, as I mentioned, an 80-mile beach runs along that area, and the tide goes out for a considerable distance, which means one cannot even entertain people by fishing in that area. There is nothing that can be done in that locality.

So, we find that while the State Government—and I am referring to every State Government—is ready and rearing to go, let us say, to commence work which will be reproductive and which will develop the State's economy, and feed many hungry people throughout the world eventually, much of the money that is necessary is not available.

Whilst I know that State Governments cannot do very much about that particular disability under which they suffer, I feel they should never cease to appeal to and approach the Federal authorities for more money to spend in the direction of development.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The artificial lake at Canberra is going to cost a lot of money.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The artificial lake at Canberra is something else on which there is expenditure on beautification rather than on something which will return some kind of income to the community.

Whilst on the subject of the north, I would like to describe just how hard it is for the little man to commence operations there. A general picture is usually painted of the north's great wide open spaces and the opportunities that await anybody who steps into that country to develop it. As a matter of fact, Mr. President, if you, I, or any other person

went into the Lands Department and inquired whether we could acquire anything from a quarter acre building block to four or five acres of land in order to try our luck in the north, we would be told there is no land available. That has been the case for many years—there is no land available.

For some reason or other, the Lands Department never appears to be able to keep up with the townsite blocks which are required in the very small towns in the north. That is the reason why townsite blocks are not available, and why blocks for agricultural, horticultural, or any other kind of agricultural development are also not available. The land is tied up either in pastoral leases, reserves of some kind or another, or general commonage.

I can quote an instance of a man in Broome who, this year, wrote to the Lands Department and asked permission to utilise a few acres of mangrove swamp-samphire country. This man would like to experiment on a few acres at his own expense to see whether the type of agriculture of which he has some knowledge would be economical. He was told by the Lands Department that he would not be successful and the land could not be made available. Just imagine a person who wants to put his own money and energy into a project, and at no cost to the Government, being immediately turned away with the reply that he would not succeed and therefore the land would not be made available.

Anybody who has been to the north and anybody who has seen the tidal mangrove swamps which line many hundreds of miles of our coastline in the north would wonder why a person would want to develop such an area; but surely no one would stop a sensible person who has done a little bit of experimenting on a small scale, and a person who is prepared to risk his own money and his own time, from having this opportunity. However, that is the position.

When we bump up against departmental heads who advise their Ministers that a man who has undertaken some experiments should be dissuaded from taking up land, I think the Minister should use his authority, because that is what he is there for. The Minister should tell his departmental heads that he will override such an opinion and allow the applicant to have a try. A Minister should not simply agree with the advice of the heads of his department, particularly when they say that land cannot be made available.

I, myself, have spoken in this House on many occasions on the potential of the North Kimberley area—that is the Drysdale area bounding Napier Broome Bay. I remember reading to the House in 1951 or 1952 the report of surveyor Easton who surveyed and classified the area. It was an illuminating report of what he had

discovered the Benedictine Fathers were growing and producing at the Drysdale Mission. That was way back in 1922.

When I became Minister for the North-West, one of my first actions was to see the then Minister for Lands (Mr. Hoare) and the Surveyor-General (Mr. Fyfe), and we despatched a survey team into North Kimberley in 1954 to check on the two previous reports, one made in 1914 by surveyor Brockman, and the other in 1922 by surveyor Easton, with regard to the potential of this country. The reason it was not settled was because there was no access from the sea—a suitable harbour could not be found—and no access from the land either.

This Government has made an appeal to the Commonwealth Government for roads to be constructed from Wyndham to Derby through that area. Anybody who is familiar with the area will know very well that it would take many years and many millions of pounds to complete a traffickable road from Wyndham to Derby. As a matter of fact the Hawke Government did attempt to build a road into the area, and it spent quite a large amount in this direction. I cannot recall what it was, but it was many thousands of pounds. The road was constructed to Kurunje Station following the survey in 1954. The money for this road was allocated out of the 1954-1955 expenditure. The road could be seen from the air when anybody flew from Derby to Wyndham at the time the construction was going on, but a flight over that area now would show no trace of the road. It has gone; it has been washed away and is completely gone.

There are ravines and gorges in that section of the country which would require, when there is any rain—and it rains frequently there—not one, but two or three Sydney Harbour bridges to make the roads all-weather roads. But I say there is not the slightest doubt that access must be from the sea; and it can be from the sea. That is the reason I asked the Minister what the Government's intentions were with respect to constructing a jetty at Napier Broome Bay to open up that land.

The land was surveyed into several pastoral holdings and let through the land board to selected lessees as far back as 1956 or 1957. But the lessees were all Eastern States pastoralists or graziers, and when they came to inspect their land they could not even get in to do so. Some of these people did fly over the country in chartered planes, but they had no hope of getting on to the land to see what had been allotted to them. Consequently the leases were forfeited.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Would you suggest the road proposal be abandoned?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I do not suggest it be abandoned altogether, but I am perfectly sure it could not give access to that country for many years. I

suggest the cheapest method is by sea; and that is the reason the Commonwealth agreed that part of the £5,000,000 which it granted to Western Australia should be spent on a hydrographical survey of Napier Broome Bay to select a jetty site to develop that unoccupied country.

The survey was completed last October, but the Minister told us today that we may not see the surveyor's results because they have not yet been considered. Napier Broome Bay provides a natural harbour. I have not been there, but I know that is so through talking to people who have lived for many years at the mission, and to others who have worked on the ships which go up and down the coast every year. As a result, I know that the possibilities are remarkably good in that area.

There is a phenomenon in Napier Broome Bay: the highest rise of tide there is only 6 ft. Yet just outside the bay—at Troughton Island, for instance—it is about 20 ft.; at Wyndham, in the Cambridge Gulf, it is 20 ft. to 23 ft.; and at Yampi, coming further back the other way, it is 35 ft. to 36 ft. This place is a natural harbour and there is natural access to it. But there seems to be no hurry to develop it.

The most amazing part about the £5,000,000 grant is that the Commonwealth Government specifically tied the Hawke Government down to certain projects; and the projects had to be in a certain area. One of the specific requirements was that all the money must be spent on developmental works. To my mind there cannot be any better developmental works than the opening up of unoccupied country; and the country proposed to be opened up is, I suggest, the richest pastoral and grazing country in the north of Western Australia. It is better country than the East Kimberleys or the West Kimberleys, and it has a far better potential. There are rivers there which run all the year round.

There is one pastoral lease occupied in this area; it is right alongside the Kalumburu Mission which is close to the sea—four or five miles away—in Napier Broome Bay, and about 14 miles from the most suitable jetty site. The lessee of this pastoral lease of 500,000 acres, took up the area in 1950. His original intention was to graze sheep, and he bought sheep at Noonkanbah Station at West Kimberley and left them with drovers to drive across to his holding on the Drysdale River-Carson River-King Edward River area. None of the sheep arrived there because what the drovers did not eat the dingoes did on the way across.

However, the lessee still holds the land, or the lease, and he is now a cattle grazier. I do not know where the cattle herd came from, but he is running, I understand, 220 or 230 head of cattle on his 500,000 acres. I also understand that he does

visit his holding occasionally—once or twice a year, and spends the rest of the time in Wyndham. This man has not, from the day he was granted the lease, complied with the requirements of his pastoral lease.

We know that under the Land Act, anybody taking up a pastoral lease must have so many head of stock on it at the end of so many years, and must have spent so much capital on improvements in so many years, and so on. Well, there is nothing on this place. This man does not own sufficient horses to muster his cattle, and he has no aboriginal boys working for him at all. When he wants some marking or mustering done in order to get a few bullocks out to be marketed—I do not know where he markets them; probably Glenroy or some neighbouring station—he borrows the mustering plant from the Kalumburu Mission; and the natives of the Kalumburu Mission are reluctant to work for him because, they say, he is too lazy. Well, anybody who knows the natives at Kalumburu will know that if anyone could find someone lazier than the natives of Kalumburu, it must be the natives themselves. That is the type of thing that goes on.

I visited the area this year, and when I read in the paper that the Minister for Lands proposed extending pastoral leases, I thought: Here is one that should not be considered, anyway; this is only a dud keeping a good man out. I wrote to the Minister and suggested that this pastoral lease should be cancelled; that the land should revert to the Crown; and that the Minister should have a very good look at this land and test its potential to see whether it was more suitable for something better than a pastoral lease—whether it was suitable for agricultural purposes. I am sure that much of it is. The Minister, on the advice of the Director of Agriculture and the Surveyor-General, informed me that he agreed with their views and decided to take no action.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: The easiest way out!

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I think the Press should tell the people something about this type of development the Government is encouraging. Here are opportunities waiting for anybody that has the money. Not all of the prospective seekers of land in the Esperance district will be granted properties, and if those who are unsuccessful were to go to the north and have a look at what the missionaries are doing up there, they would not hesitate put their money into the development of that land for the raising of beef.

When I asked the Minister to have another look at the matter, he informed me that although the C.S.I.R.O. report on the potential of the land did not support my views—or words to that effect—he would refer my suggestion once again to the

C.S.I.R.O. The C.S.I.R.O. surveyors were accompanied by, at that time, our land surveyors. The party led by surveyor Morgan was in that area in 1954. That party classified the land; and in the Parliament House reference library a booklet should be found setting out the classifications. I know it was there a few months ago. It also sets out the carrying capacity, without engaging in any agricultural pursuits, and the carrying potential, including the cost of development. In my opinion, that land offers a tremendous economic proposition, but from the point of view of the theorists it is completely discounted.

However, since those surveys have been made and since requests have been forwarded by the missionaries in that area for some technical advice from the Department of Agriculture, but without having received it, the head of the Kalumburu Mission decided to experiment with various grasses. One grass in particular, known as Townsville lucerne, has virtually taken charge of the area. Four years ago the seed, together with some super, was broadcast by hand on the clearest piece of land that could be found close to the mission. That was done less than four years ago. In the past, a herd of goats roamed that area, but they have all been killed off with a view to allowing this lucerne to spread; and there is no doubt that it has spread. It is thriving on the natural rainfall.

Therefore, when one actually views the type of land there, realises what can be produced from it, and knows that over one's shoulder can be seen a beautiful flowing river of fresh water—which, incidentally, flows all the year round—one wonders why the country was not occupied years ago. The reason, of course, is difficulty of access. So I am hoping that, when the Government does consider this hydrographic survey and the recommendations emanating from it, if any, together with the report from the harbours and rivers department, it will use some of the £5,000,000 which it was granted by the Commonwealth Government—that is, if there is any left—to undertake some real developmental work.

I do not wholly agree with the Government's ideas for the development of the Ord River scheme. I called a building there a club-cum-hotel. The Minister has said that he cannot give us the cost of the structure erected there. What is wrong with the administration in the Treasury when it cannot tell us what a building has cost? The local people say that it cost £30,000. What is wrong? we know it is Government policy to sell hotels, but surely to goodness when it is providing something in a particular district it does not want to be worried about telling people, "We are building a hotel." It wants to dismiss that though. The Government should provide a facility if private enterprise will not provide it, and

then sell it to private enterprise at a later date. That has always been my idea in regard to hotels. Therefore, why we cannot ascertain the cost of a hotel that has been built at Kununurra from the expenditure of loan funds, I do not know. There is no doubt that it is a very fine and splendid structure: it would grace any town in the southern part of the State, especially a seaside resort.

Instead of the Government becoming engaged in building hotels, it should allow private enterprise to do that. All the Government would have to do would be to do the same as the Minister for Housing does—in the same way as he has done in the past—and say, "There is a site for a hotel and we will put it up for auction." Had that been done, private enterprise could have bought the site and built a hotel on it, and the loan funds which the Government used to construct the hotel could have been spent elsewhere. I suspect that part of the £5,000,000 grant was used for this purpose, but how can we find out? All the expenditure has been bulked in one figure; and, therefore, one becomes suspicious, especially when the Minister gives us a reply, such as he has given us today, that there was a special grant used on power houses.

The Minister said that a price was given for the lot and that the cost was bulked. How does one do business that way? The obvious question is: What is being hidden? Apparently the Government is hiding the fact that it has built a hotel. Is it hiding the fact that most of the £5,000,000 has been spent on the construction of this building—the £5,000,000 which the Commonwealth Government, by statute and by letter, stipulated had to be spent in certain places and in a certain way? Therefore, I think the reply to the question I asked necessitates further questions, and I intend to ask them.

That is one phase of the development of the Ord River project with which I do not agree. I would not object if all the money were expended on the construction of the dam itself. I feel that when the Government uses loan funds to clear the land and to prepare it in a similar fashion to what is done in connection with the war service land settlement farms, it has seemed to have adopted the plan that it is going to develop the land in the north to a certain stage and then sell it to private individuals. The same result will eventuate there as under the war service land settlement scheme. The land will become over-capitalised and only people with a great deal of capital will be able to settle in that area.

Instead of loan funds, or part of the £5,000,000 grant being used on that project, why does not the Government allocate the land and let private enterprise spend its own money on developing it? This type of land requires very little more

for its development than the land at Esperance. It is fairly sparsely timbered with low scrub. Here we find the loan funds, once again, being spent on unnecessary works.

If the land is surveyed and divided into economical sized blocks—which the Government advisers will no doubt advocate—the Government should do the same as was done in Esperance; that is, put the land up for selection and thus enable the people to apply for it and to spend their own money on development. There is no other avenue which provides better tax concessions than land development.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How do you think the little man would get on on that basis?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I do not think he would get on at all. It would require a man with large capital to develop the land in that area.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You said the little man was not getting a fair go.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I said the little man would not be able to get a fair go under this Government.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: He would get far more under this Government.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Government did not give the small interests a chance to buy the Banksiadale mill or the State brickworks. The whole undertaking was sold in one block. There were no bidders allowed for the separate branches of the undertaking. I have not the slightest doubt that under the system the Government adopts, it is working deliberately in that manner so that only the big man can acquire anything—whether it be a timber yard or an irrigated farm on the Ord River. I know that, generally, the little man starves and the big man finishes up with everything in respect of land settlement. Mr. Jones would know all about that.

The Government is asking for extra money, but it is not spending in a way to provide the greatest amount of employment for the people. With all the millions involved there should be no-one out of work in Western Australia today. That is the aspect which the Government should always take into consideration. It seems the Government is not afraid of unemployment; as a matter of fact, it is not afraid of anything except those who direct the Government. One of these days we will discover whether they are Australians or people overseas.

The evidence all points in one direction: overseas investors are the big fry and the Australian interests are the small fry—whether they be industrialists or commercial interests. That appears to be the pattern as I see it, as I read it in the newspapers, and as I can work it out for myself.

Yesterday the Federal Government announced that it had approved the recommendation of the Grants Commission to allocate £6,156,000 as special aid to Western Australia for the next financial year. This is £1,847,000 more than the grant in the previous year. That is good news, but I hope the two Ministers in this House will impress on their colleagues in the Cabinet the need to have a very close look at the expenditure of this amount of £6,000,000.

Yesterday I asked some questions in relation to roads in this State, and I was given answers which appeared to be facetious or evasive. Of course, I realise the Minister in this House does not administer the department concerned. All that will happen is that I shall have to ask the questions again. I do not know whether the Minister for Works thinks he is creating more employment by having to get his staff to prepare the answers again. He certainly could have given sensible and logical answers in the first place.

I asked several questions as to the length of main roads in the north. The footnote to the answers states that answers Nos. (1), (2), and (3) include the Main Roads Department and all local authorities. Questions Nos. (1), (2), and (3) relate to the length of roads in the north, the length of roads which have been bituminised in the North Province, and the length of roads which have been bituminised in the rest of the State.

The answer was that in the North Province there were 317 miles of bituminised roads at the 30th June, 1960. I cannot understand why the figure at the 30th June, 1961, was not given. Surely the Main Roads Department is not that far behind in its work that it cannot tell how many miles of bitumen roads have been constructed in this State for the period which ended six weeks ago; surely it does not take the department 14 months to work out these figures.

So 317 miles of roads were bituminised in the North Province at the 30th June, 1960, and in the remainder of the State there were 8,097 miles at the 30th June, 1960; but the footnote indicates that the 317 miles in the North Province include the town roads; that is, all the roads in the towns. But the 8,097 miles of bitumen road in the other half of the State do not include the town roads. These are simply main roads statistics. Why are not the same statistics given for roads I embraced in my request? They are the main roads, the secondary roads, and the developmental roads. They are the three classes of roads with which the Main Roads Department deals. Therefore, why is it that we cannot get a proper answer? It only means that I will have to ask the question again. There are not 317 miles of the roads I mentioned that have been sealed.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If you have not received a satisfactory answer, it would not be the first time that a member has not received a satisfactory answer.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I am not talking about it being unsatisfactory. It is not the proper answer to my question.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I can remember when I was on that side of the House I complained of the same thing.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: You could have. You did not complain about roads. You complained about not getting an answer you wanted.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is right.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: You were perhaps on something of a political or policy nature. This is merely a matter of statistics which we will all read when we receive the 1961 report of the Main Roads Department. In fact, it could even be in the 1960 report. But no; for some reason or other one has been garbled against the other. I would suggest the reason is that in half of the State there are only 317 miles of sealed roads. Of that 317 miles, the Government to which I belonged sealed 250 miles in one issue, I can recall. There was probably a lot more.

In order to boost up the figure and make it look a bit better than 260 miles, all the little streets that have been sealed in the townships in the north-west have been added. That is the only construction I can put on it; it is the only possible construction that anyone can put on it. Having travelled over the roads so much, I would know how many miles are sealed and how many miles are not sealed.

It is a disgrace that the Government should talk about developing the north and encouraging tourists in the north when it is not prepared to seal the roads there. It is a fact that the only main road in the North Province is the 250 miles of road which runs from the Murchison River to Carnarvon, and that was declared a main road by Mr. Tonkin when he was Minister for Works, so that the Main Roads Department could go ahead and take over completely the expenditure from the local authorities to seal the road. Every other main road in the north-west is considered and classified by the Main Roads Department as a secondary road. The road from Meekatharra across to Marble Bar and Port Hedland; the road from Carnarvon through the ports and linking with the Murchison road; and the road which continues on from there to Broome, Derby, Hall's Creek, Darwin, Sydney, Melbourne, or into Wyndham, are considered by the Main Roads Department as being only secondary roads.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.3 p.m.*

Before the tea suspension, I was describing the roads in the northern half of the State as they are classified by the Main Roads Department. All except the road from the Murchison River to Carnarvon—which is the only section declared a main road—are considered to be secondary roads by the Main Roads Department for the purpose of its expenditure.

I asked another question in connection with roads; namely, that if the Government has a declared policy of sealing roads where railway services have been discontinued, does the Port Hedland-Marble Bar road come into that policy? The answer was neither yea nor nay. I received the answer that the Government does not consider that the road comes into that category. The reason given by the Minister was that several miles of the road have already been sealed. I know that because I, as Minister for the North-West, was responsible for at least 80 per cent. of the portion of the road that is sealed at the moment.

The Government also says that the work may be spread over a period of several years as the volume of traffic and maintenance costs would not at present justify the heavy expenditure involved in the large annual surfacing programme of this road.

We have a Government which has never stopped clamouring and blowing its trumpet about its activities and its intentions to develop the north. The people in the southern portion of the State must think the north is a wonderful place, and that it has undergone a marvellous change since the Hawke Government was defeated. If they look closely and read parliamentary proceedings they will find that the Government has no intention of improving the most important factor in development; namely, the roads, to the stage where they are all-weather roads and where, when sealed, they will reduce the cost of transportation by an enormous amount.

The Minister for Works says the volume of traffic does not justify the work. Replying to a previous question this afternoon, the Minister for Mines advised Mr. Wise that no less than 45,000 tons of manganese passed over that road during the last twelve months, apart from normal services. Every vehicle which travels north of Port Hedland must pass over some section of that road. Thousands of cattle are transported by road train over that road annually from Anna Plains, Mandora, and Wallal stations.

Goodness knows how many bales of wool pass over that road—it must be thousands. There would be a twice-weekly road service traversing the road to service Marble Bar and the tin and copper mining operations going on around the town. The road also services Nullagine, and the Blue Spec Mine and the other mines out

there. Yet this Government considers that the road does not warrant the heavy expenditure involved in surfacing it. The road covers, I think, a distance of 121 miles. The Watts-McLarty Government discontinued the rail services.

Mr. Simpson introduced a Bill into this House in 1950-51, and I and the late Hon. Frank Welsh protested against the removal of the line at the time. I was responsible, as Minister for Railways in the Hawke Government, for discontinuing certain services in the southern part of the State; and despite the fact that the discontinuance was agreed to by Parliament, agitation has never ceased, from representatives of the areas affected, for the roads to be sealed where those services were discontinued. This Government agreed to the agitation and sealed the roads. They are nearly all sealed.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The Government plans for them to be sealed.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It will be done progressively, and it will be completed this year, I suggest. I do not know the weight of wheat, but the quantity of wheat that comes down the Corrigin-Brookton section would, in tonnage, not amount to very much more than the tonnage that is carted over the Marble Bar-Port Hedland road. There is at least one discontinued rail service where the Government has guaranteed to seal a road. This particular road would not, in my opinion, carry a much larger volume of traffic than the road from Marble Bar to Port Hedland, and it is certainly not as important. The Marble Bar-Port Hedland road is the only one that gives access to the Eastern States and to parts north.

Coming back to the puffed-up figure of 317 miles of sealed roads in the whole of the North Province, which is almost half the area of the State, one cannot help thinking of the Government's much-professed policy to seal 450 miles of the Eyre Highway. Here is 450 miles of highway which passes through very unproductive country with a very poor agricultural potential. The Government intends to seal that in preference to sealing the roads that lead into the northern part of this State.

I am going to be a little political here because at each election that has so far been held in the north, the Liberal portion of the present Government has always advertised in its pamphlets that it would seal the road from Geraldton to Wyndham. The programme of road sealing for the north for this financial year covers 57 miles; but in the remainder of the State the figure is 474 miles. I feel there should be much more publicity given to the actions of the Government towards the north rather than the intentions of the Government towards the north. I support the Bill.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines) [4.15 p.m.]: I want to take the opportunity of thanking Mr. Strickland for his contribution to the debate; but to say the least of it, I do not agree with all he has said, and I think there are one or two matters about which I should comment. Mr. Strickland appeared to me to concentrate his argument on the fact that the Brand Government had received more money through a Bill of this nature—the first Supply Bill of the year—than had any previous Government. He suggested that because of that we should have found ourselves in the position of being able completely to solve the problem of unemployment. Of course, as the honourable member knows, completely to solve the unemployment problem is difficult, to say the least, for any Government.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It is impossible.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes; it is impossible for any Government to solve the unemployment problem in the manner he would like to see us solve it. But it is interesting to note the unemployment figures for June. I think Mr. Strickland quoted them to us the other night, but the number is 6,616, and that figure is comparable with the figure for unemployment when the Hawke Government went out of office. He told us that the number then was 7,430.

It is also interesting to note, and the record is in *Hansard*, that when the present Premier was Leader of the Opposition he moved a motion in the Legislative Assembly to amend the Address-in-Reply. He abhorred the situation at the time and called upon the Government to do something about it. Do members know what was done? The Legislative Assembly voted then and there without a fragment of debate, or without the slightest contribution in reply to his remarks. The Assembly members just let the bells ring and took a vote on the motion.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Probably they thought it might support our case in Canberra.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Following that, Mr. Watts (Leader of the Country Party) moved this motion—

But this House expresses its amazement and concern that no member of the Government saw fit to make any reply to the amendment moved yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition referring to various matters affecting the economy of the State.

At last that got Mr. Hawke to his feet and he made a speech which takes up about 15 lines in *Hansard*. That was the situation then—

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You know what happened.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —when there were 7,000 people unemployed. Now those same members are crying and condemning the Government for everything.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: My word, you did!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: All we hear in this House is Mr. Strickland complaining that the Government of which he was a member found itself in the unfortunate position of having 7,430 people unemployed. But did the members of that Government try to explain what they were doing about it? No, they did not. They just said, "Ring the bells. We will get rid of this very quickly because we have the numbers to do it"; and that is what they did.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: We tried to start industries but you would not help us.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: When speaking on another debate the honourable member mentioned two matters, that I can call to mind, in respect to which he said the Government of that day tried to do something but it could not get any help from the then Opposition. One of these items was the export of iron ore from Talling Peak and the other was in reference to the Wandana flats. The Wandana flats were started in the year 1954, when there were 1,600 people unemployed, and not in a period when there were 7,000 people unemployed.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You still oppose them, don't you?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The opposition to the building of Wandana flats was not because it would provide employment, or because if the flats were not built no employment would be available, but because it is far better for the Government to build individual houses for the people than it is for them to be placed compulsorily in a block of flats with poor little Willie having to be on the tenth floor looking down on to the street below and having nowhere to play. I, as an individual, took that attitude when the flats were built, and I still stick to it.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Even though you are building them now.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Can the honourable member tell me where I have built flats for families? Of course he cannot because I have not done it; and certainly not a block of flats that could compare with those in Subiaco.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Didn't you build a block of flats?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I built a block of flats in South Perth for widows, a much-needed but very small contribution towards a big problem. We built a small block of flats but not anything like the block of flats at Wandana.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: And knocked one back that the Hawke Government started to build.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes; I did not go on with the block of flats that was advertised as being ready to be built, because I put the money into building separate houses for the people—houses where men, their wives, and their children can be accommodated under separate roofs, so that they have a feeling of security, and are not being forced into flats.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Who forced them?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Today I find myself in the position where I am forcing them; and does the honourable member know why? When a man reaches his turn on the priority list, he is offered a house or a flat. If he does not take it because he does not like it, or if he does not take the house he is offered because he does not like it, his name goes down to the bottom of the priority list; so in fact, we are forcing him, because we offer him that accommodation and if he does not take it he does not get a second go.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: If you are not building flats why do you offer him a flat?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Because I cannot pull the building down.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: But I thought you said you were building houses.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Then why don't you give him a house?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Does not the honourable member appreciate that vacancies occur in these blocks of flats that we are talking about?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You can get single people to take them.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We are side-stepping the issue. The point is—

The Hon. J. G. Hislop: If this is a private conversation I would like to hear some of it.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): Order! The Minister may proceed.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will speak up so that the honourable member can hear my side of the story, anyway. It is not very much to the point except that Mr. Strickland was suggesting that because there was opposition to the building of this large block of flats, if the work had not been proceeded with it would have meant further unemployment. But, as I have pointed out, at the time there were only about 1,600 people unemployed.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Not enough for you?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is not the sort of remark that I will accept, nor will I place any great credence on it. The other matter to which the honourable member drew our attention was the question of the export of iron ore from Talling Peak. The party of which I am a member has never been opposed to the principle of exporting iron ore; but, my word, we as a party were opposed to the money being used to set up another State-owned enterprise! That was the point; and at the time it was advertised that the money would be used to extend Wundowie, and set up a State-owned iron and steel industry. That is what we were opposed to; but how that could have had any effect on unemployment is beyond me.

Surely the honourable member knows that these mining projects do not grow up overnight. Mr. Strickland, who is a member for the North Province, knows how long it has taken B.H.P. to get to the point it has reached at the moment. Last month it mined its record tonnage of iron ore, and look how long it has taken to reach that stage. These projects take a long time and a lot of money.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: How long does it take to mine manganese?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It does not take so long to mine manganese, because that is an entirely different mineral; it occurs in small quantities in isolated places and it is taken out of the ground by ordinary quarrying methods. But in the case of Koolan Island, the project is a mighty big one.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: And in the case of Mt. Goldsworthy?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Apparently the honourable member thought I had given away those deposits to some overseas interests. That really amazes me. The Mt. Goldsworthy iron ore deposits are in the North Province, and Mr. Wise has a great knowledge of them. Mr. Strickland thought I had given them away to Consolidated Gold, or somebody like that. Surely the honourable member recalls that the deposits of iron ore at Mt. Goldsworthy are the subject of tender, advertisements for which have appeared in the Press. Tenders do not close until the 4th September; so I have not given the deposits away to anybody. I can assure him on that point. However, when the time comes we will endeavour to negotiate and come to an agreement in respect to Mt. Goldsworthy for the export of the iron ore.

I was pleased to see in the Press today an announcement concerning the signing of the agreement with the Western Mining Corporation Ltd. in respect of Talling Peak. I can remember the honourable member questioning me last year, and mentioning it in his speech. He said, "You are not going to give away Mt. Goldsworthy?" I assured him that it was neither

my intention nor my desire to give away the Mt. Goldsworthy deposits, but that we were going to go on with it. I said that I thought Talling Peak would be the first to be dealt with and Mt. Goldsworthy the second. That is what is going to happen; and tenders are being called for the deposit. We will get the project under way as quickly as possible.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Have you any preference for local tenders?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Tenders will be called on the open market and the deposits will be given to the best tenderer. In the case of Talling Peak, the tender of a local company was accepted—the Western Mining Corporation Ltd., which has done a good deal for Western Australia. If that company tenders for Mt. Goldsworthy—I do not know whether it will—it will receive the attention to which all tenderers are entitled.

I should like to point out to the honourable member that I have no preference for overseas interests; but the previous Government had. The previous Government had a lot of preference for overseas interests. To get the proof of this we have only to look at the Governor's Speech when he opened Parliament in 1957. This is what appears in the Governor's Speech on that occasion.

More attention is being paid to this State by overseas interests. It is hoped to attract outside capital in greater measure to assist with the task of our development. This is all the more important because Western Australia, in common with other States, is unable to secure through the Loan Council the loan funds it requires for essential works.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is so.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In 1957 the honourable member was a member of the Government, and I take it he is in accord with what was written in that Speech.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Yes, but we would process it as well.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He was a member of the Government that sent The Hon. J. T. Tonkin overseas, and we all know what was in the Press on that occasion. We read great headlines of the 9, 10, 11, and more industries that were promised for Western Australia; and when I sat in this seat and said last year, or the year before, something about Richard Klinger, the honourable member was proud enough to put me on the right track and assure me that that was one firm which the previous Government had brought to this country, and it was not done by this Government.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Laporte, too.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will tell the honourable member something about that when the agreement is laid on the Table of the House. Laporte had slipped

out of the previous Government's fingers, but I am glad to say that we were able to get it back again.

However, it is no use saying, because it suits one, that we must not attract industry to Western Australia; that we must give the local people a go; that we must not export our iron ore—as the honourable member said the other night. He said the company will export the iron ore and the profits will go out of Australia. How was Australia first started off in its programme of development? It was started by the influence which came in from other countries.

When the Opposition is in government it says it is important that we pay great attention to overseas interests, to get capital into Western Australia to help us with our industries. When it is the Opposition, however, it advocates exactly the reverse.

The task I have endeavoured to perform in the last couple of years is to encourage capital into Western Australia; to try to create an atmosphere in which people will be interested to come here with their capital, with their knowledge, with their resources, and with their desire to advance and make a profit; because every time they make a profit it is profitable for Western Australia; and it is good for us to have them here doing that sort of thing.

We surely do not want to listen to a state of affairs which is made to look gloomy. Surely Mr. Strickland does not want to throw a curtain of gloom on this picture! Cannot he share in the fact that the country's future is bright? In every Speech made by a Governor or a Lieutenant-Governor when opening Parliament, it has been pointed out that the future of the State was bright. This has always been the case. I defy the honourable member to pick out one Speech in the six years of the Hawke Government's regime where the Governor's Speech indicated that the future of Western Australia was not bright. It was always bright.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: When will it materialise?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It will materialise. One cannot expect any Government in two years to wave a magic wand and say that everything will be all right. It took the honourable member's Government six years, and then it did not do the job thoroughly. When I was appointed to the office of Minister for Mines—and here I will not say who told me—a certain person told me that I would have a couple of hours of work a day to do in the Mines Department. He said, "That will not worry you very much; a couple of hours will see you through."

When I first got down to the Mines Department I began to think he was right because, frankly, there was not a great deal of activity there; but it was not long before things were different. I did not want the job of Minister for Mines when

I got it, because I felt totally inadequate to tackle it; and probably I am still inadequate. But in the last two years I have learnt a little, and my enthusiasm to work for the State of Western Australia is not less than it was two years ago: it is a great deal more. In the two years I have tried, alongside my colleagues, to create an atmosphere which will bring people to the State; to attract the eyes of the world to the potentialities in the particular departments I have under my control—particularly the Mines Department.

I have tried to show people the potential that exists in Australia. I have had the very pleasurable experience of listening to men who have come from other countries of the world, and who have said to me over my office table that there were opportunities in Western Australia; that there was great potential here; and that they were interested in coming here.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): Will the Minister kindly address the Chair?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Very well, Mr. President. I have tried to create this atmosphere, and I have been doing my very best to promote it. I would like to go back to the year 1956, to the general election that took place on that occasion. As a political party we felt quite sure we were going to be successful at the polls in March of that year; and do you know what happened, Sir? For the Government of the day came a godsend in the form of a "Little Budget"; and the members of the Government clapped their hands in glee and said, "This will fix it; we will go back into government all right; thank God for the Federal Government." And it was so. No member of the Opposition, if he remembers the occasion as I do, would say that that was not the situation.

The situation that prevails today is not the fault of the State Government. I regret to say it has been brought about by the Federal Government. When one tries, as Mr. Strickland did, to get us to believe that, because this Government is in the fortunate position of having £1,500,000 more provided for in the Supply Bill than it had last year, then it is the start and finish of things. It is too humorous for words. One only has to stop and think for a second to realise that the £25,000,000 for which Parliament is asked in this Bill is a mere fragment of the State's economy; it is a mere fragment of the total. In Western Australia we have approximately 180,000 people employed. Would they be getting an average of £20 a week? If they were, they would draw roughly £3,500,000 a week in wages; and for 52 weeks that would be in the order of about £175,000,000 in wages alone.

Then again there is the income from primary industry, from commerce, and from the sale of consumer goods. If these

figures are added together, it will be found that £25,000,000 is a very small proportion of the total spending power of a little State like Western Australia. For goodness' sake, let us get things in the right perspective.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Why not talk about the annual expenditure?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member has had two opportunities to make a speech—one on the Address-in-Reply, and one on this Bill.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): I would ask Mr. Strickland to refrain from interjecting.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I can assure you that I will, Mr. President. I will not look at the Minister and then I will not interject.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will look at you now, Sir, and I am sure I will get further inspiration to carry on.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You will need it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not propose to look in that direction. This £25,000,000 is just a small proportion of the State's spending ability. One cannot help unemployment today any more than one could in January, 1959, when the State had a record unemployment figure. So, to say that the Government, as a single entity, is to blame for the whole lot is quite wrong. For instance, we read in the issue of the *Daily News*, which we received this afternoon, figures given by the secretary of the Bricklayers' Union which show that in June, 1961, there were 100 bricklayers unemployed and that today there are 62 bricklayers unemployed, which means, of course, there is an improvement in the position.

The Government is conscious of the fact that it has this unemployment problem. It is of no use Mr. Strickland saying that we are not interested in the working man; it is of no use his making the ridiculous assertion that the only people to whom we give a worse deal than the working man gets is the native. Statements like that deserve to be treated with contempt. We are conscious of the difficulties that prevail, and we are doing everything we can to put things right.

The Minister for Works has entered into contractual arrangements to speed up the public works programme. As Minister for Housing, I have gone on with the Empire Games village three months before the necessary time. Through the Treasurer I have been able to obtain certain finance from the banks. This Government spent its £23,000,000 last year, and it will spend its £25,000,000 this year, on building hospitals, houses, schools, roads, and on improving the lot of the natives. It will also enter into contractual arrangements for further public buildings, and all these moneys will be spent.

But the unemployment that exists today in the building trade is not brought about by lack of Government spending; because the Government is spending as every other Government has done, right up to the hilt of its ability to spend. The trouble is that we have unemployment in the building industry because of contraction of finance available to the home-builder. We have not spent any less at Government level on housing. We spent £3,000,000 on war service homes last year, and £3,000,000 under the Commonwealth-State agreement, together with £1,250,000 under the State Housing Act, a total of about £7,250,000.

There has been a bigger vote in connection with education, and it will be bigger again this year—it will be bigger than we have ever known. So it is to be expected and anticipated—and surely this is agreeable to the Opposition—that the Government will have more money to spend. But the problems are no less than they were before, because, as Mr. Strickland knows, an increase of 1s. a week in the basic wage has a considerable impact on the pay sheets of the Government departments. This money is absorbed; and I am very glad to say that the additional money has been forthcoming. The previous Government must have found it pretty heavy going when in the years 1957, 1958, and 1959—three consecutive years—they asked for only £21,000,000 in their Supply Bills.

I would ask Mr. Strickland in all good faith not to ring down a curtain of gloom over Western Australia, but to join with us in the enthusiasm we have to see Western Australia go ahead. Let us say what the average man in the street is prepared to say it; namely, that the world is beginning to take notice of Australia and of Western Australia. Let us say that the foundations we have been endeavouring to lay for the last two years will in the course of time reach fruition. Let us say that the agreements which have come, substantially out of the Mines Department, have proved successful. Whether the negotiations with Laporte, for instance, started in the days of the previous Government or not, I care not over much. What is important is that we have got Laporte here.

Surely let us say that the Scott River agreement is successful and that the bauxite deal is also successful; and let us say that of all the other agreements, including the one with the Western Mining Corporation in connection with the deposits at Mt. Goldsworthy, which is in the honourable member's province. Let us say that the people who enter into agreements with the Government are successful in their operations, because if they are they will bring employment and economic stability to the State; they will also bring to Western Australia the prosperity which we are seeking.

With those remarks I close this debate. I would point out to members that it is not a bit of use, merely for political reasons,

trying to create an atmosphere to the effect that Western Australia's prospects for the future are not bright; because, in spite of everything, Western Australia's prospects for the future are bright, and no matter what anyone might say to the contrary I feel sure we will succeed and prosper.

#### *Personal Explanation.*

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: On a point of order, Mr. President, I would like to refer you to Standing Order No. 385 which gives a member the privilege of correcting a previous speaker when that member has been misquoted. The Minister misquoted me when he said that I claimed the Government was treating the working people worse than the natives. From memory, my words were that wage and salary earners were the most helpless section of the community, apart from the aborigines.

#### *Debate Resumed*

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee, etc.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

#### *Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), and passed.

House adjourned at 4.49 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 10th August, 1961

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