

# Legislative Council

Tuesday, 11th September, 1951.

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

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan (for Hon. G. Bennetts) leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. R. J. Boylen (South-East) on the ground of private business.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### *Fourteenth Day—Conclusion.*

Debate resumed from the 6th September.

**HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [4.34]:** May I take this opportunity of joining with previous speakers in offering my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on the recent honour that has been conferred upon you. I trust that you, and your good lady, will long be spared to enjoy that well-deserved honour. I wish also to congratulate Mr. Sparks and Mr. Roberts on the promotions that they have received. From our general knowledge of the two gentlemen concerned, I am sure they will carry out their duties in the exemplary manner that characterised their predecessors.

Time marches on and at each opening of Parliament we notice that many familiar faces are missing. On this particular occasion we see that our beloved Sir James Mitchell, Hon. Hobart Tuckey, Hon. W. J. Mann and Mr. Leake, the Clerk of Parliaments, have passed over the Great Divide. Although bereavement is a severe blow to the relatives concerned, we trust that it will be tempered somewhat by the knowledge that their loved ones played their parts, lived their lives and have gained their rewards.

To Mr. Henning and Mr. Murray I extend, in common with previous speakers, a hearty welcome to this Chamber. The demonstration that they have given of their ability to deal with subjects within the sphere of their interests proved that they will be suitable members to occupy positions in this Chamber. I am sure that as time goes on they will bring to this House the benefit of the knowledge they have of subjects that concern their own particular province and the State generally.

I now want to have a few words to say about the recent peace proposals. In doing so it will be necessary for me to travel in retrospect, as it were, and I ask your tolerance, Sir, and the indulgence of the House. Firstly, I want to go back to World War I, and I think that, notwithstanding the fact that many years have passed, what happened at the cessation of hostilities on that occasion was no doubt indelibly imprinted on the minds of the people who went through that particular war. We all know that World War I. lasted for 4½ years and during the course of that conflict we heard from the then Kaiser the screams of "Gott mit uns" and "Gott straf England." We heard also from the leaders of the Allied Nations that they would never again trade with Germany.

It comes vividly to my mind that when the armistice was signed in November, 1918, and an army of occupation was sent to Germany, it was thought by those who carried the responsibility at the time that it was only necessary to have that army of occupation as far as the river Rhine. To my mind that was wrong; it was indicative of a soft peace because the people of Germany had no war on their soil; it was all fought in France and Belgium. Apart from the fact that their own kith and kin had sacrificed their lives, the people of Germany did not know very much about actual warfare. Then we found that this nation of arrogant people, imbued with the idea of racial superiority and a desire to dominate the world, was permitted, to a large extent, once again to build up its strength.

Notwithstanding the fact that what remained of their fleet was destroyed in Scapa Flow in Scotland, the trade that she was able to carry on with other nations enabled Germany in the short space of 20 years, to bring upon the world another war that lasted for six years. To my mind, the responsible people of that particular time did not teach Germany the lesson that was necessary. Germany could not have been taught her lesson properly or else she would not have been able to throw the world into a catastrophe that lasted for six years.

We hear a lot about the iron curtain, but we also have to remember that in the Black Forest in Germany there was something going on that no foreigner was per-

mitted to see or know of. Whilst the United Kingdom and Australia were battling to pay their war debts to America, Germany paid very little or no reparations to the victorious allies. Thus it came to pass that there was not very much difference between the victors and the vanquished.

The House will remember that under the Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations organisation was formed. We pinned a great deal of faith to that organisation and thought that through it negotiations would take place to settle the differences of opinion between nations. Unfortunately, however, the death knell of the League was sounded when Mussolini was permitted to take command of the Mediterranean, to utilise the Suez Canal and the Red Sea and to attack Haile Selassie. To my mind, that was the beginning of World War II, for it did show to Hitler and Mussolini the growing weakness of the allied powers.

I would like to draw some comparison between conditions that were brought about as a result of that peace in June, 1919, and the peace treaty that has recently been signed in San Francisco. We all know that the majority of the nations have subscribed to these peace proposals. Some, however, have not, and with these I do not wish to ally myself. I wonder, however, whether we are doing the right thing. As far as Japan is concerned, we have to take into consideration the fact that while America, the United Kingdom and the British Commonwealth were engaged in another war, she virtually stabbed those nations in the back; she did not follow the general usages of war and declare war on them, but merely went ahead and bombed Pearl Harbour.

Apart from this, Japan has perpetrated some of the vilest atrocities on those who were unfortunate enough to be prisoners of war, including many courageous girls who followed the profession of Florence Nightingale. Japan also torpedoed a hospital ship on the eastern coast of Australia, and now it is proposed to treat her in a very soft manner; it is proposed that she should be permitted to rearm herself; that she should have the opportunity of deciding the method of paying reparations to those countries she invaded; and, to all intents and purposes, it is also now proposed to again trade with Japan and give her the same opportunity that Germany was given after World War I, to build herself up.

It is only quite recently that we had some Japanese sampans coming around the coast of Australia and committing an act of piracy while a state of war existed between her and the allies. The small fine that was levied upon her meant nothing at all. I suppose we have to bow to the decision of those who are carrying the responsibility for the governments of the various countries in coming to this decision, but it definitely does not meet with my approval. I feel that Japan should be made to realise

that having once stabbed the United Nations in the back, she is not going to be given another opportunity to do so.

It appears to me that Japan will have an opportunity to rearm herself and an opportunity to trade again with other nations, thus enabling her to build herself up in a few years' time into one of the important nations of the world. What evidence have we to show that Japan is not going to do what she did previously. As far as I am concerned, I believe she will not hesitate to do the very same thing. It is my opinion that she will ally herself with any country from which she can derive the greatest benefits.

I feel that we have done the people of Australia an injustice; to some extent we have added insult to injury. I read in the papers that it is again proposed to establish trade with Japan and whilst I recognise it is necessary to make Japan assist in building up our country and I would have no great objection to the Japanese being made to work and supply this country with steel and other materials of which there is a shortage—I certainly do not agree that Western Australia and Australia should be told to import Japanese crockery and toys.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Who is she going to trade with?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am not concerned with that.

Hon. L. A. Logan: What about our wool?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Are not there other countries that can do with our wool? If it is necessary to do so, we can send wool to Japan, but I think we should bring back from that country in exchange materials that are in short supply here, not crockery and toys—these can be manufactured here. It is all right for Mr. Logan to hold those views, but I certainly am not going to agree with them. It might be necessary to have trade relations with Japan; but she is the vanquished and we are the victors, and she should supply us with the materials necessary for the building up of this country, not with crockery and toys. My final word on the subject is this: Let us take heed that history does not repeat itself.

With other members, I have listened with great interest to the speeches delivered during this debate and feel concerned about the north of Australia. This is the Jubilee year of the Commonwealth. In 1901, the Constitution was proclaimed which brought the Commonwealth into existence, giving a continent to a nation and a nation to a continent, giving us one flag and one people, proud to be known as Australians, and proud of the honour and privilege of being a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is a Commonwealth, not merely a federation of States, with certain powers that were previously exercised by the States and were transferred to the Commonwealth.

One of the principal powers transferred to the Commonwealth was that of defence. To my way of thinking, defence means not merely the provision of a navy, army or air force and the preparation of landing grounds in the north of the continent; nor does it mean merely the provision of destroyers or sloops to sail around the north. I consider it implies that the north of Australia should protect itself, necessitating the peopling of the north and the provision of industries, both primary and secondary. In this way, the people residing in the north would be enabled to engage in whatever defence might become necessary for the northern part of the continent.

An opinion exists—and it has been expressed in this House—that the northern part of Western Australia should be handed over to the Commonwealth. At this stage I would not say that I would oppose such a transfer, but I certainly would not cast a vote in favour of it unless a great deal more information were made available to me. The Commonwealth 40 years ago took over the northern portion of what was then known as South Australia—the portion above the 26th parallel and bounded by Western Australia on the one side and Queensland on the other side. Notwithstanding that that territory has been under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth for more than 40 years, I cannot see that a great deal has been done for it. Not until the Japanese endeavoured to invade Australia were steps taken to any extent in that territory. If that may be regarded as a criterion of what would happen to the northern part of Western Australia, I venture to say it would be better left in the hands of the State.

Recently, the Premier, during his visit to Canberra, asked for a certain amount of money for the development of the North-West and was told by the Commonwealth Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, that that was a matter for the State. When a man holding such an important portfolio makes a statement that the peopling of the north and the provision of industries are matters for the State, notwithstanding that the Commonwealth is the taxing authority, it calls for a great deal of thought. In view of that statement, the Government of Western Australia should take up the matter very forcibly with the Commonwealth and point out that if the northern part of Australia is to be protected, it must be peopled and must have industries, and that for this, money is necessary, and that as the Commonwealth is the taxing authority, it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth to make the money available to the State Government.

Becoming a little more parochial, I wish to refer to the housing question which has agitated the minds of many people.

When I read in His Excellency's Speech that 5,000 houses had been built, and when I look around my province and see what has been done there, I feel that the people of West Province and of the Fremantle district in particular have received a very raw deal. Recently I asked the Minister for Transport a question and elicited that the number of Commonwealth-State rental homes erected in the Fremantle area since the State Housing Commission began activities was 216 at Hilton Park, 173 at Mosman Park and seven in the Melville area. In 1947, the policy of the present Government was to build small-unit homes for the people, and though a certain number of such homes have been built, in West Province and Fremantle in particular only 10 small-unit homes have been erected and, of that number, three have been made available to employees of the State Electricity Commission. Of the 216 houses built in Fremantle, 48 have been made available to employees of the State Electricity Commission.

While I have no objection to homes being provided for people, it is not fair that some who have homes elsewhere in the metropolitan area and who have been transferred to Fremantle because they were working in the South Fremantle power house should receive priority over people who have lived in Fremantle, been ratepayers and worked there for a considerable number of years. The State Housing Commission says that it has built 120 flats in Fremantle. Those are known as transient flats, and have been erected at what is commonly called Mulberry Farm, but officially it is Davies Park. The building of those flats was approved by the Fremantle City Council on condition that they were not alienated, because they are substandard places inasmuch as the height of the ceilings is only 8ft. 3in.

But these flats are of no value to the Fremantle residents because the Government policy is that they shall be allocated to migrant building tradesmen and Australian building tradesmen on a 50/50 basis. For some reason or other, however, we find that other people, who are not building tradesmen, have from time to time, been given these flats. I say to the Government that if it has a policy, it should stick to it. By altering its policy the members for the Fremantle district are placed in an invidious position because people come to us and tell us there are flats vacant at Mulberry Farm and we say to them, "If you are not building tradesmen, we are sorry but you are not allowed to obtain them." Then they point out to us that so-and-so who works in some other industry has a flat there. That places us in an invidious position.

It can be truthfully said that the Fremantle City Council has at all times endeavoured to meet the Government and the State Housing Commission in every respect with a view to encouraging them

to build sufficient houses in Fremantle for the people. In that regard the council has transferred to the State Housing Commission, 226 acres of land, including 14 acres for a school and five acres for a reserve. A large tract of country has been cleared since 1948, but on it only 14 houses have been built, the rest being in various stages of construction—some have only the stumps, some part of the frames erected, and many, of course, have not been commenced.

Quite a number of houses have been transferred to the war service homes section. I have no objection to that, because the houses are still being provided for the people. Someone gets them irrespective of whether they are under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme, the State Workers Homes Act, or the war service homes scheme. I do not complain because they become war service homes, but I do because of the fact that since the Commonwealth-State housing scheme started, Fremantle has received only 216 houses and 10 small-unit homes, and out of that number, 51 have been allocated to the State Electricity Commission, thus depriving the residents of Fremantle of those particular homes.

We have heard a great deal about why it is necessary that the Government should become the landlord in this State. I feel it is obvious and necessary, because if we look back over the past few years, say to June, 1947, and take the figures up to the March quarter for 1951, we find that, in round figures, the population of Western Australia has increased by 80,000. Included in that number are 42,000 migrants from overseas. We had six years of war, and during that period there was an almost complete cessation of building activities, so that it was necessary, after the cessation of hostilities, to try to catch up with the building lag, and in addition, to provide housing for the natural increase by marriage. Furthermore, the 42,000 migrants who have entered this State over and above departures—including interstate migration, which leaves Western Australia minus, because more people have left this State for the Eastern States than have arrived here—have to be housed.

In the overall figure, the population of Western Australia has increased, since June, 1947, by approximately 80,000 to the March quarter, 1951. So it will be necessary for quite a long time yet for great activity in the building of homes for the people. Whilst I do not want to appear parochial or partisan, I feel that Fremantle is a most important part of Western Australia. It is a highly industrialised district and in recent years the Fremantle City Council has, by making land available to industry, encouraged quite a number of manufacturers to come here from the Eastern States. Whilst that will be of some

benefit to Fremantle and the people there, it will also be of benefit to the State generally.

Fremantle, being one of the earliest settled districts in Western Australia, naturally has a large number of houses that have reached the stage when they are of no further use for human habitation, and so should be demolished. Owing to the shortage of housing, however, it is necessary that people should continue to live in them because there are not sufficient other houses for them. So I ask the Government to see whether it can do something more for the Fremantle district than it has in the past. We have heard a great deal, from time to time, about contractors working here and there, but for about 18 months after the present Government came into office, not one house was built in Fremantle, and the reason given was that it was not possible to get contractors to go there.

But at the same time South Perth and Belmont were receiving their quota of houses built by the Public Works Department under day labour conditions. I feel that Fremantle, generally, has not received the justice it was entitled to in view of the fact that it has an increasing population and new industries. As I mentioned earlier, we find that since the advent of the Commonwealth-State rental scheme, only 216 houses have been built in Fremantle, and ten small-unit homes, and out of this number, 51 have been made available to the State Electricity Commission.

Hon. L. A. Logan: You would probably have got more built by private enterprise.

Hon. G. Fraser: Private enterprise could have built all the time, but it did not.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I wish now to deal with the Fremantle hospital. Part of the building is quite old—I would say bordering on 80 to 100 years of age. That part comprises the women's medical ward, the administrative section, the theatre, the x-ray department and some of the quarters for the resident doctors. At the present time the hospital is 104 beds short. It is recognised as a 201-bed hospital because beds have had to be crammed into every possible nook and corner. It is proposed in the near future in order to alleviate the shortage that now exists, to make temporary provision for two wards by utilising two buildings that were imported for schools—aluminium-type buildings which, I understand, were to be utilised as schoolrooms.

It will also be necessary to increase the accommodation for the nurses. To do that, it is proposed to bring down some imported Swedish homes and erect them alongside the nurses' home which, prior to being purchased by the Government, was known as Hudson's property, in Mary-st. I do not know whether members have seen these Swedish homes, but from what I have learned about them they may be

regarded as a temporary expedient for housing. In view of the fact that they are constructed of softwood I am doubtful as to whether they will be as economical as the Government thinks. White ants are fairly prevalent in this State.

Hon. A. R. Jones: They are proofed against white ants, are they not?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I know of many other buildings that have been white-ant proofed, too, but the white ant, so I understand from builders, has never been known to be worse in Western Australia. If the men in the Government Chemical Laboratories could find a method of treating softwoods and karri timber so that they would not be attacked by termites, they would be doing something of great economic value to the State.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Certain timbers were powellised years ago.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I can remember when powellised karri sleepers were used, but they did not remain long in the ground. The main points about the Fremantle hospital are that it needs to be extended and the fact that Government officials are running around Fremantle and districts trying to find a new hospital site. These activities leave me cold because the officers have had time during the years gone by, when there was suitable land available from which to select a site but they did not avail themselves of the opportunity then. As that land is now being utilised for other purposes, it is no longer available.

Hon. G. Fraser: They have been doing that for about 12 months.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Yes, something like that. I am of the opinion that there is nothing particularly wrong with the present site. It is possible for a greater area of land to be made available by the eventual demolition of what are known as the Base Flats.

Hon. G. Fraser: And the Fremantle gaol.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: As there is every possibility that the South Terrace and Alma-st. State schools will have to be removed before many years, especially if my colleague's theory regarding the southern extension of the harbour proves correct, that land could also be utilised for further additions to the Fremantle hospital. Further, there are two other areas that could be used for the extension of the hospital, namely, that known as Scotsman's Hill and the other which is bounded by Alma, Attfield and Fothergill streets. In the latter area there are only three old type houses, which eventually will have to be removed.

With all that land available, part of the new hospital could be built on portion of it and on its completion the old hospital section could be demolished after serving its purpose in the interim. Fur-

ther additions could then be made to the new section. So whether we are to have a new site for the Fremantle hospital or whether it is to be built on the existing site, no one seems to know. In the meantime, a conglomeration of buildings surround the hospital site and if any more are erected, I do not know whether enough room will be left to build a substantial hospital in the future.

I was rather disappointed with the remarks of Dr. Hislop concerning the building of a 500-bed hospital in Fremantle. As I have already pointed out, the existing hospital contains 201 beds, but as there is a shortage of approximately 104 beds at present, it should be a 305-bed hospital. With Fremantle at one end of the metropolitan area, I believe it is necessary to have a hospital there which would be just as important as the Royal Perth Hospital. Within the boundaries of the Fremantle municipality, it can be envisaged that we will have a population of approximately 50,000 and, with the expansion of some of the contiguous districts, the population to be served by the Fremantle hospital will be increased further still.

To my mind, it is necessary for Fremantle to have a hospital capable of treating, if necessary, both medical and surgical cases. As Fremantle is a main port, the hospital has to admit patients from the ships and, further, as the district is becoming highly industrialised, beds must be kept in reserve in the event of accidents. If all the medical and surgical specialists are to be retained at the Royal Perth Hospital, is it intended that patients should be transferred from Fremantle to that hospital? In the event of hostilities or some other emergency, are we to have all our eggs in one basket, or should Fremantle have a hospital with the necessary medical and surgical facilities?

I think Dr. Hislop will agree with me when I say that one of the reasons in recent times why it has been impossible to obtain student doctors at the Fremantle hospital, whilst at the same time the Royal Perth Hospital is able to obtain as many as required, is that students prefer to go to a hospital where they can enjoy the advantages of the best tuition under specialists. Those students who might be attracted to the Fremantle hospital point out the advantages which exist at the Royal Perth Hospital and naturally go there to obtain the specialised tuition. On one occasion it nearly became necessary to close one of the wards in the Fremantle hospital, which was only prevented by the Public Health Commissioner making available sufficient staff.

It is necessary that we should have a decent type of hospital at Fremantle. In the Eastern States, particularly in Melbourne and Sydney, I understand there are quite a number of large hospitals,

some of which work under an agreement whereby they allocate either surgical or medical cases to the hospitals best able to treat them. Thus there is complete co-ordination between the hospitals generally in those two States. Therefore, I cannot see any reason why we should not have a large and up-to-date hospital in Fremantle working in collaboration with the Royal Perth Hospital.

Whilst I have always been prepared to listen to and, to a great extent, admire Dr. Hislop's speeches in this House on the problems of hospitalisation and medicine, I believe he has done himself a dis-service by endeavouring to point out that it is not necessary to have a large hospital in Fremantle. While it is not possible to build such a hospital in Fremantle at present, we must perforce put up with the facilities at present obtaining, but I trust that in the next few years the Government and the Medical Council will be able to do something towards that end.

I now wish to refer to the important question of school accommodation. I am not unmindful of the fact that there are other parts of the State besides Fremantle that require more schools, but I would point out that when the new Hilton Park school was being built I drew the Minister's attention to the fact that it would not be large enough and that it should be enlarged while in course of construction. Unfortunately, nothing was done, and when the school was opened in August of last year, quite a number of children, up to the third standard, were transferred from the White Gum Valley school to the new school, with the result that the new building was overcrowded on the opening day.

After the examinations at the end of the year, when the children were promoted to a higher class, they were transferred back in the following January to the school they came from. But, the school is still overcrowded. It appears that again some temporary structure must be taken there to serve either as additions or as extensions built on to the existing school. If attention had been given to the matter when I raised it during the period the school was under construction, it would have been far more economical than it will be to add to it now. Furthermore, when such work is carried out, it will detract from the general architectural appearance of the school building.

Another unfortunate feature is that a number of children who attended that school came from Melville camp. That appears to be the only place where people can be accommodated at present, and there are now approximately 150 families living there. The children from that camp attended the junior classes at Hilton Park school and when they rose to a higher class had to attend the White Gum Valley school. In common with other transport-operating bodies, the Fremantle Tramway Board has increased its tram fares and

children have now to pay 1s. 8d. weekly to travel to White Gum Valley school whereas previously, when attending the Hilton Park school, their fare was only 1d. each way daily.

If the camp site had been adjacent to a Government railway those children would have been able to travel free. It becomes necessary, therefore to inquire of the Government whether it intends to offer those children the same facilities that exist in other parts of the metropolitan area by providing the advantages offered by Government transport. Even the children in country districts enjoy the benefit of being transported to and from their school by bus.

That, of course, is an excellent service, and those who instituted the scheme are to be commended; but it does seem unfair that because the school nearest to their homes is unable to accommodate them children are forced to pay 1s. 8d. a week to attend another school. I am hoping, therefore, that the Government can do something to assist the parents of those children who, through no fault of their own, are finding it rather expensive to send their children to school.

The fishing and crayfishing industry at Fremantle will be reorganised in the near future. I understand that the fish markets are to be renovated and extended, and that money has been made available by a certain firm for the provision of an up-to-date plant to process fish and crayfish. Quite a number of people, either individually or collectively, have spent considerable sums of money in building fishing boats and there is not sufficient protection for these craft in the area near the fish markets. I mentioned the matter some time ago as requiring attention, and I hope the Government will deal with the situation. Adequate protection is essential for the fishing fleet that necessarily has to moor in the area. Should there be a severe blow and some of the boats drift ashore, the damage would be considerable and the industry itself would be adversely affected.

Another point is that provision is made in the regulations for the compulsory survey by competent inspectors of the boats comprising the fishing fleet, to see that they are seaworthy; but there is no such precautionary measure taken to see that the crews manning the boats are fully competent to undertake their duties. If those individuals are to take the boats to sea, they should be competent, particularly the master and the engineers who look after the machinery. I trust the Government will look into the matter and deal with the position by means of amended regulations.

Recently I had occasion to ask some questions regarding the berthing of over-sea passenger ships at Fremantle and requested that those vessels should berth at either "C" or "D" shed instead of at "G"

shed. The latter practice has been responsible for new arrivals gaining an unsatisfactory view of the city. I was informed in the answers furnished to my questions that the berthing of mailboats is mainly confined to "E," "F" and "G" sheds but seldom do we see one at "E" shed and more often are they at "G" shed than at "F" shed. It means that when people go ashore they board buses at Edward-st. where they are taken direct to Perth.

The commercial community at Fremantle consider that this procedure deprives them of a certain amount of business to which they should be entitled. They hold that if the ships berth at a more advantageous point they could proceed through the City of Fremantle and would transact a certain amount of business there. Through the vessels berthing at "G" shed, passengers are apt to get a bad impression of the port which is the first point of call in Australia and, in fact, is the gateway to the Commonwealth. The object of my question was to see if it was not possible for oversea boats to berth at either "C" or "D" shed.

The information conveyed to me in the answers indicated that immigrant ships generally berth at "A," "B," "C," "D," "E," "F" or "G" sheds, but it is not very often that they actually berth at sheds "A," "B," "C," "D" or "E." More often they berth at "F" or "G" shed. As to the provision of special buses for the passengers, the replies indicated that the service was started prior to 1934, the Transport Board not then being in existence, and that no action had been taken to cancel the convenience made available for the passengers. No one would object to that, but if the berthing of the vessels was transferred from "G" shed instead of the passengers being taken by bus from Edward-st., where they see only the industrial part of Fremantle, they would pass through the central portion of the city and get a better impression of Fremantle.

I have been handed a photograph which I would like members to view. It shows the second A.I.F. transports in Fremantle harbour in 1940. The photograph, which was taken from the North Quay, gives a view of a large number of big ships berthed at Victoria Quay and demonstrates that it is quite possible for any large ship to be berthed at the quay practically right up to the mouth of the harbour. Some very large ships have been berthed from time to time at Fremantle. These included H.M.S. "Hood" which was about 43,000 tons. She was berthed at the lower part of the harbour. Then there was the "Empress of Britain," which also was a very large ship to be berthed in the harbour.

The photograph shows a large ship turning in the harbour, all going to prove that vessels of heavy tonnage can tie up

anywhere in Fremantle harbour. It is wrong to suggest that the harbour is unsafe, because vessels can berth right along the quays, almost up to the entrance. I trust the Government will give consideration to the matter and ascertain if it is not possible for oversea passenger ships to berth at least at "C" and "D" sheds so that passengers arriving here will be able to traverse the city proper and not gain their introduction to Western Australia via the industrial sections of the town.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Where do you suggest the buses should start from?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am not suggesting anything about the buses at all. The point I am making is that if the vessels berthed at "C" or "D" shed, passengers could then proceed to Perth by bus leaving from the terminus in Cantonment-st. and travel through the centre of the city en route to Perth. No one would deny that new arrivals would desire to see the capital city, but I claim it is wrong to make them proceed via the overhead bridge through the industrial sections of the port, which gives them a bad impression of Fremantle itself. First impressions are those that last, and therefore the Government should give some attention to altering the existing state of affairs in the near future.

We have heard a great deal recently about the camps at Coogee and at the Naval Base reserve. I understand negotiations are in hand to secure the transfer of the area in question from the Commonwealth to the State Government. I trust that that will be brought about as quickly as possible. If that end should be reached, ways and means might be found for the Fremantle Road Board to spend money on the reserves so that the existing camping facilities might be improved.

Regulations under the Health Act make provision that for a certain number of caravans and camps there must be a specified number of ablutionary, cooking and bathing facilities. That local authority is not prepared to spend money on a beach reserve which belongs to the Commonwealth Government and is merely held on lease, for it has no security of tenure. If the area were transferred from the Commonwealth to the State, it might be a means of inducing the Fremantle Road Board to spend funds in providing more adequate facilities and generally in improving conditions there.

Another question about which I am concerned has reference to the Fire Brigades Board. I understand that the board comprises representatives of the Government, insurance companies and local authorities, the Perth City Council having a special representative. I was always under the impression that the board derived its revenue on the basis of so many ninths from the insurance companies, so many from the Government, and so many from the local authorities. I was, however, astounded recently to find what happens.

A fire occurred on a property at Beaconsfield where a ratepayer sought to burn some rubbish in his backyard. He thought it was extinguished but the fire spread through some dry grass and entered a neighbour's property. That neighbour rang the fire brigade, which was quickly on the scene and extinguished the flames, an engine and four men being utilised for the purpose. Subsequently the person concerned received an account from the board for £6—£5 for the engine and 5s. for each man who had attended the fire. I am wondering why such an account should have been rendered. The person concerned was a ratepayer and his municipal rates included a fire brigade rate, which should indicate that he was entitled to the services of the brigade should it be necessary.

It seems to me very peculiar, too, that the person who received the account was not the individual who lit the fire originally. The matter was brought to my notice with a request that I should investigate it, and I found that the reason for the account was that the person had an uninsured property. I have yet to learn that it is anybody else's business whether or not a person insures his property. I understand that insurance is taken out by an individual so that, should a fire occur and his property become damaged, he can collect money from the insurance company by way of compensation.

What happened in this case suggests to me that the insurance companies may possibly be in control of the Fire Brigades Board seeing that if a person does not insure his house and the brigade is called out to deal with the fire, the person concerned is made to pay because he has not taken out insurance, notwithstanding the fact that he is a ratepayer and has already paid a fire brigade rate, which included in his municipal rates. This is unfair. Although, after investigations and representations which I made on behalf of these folk, the amount was reduced to £2, that still does not alter the fact that they pay their rates to the Fremantle council, and that the amount includes a fire brigade rate which, in my opinion, entitles them to the services of the Fire Brigades Board.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The local authority pays only two-ninths.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: That does not alter the position. Quite recently I had occasion to visit an office in the Treasury building, at the Mines Department end. I do not know the name of the office, but it is where titles are assessed for valuation and payment of duty.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It is the Stamp Office.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I believe that is its name. I am surprised that a better service is not provided for the public at that office. There are two seats outside for the use of people awaiting attention. On the day I was there, quite a number of people were sitting on those seats at 1 p.m. waiting for their turn. When the

hour struck, the officer in charge closed the door and went to lunch, and those who had business with him had to wait until he returned at 2 p.m. That office must transact a good deal of business, because every time I pass through that part of the building the seats to which I have referred are full.

Surely another officer could be made available for duty there, so that there would be a continuous service from the time the office opens until it closes, without having it shut down between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. so that those who have not been attended to have either to sit there and twiddle their fingers for an hour, or else go away and return later. The Minister might take up that question and see whether it is not possible to have the office fully manned from 9 o'clock in the morning until closing time in the afternoon.

I am very interested in the subject of town planning and am associated with a committee which is endeavouring to do something in that connection for the benefit of Fremantle. For some time we have been trying to evolve a system of town planning and zoning for that city. Such work, as will be readily understood, necessitates considerable labour, planning and expense, and I feel that the least that could be expected from the Government is that it would endeavour to assist authorities engaged in such activities. However, when a deputation waited on the Minister for Local Government the members were informed that they could prepare plans and submit them. If those plans were satisfactory they would be acceptable; but, if not, they could not be approved.

Is it fair that a local authority should be asked to spend a large amount of money and do a considerable amount of planning, and then submit the result of its efforts to the Government, which might or might not endorse its suggestions? Could one not reasonably expect the Government to co-operate with such local authority, particularly in a port like Fremantle, where there is a proposal for harbour extension which will involve an alteration of the railway system and the possibility of development of harbour facilities southwards? Could we not justly expect the Government to say to the local authority concerned, "We will place everything necessary at your disposal and send officers to confer with you and let you know what is in our mind as far as railways, harbours, public works and schools are concerned?"

But that is not so. It is ridiculous for a local authority to try to plan its district without co-operation, because such plan as it evolves must dovetail with those applying to neighbouring areas. Both the Perth City Council and the Fremantle City Council are endeavouring to do something in this regard, but there does not seem to be any co-operation between them or between them and the Government. This



is something to which very serious attention should be given. I do not propose to say a great deal more about the subject, because Sir Frank Gibson has already referred to the matter of town planning for the whole metropolitan area and made some valuable suggestions.

Hon. G. Fraser: Evidently you did not obtain much satisfaction with your deputation.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: No. I am trying to impress on the House the need for more co-operation and co-ordination than there has been in the past. In closing, I would express my appreciation of the hearing accorded me; and I trust that what I have said will be given consideration by the Minister, and that he will take steps to implement the suggestions I have made. I support the motion.

**HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM** (Central) [5.52]: In common with other members, Sir, I would like to offer my congratulations to you on the honour the King has been good enough to bestow upon you. It is usual for the gentleman occupying the position of President to receive the recognition that has been extended to you, and I think it was very fitting that the honour should have been conferred on you when it was.

To the new members, I would say that I hope they will not be disappointed in this House. Some come here thinking they are entering a house of learning; others come here to teach. I have not been in the Council very long but, like Mr. Murray, I spent some time in another place. I felt under some restraint when I took my seat here, in comparison with my experience in another place. Nevertheless, this House is willing to accept any knowledge that can be imparted by even the greatest of strangers who may come within its doors.

The world needs advice and help today. I have lived for a good many years and, looking back, I cannot remember any time, since I have been capable of observing what takes place, when the outlook of the white races has been so critical as at present. If our two new members can make some contribution which will help Western Australia in a small way to assist in the solution of world problems, they will be very welcome indeed.

I extend my congratulations to those members of the staff who have been promoted. Their advancement indicates that young men who come here and have the privilege of remaining, receive training efficient enough to enable them ultimately to occupy senior positions. I hope that when the time comes for our Clerk and his assistant to retire, the younger officers who have started their careers in this Chamber will be able to fill the vacancies.

Recently the Prime Minister called all the Premiers together for what I thought was going to be a very important conference. Since then I have been waiting to hear from speeches, or to read in the Press, the reason for the calling of the conference and what eventuated. As I pointed out, I do not know of—and even the reading of history fails to disclose—any time when the world was in such an uncertain condition as obtains today. What are we, as a nation, doing to help solve the problems that are confronting us? We know that Great Britain is being called upon to make further sacrifices for the purpose of building up reserve supplies and guarding against shortages that might occur in the event of another war. I want to know whether Australia can make any contributions in that respect; and if so, what steps are being taken to organise our community so that we can effectively engage the small number of people we are able to employ in the building up of stores.

Today the world is getting short of food. That seems a most extraordinary thing to say when we in Australia have plenty of food. There are no shortages here, or there should not be, because we have a country that can be used for the production of abundant food supplies. Surely to goodness this land is capable of carrying a greater population than it has at present! We have the land. Is it not about time that we took steps to educate our people to our present-day needs and transfer them from non-essential to essential industries? I am afraid very little is being done in that respect.

Take the position of the dairying industry. It is not merely a question of the price of butter. What is equally disturbing is that people who have been engaged in the industry are leaving it, and apparently others are not prepared to take their places. Again, while we have no scarcity of cereals in Australia, the world as a whole seems to be short of them. I notice that Canada will have a record harvest this year; and a big carry-over from last year will give that country a substantial quantity of wheat in excess of what was previously held. On the other hand, there are parts of the world where there seem to be considerable shortages.

In days gone by, with a smaller population than now exists, and with fewer facilities, we in Australia were not faced with the problems that confront us today. Australia has not reached the stage of carrying its maximum population. Surely there must be some means of organising our people to the best advantage. I thought that the conference called recently by the Prime Minister might be beneficial in that respect. We have far too many people engaged in non-essential industries at a time when their energies should be absorbed in doing something much more useful.

I know it is not easy to effect a change; but methods are available to both the Commonwealth and the State Governments for handling these industries in such a way as to make it less remunerative for them to carry on, and to encourage the development of other industries which are more essential. Stockpiling has ceased in some industries. I think that America has amassed all the supplies of wool and of cotton goods that it needs. In view of the shortages that exist in essential commodities and the great measure of inflation has already taken place, the outlook is dark indeed.

Like many other members, I have endeavoured to reason out what can be done in Australia or, for that matter, in any other part of the world, to prevent inflation. I believe it is possible to halt it, but the task will be a difficult and unpalatable one. I am satisfied that, until we can make our people appreciate the fact that the only remedy for the present position is to do more work in the prevailing number of hours of labour, conditions will grow even worse than they are today. Goods and food are costing more each month. Immediately the price of food goes up, wages rise, and vice versa, and until we can get our people to realise that inflation is caused not by those who control capital but by the lack of effort on the part of the whole community, little can be done to arrest the inflationary spiral.

All sections of our community must be prepared to make some sacrifice if we are to regain a sound economy. I do not believe we will ever deflate our currency to an extent that would bring it into line with values of past years, and I feel that the real problem is to check inflation at its present stage. There was recently an increase of 12s. in the basic wage and a further increase of £1 is expected. This illustrates just how easily we could reach a stage similar to that experienced in Europe after the first World War. I visited the Continent at that time and saw just what was the final effect of inflation.

We, in Australia, suffered a depression in the early nineteen thirties, but that was nothing in comparison with what I saw in Germany, Austria and Italy after the first World War. At that time, it was not uncommon to see in the Press of those countries reports of 30 or 40 suicides due simply to the fact that the people were on the verge of starvation, with no hope of any immediate improvement in conditions and no hope of help from their Governments, which were not in a position to aid them.

If we do not take the necessary steps to halt inflation in Australia, we might easily reach the stage where it will be difficult for our people to maintain standards of decency in living. I trust that the Governments of Australia will set an example to the people. I had hoped that the conference of industries called by the

Prime Minister might have provided some definite basis upon which to work, but I do not think we have yet reached any sound starting point from which to attack the troubles that are facing Australia today. I am not going to criticise the Government, though there is plenty of room for criticism—

Hon. G. Fraser: You have criticised previous Governments severely.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I can be just as severe a critic of any Government as can the hon. member, but I am not so continuously a critic as he is. I have before me the report on the working of the Government railways for the year ended the 30th June, 1950. I desired to ascertain whether in some of our Government departments we are providing employment in excess of the numbers actually required, and I will give the House some figures to illustrate my point. I will quote from Table No. 5 on page 30 of the report to which I have referred.

In 1931, the miles of line in this State numbered 4,181. The number of passenger journeys was 11,702,741. The tonnage of goods and livestock carried was 3,153,525, and the train mileage was 5,549,090, while at that time there were 7,448 employees in the service of the Railway Department. For 1931, there was a small increase in the rail mileage. I think that was the time when the new line was being laid to Hyden Rock. At that stage, in 1932, there were 4,235 miles of line. The number of passenger journeys was 10,394,311. The tonnage of goods and livestock carried was 2,847,568. The train mileage was 5,203,612, and the number of employees was 7,105.

Let members compare those figures with the position in 1949. In that year, the miles of line totalled 4,321. The number of passenger journeys was 12,979,098. The tonnage of goods and livestock carried was 2,736,720. The train mileage was 7,036,521, and the number of employees was 10,865. Members will see that the tonnage carted in that year was somewhat lower than that in 1931.

The Minister for Transport: I think the average haul was greater.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That may be so. The staff increased from 7,448 in 1931 to 10,865 in 1949, and for last year—

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Do not forget that the staff has worked about 11 per cent. less hours.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I have calculated the percentage, but there is still a considerable increase in staff. In 1950, there were 4,252 miles of line and the number of passenger journeys was 11,671,655, which is about the same as in 1931. The tonnage of goods and livestock carried was 2,843,292, or about the

equivalent of the tonnage for 1932. Train mileage in 1950 was 6,733,141, which was considerably more than in either 1931 or 1932, but for 1950 the number of staff had increased from 10,865 in the previous year to 11,364. The Minister will probably tell me that they are doing much more work.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Capital work?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No, renovation and rehabilitation.

The Minister for Transport: The introduction of the 40-hour week meant that about 10 per cent. more men were necessary to do the work.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know that, but on the figures I have quoted the increase seems excessive.

The Minister for Transport: The lag of maintenance during the war years required a great deal of overtaking.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There was a lag in maintenance then, and also in the 1931-32 period, when we were in power. I took those two years because in that period the railways carried a record harvest, and I am astounded that at the present day they are unable to carry anywhere near the amount of wheat then handled.

The Minister for Transport: It must be remembered that we now have a great deal more freight to carry. The ton mileage was a record last year and the year before, and our increased population and its needs must be taken into account.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I should say our population has increased by about 200,000 since 1932. In spite of the fact that the hours of labour have been reduced, I believe a number of Government employees could be turned to much more useful account if they were placed in essential industries. I do not think action of that sort should be left entirely to the Commonwealth Government. We could well appoint some suitable person to go through our Government departments and see what employees are not essential in their present positions. If we are to carry on, we must have a balanced economy in this State and we must not employ more people on clerical work, for instance, than on actual production in industry.

I admit that in some cases a great deal more clerical work is being done than was the case in past years, and that is due to the fact that we are spoiling the people to a great extent. Nowadays, they rush to the Government for almost everything instead of trying to help themselves. Not only the people, but also many members of Parliament, try to push on to the Government a great many functions and tasks that should remain the responsibility of the individual, and that absorbs a considerable amount of labour. It should be our

policy to make people more self-reliant, as they could often do things for themselves more cheaply than those same things can be done for them by the Government. I have endeavoured to put forward helpful and worth-while suggestions without being too critical of the Government. Our problems today are real enough and great enough, and I feel that each of us should put forward to the Government any suggestions that we think might be helpful.

#### THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [6.14]: The custom of the Minister in charge of this House to include in his contribution to the debate on the Address-in-reply a detailed answer to controversial points raised by members in the course of their speeches was, I think, initiated by that capable and popular leader, the late Hon. J. M. Drew.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Just prior to the tea suspension I commenced to reply to the debate and I had referred to a custom which had originated with Hon. J. M. Drew, who gave detailed replies to controversial points raised during the debate. This custom, which I consider a most excellent one, has been adopted by the late Mr. Drew's successors in office, and it is one that I propose to follow again this year.

First of all, Mr. President, I desire mine to be included in the congratulatory references to the high and well-deserved honour accorded you by His Majesty the King, an honour which, I trust, will prove some recompense for the time and application you have given to your parliamentary duties and to your work in presiding over the destinies of this House. You have held the high office of President with dignity and have proved the friend and wise counsellor of all members, both old and new.

I have already referred this session to the great loss the State sustained in the decease of our beloved Governor, the late Hon. Sir James Mitchell, and also in the deaths of Hon. W. J. Mann, Hon. H. Tuckey, and the Clerk of Parliaments, Mr. Leake. No further words of mine are needed to emphasise the sense of sorrow and loss we have felt at their passing.

To the new members of this House, Hon. J. Murray and Hon. C. H. Henning, I accord a warm welcome. The exigencies of time and fate remove familiar faces and bring new ones to our ken in this House, a process that, without doubt, is of great value to Parliament and to the State, but one that has its personal sorrows when one remembers the firm friendships that have been formed in this Chamber, friendships that are little affected by political beliefs or by differences of opinion in debate. Our two new mem-

bers will prove, I know, of great value to our deliberations and decisions. Both are representatives of a constituency playing a prominent part in our great primary industries and Mr. Murray, in addition, has the benefit of three years parliamentary experience in another place. Mr. Henning too, has a parliamentary background, his father having been a member of the Legislative Council from June, 1897, to May, 1898.

In discussing the speeches made by members on the Address-in-reply, I note that the usual wide range of subjects has been traversed. Over some of these the State Government has no jurisdiction as they come within the Commonwealth sphere. I noticed, too, a tendency for members to be less critical in their speeches and I feel that this is due to a realisation that in these troubled times, we all have an obligation to try to work together towards a solution of our difficulties, rather than to seek and criticise what might appear weaknesses in administration, but which are due to difficulties arising from present-day conditions. In this regard I must convey to Mr. Grey my appreciation of his decision not to criticise in his speech, but to make a concrete and useful contribution to the debate.

The opinion was expressed by Mr. Hall—and I have heard it mentioned by other members—that over the years, very little notice has been taken of the matters raised by members during the Address-in-reply debate. I want to assure members that both the Minister for Agriculture and I have taken a keen interest in every speech. When force of circumstances have prevented me from being present in the House at any time, I have perused "Hansard" transcripts of the speeches made in that period. Any suggestion that has been proffered has been forwarded by me to the appropriate quarter for consideration.

The news that Their Majesties and Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret will visit Western Australia in March next, has been received with much pleasure by their loyal subjects in this State. Mr. Logan suggested that all children, nine years and over, should be brought to the metropolitan area so they could have the pleasure of seeing our Royal Visitors. The Government agrees that all children should be given the opportunity of seeing Their Majesties. Mr. Logan's suggestion, however, although laudable, would be difficult to implement, in view of the problems of transport, accommodation and supervision of the children. Nevertheless, it is proposed by the utilisation of special transport facilities, to bring children from as far afield as possible to the nearest points to be visited by the Royal Visitors.

Hon. L. A. Logan: That was the idea.

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:** In his maiden speech in this House, Mr. Murray, as was to be expected, devoted some time to the timber industry, a subject on

which, of course, he is an authority. In discussing the shortage of manpower in the timber industry, Mr. Murray suggested that the Government should encourage the migration of people of Scandinavian origin to this State, these being people experienced in this industry. I would like to inform the hon. member that this possibility has already been examined, but it was not found that we could attract such labour to this country in sufficient numbers.

So far as migrant labour is concerned, the industry in general has been sponsoring the immigration of suitable labour from Italy. Some amelioration of the situation has resulted from this source, but it is of doubtful benefit, as many of these workers desert the industry for other employment shortly after their arrival. The labour difficulties of most of our timber mills have been worrying the Government for a considerable time. In this industry there is a very large turnover of labour, and many sawmillers find it impossible to man all their benches with experienced key men. All possible efforts to persuade men to remain in the industry are being made, such as the provision of amenities by sawmillers, and in this regard the establishments of clubs has had gratifying results. The provision of houses for married men is another matter that has been given special attention in an effort to arrest the drift of labour. Endeavours are also being made to recruit migrants from Dutch and German sources.

As a means of obtaining skilled labour the Forests Department has conducted three schools for fellers. A total of 49 men passed through the schools and attained sufficient proficiency to commence falling timber for mills. Unfortunately, as was the case with the migrant labour, a substantial proportion of these men did not remain in the industry. The department also prepared a school for mill hands but no men made themselves available for training. These details should provide the House with some indication of the difficulty that the industry and the Government are facing in their efforts to procure labour adequately to man mills.

Also, both Mr. Murray and Mr. Baxter referred to problems associated with the supply of fruit cases. As Mr. Murray pointed out, sawmillers cannot obtain the necessary skilled labour to work the fruit case benches. The hon. member expressed the hope that the Government would not wait for the findings of the Royal Commissioner but would take steps to remedy the fruit case shortage. As Mr. Murray knows, practically all the prewar output of fruit cases was produced by general purpose mills, largely from offcuts but partly from special planking used for the purpose. It is expected that when labour becomes more plentiful, this practice will re-operate.

Various steps have been taken in an endeavour to improve the fruit case position, these including the issue of a special

permit to the State Saw Mills to cut up to 1,000,000 cases, the cutting of up to 500,000 cases at the Kent River mill when it is open, the insertion in a number of sleeper sawmill permits of a condition providing for the production of a certain percentage of cases, and the issue of a number of permits for fruit cases only. Unfortunately, the crux of the problem is the shortage of labour, and as Mr. Murray will agree, this at present is a most difficult problem. Mr. Murray referred to the practice of cutting timber into eight- and nine-foot sleeper lengths and leaving the ends in the bush. He stated that these ends often were up to three and four feet in length and would be suitable for fruit cases. For some time past sleeper sawmillers have been given the opportunity of changing over to long-length cutting, this being subject to the conditions that logs were to be measured in the round, the emphasis being placed on sleeper production as logs were more suitable for this purpose, and that all scantlings produced were for use within the State. A few sawmillers availed themselves of this offer, but the majority have continued taking to mills short length logs that are not particularly suitable for the cutting of scantlings.

With regard to the recovery of marketable timber from areas being developed for settlement, Mr. Murray suggested that the difficulties to be met, such as the nature of the terrain, isolation and absence of suitable hauling roads, warranted some co-operation in the provision of roads that would be suitable both for the recovery of timber and for settlement purposes. The officers of the Forests Department to whom I passed this suggestion, advise that it is worthy of consideration and have informed me that negotiations have been instituted between the departments that would be concerned.

As might be expected, I listened with keen interest to Mr. Jones' criticism of railway officers. My opinion, based on a rather thorough experience of railway activities, is that the hon. member was a little dogmatic in his assertions. I realise that with a staff the size of that of the Railway Department and which, in addition, is scattered over so large an area, supervision over work is difficult, and that at times unsatisfactory performances by individuals are inevitable. The section dealing with consignments is one that has occasioned the Commission a considerable amount of worry, the reason being an appreciable shortage of trained stowing and sorting staff, and the consequent necessity to employ a large number of casual employees. Supervision is carried out as thoroughly as possible, but with consignments reaching record proportions, all loading cannot be closely watched.

Unfortunately, damage in transit and pilfering of consignments is occurring. These problems, however, are not confined to the railways, as shipping companies and road transport organisations are experiencing similar difficulties. I would like to draw members' attention to the fact that if consignors are prepared to pay the small extra expense of 10 per cent. required to send goods at Commissioner's risk, the cost of all damage would be met by the department. In support of his contention of the general laxity of the Railway Department, Mr. Jones alleged that never before had there been so many accidents. The hon. member went even further by stating that there seemed to be no redress against employees found guilty of incompetence or negligence.

It is inevitable that accidents will occur, particularly in view of the high train mileage in this State, which amounts to nearly 7,000,000 miles per annum. Accidents that occur are subject to immediate inquiry by a board of responsible railway officials. In the case of accidents where the safety of the public is involved, a representative of the National Safety Council attends the inquiry. Causes are ascertained, and where a deficiency on the part of an employee is evident, appropriate action is taken. It is not true, that only small fines result in these cases. The severity of a penalty is dependent upon the facts established in each case. Under the Railways Act, the Commission has the power to impose a fine of up to £5, where there is evidence of incompetence or negligence on the part of an employee. It also has the power to regress an employee to a lower grade, a punishment which has greater monetary effect than a fine, and where the seriousness of the employee's action warrants, the Commission has no hesitation in dispensing with that employee's services.

I would like to reiterate my confidence in the ability and probity of the permanent railway staff. In these days, like other employers, the Railway Commission is forced to rely on casual labour to a large extent. While much of this labour is conscientious and willing, a proportion falls far short of the standard demanded in normal times. It is a tribute to the department that although the railways have conveyed upwards of 800,000,000 passengers during its existence, not one single paying passenger has been fatally injured. In regard to efficiency of service and organisation, the department has carried a record ton mileage over the past two years. Last year was the best yet, and this despite fewer actual wagons than there were in service 20 years ago. Many of the trucks in the system are over age and approaching the stage of uneconomic repair. Last year over 600 new trucks were added but over 700 were written off as beyond the repairable stage.

The programme for 4,000 odd additional wagons, although a little delayed on account of the demands of rearmament, will greatly assist in enabling the Railway Department to cater for all traffic offering and so help to relieve present road congestion. The position is much the same in all States of the Commonwealth, and in view of the fact that Western Australia has had a greater expansion of growth than any other State, our performances have been recognised as good. Last year our population increase—helped by migration—was 5.2 per cent. as against an Australian average of 3.8, our rate being almost 50 per cent. above the average. In actual numbers our increase last year was over 29,000—the largest in our history. This has created a demand for more houses, more schools and amenities of every kind.

In five years, production of Collie coal has increased from 550,000 tons in 1946 to 814,000 tons last year, and the production rate is still increasing. Land settlement is expanding; primary production of all kinds is increasing—last year we produced the second highest wheat yield in our history—and the demands of the housing programme in both the country and the metropolitan areas have imposed heavy pressure on railway traffic. Substantially these demands have been met, but some traffic has for the time being been surrendered to road haulage. The railway proportion, however, has been maintained at an astonishingly high figure. Press reports have indicated that more than half our wheat and super is being hauled by road. In terms of tons lifted this is true, but in terms of ton mileage the picture is rather different. Road vehicles take the short hauls. Railways take the long hauls. In terms of ton mileage the railways exceed road traffic by more than three to two.

During the year it was found necessary to increase railway freight and coaching rates. This was unavoidable as costs had risen sharply in common with rising costs in all other forms of industry. Costs over which the Railway Department had no control increased by over £5,000,000 since 1946. As members know, a special committee was set up to examine the incidence of rating and its recommendations were adopted. Amongst other things it recommended an overall 30 per cent. rating increase and the merging of the lowest classifications into higher classifications. This had the effect in a few instances of raising the lowest rated commodities by a greater percentage than the average but it must be borne in mind that these classes had for years been carried at uneconomic rates, much below cost, as the result of concessions given to assist certain industries in depression days, at a time when the system as a whole did not have to bear the same high costs of operation as it does at present.

The Government in assessing the increase in rating budgeted for an actual loss on operational costs in addition to

assuming the burden of interest. The railways therefore give a service to the user at about two-thirds of its cost, so that every railway customer in effect benefits by a subsidy of one-third of the cost of operation. The Government feels that this policy is sound as it represents some measure of encouragement to country people and believes that it helps to arrest the drift to the city and so assists the policy of decentralisation.

In any changes of rates classification and suspension of old concessions, some anomalies are bound to occur, and these take a few months to correct. A committee of traders and departmental representatives is now being appointed to resolve these difficulties. The telescopic system of rating adopted by the department applies a tapering scale of charges so that the longest hauls have the lowest rates. The remote individual in the country therefore receives special consideration. No other system of transport applies this principle to nearly the same extent.

Probably no section of the Public Services is more vigorously criticised than the Railway Department. It is so much an integral part of the needs of almost every individual in the movements of people or goods—particularly in the country—that its occasional shortcomings are highlighted and its many benefits are often overlooked. No other service comes under the critical eye of the public to nearly the same extent. No other service operating on a commercial basis is called upon to offer more concessions to this or that section of the community. Generally, these concessions are expected as a matter of right.

In the discharge of their duties railwaymen are called upon to serve in any part of the system, and the opportunities which the average citizen has of establishing a permanent home are often denied to them. Nevertheless, the great body of railwaymen do enter into the life of the communities in which they temporarily reside in a truly remarkable way, mainly because they are inherently good Australians and good citizens. Many of our country towns are richer by reason of the services rendered by railwaymen in the civic and social activities of the town, and not a few of these loyal public servants return to various country centres on their retirement—or earlier—to settle down and sometimes to follow up farming or other pursuits.

But while the railways get plenty of criticism, occasionally they are handed some bouquets. Recently Mr. H. E. Braine, of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., complimented the department on its improved handling of the present wheat harvest. Probably the true test of the public attitude to the need for rail facilities and service is the public outcry when any hint is given of the abandonment of uneconomic lines. This was instanced by Mr. Strick-

land's remarks as to local public reaction in regard to the proposed closure of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway.

When the Bill for closure of this line was presented to Parliament last year, it was pointed out that over the years this line, which had a capital cost of £381,000, had built up an accumulated loss on operations amounting to nearly £600,000. It was also pointed out that for some years the annual loss had averaged £12,000, in addition to which there was an annual interest charge on capital liability exceeding £13,000. It is beyond question that if efficient road facilities, such as exist at the present time, had been in operation at the time it was proposed to build this line, then the railway would not have been built. The various aspects mentioned by the hon. member have been carefully examined, but it is felt that continued operation of the line, even with a light diesel engine as suggested, would not be practicable. The present position is that the Main Roads Department is putting the road in good order and from the latest advices we have, it is anticipated that the condition of the road and the necessary arrangements for providing water to Port Hedland, will be completed by the end of this month. When those two requirements are met, it is proposed to abandon the service on this railway.

During his speech Mr. Bennetts asked me two questions in connection with railway matters. The first concerned the "PM" class locomotives, a number of which the hon. member believed were receiving attention for boiler trouble at Northam and at the Midland Junction Railway Workshops. On inquiry I find that no "PM" locomotive or boiler is under repair at the Midland Junction workshops at present. Two of these engines at Northam and one at the Midland Junction running sheds, are undergoing routine inspection, during which the opportunity is being taken to replace a few broken stays in the boilers. These stays are in a breaking zone common to all "P" locomotives, and I am informed that there is nothing out of the ordinary in the work being performed.

A great deal of concern was expressed by Mr. Bennetts at what he described as the action of one railway official in changing the colour of railway tickets. The use of another colour, said Mr. Bennetts, as well as putting the department to the considerable expense involved in the destruction of old stocks, would tend to confuse passengers and railway officials, who were accustomed to the old colours of white for first-class tickets and green for second-class. I am afraid the hon. member is a little astray in his facts. His remarks would lead one to believe that all tickets had been altered. This is not so. The change in colours applies to country tickets, no change having been made to suburban tickets apart from monthly tickets. First-class country tickets are

coloured yellow and brown, the "yellow" indicating trips from Perth and "brown" trips to Perth. For second-class travelling, the colours are blue and grey, "blue" for trips to Perth and "grey" from Perth.

Contrary to Mr. Bennetts' belief, this system, which for some years has been operated successfully on Eastern States railways, is a great improvement on the old colours, and is of considerable assistance to ticket examiners, as they do not require such close inspection as the old type of ticket. The dual colours also facilitate detection where passengers inadvertently proffer the wrong portion of the ticket at station barriers. Mr. Bennetts' fear that there will be considerable expense involved in destroying stocks of the obsolete white and green tickets is unfounded. The decision to introduce the new colours was made in December, 1949. From that date the printing of white and green tickets was kept to a minimum so that when the change to the new tickets took place 18 months later, in July, 1951, there was very little stock in hand requiring destruction.

The feelings of Mr. Hall in regard to the lack of refreshment facilities for train travellers beyond Mullewa are shared by the Railway Department. The small passenger patronage does not justify the provision of a buffet or dining car, while it would be unsound economically to conduct a departmental refreshment room to service one train weekly in each direction. Efforts to interest private enterprise to cater for travellers has met with no success, so it would appear that the business offering is not sufficiently attractive.

Then again, Mr. Hall drew attention to what he referred to as a need for refrigerated vans for the carriage of perishables to country districts. In this regard, as the hon. member is probably aware, brake vans fitted with iced compartments are used in warm weather on the Eastern Goldfields and Murchison lines for the carriage of perishable traffic. As would be expected, the progressive trader has no objection to paying a small surcharge for the convenience of this service, which guarantees the arrival of goods in first-class condition. It is rather strange that disappointing patronage has been afforded this facility by residents of the Murchison.

In drawing attention to the need for new railway barracks at Merredin, Mr. Cunningham mentioned that during an inspection earlier in the year I agreed that a new building was warranted. The most urgent requirement in regard to barracks is at Brunswick Junction where the construction of the new building is about to be undertaken. Following this a commencement will be made at Merredin. I should like to mention that the order of priority for new barracks has been discussed with and approved by the W.A. Locomotive Engine Drivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Union.

Referring to water supply, Mr. Baxter provided some interesting information in regard to rock catchments and emphasised the necessity for the use of these areas to supplement the main catchment areas in the coastal ranges. The hon. member is aware, doubtless, of the Government's interest in overcoming water supply problems in the areas to which he referred. Suggestions for developing rock catchment supplies in the eastern and north-eastern districts have been referred to the Hydraulics Branch of the Public Works Department.

There is a committee attached to the Public Works Department known as the Hydraulics Proposals Committee, which comprises senior professional officers from State departments concerned in rural development. This committee gives consideration to and makes recommendations in respect of water proposals, particularly those affecting the drier areas. A comprehensive programme has been arranged for surveying rock catchments, etc., in these areas, and it is expected that surveys will proceed early in the coming year. When the surveys have been completed, reports and recommendations will be made by the Hydraulics Proposals Committee and will be given prompt consideration by the Minister for Water Supply. The surveyors will, of course, make inquiries from farmers, etc., in the localities concerned before submitting their proposals.

In the Lakes District, the department has already carried out a considerable amount of rock catchment conservation work, the largest of which has been at Dingo Rock. As members will appreciate, any decisions for the carrying out of rock catchment proposals in the areas affected will be influenced by limitations of staff, equipment and manpower, and by departmental commitments in other localities where the needs are of equal importance.

As usual, Mr. Hall took the opportunity to bring to the notice of the Chamber the progress of the work being undertaken on the Great Eastern Highway. The hon. member suggested that, if the unbituminised portion were graded every two months, the road would be kept in comparatively good order. He then went on to say that the attitude of the Main Roads Department appeared to be to neglect the road. As a matter of fact, maintenance grading on the unconstructed portion of the road was carried out during June, July and August. Generally speaking, this winter the grader strength of the Main Roads Department has been below par in view of concentration on the reconditioning of Eyre Highway as far as Eucla. If bitumen is received according to order, there should be a black road from Perth to Kalgoorlie by Christmas, 1952.

Another complaint ventilated by Mr. Hall concerned the National Fitness Council. The hon. member wondered whether the council's activities justified its existence.

He thought it should give more assistance to children in outback areas and instanced a request he made for physical training material for the children of Big Bell, which, he stated, was unsuccessful. As a matter of fact, the National Fitness Council, working under extreme financial difficulty, has achieved some excellent results in the country. To mention but a few of these, there is the splendidly equipped and large Youth Centre at Merredin, which is under road board management; building and land owned at Pinjarra and used nearly every night under the auspices of an active committee; and the Youth Centre at Wagin, which has been fully paid for. These are some of the permanent structures in constant use by young people of the districts, and, in addition, there are dozens of hired halls and schools, in rural areas, which are used in the interests of national fitness.

The total amount available annually to the National Fitness Council for work in country areas is about £1,300 only. Members will realise the difficulty in stretching this amount to meet the State-wide requirements, and it is obvious that all individual appeals for assistance cannot possibly be met. The council's funds are provided by the Commonwealth Government, whose policy is that it should be allocated on a subsidy basis, according to the amount raised by local people. The Commonwealth Government's opinion is that local governing authorities should be stimulated to assist the young people of the district. All financial assistance by the National Fitness Council in country districts is given only through properly constituted youth committees sponsored by the local governing authority. Mr. Hall stated no help had been given to Big Bell by the council. As no application has ever been received from that centre for the formation of a youth committee, the council, under the policy laid down by the Commonwealth Government, would not be able to make any assistance available. Mr. Hall did suggest to the council that equipment belonging to the Mt. Magnet Youth Committee be transferred to Big Bell as it was not being used. Inquiries, however, revealed that this lack of use was only temporary.

Reference to the price of gold and assistance to the industry generally was made by several members. As the House is aware, I led a deputation at Canberra on the 24th August last, to the Treasurer of the Commonwealth. This followed preliminary discussions between Hon. A. F. Watts and Sir Arthur Fadden. As well as myself, the deputation comprised Mr. R. J. Agnew (President of the Chamber of Mines of W.A.) representing Western Australia, Mr. G. Lindsay Clark, representing both the Victorian and Western Australian Chambers of Mines, Mr. Malcolm Newman of Mt. Morgan, Queensland, and Mr. Garrity of New Occidental Gold Mines, represent-



ing New South Wales and New Guinea. I had the honour of introducing the deputation and presenting the four main points for discussion. These were:—

(1) To request the Commonwealth to take immediate steps to initiate proposals with the International Monetary Fund for an increase in the price of gold which had no relation to existing price levels.

(2) Alternatively, follow the action of South Africa and arrange for Australia to participate in the premium prices for gold on the "free" market.

(3) Alternatively, a long term plan to stabilise the industry under which the Commonwealth could subsidise the price of gold so as to maintain low-grade mines in production, minimise selective mining and encourage development.

(4) To request the Commonwealth Government to allow a technical adviser to accompany the Treasury representative to the International Monetary Fund conference when the matter of gold was being discussed.

I stressed the tremendous importance of the gold mining industry to Western Australia and emphasised the impact that rising costs together with the fixed price of gold had on producing mines. I pointed out to the Federal Treasurer the disastrous effect on this State's economy that would result were the gold mines forced to close, and told him that it was estimated 60,000 Western Australians were directly or indirectly dependent on the industry. I showed that a major problem would confront this State were it found necessary to provide homes and work for displaced Goldfields people, and compared this with the substantial field of potential development that could be opened up if steps were taken to stabilise the industry.

I told Sir Arthur Fadden that the industry was aware that it had the sympathy of his Government, which was expressed clearly during the recent Federal elections, but that it wished for a clear re-affirmation of Commonwealth policy in relation to goldmining. If it was Commonwealth policy to fix the price of gold at the present figure to conform to the international agreement, then it was only fair that the goldmining industry itself should have offsetting compensation, in view of the fact that the dollar price of gold was restricted to its prewar price. I referred to the decentralisation policy of our own Government and the Federal Government, and stated that there was no speedier method of attracting population to empty areas than by the development of mines. I pointed out the vast mineral resources of Western Australia, much of which had been surveyed and was known. I said that a firm declaration of policy would restore confidence, attract investors and encourage settlement.

Referring to the possible method of assistance, I indicated that the industry would much prefer the application of a "common rule" than the present piecemeal method of assisting marginal mines. The formula to be presented by the deputation was simple, would save tremendous work for both applicants and the Government departments, and would avoid delays and uncertainty. It would ensure a sliding scale of assistance, which would apply only to those mines actually in need and would preserve the incentive to companies to reduce costs as far as possible. I showed that there was ample room for development in the North-West in the exploitation of mineral resources and that mining experts were fully alive to these. I pointed out the interest taken by the United States in the search for oil in this area.

The president of the Western Australian Chamber of Mines, Mr. Agnew, submitted detailed figures of production and production costs to Sir Arthur. He explained that the "common rule" formula had been based on a somewhat similar formula now operating in Canada. In principle, it was not unlike the Commonwealth Gold Encouragement Act of 1940, which operated very satisfactorily through the State Mines Department, and which had established a precedent. Mr. Agnew said that the actual formula was a simple one. It was the difference between production cost and basic cost (£13 3s.) multiplied by two-thirds production. The effect of its application would be to render the greatest measure of assistance to those mines most in need and to taper off as the need lessened. At the present time, said Mr. Agnew, a relatively small proportion of mines would need assistance, but, if increases in the basic wage and the rising trend of other costs brought other mines within the ambit of the formula, they would know in advance what aid they could expect.

Emphasis was placed by Mr. Lindsay Clark on the inequity to the gold producers of the restriction of the basic I.M.F. gold price to its prewar figure, this having no relation to existing price levels. He also argued that if South Africa were permitted to sell portion of its gold at premium prices on the "free" market, the Australian producer should likewise be permitted to share in this market. Mr. Malcolm Newman and Mr. Garrity supported the representations and spoke in favour of the formula method of assistance.

In reply, the Federal Treasurer stated that the Commonwealth Government fully appreciated the importance of the goldmining industry to the Australian economy and to Western Australia in particular, and he made it clear that it was his Government's desire that economic gold production should be encouraged. Sir Arthur also said that the Commonwealth Government already had the problem under examination. He indicated that it was not possible, at that stage, for the Commonwealth Government to anticipate the

outcome of the consideration being given overseas to the problem of premium sales. When that decision was known the Commonwealth Government, taking into consideration the requirements of collaboration as provided for by international agreement, would examine the position with the interests of all, including the gold-mining industry, in mind. In this connection, Sir Arthur stressed the many factors that would have to be taken into account.

The Australian Government, Sir Arthur stated, was continuing to support proposals during international discussion for an increase in the official world price of gold. In the meantime, he would note the industry's request for early assistance based on some automatic formula in preference to individual examinations of the affairs of particular mines. Sir Arthur referred to the many commitments which his Government had to face in relation to its defence and other responsibilities, but he undertook to bring the industry's request before Cabinet for early consideration of the whole question of assistance to the goldmining industry in its present difficulties. In reply to a question, Sir Arthur also said he would submit to Cabinet the proposal of the deputation that a technical expert should accompany Professor Melville to the International Monetary Fund Conference in an advisory capacity. I may add that the matter has been further followed up and the name of Mr. W. S. Robinson has been submitted as the technical nominee. I trust that my remarks will assist to ease Mr. Cunningham's fears that the Government has done little to advance the cause of the industry and will also indicate to the hon. member that his suggestion that a representative of the industry be sent to the meeting of the International Monetary Fund conference has been anticipated.

In the course of his contribution to the debate, Mr. Heenan suggested that consideration might have been given to the adjournment of the House so that members could attend the Kalgoorlie-Boulder annual racing week. Mr. Jones offered a similar suggestion in regard to suspending our debates so that country members might attend district shows. The importance of these occasions is recognised, and it is perhaps unfortunate that the legislative session clashes with these seasonal engagements. In previous years, as members are aware, this House has had some waiting periods, owing to protracted debates in another place, on the Address-in-reply. This year the debate there has concluded sooner than usual, so that an earlier start is being made on the legislative programme proper. It is for that reason that the usual adjournment of past years has not been practicable this year.

Housing, that hardy perennial, received its usual share of attention. Mr. Murray suggested that it would be in keeping with

the Government's policy of decentralisation to build more houses in country districts. Unfortunately, the main bottleneck in rural areas, so far as building is concerned, and one that has caused a great deal of trouble to both the State Housing Commission and the Public Works Department, is the difficulty in obtaining building contractors to operate in the more distant inland towns.

In an effort to solve the problems associated with building houses in the country the State Housing Commission has set up a country organisation section. The duties of this new section include co-ordination of the Commission's country activities, examination of the housing requirements and future developmental trends in all country towns, and to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the pre-cut housing scheme in country areas. This pre-cut scheme was put into operation early this year and it is hoped that it will overcome some of the labour problems in the country. An improvement in the country house building programme is already apparent as a result of the activities of the new section.

To the end of July, 1951, some 1,352 homes had been erected in 63 country towns under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. At present approximately 400 more are under construction in 62 towns ranging from Albany in the south to Derby in the north. The policy of the Commission has been to spread its activities over as many centres as possible. Particular attention has been given to the large towns in industrial and rural areas, as can be realised by the following figures which show the houses completed in various towns:—

Collie	....	....	....	160
Bunbury	....	....	....	212
Albany	....	....	....	83
Geraldton	....	....	....	81
Northam	....	....	....	69
Merredin	....	....	....	52
Wittenoom Gorge	....	....	....	77
Wundowie	....	....	....	109
Narrogin	....	....	....	38
Manjimup	....	....	....	29
Donnybrook	....	....	....	21
Boyup Brook	....	....	....	31

In all these towns, the building of further homes is proceeding. Several members drew the attention of the Government to the housing needs of the North. Here again the reluctance of contractors to accept work has proved a serious problem. Nevertheless, the Commission has completed the erection of 77 houses at Wittenoom Gorge, 10 at Carnarvon, one at Derby and 40 at Big Bell. In addition, 10 homes are under construction at Carnarvon, six at Derby, two at Onslow, two at Port Hedland, two at Roebourne, 43 at Wittenoom Gorge and five at Northampton.

While recognising the very urgent housing need, Mr. Hearn considered that it would be wise to adopt an increased industrial building programme. In this regard he pointed out that if industry is retarded through lack of sufficient and suitable buildings, it will be unable later to absorb our increasing population when these people are seeking employment. I think it will be found that the State Housing Commission has given favourable consideration to the release of materials for industrial and other projects, and that substantial allocations have been made during the past two years, consistent with the need to reserve a due proportion for housing.

The figures that I propose to quote indicate the very large increase that has taken place in building activity—apart from housing—during the last five years. These include shops, factories and other similar buildings that have been completed—

1946-47	....	220	at a cost of £358,000
1947-48	....	270	at a cost of £420,000
1948-49	....	347	at a cost of £889,000
1949-50	....	472	at a cost of £865,000
1950-51	....	839	at a cost of £1,432,000

These figures reveal that regard is being paid to the building need of industry, particularly when it is found that the number of constructions in 1950-51 were 77 per cent. greater than in the previous year.

Attention was drawn by Mr. Hall to an amenity which he stated was lacking in the Murchison area. This was dental facilities. This is another instance where the efforts of the Government have been fraught with disappointment. During the past two years two dentists have been appointed in succession by the Public Health Department, with headquarters at Geraldton, to deal with schools in an area extending as far as Wiluna. After brief periods both men resigned. The department now has appointed another dentist to service this district. It is expected that a house in Geraldton will be available for him soon. When this eventuates, he will take up practice, and Murchison schools will be given priority in his itinerary.

The problem attached to the care of our native population was the subject of some debate. Mr. Parker's remarks were of great interest. The hon. member is to be commended for the time that he has devoted to making himself conversant with all aspects of native administration. Mr. Hall in discussing the assault by several natives on the Acting Superintendent of the Cosmo Newbery native station stated that though the latter should have been prosecuted no action was taken. This is not correct. The Department of Native Affairs, acting for the natives, instituted proceedings in court against the Acting Superintendent, who, however, was acquitted. I would like to assure the hon. member that the antecedents of all ap-

pointees to the department are checked carefully. In the case under discussion it would appear that the person in question lost control of himself and disclosed inhibitory tendencies that otherwise might not have been revealed.

Several members devoted a considerable amount of attention to hospital and social service problems. As much of this matter is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government and, in addition, has been dealt with on previous occasions, I do not propose to discuss every point that was submitted. I would like to correct an erroneous statement made by Mr. Bennetts when referring to the Mt. Henry women's home. The hon. member averred that £200,000 had been spent on the home up to date, and that it was providing accommodation for 20 aged women. He expressed his belief that the home would ultimately hold 50 persons and that its completed cost would be £400,000 to £500,000. I am afraid the hon. member's remarks were misleading. The home is accommodating approximately 150 persons at present and the ultimate plan envisages a total of 350 persons.

In discussing Dr. Hislop's contention that an intelligent view of hospital planning should be taken by the responsible authorities, I would like to point out that the hospital plan being embarked on by the Government has been considered and approved by the State Health Council. This council, as members no doubt are aware, is a body of medical men selected by the medical profession to advise the Government on such matters. There is a sub-committee of the council known as the Hospital Requirements Committee. Incidentally, I am told that Dr. Hislop was not able to accept appointment to this sub-committee. I am informed that hospital bed requirements for all areas, including that of Fremantle, were estimated after a careful survey of all beds in the State and an examination of the use made of them. The increase that may be expected in population was also an important factor taken into consideration.

The survey indicated clearly that the requirements of this State are almost exactly similar to those estimated for Great Britain and the United States of America. The figures adopted for hospital planning in those countries are five beds per 1,000 population for acute cases, and 2 to 2.5 beds per 1,000 for chronic cases. The survey also indicated the manner in which these beds should be spread throughout the State, that is, with a higher proportion in the metropolitan and regional areas.

The 1950 population dependent on Fremantle hospital was 65,000. In 1960 it is estimated that this will have grown to over 90,000. On these figures it is evident that Fremantle now requires approxi-

mately 350 acute and 150 chronic beds, and that in 1960 approximately 600 acute and over 200 chronic beds will be required. In view of this, it is proposed to build a 350-bed hospital extendable to 500 beds and to retain the present 200-bed hospital for chronic cases. If, as Dr. Hislop suggests, the cost of a 500-bed hospital is £2,000,000, this would be considerably cheaper than five 100-bed hospitals, the cost of which would be at least £3,000,000.

I am informed that the hon. member's suggestion that a number of small hospitals saves staff by using general practitioners instead of specialists, is difficult to understand. Doctors, I am told, are about the only persons not at present in short supply, as regards hospital staffs, and that practitioners visiting at various odd hours would entail considerable wastage of the nursing staff's time. My information also is that a number of small hospitals means duplication and uneconomical use of ancillary services, and that modern medicine is making an ever-increasing use of various ancillary specialised techniques, investigations, equipment, etc., which can only be economically supplied and used in large hospitals.

The Royal Perth Hospital is already overcrowded in its specialist, diagnostic and therapeutic departments. The further 100 beds to be added to it will have little effect on the hospital bed situation in the metropolitan area, but will add to the strain on specialist departments in the hospital and render them still less capable of dealing with referred cases from a number of small metropolitan hospitals. Fremantle hospital is already staffed with specialists and although certain specialties are at present confined to Royal Perth Hospital the expanding needs of the metropolis may require extended specialist facilities in Fremantle. There will be a proportion of community beds in the new Fremantle hospital and use, therefore, will be made of general practitioners.

Then again, Dr. Hislop stated that a hospital of 10 or 11 storeys would be much more costly than one of perhaps 100 beds and only two or three storeys. In this connection, however, if a suitable site is provided, it would not be necessary to build a 500-bed hospital up to 10 or 11 storeys. Mr. Gray asked for some definite information of the site of the proposed new Fremantle hospital. I am afraid I cannot give him this. While it is realised that a decision is most important, the problem of siting is by no means simple. The problem is the subject of discussion between the Town Planning Board and the Fremantle town planning authority, and a report has not yet been received.

Hon. G. Fraser: They must take a long time.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: They do. Mr. Fraser asked why Sections 72 to 84 of the Health Act, particularly

those relating to the connection of premises with sewerage and drainage, should refer to the liability of both the owner and occupier of the premises. The hon. member desired to know why local authorities were given power to compel occupiers to have these connections made, and also to provide laundry and bathroom facilities when these are unsatisfactory. I would inform the hon. member that in determining the liability for expenses consequent upon the installation of drainage or other work on any premises, it would at first appear that the owner should at all times be held responsible by reason of the fact that the enhanced value of the property would benefit the owner, and not the occupier. In practice, however, the terms of tenancy vary widely in that by agreement between the parties certain responsibilities are assumed by an occupier under lease agreement.

Not infrequently a difficult situation arises when an owner who has been served with an order to carry out work, informs the local authority that, by agreement, the occupier holds himself responsible to the owner for works which are the subject of the order. In such cases, the local authority, under the Act, can waive the question of equity and thereby avoid legal argument and delay in the execution of orders. As a safeguard, under Section 369 of the Act, an owner is given the right to approach the court for recovery from an occupier, and vice versa, where it is felt that works undertaken have been the responsibility of the other party.

The interests of a local authority, which has carried out work on behalf or in default of an owner, are protected by Section 371 which provides that the expenses shall remain a charge upon the land until paid. It would obviously not be a rightful act to cause the expenses to remain a charge against land where the occupier was the responsible party. The practice, therefore, is to regard the owner as the responsible party unless he shows the case to be otherwise under an enforceable agreement. In order to ensure that a local authority, and therefore the ratepayers generally, do not suffer financial loss due to dispute between an owner and occupier, Section 80 (3) refers to owner only. Should the owner consider that he has a claim against the occupier, he is protected by Section 369.

In the course of his remarks, Mr. Fraser cited a case where difficulty was encountered in enforcing the law. The case occurred shortly after the local authority had suffered a reverse in court in a similar circumstance. It is felt that the case would not have been lost if it had been presented differently. A number of convictions have been obtained by other authorities in parallel cases. Should the local authority in question still feel dissatisfied with the legal position, it may itself place the matter beyond doubt by amendment of its bylaws.

What he explained was the method adopted by the Department of Agriculture for the testing of cream for butterfat content at the factory, was criticised by Mr. Loton. The hon. member said he understood that when a can of cream arrived at the factory, a sample was taken for a factory test, this sample later being subject to another or check test by a departmental officer. He felt that this was an unsatisfactory method and suggested that a more reliable test would be for another sample to be taken by the department's inspector. This proposal would be difficult to implement as cans are often emptied prior to the tester's arrival at the factory.

Regulation 42 made under the Dairy Industry Act provides that samples shall be available for check testing equal to the number represented by a full run in the testing machine, the tests of which have been entered in the records. The samples must be the last series which passed through the machine. This method provides an element of surprise by enabling the inspector to enter a factory and seize the last series of samples tested prior to his visit. It is important that the check be made on tests which have been entered on the records, in the event of departmental action being necessary in the case of unsatisfactory tests. Furthermore, Mr. Loton also considered that all cans were not satisfactorily stirred prior to testing. I am informed that the stirring of cream in the can is watched by the inspector during his visit. Any failure to stir at other times would create variations in the tests which would be apparent when the records were examined.

The shortage of Government surveyors, particularly in the Great Southern district has been referred to by Mr. Loton and he pointed out this is delaying essential developmental work. Mr. Bennetts indicated also that work at Esperance was being retarded through the lack of a surveyor. This shortage is caused mainly by the great activity in land settlement and land transactions throughout the State, making it most difficult to cope with the greatly increased volume of survey work. A number of surveyors have been operating in the Great Southern and Esperance districts during the past years. Contract surveyors on this work were Mr. F. G. Medcalf, from January to June at Many Peaks, South Stirlings, Rocky Gully, etc., and Mr. I. M. Gordon, from March to May, at Yornaning, Katanning, Cuballing and Narrogin. At present Mr. W. S. Brockway is undertaking Crown land surveys in the Esperance district.

Staff surveyors are Mr. W. B. Martyr, who has been operating at Yealering, Wickiepin, Pingelly and Corrigin, since the 18th July, 1951; Mr. J. F. Morgan who is stationed in the lower Great Southern district, and has been working at Rocky Gully since the 17th May, 1951, and Mr. F. K. Thompson, who has been at Brookton and

Hyden from the 5th June, 1951. Mr. Medcalf resides in Albany and most of his time during the past few years has been spent on departmental work in the lower Great Southern. Every effort is being made to increase the survey staff and this will be continued actively.

In a rather restrained manner Mr. Fraser commented on a subject very dear to his heart, that of the Fremantle harbour extension scheme. He painted a dreary picture of a substantial area in North Fremantle ravaged as a result of work necessary for an upriver extension plan, and referred specifically to the possibility that 350 houses would be affected by the scheme. I do not propose to comment at this stage on the actual number of properties that will be involved, as no accurate information in this regard will be available until the future harbour developmental scheme is accurately laid out by the consulting engineers, Sir Alexander Gibb and partners, and the survey of the whole area is completed. This work is being carried out and it is expected will be completed early next year.

It is believed that the figure of 350 houses quoted by Mr. Fraser is in excess of the total number of properties that will be affected by the ultimate upriver harbour development scheme. Completion of the scheme is not expected for some 50 years or so and the absorption of any properties will be gradual over that period. It is certain that properties affected within the next few years by the re-siting of the road and rail bridges will be only a small fraction of the figure provided by the hon. member. I am informed that most of the properties that will be affected are sub-grade in character, are old, and in the normal course would have to be replaced in the not-too-distant future.

Of the total area in Fremantle required for harbour extension purposes, much is unoccupied beach and river bank land and vacant areas. I would like to emphasise that accurate information regarding properties to be absorbed in North Fremantle by the upriver harbour extension scheme cannot be known exactly until the surveys now in hand are completed and the layout of the upriver extension scheme, including re-siting of the bridges, is completed. It must be remembered that there are only three alternatives to choose from in extending the harbour, these being seaward or upstream extension, or a new site. The last mentioned is out of the question and no matter whether extension be upstream or seaward, some interference with private property is unavoidable.

If it was decided to extend seawards, private property would be affected by the need for wharves, reclaimed areas, road and rail approaches and possibly a special railway system to haul the huge loads of

stone required for the long slow work of constructing breakwaters, work which, in such an exposed locality, would take years to complete. Incidentally, it must be realised that no inshore works, such as dredging, reclamation, quays, railways, roads or transit sheds, could be undertaken until such time as sufficient protection is given from the sea by the breakwaters, thus causing an additional delay amounting to years.

In reply to the hon. member's contention that another engineer would probably disagree with the extension plans, I would point out that upstream extension has been recommended by Mr. Stilleman, Sir George Buchanan, Sir Alexander Gibb and Mr. Meyer, as well as Mr. Tydeman. Each of these prominent, experienced harbour engineers recommended upstream extension as the first step to port extension, to be followed in the distant future by seawards extension. Mr. Fraser expressed surprise at the nature of an answer he had received to a question he asked in Parliament in connection with test borings at Point Brown. The hon. member thought it strange that no departmental report was available regarding the borings.

I would like to explain to Mr. Fraser that written reports are not usually made on borings. In the normal course, information obtained from borings is recorded on drawings. Into these drawings or boring sheets the engineer writes and records all the information revealed from the bore holes. To an engineer, therefore, these drawings are the full records. As the hon. member was informed in the parliamentary question referred to, all information necessary in regard to the borings made on the original proposed bridge site at Point Brown by Sir Alexander Gibb, is recorded on P.W.D. Plan No. 27058, and Appendix 2, Volume 3 of the Tydeman report on the Port of Fremantle, 1948.

Then again, Mr. Fraser indicated he had received information that borings carried out prior to 1929 failed to reveal a satisfactory bottom. This is not so. Borings made some 25 years ago did not cease owing to an unsatisfactory bottom. They were complete for the purpose required. The depth they were taken to was 80 feet, which was deep enough to give sufficient indication to the engineers of the geographical strata available for bridge foundations. Any of the material indicated for the full depth of these bores is suitable for foundations for the new bridge, being mainly sand and rock. As a matter of fact, bridge foundations can be constructed in most types of material. The conclusion that bridges must be founded in rock is often erroneously believed by laymen. Bridges can be designed for any type of foundation ranging from water, hydraulic grades of mud, clays and sand to rock.

Until such time as the detailed design of the new bridge is available from the consulting engineers, the optimum economic depth of the foundations and the length of span to suit the loading cannot be determined. It is probable that more bores on the site will be required. The information already obtained from bores indicates that an economic pier and span or similar structure can be constructed at Point Brown. Mr. Fraser questioned the fact that the borings ceased at a point approximately two-thirds of the distance across the river, and he thought this rather curious. The explanation is that these bores covered the area of the proposed bridge site, which was in the realigned river north of the existing channel. At this point the river was to be straightened and re-sited north of its existing bed. For this reason the proposed bridge would not coincide with the present channel.

The fact that the borings stopped in midstream of the existing channel merely meant that point was the limit of the site of the future bridge. Mr. Fraser in support of his contention that the most economical extension scheme should be adopted, quoted costs he stated he extracted from Mr. Tydeman's report, and which, he said, revealed that costs per berth of a seawards scheme would be less than for upstream extension. In the manner expressed by the hon. member, this gives a false impression of the position. The correct viewpoint is that the final seawards project, envisaging a very large number of berths, possibly to be constructed over the next two centuries, would cost less per berth than berths upstream if all were constructed at once.

In fact, such a vast scheme could only be constructed over a very long term, that is, over the years, and scheme by scheme, and stage by stage. If this vast scheme is constructed as one large contract its cost would be less per berth than the cost of a smaller upriver extension scheme. It is obviously not possible for this large scheme to be constructed simultaneously; it can only be constructed in stages, and in this form will cost more per berth than will a smaller upriver extension scheme.

On this occasion, Mr. Fraser again referred to the financial arrangement relative to the kindergarten movement, under which the Kindergarten Union meets the whole of the cost of teachers' salaries and imposes a per capita levy on the branches to help defray the cost. This levy was recently increased, and the hon. member suggests that it would be to the advantage of the branches if they were to revert to the previous system whereby they received a Government grant of £4 per child per annum and then had to raise the rest of the money needed to pay the cost of the teachers' salaries.

Hon. G. Fraser: No, I did not suggest that at all.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Then I must have misread the hon. member's remarks; I thought that was what he suggested. It is true that prior to 1949 the procedure was for the Government grant to be paid direct to the individual kindergarten committees, which were then required to meet the cost of teachers' salaries and the incidental expenses incurred in the functioning of their centres. Under an administrative change which operated from the beginning of 1949, the central body of the Kindergarten Union assumed full responsibility for the payment of teachers' salaries, towards the cost of which it received the full annual Government grant of £4 per child and, in addition, levied the kindergarten committees to the extent of £4 15s. per child per annum. The decision to make this change was purely a domestic matter between the Kindergarten Union and its branches, having as its object the placing of their finances on a sounder footing and the bringing of the organisation into line with the ruling practice in other States.

In 1949 the Kindergarten Union's income, consisting of the levy, the Government per capita grant and an annual Government subsidy of approximately £6,000 to meet administrative costs and the expenses of the Kindergarten Training College, was sufficient to meet its financial commitments. During the past two years, however, costs have risen very steeply, teachers' salaries in particular having increased by approximately 50 per cent., and the Kindergarten Union has become increasingly dependent on Treasury assistance in order to carry on. The Government grant has been practically doubled since 1949, and will amount this year to £16,375. The annual grants for the past few years have been—

	£
1944-45	1,549
1945-46	667
1946-47	904
1947-48	6,125
1948-49	5,373
1949-50	10,447
1950-51	12,706

As I have already mentioned, the grant for 1951-52 will be £16,375. In addition, a sum of up to £500 per year is available to encourage the opening of new country centres at a rate of £100 per centre. Notwithstanding these increases, the levy on the kindergarten committees on the other hand remained unaltered until last month, when an increase of £2 per child per annum was decided upon. In the circumstances, this rise of 42 per cent. in the levy seems fully justified.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the whole of the increase was levied in the last school term instead of being spread over the full year, but the responsibility for this decision rests entirely with the Kindergarten Union.

I am afraid it would not be of any assistance to revert, as Mr. Fraser suggests, to the earlier system of paying the Government per capita grant direct to the local committees.

Hon. G. Fraser: I did not suggest that at all. What I suggested was a straight-out Government grant to the individual committees.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am glad the hon. member has made that explanation, because that was the impression I gathered. At present rates, teachers' salaries cost £17 per year for each child enrolled. If the Government were to meet the cost of kindergarten administration and teacher training, and distribute the balance of its grant among the individual committees, the amount received per child would be approximately £8. The committees would then have to find £9 per child to meet the cost of teachers' salaries compared with £6. 15s. at the present time. Far from improving the position of the kindergarten committees, that would leave them £2. 5s. per child worse off than they are under the present system.

In closing the debate I must apologise if my speech has appeared rather protracted, but it is my belief that members of this House are entitled to replies to complaints or criticism expressed by them, or to questions asked of the Minister in this House, during their speeches on the Address-in-reply. I have endeavoured to cover as many points as possible, but if any member feels that, through inadvertence, I have failed to reply to him, or have not given sufficient information, I will be happy to provide any details I can obtain.

I do not wish members to think that the Minister for Agriculture or I ignore comments during the Address-in-reply debate. As I have said earlier in this speech, all suggestions or comments are forwarded to the appropriate authority. Before resuming my seat, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and all members for the courtesy with which I have been listened to and for the assistance rendered to me at all times in the course of my rather onerous duties. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

*As to Presentation of Address.*

On motion by the Minister for Transport, resolved:

That the Address be presented to His Excellency the Administrator by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

**BILLS (8)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Public Buildings Act (Validation of Payments).
- 2, Public Buildings Act Repeal. Received from the Assembly.
- 3, Noxious Weeds Act Amendment.
- 4, Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment.
- 5, Agriculture Protection Board Act Amendment.
- 6, Poultry Industry (Trust Fund) Act Amendment.
- 7, Potato Growing Industry Trust Fund Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Transport (for the Minister for Agriculture).

- 8, Road Closure (Wanneroo). Introduced by Hon. N. E. Baxter.

*House adjourned at 9.1 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 11th September, 1951.

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

**QUESTIONS.****INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT.**

*As to Prosecutions, Convictions and Penalties.*

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many prosecutions have been launched for breaches of the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act, 1939, during the period 1939 to the 30th June, 1951?

(2) How many convictions have been recorded?

(3) What were the maximum penalties imposed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1), (2) and (3) Prosecutions are not listed or indexed in their various categories, and, consequently the supply of the information required would involve considerable time in checking up charge sheets in courts throughout the State.

Since 1948 records have been kept by the Department, and these indicate that 22 prosecutions have been launched since that date.

Convictions number 17, the maximum penalty being £50.

These figures do not include prosecutions launched privately.

**FREMANTLE HARBOUR.**

*(a) As to Conditions of Sampling Sea Water.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Does he consider that the sampling of water from Fremantle Harbour carried out on the 9th October, 1950, to test the extent to which the water was polluted, was satisfactory, in view of—

(a) the fact that any oil, etc., would float on top of the water while the samples were obtained 6 inches below the surface;

(b) the fact that the strong incoming tide would be bringing in large quantities of unpolluted water and pushing any polluted water further upstream;

(c) the fact that sewage from ships in the harbour would be largely undissolved and would not be spread evenly through the water, and that any solids would not be included in the samples collected?

(2) Will he have further tests of this nature carried out under better conditions and extending further upstream?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, under the conditions then existing.

(2) Yes. Regular tests have been made monthly in the Swan River above the Fremantle Traffic Bridge over the last 3 years.