

that application be presented to the Minister who, in turn, would secure the Treasurer's approval for such financial accommodation.

Take the position of an officer of the bank who has lived in country areas due to his employment. He may have been in Geraldton for some years and then be transferred to Merredin, Bruce Rock, Albany or Bunbury with no opportunity of purchasing a home for himself. If he is appointed a commissioner—I think this would be the goal of every officer of the Rural & Industries Bank—and he comes to reside in Perth, knowing how difficult it is for bank officers to exist on the remuneration they receive, he will have no financial reserves with which to provide for himself an adequate home, when he takes up his position as a commissioner.

I feel that is a time when a commissioner should have the opportunity of submitting an application to the Minister for financial assistance. It should be done after it has been perused by his fellow commissioners. The Minister, in turn, would secure approval for the advance from the Treasurer for the time being. The goal of every officer of the bank, I repeat, must be to become one of the bank's commissioners, but, having achieved that goal, he may, through certain circumstances, need financial assistance to provide a home for himself and his family. I feel that the measure, which is designed to encourage officers of the bank to bank with their own institution, is a good one, and I support it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 17 amended:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am particularly interested in the point raised by the member for Vasse. I think that, as long as protection and some security are given and some discretion is allowed to the Minister, as the hon. member suggests, what he has put forward might be a very good move. The commissioners themselves are satisfied with the Bill because it is general banking practice not to permit an executive officer of a bank to enter into any loan or other borrowing arrangement from the institution if he is in a position to make a certain profit out of the knowledge which he has as an officer of the bank. But within reason, as suggested by the hon. member, the matter could well be looked into and I promise to do that.

Mr. BOVELL: The main reason why I made the suggestion is that an officer who has probably not resided in the metropolitan area may become a commissioner, and he may have no financial resources to enable him to purchase a home. He may have had no accommodation from the bank in the past, and here he is precluded from applying for it, but under my suggestion he can be granted accommodation for the specific purpose of providing himself and his family with a home. I agree that he should not decide whether he should have the accommodation but that that matter should go to a higher authority, namely, the Minister. My proposition is mainly to assist him to get a home.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 9.35 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 5th September, 1956.

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

**QUESTIONS.****DONNYBROOK CIDER AND  
CANNING CO. LTD.***Sale of Buildings by Government.*

Hon. H. K. WATSON asked the Chief Secretary:

Concerning the cool store, cider factory, hostel and plant hitherto leased by the State Government to the Donnybrook Cider and Canning Co. Ltd.:—

- (a) Have such buildings and plant recently been sold?
- (b) If the answer to question (a) is "Yes"—
  - (1) What was the cost to the State Government of these buildings and plant?
  - (2) What was the sale price thereof?
  - (3) What were the terms of payment?
  - (4) Was the sale by auction, or tender, or private treaty? And if by private treaty, why were tenders not called?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(a) Yes.

- (b) (1) £36,004, including land, buildings, stock and plant.
- (2) Miscellaneous sales reduced this price to £32,449, and the balance of the assets were then sold for £27,000.
- (3) A deposit of £7,000, and the balance of £20,000 by four equal and consecutive half-yearly payments of £5,000 each on the 31st July and January each year commencing the 1st July, 1956, plus interest on outstanding balance at current bank rates.
- (4) The sale was made by private treaty. Tenders were not called because, following extended efforts and negotiations, the Government was satisfied that the highest possible price had been obtained.

**STATE SAW MILLS.***Output and Men Employed.*

Hon. J. MURRAY asked the Chief Secretary:

Will he inform the House of—

- (1) The total output of the State Saw Mills for the years 1952-53; 1954-55?
- (2) The monthly average of men employed to produce the above figures for the years 1952-53; 1954-55?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

**(1) Loads Produced—**

1952-53	....	....	46,306
1953-54	....	....	48,794
1954-55	....	....	53,710

**(2) Men Employed—**

1952-53	....	....	757
1953-54	....	....	771
1954-55	....	....	858

**STATE BRICK WORKS.***"Seconds" on Hand.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it a fact that there are 800,000 pressed bricks classified as seconds, stacked at the Byford yard of the State Brick Works?

(2) Is it a fact that there are nearly 1,000,000 pressed bricks, classified as seconds, stacked at the Armadale yard of the State Brick Works?

(3) Are these bricks not suitable for inside work?

(4) How is it intended to dispose of these bricks?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) and (2) There are a number of pressed bricks classified as "second class" stacked at Byford and Armadale yards but far less in number than stated. The stockpiling position at these yards is consistent with the condition of the building industry today.

(3) and (4) Yes; these bricks are suitable for interior work and many other uses. Every effort is being made to dispose of them on a depressed market. The price schedule provides a special rate for such.

**PENSIONERS.***Hospitalisation.*

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

Is he aware—

- (1) That pensioners holding medical entitlement cards now only receive the first 28 days free of hospital charges if admitted to public wards?
- (2) That if no bed is available in the public or low rate wards they are placed in wards carrying a higher charge?
- (3) That these pensioners when admitted are asked to sign form HA. 22?

- (4) That this form, in small print, reads:

I hereby apply for admission of ..... to a ..... bed ward, In the event of this not being available whatever accommodation is available will be accepted and I promise to pay the prescribed fees, including extras, subject to the deduction of Hospital Benefit allowable to the Hospital by the Commonwealth. I agree to notify the Hospital Authorities in the event of changing my address.

Date.....

Signature.....

- (5) As most pensioners do not know and are not advised that their signature waives the normal concession of free treatment, and as the cost imposes an impossible hardship on their slender resources, will he take steps to provide that the 28 days' free treatment is applicable to all wards in Government hospitals?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Pensioners with medical entitlement cards receive free hospital treatment for the first 28 days in a general or public ward of a public hospital. If no bed is available in a general ward, or where a single room is required for medical reasons, a pensioner receives free treatment in any ward irrespective of size.

- (2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Infrequently a pensioner, or his relatives, demand private accommodation when a bed is available in a general ward and a single room is not necessary for medical reasons. In these cases treatment is not free, and the hospital obtains a guarantee of payment on form HA. 22, which is the standard form used in respect of private patients.

- (4) Yes.

(5) Before a pensioner is admitted to a private ward, at his own or a relative's request, the pensioner or relative is advised that the hospital fees are payable in respect of a private ward, less 12s. per day Commonwealth hospital benefit.

#### BETTING.

*Tabling of Papers, Applecross Shop.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

Will the Minister lay on the Table of the House the papers relating to the granting of a licence for the starting-price betting shop in Ardross-st., Applecross?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

No. The file will be made available to the hon. member at the Minister's office as it contains personal reports of a confidential nature.

#### MERREDIN HIGH SCHOOL.

*Contract for Construction.*

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

- (1) What was the contract price for construction of Merredin high school?
- (2) To whom was the contract let?
- (3) Were public tenders called?
- (4) What are the financial arrangements for payment?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

- (1) £63,670.
- (2) Jennings Constructions (W.A.) Pty. Ltd.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) All payments due prior to the 1st August, 1956, deferred until the 1st August, 1956. All subsequent payments by cash as due.

#### BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES ACT AMENDMENT.

*Standing Orders Suspension.*

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Bill for "An Act to amend the Marketing of Potatoes Act, 1946-1949" to be taken on receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly, and to have precedence each day before the resumption of the debate on the Address-in-reply, and to be passed through all stages at any one sitting.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban) [4.44]: In making my contribution to this debate, I would like to add my condolences to those already voiced in respect of the members who have departed this House, and to extend my sympathy to their families. I congratulate the new members who have been elected, particularly Mr. Jeffery. I am very glad to see him here. I hope the new members will find a great deal to interest them during their stay in this Parliament.

I would like at the outset to congratulate the Hawke Government on its great social service programme, and on the courageous approach it has made to this very difficult problem. I took a visitor from Victoria around the psychiatric clinic in Havelock-st. yesterday, and she was amazed to see that we had such a free service for the public of Western Australia. This is a most modern home, and

It was indeed with pride that I could show her something that had been achieved by the Government during its term of office. The home was only opened shortly after last Easter, and I was informed yesterday that over 500 patients had been treated in it up to date.

The patients dealt with are nervous cases and it is necessary to endeavour in this way to alleviate the sufferings of people who would perhaps not be treated with such good results if they were sent to Heathcote or Claremont. The Government also assists financially a very worthy cause through the assistance it is giving to slow-learning groups and spastic clinics with which I am personally associated.

Of these things I can speak with some authority because I understand them. The home to be opened for the mentally incurable children is an entirely new departure and a complete precedent in Australia. It will relieve a suffering minority in the community by helping the mothers of those children to retain their health until something can be provided to fully meet their children's needs.

I am very pleased to see that the jury Bill will be introduced again this session, and I hope it will have a different fate from that which it suffered last session. I would like to congratulate the Government on initiating a medical school fund, and it gives me great pleasure to be in a State where an appeal such as this has proved so great a success. The things of which I speak cover very important fields of endeavour and are factors that really matter in human relations.

The relief of human suffering, together with the recognition and the uplifting of the dignity of the individual brought about by legislation introduced by the present Government is a matter of great pride to me. These activities help to cure the ills of society, which in my opinion are mainly caused by the economic system under which we have to live at present. I refer to the competitive system. That is the main cause of nervous breakdowns, and there has been a real attempt by the present Government to relieve these difficulties and to promote human happiness in some small measure.

Now I propose to refer to a most touchy subject. I have looked at the plans for the new additions to Parliament House; and while I did see some provision for the women, it surprised me to find that that provision was only for women's toilets. I do not know whether members are aware of the fact, but this is the only State in Australia in which accommodation is not provided for the women members of Parliament. When I first came to this House and spoke of the matter, it was pointed out to me—rather naively—I thought—that there were no "women" in Parliament, but only

"members." I referred this remark to one of the women's organisations, and they suggested that I treat it literally and exercise my full prerogative and then see how convenient it would be for the other members.

I would earnestly ask for some provision to be made for women members of Parliament. There should be at least a room set aside in which we can deal with the cases which are referred to us, some of which would never be referred to a man. When I look around, it seems to me that men have been the lords of creation for so long that when they built the Parliament Houses they never visualised that the time would come when society would evolve far enough to have women members. There were provisions in our plan for a billiard room and a bathroom. I know that I can use them, but I do not want to.

There is a committee which I have been asked to carry on; and because I cannot always get away, it is necessary for it to meet here. Through the courtesy of the Chief Secretary, I have been able to use his room—a privilege for which I am very grateful. Personally I have no complaint to offer against any member of this Parliament as all have treated me as I would expect to be treated. I hope that in using his room I have not inconvenienced the Chief Secretary.

There are some niceties of life. I, as the only woman of this Parliament, do not like to use the common room, and there is no place here to which I could retire should I have a headache. I do not feel I am encroaching when I talk about that plan, because there will always be women members of Parliament and a room should be provided, as in all other States in Australia, for the use of women members. I have always been tolerant and never made any fuss; but as this provision is made in all other States, as well as in the Federal Parliament, something should be done about it now that we are making additions.

Why such a large room was needed for a bathroom for Council members I do not know, and I think better use could have been made of some of the accommodation here, although I must say the House Committee has made the most use of the existing accommodation elsewhere. I am speaking of this matter now so that nobody will be able to say that the subject was not brought up.

I have said how pleased I am with some of the things the Government has done. But there is a pressing need of which I would like to speak. I would like to see something done in the way of a home for the more sophisticated type of delinquent boy, as I think it is dreadful to send an adolescent boy down to the Fremantle gaol among criminals where

there is no means of segregation. There is a very successful home run by the Church of England, and I would say that the correct method would be to make that a safe-custody home to which the more sophisticated boys could be taken.

This type of lad should be kept in custody, because if he absconds he has to commit a crime to exist, as he will not go home. He has to subsist, so he commits other offences and becomes more or less a lost soul. Something must be done to deal with this type of offender. I hope some approach will be made to this matter and everybody will lend support even to the extent of legislation in that connection being passed by this House.

I asked a question in the House as to whether a girls' home would be provided and the answer was "yes". I am speaking on this question because I have a real interest in it and feel we have a wrong approach to delinquency. While I was in New South Wales, I carried out considerable research and visited many of the homes, where some years ago a very progressive policy was inaugurated.

They were then spending £2 per head against our expenditure of 7s. at that time. They introduced an educational system under which girls who were committed to a home and found to be teachable were given instruction in various kinds of work. It was found that a very high percentage of these girls were saved by allowing them to do things for which they were fitted. In one home there was a girl who presented a problem, but it was found that she liked machine work and had an aptitude for designing. By the time this girl had served her term, Foys in Sydney took her from the home and she earned £9 a week on special work on this machine, doing high-class stitchery.

Cooking and domestic science are also taught and the method of approach is entirely different from ours. Our girls have to earn their subsistence by being put to laundry work as there is no alternative. It would pay handsomely to save these children and not have them a charge on the State. I want to point out these things and give my idea of what should be done. If the thought is thrown out it might be taken up and something done to educate these children, because most of them have not had the opportunity to be educated. If they are not very smart at school there are, no doubt, plenty of things that they would be reasonably good at, and we could at least give them a chance to have a fuller and better life and take their place in society.

I was interested yesterday to hear Dr. Hislop mention perimeter hospitals, and to hear him say that they should be State-subsidised. I wondered, if I tested him further, whether he would say they should be socialised. I think the idea is wonderful, and it is a socialistic idea. It is my

idea of socialism in practice. Perimeter hospitals would serve the purpose which he said they would, and that is something we could well think of in the future.

His remarks brought to my mind an indignity I always feel, because the first thing that the late Mr. Chifley did, when he commenced his health scheme, was to remove the pauperisation of people by lifting the means test from the out-patient departments of the public hospitals; but almost immediately the Opposition became the Government it clamped down on that, and its action has put us back aeons. Instead of progressing, we have gone back.

The way the hospitals are supposed to be subsidised through the Health Act is altogether wrong. That we have to make charges that are beyond all reason so far as the working man is concerned, before the individual can be reimbursed, is absolutely wrong. Of all the things we should be prepared to do, we should be prepared to bring in a reasonable, free health-scheme under adequate Commonwealth subsidy.

I want to touch on the cement dust nuisance. This matter concerns other members, too. I have interviewed women living in affected areas, and I know the frustration they are suffering. I have not heard repeated, at any interviews or meetings, the suggestion I brought forward at a public meeting which I attended, namely, that something be attempted so that we could remove the nuisance. I notice that in a newspaper it was implied that to think of removing the cement works was stupid. Well, I think they will have to be removed, and the time will come when we will have to see about it.

I suggest that a scheme be drawn up under which a royalty shall be paid on every ton of cement produced until we have a fund that can be subsidised by the State, and which will be able to meet the burden of the removal. We would then end one of the ills that we have in a part of the metropolis at the moment. The cement dust nuisance at Rivervale is a real problem, and no progressive suggestion, that I can find, has been made in regard to it. The imposition of a royalty to establish a sinking fund would be a realistic approach to the question.

The drainage problem should be given as high a priority as possible. While realising that the primary need of our people is to have water taken to them—I was an outback woman, used to dry areas and purchasing water at a very high price, and appreciate to the full what it means to be without water—I think we have to give proper consideration to drainage problems. In the Suburban Province which I represent, together with Mr. Jeffery and Mr. Griffith, the Morley Park water scheme is now going through. It has been a burning question for some time. Also a start has been made to take water to Midvale. These places, however, are also suffering

from a drainage problem. The first priority is to take water to the people, but the Government should give as high a priority as possible to drainage problems.

The Government deserves credit in this matter because the Minister has been very helpful. He actually did a drastic thing in draining the water through the sewers at Bedford Park near Shaftesbury Avenue. That was a big thing to do, and I do not doubt that he had to think well about doing it; but he did it. The Government has found money for pumping—it has found it at the expense of other things. I think—and it has done everything it can for the immediate alleviation of the problem. This is a question that has been common to Australia through the wet seasons; but now that we have been faced with it, I am sure that the Government will endeavour to have the drainage scheme accelerated if money becomes available for the purpose.

I went to Carnarvon the other week to recuperate from an illness, and I want to mention the praise that was on every lip there for the North-West members. Until I went to Carnarvon I did not realise what a vast undertaking they had, and how they have to work in the North-West. At Carnarvon a clay-bar has been put in the river. They are waiting for the river to come down, and if this clay-bar does what is hoped, they anticipate that they will have permanent water in the Gascoyne River to keep the banana plantations in good continuing production. The district is now suffering from a drought; the river has not flowed for two years.

At the research station I was shown a beautiful example of a white onion and of a light brown onion. They have matured at this time, which is our off-season, and the people there have high hopes of the onions meeting the off-season in Western Australia. They told me that Mr. Norton, the Minister and the other members are most active there. It gave me great pleasure to hear what was said about them. The bean and tomato crops are an absolute picture; and experiments are going on with tropical fruits. One man put in a crop of cucumbers last season, and he received £2,000 for it.

There seems to be a future at Carnarvon that I never dreamed would be there. I belonged to that part of the country—further inland—and I never dreamed I would see tomato plantations, even in Geraldton, let alone Carnarvon. The people there said that Mr. Wise got them the bridge over the river. The clay-bar is a real engineering feat. The idea is to stop the water from seeping away and so retain it in the bed sands of the river.

I am concerned about the aged pensioners. We have heard lately of the proposal to start a centre in Perth for them. The idea is to overcome their loneliness. The civilian widows are a long-suffering class of pensioners, and I want the House

to know that it is accepted Labour policy that when the Labour Government is returned to the Federal House, the civilian widows' pensions are immediately to be raised to the same standard as those of the war widows so that they will all be in the same category. That is a forward movement, but it is not generally known, and that is why I mention it here.

If people could see the real hardships of these women who try to raise families after being left, through no fault of their own, there would be more understanding of the problem. I am one who dislikes the thought of cheap charity; of a woman having to go cap in hand because she has a family of children and has lost her breadwinner. Some get through—I faced the situation myself—but not everyone does. There are all kinds of reasons why women do not get through, such as ill-health, special circumstances, crippled children, handicapped children and so on. That women should have to stay home month after month and year after year, trying to subsist on the pittance given to them, is a national disgrace.

I was amused when the Federal Budget came out and it was called the "little Budget." I'll say it was a "little budget!" I think it is a great blot on the escutcheon of the Federal Government. What is the good of medical science prolonging life if old age is going to be a misery and the people do not have enough to live on? It would be more merciful to let us all die at an early age. I cannot see any sense in letting people live to be absolutely miserable. If there was a war tomorrow, the Government would find the money for it—millions of pounds—yet people have to live on a small subsistence through no fault of their own.

The sum of human unhappiness is such that it goes right down through the children. In the early ages, when men had land to till, the problem of food was not the great bogey or threat that it is now. Today in our urban areas we have an unemployment problem which is assuming major dimensions. There is nothing so dreadful or degrading for a man as being unable to sell his labour on the market. He has the right to work and work cannot be found for him. It is every man's birth-right to be able to work and earn his food and keep; but here we have the economic cycle again.

Yesterday I listened to members talking about money going down through the primary producers. The problem is bigger than that. The economic system under which we live is wrong. It is "boom and bust," and it has been ever since I can remember. There has been little change for the better. The system is slowly evolving, but it is only evolving by the efforts of Labour thinkers. It always makes me smile to hear people say "socialist so and so." Socialism is a way of life, and to me it promises the best way of life in the world.

The dignity and happiness of human beings are at stake. To preserve that dignity and happiness, what is wrong with circulating the money among the masses of the people? If we cannot preserve the dignity and well-being of these people, it is of no use Governments sitting in council. We will never progress if we condone a system that considers the only reward to be that of profit making.

Recently I read in the Press an article written by the Leader of the Opposition in another place, an extract from which reads as follows:—

When the bitumen road ends and you come to the corrugated section it is wise to look well ahead and look out for pot-holes.

In 1948, the late Mr. Chifley, who was then Prime Minister of Australia, travelled well over the corrugated road during the nation's transition from war to peace. It was an epoch-making achievement for any legislator, because that transition was made with slight inconvenience and with little personal hardship to any individual.

When big business interests were threatened by the war, no one cried about controls then. Everyone accepted them because we had everything at stake. Now, however, those people have an entirely different approach to controls. The wheel has turned and unemployment is again in our midst. In their opinion control is a dreadful thing. It is supposed to be a Frankenstein that no one can subdue. However, controls cannot be a bogey in one set of circumstances and not a bogey in another set of circumstances. That is an opposition with a parallel.

If, in wartime, the economy of a country is at stake and it is necessary to have controls, surely the economy is at stake when we are faced with another crisis, such as unemployment! It is wrong for the banking system to close up on credit instead of making it more liberal. The principle followed by Mr. Chifley was that when bad times came money should be made available through the central bank. That money was to pay for large public works and national projects so that people could be kept in work until the economy becomes balanced.

I am quite certain that the present position will right itself because it has done so before. Nevertheless, whilst we have an unbalance there should be some way of issuing credit through the central bank to undertake national projects and public works to ensure that people are kept in work and, further, to make certain that we do not suffer the degradation of the last depression.

Another extract taken from this article written by the Leader of the Opposition for the Press, reads as follows:—

In the light of our war and post-war experiences, the socialist system of tight Government controls and

bureaucratic directions with all its frustrations, wastes and inefficiencies and its standing temptation to corrupt practices, has been entirely discredited.

That is the type of statement that some people make but are never able to qualify. I feel quite certain that Hon. Sir Ross McLarty could not qualify that statement. Such remarks are nothing but pious wishes.

I think I have taken all the time I need to make this speech, and I trust that some of the comments I have offered will be considered, and that when we are deliberating any legislation that passes through this Chamber we will make the best possible contribution to the betterment of society. Also, I hope that at least we will all do our best to ensure that unemployment is wiped out once again. I am quite certain that if war was declared tomorrow, the Commonwealth Government would soon be able to raise hundreds of millions which it was able to do during the last war. The wastage that is occurring in the defence vote alone would keep the unemployed men of this country in work and in a more happy state than they are in at the moment.

**HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (Suburban) [5.20]: The debate on the Address-in-reply gives members an opportunity to address themselves to various subjects that are raised in this House, and to discuss the various activities that they become interested in during the course of the work which they perform in their respective constituencies and in the State generally.

Firstly, I want to join with other members in expressing my extreme regret at the passing of Hon. H. Hearn and Hon. D. Barker. Both those members rendered valuable service in this House and to the State, and I was indeed sorry to hear of their sudden passing. Secondly, I want to add my congratulatory remarks to those which have already been expressed to the members who were elected during the last biennial election, and also to those who were elected to fill the places of the two members who have recently passed away. I feel sure that in those new members we will have men who will serve the State well and apply themselves assiduously to their parliamentary careers.

During recent sittings of the House I have directed certain questions to the Minister for Railways and—particularly—to the Chief Secretary in an endeavour to obtain information for the benefit of the people in my constituency. Some of the replies I received were satisfactory, but others were most unsatisfactory. For example, one of the questions I asked of the Minister for Railways concerned the establishment of the railway marshalling yards in the Welshpool-South Belmont area. As I have said, whilst some of the

replies the Minister gave to those questions were, in the main, satisfactory, the other answers which he gave have, unfortunately, left among the people who live in that wide area a grave feeling of insecurity.

They have expressed to me that they do not know what to do with their houses, their land, and their possessions. They do not know whether the Government is going to take over their land. Because of the threat of resumption hanging over their heads, they do not feel disposed to improve their gardens or to make plans for the future. It is with this in mind that I am today trying to arrive at some basis whereby I can approach these people and say, "This is the Government's attitude. This is what it has done."

I am sorry the Minister is absent from the Chamber temporarily, because if he were here he would be saved the trouble of reading my speech in Hansard, and also I could direct to him personally one or two important matters. It has come to my knowledge that the Government has seen fit to pay—I do not know the number of people involved or the amount that has been paid—some money in respect of land that is to be resumed for the proposed marshalling yards. If that is to be regarded as a precedent, I want to know about it. I want to be able to go to these people and say, "The policy of this Government is to pay to you, if you make application, compensation for your land as speedily as possible."

On the other hand, if these people cannot be paid, I also want to be told that. When I put the question concerning the payment of compensation to these people, the answer I received from the Minister was as follows:—

As soon as possible after resumption or acquisition has been effected. In the light of the information that I have received—namely, that some money has been paid prior to resumption or acquisition—I am of the opinion that if it is good enough for one person to be paid in such circumstances, it is good enough for others to be paid also. It is the bounden duty of the Minister to make known what the Government's definite future policy is to be on this matter.

The people who own rural properties in this area are anxious to know—if they are to be put off their properties to make room for the marshalling yards—what the Government proposes to do, so that they may make the necessary applications for compensation and receive the money to enable them to establish themselves on rural properties further out. They want to know when they can do that, and how they can do it, and how much money they will have available to establish themselves on another property. Surely they are entitled to something definite from the Government on this particular matter!

I now wish to deal with the question of housing. The other day the Chief Secretary moved for the suspension of Standing Orders so that the rents and tenancies Bill might be discussed and passed through all stages. When he introduced this measure, the Chief Secretary told us of the dire necessity for it to be passed because of the urgent circumstances that prevailed. However, if one cares to glance at the Press, one finds contrary statements made by the Minister for Housing in another place.

For example, in "The West Australian," dated the 29th August, 1956, the Minister for Housing was reported as saying—

Western Australia's back lag in housing had been overtaken leaving only the current demand to be met.

A little further down we find these words published—

Because of the generosity of the Premier the housing problem had been solved sooner than otherwise would have been the case.

I did propose to ask the Chief Secretary whether the Minister for Housing was correctly reported in that article, because we have heard so often how "The West Australian" and the "Daily News" seem to have developed a habit of grossly misreporting the Minister for Housing. However, I do not think it is the Press that misreports him, but I think it is the fault of the Minister who more or less gets out from under when these reports are made. I am quite sure the reporters know their business and know what they have heard. They go back to their newspapers and submit articles of the nature I mentioned, knowing full well what was said at the time.

In order to test that out, I made inquiries at the State Housing Commission. I said to the parliamentary liaison officer, "What does current demand mean?" He said he did not quite understand my question, and I replied, "Let me put it this way. What date of Commonwealth-State rental applications for housing are you dealing with at the present time?" His reply was, "January, 1955." It is stretching the point a great deal to say that current demand is from January, 1955. That was one year and nine months ago; so the situation which the Minister for Housing puts forward is not as true as it would appear to be on the surface.

I was also told that people who required flat accommodation were being dealt with as far ahead as March, 1956, so that if a person wanted to live in a flat in preference to a house, he would have a better chance of getting accommodation. That accommodation is being provided at Subiaco, Fremantle and Como. To my mind that is more like current demand.

The situation is plainly this: If a person went to the State Housing Commission today and lodged an application for a



Commonwealth-State rental home, he would have to wait for a period of 18 months before he would get it, because the Housing Commission is dealing with applications for January, 1955. It will be appreciated that these are misleading statements which we continue to receive in this House. I think it is about time that members were able to extract from the Government—and it is like pulling teeth—information of a correct nature to enable us to find out exactly what the position is.

I want to say something about the election which took place in April, 1956, and preface my remarks by lodging a very strong protest against the Government's action in holding the Legislative Assembly elections and the Legislative Council biennial elections on the same day. By doing such a thing the Government virtually turned a voluntary election into a compulsory one. The activities of some of the staff in the polling booths were far from creditable, but no doubt they were carried out under instructions. In one polling booth I went into in Victoria Park, there was a long table in the main counting centre which was about four times as long as the table in this Chamber. Seated behind it, shoulder to shoulder, and so closely packed that they could scarcely move, was an array of poll clerks to deal with applications by people who came to vote. One could go to the first occupant at the table and give his name, irrespective of the alphabetical order, or to the last occupant and do the same thing. There were 22 poll clerks employed at that particular centre.

At another centre I went into during my visit as a scrutineer for an L.C.L. candidate, the returning officer told me that the Electoral Office had supplied him with so many poll clerks that he could not accommodate them all, and he sent some to the main counting centre at Victoria Park. That is probably the reason why the main counting centre at Victoria Park had so many polling clerks.

Just think of a returning officer on a polling day having so much staff that he could not accommodate all and had to send some away, bearing in mind the fact that the Government's excuse for holding the two elections on the one day was that it would be cheaper, and less money would be spent from the taxpayers' pockets by holding combined Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly elections!

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Was that actually advanced as a reason?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It was advanced as a reason by the Premier. It is also very interesting to see just how untrue a statement of that nature was. When I asked questions regarding the cost of various elections—and I am sorry the Press did not give some publicity to them—interesting answers were given. To my mind it is important to let the people of the State

know about the lack of truth on the part of the Government; and, when the lack of truth has been established, publicity should be given to the fact.

The Legislative Assembly elections held on the 25th March, 1950, cost £7,730 14s. The Council elections held in May of the same year cost £3,367 17s. 6d., making a total of approximately £11,000. The Council elections held on the 3rd May, 1952—in fairness the increases must be taken into consideration—cost £3,895 13s. 10d. The general election of 1953 cost £9721 9s. 11d. The Council election held on 8th May, 1954, cost £3,367 7s. 7d. but the combined election cost £19,172 12s. 10d.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That was because there was such an awful franchise qualification.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The hon. member who interjected enjoyed about an hour of the time of this House without so much as a murmur from anyone. I am sure she must have cut the time for her speech so much shorter because of that fact. If she allows me the same privilege, I am sure I shall be able to cut down the time of my speech.

We can see that the combined elections cost approximately £20,000. If we add together the cost of two elections which were held on different dates, we will see that the total approximated £11,000. What fragment of truth is there in the Government's assertion that it would cost less to hold the two elections on the one day?

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: The total cost of the independent elections would not amount to the cost of the combined election.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Is was higher in the former instance. The cost for the independent elections was about £26,000. In other words, five elections were held at a cost of £26,000, and one combined election cost £20,000. It is interesting to see the sort of thing that has gone on.

To my mind the Government makes the position a lot worse by ordering the Electoral Office staff to go out into the field after their normal office hours and paying them overtime rates and so much a mile for the use of their motorcars to put people on the Legislative Council roll. The Government should be well and truly censured for its activities in this regard. We know that the Constitution provides that the method of obtaining enrolment for the Legislative Council is on a voluntary basis. We know that candidates, organisers of political parties, and helpers of candidates in Legislative Council elections spend a good deal of time going around and placing people on the roll. But to my mind it is a complete moral wrong, if nothing else, for the Government to

order the officers of the Electoral Department into the field to carry out that function.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I hope they will do that for me the next time.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I hope they will not do that for the hon. member. I hope that legislation will be introduced which will prevent the Government from doing that sort of thing for the hon. member, for me, or for anyone else, because it is very wrong indeed to order officers of the Electoral Department into the field for this purpose.

Hon. G. Bennetts: If we made the Legislative Council election compulsory, that situation would be avoided.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is a matter which we will have opportunity to deal with. I am now dealing with the activities of the Government in regard to this particular point. Then we read in the Press that the Minister controlling the Electoral Department said that because of the lack of time in one instance, people have not had the opportunity of getting on to the Legislative Council rolls, so they are to be assisted by the officers going out.

He said that no discrimination was made by the Electoral Department in the places where these activities were carried out; but we find that the centres which the electoral officers went into were State Housing areas. They did not go into South Perth; they did not go into Nedlands; they did not go into Mt. Lawley; and they did not go into the places that were regarded by the Government as Liberal strongholds. They went into places which the Government regarded more as Labour strongholds. Whether or not the Chief Secretary is dozing—

The Chief Secretary: No; I am listening.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —he knows that is the case. These officers worked in Commonwealth-State rental areas. He also knows that because his answer to a question was that the Government paid these men some £400 in overtime to get the enrolments. It would be extremely interesting to see how many enrolments they were responsible for obtaining, and to divide the number of such enrolments into the number of pounds spent to see how much it cost the taxpayers to get each one on the roll.

I hope that we shall see legislation on the statute book in the course of time which will prevent a recurrence of what I would call an offence of the nature I mentioned. I also hope that we will see legislation on the statute book to prevent this Government or any other—but more particularly this one because it is the only one which has created the breach—from holding two elections on the one day.

For my part, I am quite certain that no member of this House—not even the Chief Secretary—could ever be convinced that the framers of our Constitution had in mind that the two elections would be held on the same day, because one is compulsory and the other is voluntary, and the two should be kept completely separate. However, in this case, because it suited the Government to hold them on the one day, that was done. When one brings a subject of this nature before the House, there is nothing that anybody can say in denial of the circumstances related, because members of the Government know that what I have said is perfectly true and nothing can be said in rebuttal.

The Chief Secretary: We do not want to prolong your speech.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have known the Chief Secretary to take ample opportunity to prolong my speech when he thought it would be of advantage to do so or when he thought he could score a point. But he knows that what I have said is undeniable. Unfortunately these things are done and the public forget very easily and willingly and the matter goes into oblivion and is not thought of any more. But I think such things should be thought of, and we should have legislation on the statute book which would put a stop to them.

In the few years I have been here, it has always struck me that to pick up the Governor's Speech is interesting, because the Speech is usually the same type of thing year after year. It tells Parliament two things principally: What the Government has done, and what it is going to do.

The Chief Secretary: Or hopes to do.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: But we know that the Speech is prepared for His Excellency by the Government in power. It would be excellent if the Government would tell His Excellency not only what it has done but all that it proposes to do, because very shortly after His Excellency delivers the Speech the Government hastens to do things which are outside the orbit of that Speech, and which would make bad reading for the public assembled here on the day of the opening of Parliament.

I heard one member speak of what Mr. Chifley did for Australia. Mention was made of the amount of loan funds made available to this State. It is interesting to observe that in the last year of the Chifley Government—1949—Western Australia received a grant of £10,168,000. That is the figure representing the Chifley Government's grant to Western Australia in its last year of office. This year the Western Australian Government received £28,233,000.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: There is a big difference in the years, though.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: And in the amount of money, too.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: And in the population.

The PRESIDENT: Order, please!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is more than twice the amount that was made available by the Chifley Government. It is interesting to observe that Western Australia received more money on a per person basis than any other State in Australia. The figures for this year to the 30th June were as follows:— New South Wales, £21 0s. 11d.; Victoria, £18 12s. 10d.; Queensland, £23 8s. 7d.; South Australia, £28 10s. 5d.; Tasmania, £35 15s. 5d.; and Western Australia, £42 7s. So what is the good of the Government continuing to say that the treatment that has been meted out to it by the Federal Government is niggardly when the same people who give lip service to that know full well that Western Australia has had more money per head of population than any other State of the Commonwealth!

The Lieut.-Governor's Speech on this occasion contained the statement that there are some disquieting features in the State's economic outlook. I could not agree more! We have unemployment in Western Australia far in excess of that in any other State. At present, the Government is labouring under a deficit of £4,000,000, and that amount is an overflow—or a deferred payment, as it has been termed—from last year. The Premier is continuing to ask the Commonwealth Government for £4,000,000 to stem the tide of unemployment, but the truth of the matter is that that £4,000,000 is required to meet the deferred payments or the promissory notes this Government has given in respect of work done last year and work to which it has committed itself for this year.

The Chief Secretary: You know that that is not correct.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If it is not correct, the Chief Secretary will have ample opportunity to refute it later. But I think we have every reason to believe that it is correct.

The Chief Secretary: You know that request was submitted with a schedule of work upon which it is proposed to spend the money.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I suggest that the Chief Secretary go to another Chamber and look at the correspondence which has been laid on the Table there, and he might then change his mind. If that correspondence were brought here, I am sure it would make some mighty good reading—some very good reading indeed. Would the Chief Secretary deny that the State Housing Commission is £1,500,000 in the red?

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No! Where is the Government going to get that £1,500,000 to bring the balance back so that it is equal? There is no comment.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: When the Labour Government came into office it had £8,000,000 to pay for diesel engines to the purchase of which it was committed. Where did that come from?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not know what the hon. member is speaking about.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You know exactly what I am speaking about.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We face this deficit; and if there had been a change of Government it would have been extremely difficult for the incoming Government, as it will be for this Government, to make its way through the remainder of this financial year.

The Chief Secretary: That is nothing new on a change of Government.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I suggest that we are much closer to the margin than the people of this State realise. Unless something is done about the matter in the near future, the whole thing could very readily blow up, and I think nobody knows that better than the Treasurer. We hear talk about inflation and keeping down the cost of living and profit control. We hear talk about controls on everything except the Government.

It is very interesting to see just how much control this Government has been able to exercise over public utilities and public services since it came into office in 1953. For the benefit of members, I am going to read some of the increases this Government has been responsible for since 1953 and leave members to examine for themselves why the cost of living is as high as it is, and why inflation is occurring in the way it is. The figures I have to submit to members are as follows:—

#### State Shipping Service:

Darwin freight rate, excluding personal effects, household goods and foodstuffs—

August, 1953—Increase, 10s. per ton; 4½ per cent.

May, 1954—Decrease, 1s. 6d. per ton; 1 per cent.

May, 1956—Increase, 7s. 6d. per ton; 3½ per cent.

#### Mines:

Survey Fees—Average increase of 55 per cent. from 11th June, 1954.

#### State Batteries—

Northampton—Crushing charges increased by 50 per cent. on 14th March, 1955, £1 to £1 10s.

All Batteries—Average increase of 33½ per cent. on crushing charges for base metals on 11th November, 1955.

#### Forests:

Royalty charges were increased from February, 1953, from 12s. 5d. to 19s. 2d. per load—approximately 54 per cent.

#### Crown Law:

Supreme Court Fees from 16th July, 1954, were increased approximately 2 per cent.

#### Lands and Surveys:

Survey Fees under the Land Act have been increased by 33½ per cent., September, 1954.

Maps and Plans for sale have been increased approximately 50 per cent., 5s. to 7s. 6d.

#### Agriculture:

1st July, 1953—Orchard registration, 1s. to 2s.

1st March, 1954—Grade herd testing, 5s. to 7s. 6d.

1st August, 1955—Dipping cattle, 9d. to 1s. Spraying cattle, 1s. to 1s. 6d.

#### Kalgoorlie Abattoirs—

From 14th September, 1953, slaughtering fees were increased by 33½ per cent., ¾d. to 1d. per head dressed weight.

#### Child Welfare:

Maintenance charges on account wards in the Reception Home increased from £1 per week to £2 10s. per week—150 per cent.

#### Native Welfare:

Accommodation at Bennett House increased from 15s. per week to £2 16s. 8d. per week for adults, who could pay. Generally the visitors are indigent and no charge is made.

#### Factories:

The schedule of fees was increased with Parliamentary approval approximately 200 per cent.

#### Homes:

Accommodation charge for pensioners advanced approximately 14 per cent. from £2 5s. 6d. per week to £2 12s. per week. This is in accordance with the pension increase.

#### Medical:

Consultation charges per visit for North-West doctors increased from 10s. 6d. to 15s.—approximately 43 per cent.

Hospital fees increased by approximately 70 per cent., and out patient fees from 2s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. per visit.

#### Public Health:

The range of pathological fees was amended from 10s. 6d. to £1 1s. to 17s. to £6 6s.

Schedule of meat inspection charge was increased 50 per cent.

#### Mental Health:

##### Accommodation at—

Heathcote—£1 7s. to £2 4s. 1d.—63 per cent.

Claremont—General, 16s. to £1 2s. 5d.—40 per cent. Service, £1 4s. to £1 9s. 11d.—25 per cent.

#### Railways:

From 1st October, 1953, the freight rates were increased by an average of 33½ per cent.

#### Trams and Ferries:

Recent increases provide for 25 per cent. on trams and 50 per cent. on ferries.

#### Registry:

Searches—2s. 6d. to 3s.; 20 per cent. Certified copies—5s. to 7s. 6d.; 50 per cent.

Extracts—2s. 6d. to 3s.; 20 per cent. Change of name—5s. to 7s. 6d.; 50 per cent.

Registrations of births, deaths and marriages within 14 days have been exempt from the payment of a fee. Previously it was 1s., 1s. and 2s. 6d. respectively.

#### Fremantle Harbour Trust:

The scale of charges has been increased approximately 100 per cent. since February, 1953.

#### Country Areas Water Supply:

The rate has been increased by 3d. in the £, which approximates 16 per cent.

#### Public Works:

Water Boards.—An increase of approximately 20 per cent. for the year 1956.

Country Lands—The rate has advanced from 4½d. to 5d. an acre.

Irrigation—The irrigation rate of 11s. 3d. per acre was increased to 22s. 6d. per acre. The latter providing for two free waterings, whilst previously it was one. Increase approximates 7s. 6d. per acre or 66½ per cent.

Drainage—The charge has been increased by approximately 25 per cent.

#### Metropolitan Water Supply:

Sewerage and Drainage Rates—Net increase of 2d. in the £ on annual valuation.

Excess Water Charges—Increase of 9d. per 1,000 gallons.

Many people will receive a nasty shock this year when they get their excess water bills. Some time ago the excess water rate was 1s. 3d. a thousand gallons, but if a person paid the full water rates before the 30th November the rate was reduced to 1s. per 1,000 gallons. Now that rate has been increased to 1s. 9d. But if a person does not pay the full water rate by the 30th November, the excess charge is 2s. a thousand gallons. These increases continue as follows:—

**Treasury:**

A turnover tax of 1½ per cent was imposed on off-course and on-course bookmakers on 1st August, 1955. This replaced the Winning Bets Tax of 2½ per cent. which was imposed by the previous Government and operated from 5th January, 1953, to 31st July, 1955.

The most disquieting comment that I can offer is that the Government intends making further increases in public charges; but the Premier is not yet in a position to tell the people what they will be. There is a magnificent record, if ever there was one, for a Government that came into power in 1953 and talked of keeping prices down, and the cost of living down, and yet, with both hands, and as hard as it could go, has increased the price of Government services year after year!

The Chief Secretary: Do you suggest they should not have been increased?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am not suggesting anything of the kind.

The Chief Secretary: Then what is your point?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: This: When one picks up the Lieut.-Governor's Speech and one sees nothing about these increases; and when one reads the Premier's policy speech delivered prior to the elections of this year—about February—and one sees nothing about them; and when one reads the speech he made prior to the elections in 1953 and one sees nothing about them, one wonders what is going on. As soon as this Government was elected, the people of the State saw plenty of these increases, and charges are continuing to increase. That is my point. I have said before in this House—

The Chief Secretary: Is ours the only Government in Australia that has increased its charges?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —that at times it is necessary for a Government to increase charges. I know that this is not the only Government that has done so.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Then what are you making a fuss about?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: There is one fuss I would like to make—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Chief Secretary: No, you would not be permitted.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I suppose that Hansard will report that as, "Many members laughed." I am afraid that I do not know where we are heading. We have to find some answer to this problem; and it is not a bit of use, the Government in this State going to the Federal Government and asking it for money to spend on public works.

The Chief Secretary: I would suggest that not one of these charges would have been necessary if a certain Prime Minister had done what he promised—put value back into the £.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is in conformity with the usual line; it is always the answer of members of this Government. Everywhere I go I hear of nothing else. The blame has always been placed on the Federal Government. It does not matter what happens, Ministers of this Government always blame the Federal Government. They are always saying, "The Federal Government does not give us enough money." I proved a little while ago that this State has received more money than any other State.

The Chief Secretary: That does not mean anything.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I know it does not satisfy the Minister or the Government, and it does not stop them from continuing to blame the Commonwealth Government. But we know full well that that Government is not to blame; we know that the unemployment situation, from which this State is suffering at present, cannot under any circumstances be attributed to the Commonwealth Government.

The Chief Secretary: Why? Because it did not bring in migrants, or something like that?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Chief Secretary knows, as well as I do—and probably a lot better than I do—that the majority of unemployed in Western Australia at present were members of the building trade. Is it or is it not a fact? Of course it is a fact! In the main, the unemployed in Western Australia were connected with the building industry.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: A lot of whom came from the Eastern States at the end of last year.

The Chief Secretary: A lot of them came from overseas, too. You have only to go to Fremantle to see that.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If a man is running a business and he does all his trade in six months, and has nothing left for the remaining six months, what does he do?

Hon. F. D. Willmott: He shuts up shop.

**Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH:** Of course he does! He must say to his employees, "I am sorry, but I have no work for you to do, and I cannot continue to pay you." That is exactly what took place in the building industry this year. The Minister for Housing made this comment:

Because of the generosity of the Premier the housing problem has been solved sooner than otherwise would have been the case.

The generosity of which the Minister for Housing speaks is the Premier's allowing him to overspend his allocation by more than £1,500,000. So if he overspent by more than £1,500,000 in the first six months of his trading year, he had nothing left to carry on with for the last six months, and unemployment was the only result. I say that the unemployment situation in this State at the moment—and it is getting grave—is directly attributable to those circumstances.

The Chief Secretary: Of course the banks refusing to advance loans for housing did not have anything to do with it!

**Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH:** The Chief Secretary knows that that had nothing to do with the situation.

The Chief Secretary: It did!

**Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH:** I give the Minister for Housing this much credit: He said, "This Government of mine has built more houses than any other Government on record for this particular time"; and we have established that fact, and we agree with him. But he also hurried on with the activities of the Housing Commission to such an extent that it had no work left to do in the last six months of the year. It is a very simple equation; and I revert to the small man in business—or any man in business for that matter. If he has no work to do in the last six months of the financial year, he does not want to keep on paying his employees. And that is exactly what has happened in the building industry.

I do not think that the Government should feel proud of the situation, and it should wake up to its responsibility and not continue to try to free itself from blame and place it all on the Commonwealth Government, when it knows full well that that Government has had nothing to do with the position. I reluctantly support the motion moved for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. I say "reluctantly" because I feel the people of this State are having arbitrarily forced upon them increases in prices for public utilities and public services that they do not deserve. However, they have to grin and bear it; they have to pay and they will have to continue to pay so long as this Government thinks fit to continue with those prices. I will watch, with a good deal of interest,

the further increases in the price of public services which the Treasurer of this State envisages.

**HON. J. MURRAY (South-West) [6.11]:** I would hate to let this motion pass without joining with other members in offering my condolences to both Mrs. Hearn and family, and Mrs. Barker and family. To me the late Harry Hearn was a personal friend; and when the Chief Secretary moved the condolence motion, and members spoke to it, I felt too deeply about it to speak. The late Mr. Hearn tendered advice to me on many occasions, and I always felt that he gave members the benefit of his extensive knowledge when he spoke on any subject. I did not know the late Mr. Barker very well, but he was a man of honesty and sincerity of purpose. The North had no more sincere stalwart in this House, and I doubt whether it has ever had one more sincere than the late Mr. Barker.

I would like to use for the title of my address this evening the heading of a column which used to appear in "The West Australian"; this column was called "One Thing and Another" and in the column itself there was a small extract of verse which has since appeared in many other articles. It went something like this: "The time has come to talk of many things"; and it is in that way that I want to address myself to this motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

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

**Hon. J. MURRAY:** Before the tea suspension I had addressed myself to the House and joined with other members in offering my condolences to the relatives of Hon. H. Hearn and Hon. Don Barker. I also indicated that I intended to occupy some little time in discussing many things. Before we proceed to that aspect, I would also like to tender my congratulations to those new members who have joined us and to congratulate also those members who had to face the last biennial election and who were returned. Of the new members I would say that, having listened to them with some degree of interest, I feel sure that when we come to that important part of our duty, which is to discuss legislation and amend or pass it, thus giving it our blessing, they will contribute very forcibly to the debates on those matters.

The first question I want to discuss in general is in relation to the financial position at the moment. It is probably a strange topic for me; but it has struck me on many occasions since I have entered Parliament that the viewpoints of many members—probably not so much in this Chamber as in another place—change, depending on which side of the House they are sitting, or depending on whether they are part and parcel of the Government or sit in opposition to it. I repeat that

that is not quite so noticeable in this Chamber as it was when I was in another place.

To open my remarks, I would like to quote some views expressed by Hon. F. J. S. Wise. When I found the appropriate volume of Hansard I discovered it was a bit cumbersome and further examination showed that Mr. Wise's speech ran from page 22 to page 38 of that volume. Accordingly I took some extracts from it. I have checked and re-checked them to make sure that they are identical with the volume from which they were taken. The Hansard volume to which I refer is Volume 121 of 1948, page 32. This is what Mr. Wise had to say then on the important subject of the financial position and I would commend his remarks to all members who are really interested, not only in financial matters generally but in the present drift of the State. I quote as follows:—

If members will carefully examine the returns which are furnished, and which show clearly the unproductive and productive loan assets, they will have ample food for thought. The Government of this State, which pretends to be so much against anything savouring of socialisation, will get but scant comfort from the fact that the fully productive loan assets include the State Saw Mills, the State hotels, and the metropolitan markets. These are the only three fully productive loan investments in Western Australia.

That is also probably very near the mark today. Continuing from p. 33—

I come back to the point that the public must receive service from State instrumentalities which private enterprise could not and should not operate. If the State has to be developed from loan moneys expended on drainage, irrigation, land clearing, and other projects, the taxpayer is entitled to see, particularly if the benefit can be measured, that a commensurate return is paid to the Treasury for the services given. I put this to the Premier: Can he expect other States of Australia to continue to contribute to the highest per capita repayment from income tax from uniform taxation collection unless he does something to prevent the deterioration in State finance of which I have spoken so much this evening? In his Treasury Department the Premier has men who are acclaimed as experts and are acknowledged to be authorities in public finance in all Australia. I suggest to him that he will be very unwise unless he takes notice of them. I have expounded sufficiently this evening in connection with the railways position, and one thing is clear: That unless control is exerted—for which I am certain this Chamber would give him

authority, as we on this side endeavoured to obtain it—unless he exerts sufficient strength to prevent what is happening in that one department, we will drift along into chaos that can have only one ending.

At a later stage, on page 37, the then Premier interjected, as follows:—

There is a greater demand on the Government today to spend than ever before.

Mr. Wise replied as follows:—

Yes, and if the Governments are willing to be led along that lane they will be spending all the time, but if we wish to have a condition of healthy finance and happy relationships, then we should attempt to curb any wilful extravagance which can be avoided. I hope that this State's Treasurer will show by his own example and his own endeavours that he is not going to be led into a financial morass which would—as "The West Australian" points out—lead us towards insolvency. I also hope that by much care and imagination he will be able to adjust his finances to such a state as will warrant the confidence of even those who are opposed to him in many other respects. It is only in this way that we can expect to keep our State intact and prosperous. We on this side of the House do not wish to indulge in petty criticisms but only soundly to examine the position and express our views so that the people can decide for themselves just how dangerous is this trend.

Those were the remarks made by Hon. F. J. S. Wise in 1948, and history seems to be repeating itself on this matter of financial drift. Sir Ross McLarty had this to say on the same question; and I quote from "The West Australian" of the 4th September:—

It is a long-term objective but we are now only at first base and must consolidate our position. How do we do this? First of all there should be a rigid check on Government spending to eliminate waste and inefficiency. This applies to both Commonwealth and State Governments. I firmly believe that the savings thus made would be considerable. Major public works should be tendered for and carried out by private enterprise with bonuses for early completion and penalties for delay.

It will be seen, therefore, that in 1948 Mr. Wise chided the then Premier for what he called wasteful expenditure of loan moneys. Today the picture is the same, only there is a different party in power. So much has been said about the wasteful expenditure of loan moneys, that I do not wish to go further into that question. It is one of those matters to

which it is most difficult to find a complete answer, because we know all Governments are faced by pressure groups to spend irrespective of what is given in return. From there I would like to proceed to another question that is linked with it.

The other evening Mr. Logan suggested—and it is true, of course, and everybody recognises it—that the basic foundation of our economy is primary production. I do not think anybody really questions that for a moment. But while it is the basic foundation of our economy, I think I would receive quite a lot of support for the viewpoint which I have held over many years, and which I still hold, that our true economy is shown by the barometer of a healthy and progressive building industry.

Whilst it is true that the basis of our economy comes from primary production, it does not end there. Our economy is gauged on how that money, or the surplus money that remains in the primary producers' hands, is used in the years ahead. For many years they went hand in hand. When the primary producer was wealthy or had a good year, then we saw in the State of Western Australia an uplift in the building industry, because primary producers invested their money in bricks and mortar, which was good from the point of view of the State's economy, because no other industry employs a greater diversity of trades than does the building industry. That has been illustrated to those members who did not pay any attention to it in the past by Sandovers' advertisements over the past few days. I think probably their advertisements indicate 32 different spheres of operation in the building trades.

Unfortunately, in this latter period, there has been a diversity of investments presented to primary producers and others, so that investment in the building industry has not been attractive enough to take that money into that source. The same can be said in a small way in regard to Commonwealth loans, and I regret it very much. But that is true, and I doubt whether many primary producers would take umbrage at my saying so. They can, if they have a good season, invest their money and get a much more lucrative return in other spheres.

So in recent years the building industry has been very well supported by the State Housing Commission—that is who supported it. I said the other night when speaking to another measure which was before the House that it was a very good band wagon—a case of "house the people irrespective of the cost." Public money was not going into this industry for it will not go there when costs soar because when people build premises for rental purposes, they have to rent them at an equitable figure to those who occupy them. But that was not so in regard to the State Housing commitments. Therefore money was flooded in on this

particular cause when we did not in Western Australia have a work force to supply the quantity of housing required or demanded by that commission.

As a body the contractors should have told the Government, "This far and no further. We have not got the working force." That would have been an honest way to go about this business, and put a brake on irresponsible spending of what some people call cheap money. Circumstances and time have proved that it was not cheap money, but a workforce was built up with quite a large number of what I might call incompetent tradesmen to fill the jobs, who had to be paid the full court awards plus the demand award of those individuals for work done, so that the cost of housing and the cost of men for building operations has got completely out of hand.

The position today is that it is not an attractive investment yet for those people who have surplus money to put it into housing and building. It is not attractive at all. The Government, in an endeavour to still keep engaged the efficient workers in the building industry and the inefficient workers as well, is trying to keep the house building rate at a higher level than we have a competent work force to handle. That position cannot go on much further, and it has been aggravated to a degree, as Mr. Griffith said only this evening, by excessive spending over the last 12 months by the Housing Commission.

I doubt whether the Housing Commission is going to be able to find the money to carry out the programme it visualises in the next 12 months, and there will be a further recession on that score. Might I say before I leave the question of the building industry—I said it in another place and have said it in this House before—that there were many materials that were not really in short supply and could have been used for certain classes of work. Mr. Craig said in this House, either last session or the session before, that a particular firm in which he was interested had £500,000 to spend, but it could not get approval to go on with the work.

At that time controls were in operation; and had the building contractors been allowed to apply the money to some of the many big jobs that were required to be built—the State Insurance Office building is a case in point—the building industry itself would not have been left in the position it is faced with at the moment. Those contracts could have been filled, and they could have gone on and filled the gap as far as housing is concerned. But because of what I would say was irresponsible thinking—it was popular to house the people irrespective of cost—just look at the rental that these people housed in State Housing Commission houses have to pay today for some of the places!



I would not even try to estimate how long a timber-framed building as erected for the State Housing Commission by many contractors over the last period of years would last as a State asset. At one time I think they guaranteed timber-framed and weatherboard houses for rental purposes for 30 years. If some of these present houses last 15 years, I will be very much surprised.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We have houses on the Goldfields that have been there for 60 years.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I am talking about the economic life as laid down by the original contractors. I think the economic life of a timber-framed house in 1910 was about 30 years.

The Minister for Railways: They are worth more now than when they were built.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I shall now turn from housing. In my first political speech in Western Australia—in 1947—I said that I felt the State's future history of development would be written in water and electricity. I still hold that view. Much has been done with regard to electricity, and much attempted in regard to water; but when I delivered that speech, I made it clear to those who were listening that what went hand in hand with water supplies, irrigation and the like, was drainage.

We know that irrigation increases the productivity of land, but it is a costly project and a very long-term one, in many cases, when we start building dams, putting in channels, grading them and so on in order to serve water to a large area. Therefore, in my view—I said it then, and I repeat it now—despite the shortage of water in some districts, and the outcry from other districts to get water for stock, there is a definite need close to the metropolitan area—one might say it is almost a suburb of Perth—for extensive drainage to take surplus water away from the Pinjarra-Coolup area, on which the metropolitan area depends for its supplies to a large degree, over country which, for a long period this winter has been flooded out.

Fortunately, a large number of farmers in that area had put in a reserve of dry feed, so that during the flood period they were able to carry on. But it still had an effect on the milk production in the district. Therefore, I do not think any Government, if it wants to increase production from land that is already developed, should neglect this side of a national need.

As I have already said, when it comes to the question of irrigation, it is a long-term policy; it requires a large amount of money. The Government has to put in dams, and—in many cases—large areas of concrete waterways to carry the water on to the properties requiring it. Drainage

is more or less a cheap method of removing surplus water that is doing a great amount of damage on many properties in the South-West portion of the State.

I move now to the subject of forestry and related matters. Members would be very surprised if I got to my feet and did not say something on it. I remarked earlier that I was surprised, on coming into this House, to find the changing viewpoint according to whether one sat with the Government or was opposed to it. On the question of forestry, I have had no change in views, no matter which Government has been in office. I stated my views in another place, and I have stated them here, and I stand by them.

Unfortunately we find, when we get on to the question of forestry—to me forestry products are important to Western Australia—its importance is lessened to a degree by the fact that we have so little forest that the State cannot reap a harvest and get an immediate profit from it. But it is important to posterity; to our grandchildren and their children. So I make no apology for repeating some of the views that I have expressed in the House on many occasions.

At the moment I really want to stress the change of views of people when they are in the Government and when they are out of it. So I turn to Volume 123 of Hansard for 1949, at page 169, and I quote from a speech by the present Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Hoar—

I said, in the first place, that I was not so much concerned with the one or two anomalies that creep in now and again with respect to the items covered by this Act. But I am concerned about the distribution of those materials that have been released from control, and particularly timber.

He went on to say—

There is no justification today for the export of timber other than on a load for load basis in exchange for white wood and soft woods that are not produced in this country.

Mr. Hoar went on at considerable length. In fact, the more I read of this the more I thought I was speaking myself. He quoted Mr. Lane Poole and Mr. Kessell in support of his remarks. I do not intend to weary the House by reading the whole of his speech, but he did say—

There is no justification today for the export of timber other than on a load for load basis.

He went on to say, and I shall quote his remarks here because they have some bearing on what I shall say at a later stage—

I do not want to sit down without making one further reference to the statement of Mr. Mattiske—

he is the present hon. member of this House —

—in his tirade against the Leader of the Opposition and other Opposition speakers who considered they were justified, on behalf of the people they represent, in taking this Government to task in the way they did. Mr. Mattiske says this, with respect to timber—

It was obligatory for this State to export specified quantities to the Eastern States and oversea in accordance with instructions from the Commonwealth Timber Controller.

That is a quotation from Mr. Hoar's speech, and he was then the member for Warren. Just to show how all these people change their views, let us see what Mr. Graham had to say at that time. At page 275 of the same volume of Hansard, Mr. Graham said—

Other members have emphasised the seriousness of the situation in regard to timber and I was not impressed with the statements of the Minister as to the necessity to retain oversea markets for this product.

He was not impressed with the statement by the Minister as to the necessity to retain overseas markets for this product. He continued—

From the return submitted to this House in answer to a question addressed by me to the Minister last week—and having in mind the many other important undertakings that require attention—I think it can be said that there is no need whatever, for the next 20 years, to worry about oversea markets for our timber.

That was in 1949. He went on—

All our timber can be used in this State, for many years to come, for home and other building purposes. It is true that a certain quantity can be made available to the other States of the Commonwealth in return for materials that we, in this State, are unable to produce. I think the House is entitled to some comment by the Minister on the statement by Mr. Chifley—

This is in keeping with the remarks that Mr. Hoar made in reply to Mr. Mattiske—

—only a month ago wherein he stated without qualification, under the heading of "Timber":—

The export of timber is permitted only when the State concerned has advised that the timber is surplus to essential requirements in that State and the transport position renders difficult its supply to other parts of the Commonwealth.

Therefore we find that the present Minister for Housing—he has lost the State Saw Mills now, but is still Minister for Forests—did, in 1949, without any qualifications, state that for the next 20 years there was no need to worry about the export of timber from this State. Remarkable! I shall show the change of view directly.

In reply to both Mr. Hoar and Mr. Graham at that time, the then Minister for Housing had a few remarks to pass on this question. What he said is contained at page 278 of the same volume. I am not going to read the whole of his answers because they are involved and do not have any bearing on what I want to say; but he did state—

I will deal with the remarks of the last speaker first.

That was Mr. Graham. He continued—

The exports of timber to South Australia are largely karri when they come from the main sawmilling firms. A certain amount of jarrah does go to that State from some smaller firms and mills, but that is something as to which control at present cannot be exercised because, as I have explained, under Section 92 of the Constitution trade and commerce are free between the States.

That is the position exactly as it is now. As far as the export of timber, or anything else, between States is concerned, no control can be exercised except by special Act of Parliament—a special Act such as they are trying to put in down below, as a matter of fact.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must not anticipate legislation.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Can that be challenged under the provisions of Section 92?

Hon. J. MURRAY: After the remarks of the President, I had better not go on with it.

The Minister for Railways: You can discuss Section 92.

Hon. J. MURRAY: Before I go on further to show this changed viewpoint, I would point out that I have already read to the House extracts from the speeches of Mr. Hoar and Mr. Graham at that time. But I want to say that at that particular time pressure was being put on the State to export, or transfer—that is a better term, because it is scarcely exporting timber to send it from Western Australia to South Australia—quite large quantities of timber to South Australia.

The position was so bad at that time that the then Premier of South Australia made a special trip over here to try to get more timber. Mr. Playford had not been in the State five minutes before there was an overwhelming outcry from everyone—“We cannot let our timber go to South Australia! We cannot do this or that. We

need it here." At all times when I have spoken on this question of forestry, saw-milling, etc., I have said that if there is one State in Australia for which Western Australia can have some regard when it is allocating surplus supplies, or when it is making supplies available, it is South Australia, because that State has no hardwoods of its own.

For many years, to my knowledge, South Australia was known among those in the timber industry as the free marketing State. In most other States of the Commonwealth large timber firms had their own yards; and if they had any surplus production, such surplus was sent to other States and vice versa. However, because of a gentlemen's agreement between all the timber firms, South Australia, because it had no natural hardwoods, was left as a free marketing State to enable the timber firms to enter freely into contracts with timber firms in that State. I think that that practice continues even today.

South Australia was in an extremely difficult position, and Mr. Playford made a special trip to this State at that particular time to see whether we could relieve the acute timber position in his State. In 1949, the following question, which appears on page 5 of No. 1 of the Parliamentary Debates of that year, was asked by Mr. Fox in another place of the then Minister for Housing, Sir Ross McDonald:—

(1) Did he notice a statement in the Press during a recent visit of the Premier of South Australia to this State that he desired to secure increased supplies of jarrah for South Australia?

(2) What arrangements did the Premier of South Australia make with this Government for increased supplies of jarrah to South Australia?

The Minister's reply, interspersed with several interjections, was as follows:—

Like the hon. member, I heard that the able and enterprising Premier of South Australia desired to secure additional timber supplies from this State and that he would like to have seen me on the subject. However, he did not see me.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Why?

The Minister for Housing: Because he was not going to get any additional timber supplies. He did not know that but I did.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You did not even see him!

The Minister for Housing: No.

Mr. Yates: Did he get any more timber?

The Minister for Housing: He did not. The position is that the conservation of timber for our own needs is regarded as a first priority in the Government's policy, subject to certain

factors in the timber industry to which attention must be paid. No contracts and no promises regarding timber have been made to the Premier of South Australia or to any other State.

That was the position in 1949. The view I expressed then, and which I have since repeated many times, was that South Australia deserved the utmost consideration in regard to any timber stocks that we could have made available to it. It had no hardwoods of its own; and by flatly refusing to listen to its plea, we, of our own volition, compelled that State to turn to other sources for its timber supplies.

In continuing to illustrate the changed viewpoint that now obtains. I have before me an extract from the "Sunday Times" dated the 8th July. The headline reads as follows:—

W.A. Timber Exports Ban "Doesn't Make Sense."

To read that headline one would wonder who was about to make the statement that appeared under it. However, I did not wonder. The statement was made by the Hon. H. E. Graham, M.L.A., who said that for the next 20 years we did not need to worry about our timber supplies. This article goes on to say—

It didn't make sense for the Commonwealth to restrict the sale of W.A. timbers overseas while granting licences to import timber from dollar and sterling areas for purposes for which W.A. timbers were suitable, said the Forests Minister Mr. H. E. Graham yesterday.

The Minister for Railways: Circumstances have altered.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I have already read to the House the remarks made by the then Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Chifley, which the Minister added to his own. If we could export timber at the present time I do not think the Commonwealth would obstruct us, if we could obtain the orders. I have heard on fairly reliable authority that the Commonwealth Government would welcome any source from which it could obtain credit overseas. I still say that if we had the timber to sell and if the Minister and his department went about the matter in the right way we could still export our timber overseas. Not that I am a firm believer in the export of our timber; but I intend to say more about that at a later stage. Not only the Minister for Housing has spoken on this subject, but Mr. Gordon Freeth, the Commonwealth member, has also made a statement on it. In fact, his remarks are more astounding than those of the Minister. He said—

South Australia should be forced to use Western Australian timbers in preference to Malayan hardwoods and American oregon.

Yet we refused to let South Australia have any timber in 1949.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Mr. Freeth would not know that.

Hon. J. MURRAY: The present Minister for Forests also said, in the same year, "We need not worry for 20 years," and the Minister for Agriculture agreed with him. Yet he was the one who had the temerity to say that one of the States should be refused our timber.

The Minister for Railways: What was your opinion then?

Hon. J. MURRAY: In 1949 I said—and I say it again now—that South Australia, because it does not grow any hardwoods, deserved the utmost consideration from this State in regard to its request for timber supplies.

The Minister for Railways: Very logical!

Hon. J. MURRAY: I will now pass to what the Conservator of Forests had to say in his report for the year ended the 30th June, 1955. Unfortunately, this report was not tabled before the House rose last session and therefore was not available to members until the House was in recess. Because of that fact, on the 23rd November, 1955, I was compelled to place on the notice paper a question directed to the Chief Secretary. I would not have had any need to ask the question had the Conservator's report been available at this time. My question was as follows:—

(1) Was the Conservator of Forests correctly reported in "The West Australian" of the 19th November, when he stated—

On present trends it appeared that by 1970 Western Australia would not have any timber to export.

By 1985, unless we did something about it, Western Australia would have to import timber?

(2) If the answer is "Yes," what action is the Government taking to rectify this position?

And here is the answer that was given to me on the same day—

(1) Yes. This position would arise from the demands of the expected rapid increase of population and not from any diminution in the permissible cut from the forests.

(2) The Government has taken active steps to provide for the expected increased demand by means of—

(a) increasing the area of dedicated State forest. Approximately 420,000 acres of hardwood forest have been so dedicated during the life of this Government, and further areas are under consideration;

(b) increasing the areas of pine planting on land capable of carrying the faster growing

pinus radiata, as well as continuing previous planting programmes using pinus pinaster for which a further 150,000 acres have recently been reserved;

(c) better utilisation of timber already available in the forest, including such species as marri;

(d) increasing the annual yield of the natural forests through protection and silvicultural improvement work.

As a result of a series of actions taken by the present Government towards reorganising forestry in this State, considerably increased funds are now being devoted to forestry development.

The last paragraph, of course, refers to the amendment this House made last session to the Forestry Act when we allowed a greater proportion of the royalties to be made available to the conservator. That is the point I want to raise in regard to this peculiar matter. I asked those questions on the 23rd November, 1955, because I was interested to find that our new Conservator of Forests held the same view as myself, and that he was a little concerned about the inroads being made into our natural forest wealth in this State. I wanted to know all about the position and I was delighted to hear the answers that were given. I was of the opinion that our newly-appointed Conservator of Forests had both his feet on the ground. Then I read his report for the year ended the 30th June, 1955, and I was amazed.

As I have said, I asked those questions on the 22nd November, 1955, and this printed report was for the year ended the 30th June, 1955, and therefore must have been prepared or was in the course of preparation long before I put my question to the Chief Secretary in this House when the Conservator of Forests expressed some concern at the situation. On the present trend he said that by 1970 Western Australia would have no timber to export, and that by 1985, unless we did something about it, we would have to import timber. That was said in November. Yet in June last he had this to say:—

At the date of writing this report it is not possible to state a definite figure for the permissible cut but a revised general working plan allowing for some increase in the total cut will be drawn up within the next twelve months.

It is so unrealistic for the conservator to say in June that he is going to produce a working plan to allow for an increased cut, which means that the timber industry will be allowed to take more jarrah and karri timbers into the mills than they are at present. We find that in November the conservator had the temerity to answer

a question and say he was worried about the position, and that was what would happen. To me that does not make any sense.

From that I want to deal with a little brighter outlook; and that is, the way the forest products of this State are being handled by the sawmillers. I thank the Chief Secretary for giving me the answer to a question, and the information which I so urgently required this evening, because it has a bearing on what I am saying. I appreciate his co-operation in obtaining the figures I asked for.

In the report of the conservator for 1955, the details of activities of the sawmilling industry from 1925 to 1954 are given. They are interesting from certain aspects. When speaking on another subject I told members that much pressure had been put on the then Conservator of Forests, and on other parties, including sawmillers, to open up new mills and to increase production so that what I might call "an irresponsible programme" might go forward. For the year 1952 the report shows that the number of sawmillers rose from 256 to 280, an increase of 24. In 1953 they rose from 280 to 306, an increase of 26, or a total increase in the number of sawmillers for the two years of 50.

It is interesting to me, and I should imagine to the general population as well, to realise what has been achieved since that period when pressure was used to increase the sawmilling force by 50. In 1952-53 the total output of the sawmilling industry was in the vicinity of 17,000,000 cubic feet. In 1954-55 it rose to 19,000,000 cubic feet, or by 2,000,000 cubic feet, equalling 39,000 loads. Let us see what happened to the sawmillers between 1953 and 1955.

Looking at the conservator's report again we find that the number decreased by 27 in that period; but despite that, they achieved an increase of 39,000 loads, which is a very creditable performance. That increase represents roughly eight loads per man, taking into account the average monthly increase of manpower. That was why I went to some length to thank the Chief Secretary for getting the information I required.

In quoting the figures, I gave the overall position with regard to the mills, both the private and State mills. On checking the figures given by the Chief Secretary I find that the number of employees and the loads which were produced in the periods shown are comparable with the overall increases in the other mills. So in this regard the State Saw Mills have not lagged behind in production.

It is also interesting to note what this represents in the use of the product. That is given in the report. Local consumption has risen from 1953 to 1955 to 18.7 per

cent. During the same period, unfortunately, exports showed a decrease of 12.3 per cent. In 1952-53, exports represented 30.4 per cent. of the total output, which was practically the recognised figure, and—as has been stated in another place—frequently is the desired target. In most cases we have had to export timber to preserve the markets for such an occasion as has arisen today. In 1954 our exports of timber went down to 22 per cent. of the total.

So it will be seen that the industry as a whole has boosted production far beyond the immediate needs of the State. An outlet must be found, and the only reasonable one is overseas exports. Because of changed circumstances, and because in the past this State has refused to assist its sister States by supplying their requirements of timber; and because they can now buy cheaper elsewhere, though not as good an article, we cannot within reason expect those States to help us in our day of need.

While I object to the imposition of duties on goods coming into those States—that is on timber and the like—it is up to the Government to make sure that permits for the export of timber, which members of another place said were available—and the Commonwealth could not stop this—are issued so that the target which has been achieved by the timber industry can, in some measure, be rewarded.

I want to stress this point briefly: For the decrease of 27 mills in 12 months, for an increase of manpower of 400, there is an increase in the quantity of timber produced amounting roughly to eight loads per head. That is a real achievement. The only fly in the ointment that I can see is that the industry should have found it necessary to charge a higher price for timber. The figures for 1955 in the report do not appear to bear out any necessity for an increase. It will be interesting to see what the figures for 1956 will show. They may reveal a real need for an increase.

Before I conclude on the subject of forestry I want to point out again that it is a great pity that the trustees of this heritage of the State will not take a more realistic view on many matters. In reply to my questions, the conservator said that he was getting increased funds, but they were purely and simply taken from royalties. It is unfortunate that, he having got that extra money, it had to be diverted to other avenues of expenditure. I want to illustrate that by reading from his report as follows:—

Over a great many years attention has been drawn by successive Conservators to the limitations of our State Forests to provide for the needs of more than a million people and particularly after the timber on private property is cut out. However, if the State is willing to provide adequate

finance for fast-growing pine plantations, this picture can be changed. Working plans for the indigenous forest should take this factor into account and assume that reasonable amounts of loan or other money will become available annually.

I have said many times that softwoods will never take the place of our own natural hardwoods, but I make some exception to that by saying that karri could have an almost unlimited export, because it is not really in short supply and has not the varied uses that jarrah has. But to indicate in a report even a suggestion that the conservator believes that softwood will take the place of our hardwoods is wrong in principle. He goes on to say even with regard to softwood plantations—

In last year's report, a temporary lull in the tempo of pine-planting was announced, while the economics of planting on land then available for pines was examined. During the past year a drive has been made on soil survey with specialised officers to locate land suitable for the fast-growing *Pinus radiata*, and this has resulted in sufficient areas being in sight for at least a 10,000 acre programme on good pine soils. Although such soils are of limited extent within State Forest, it has been possible to re-purchase areas—

I want members to note that—

in the Kirup and Nannup districts which can be expected to produce a first-class forest of pine at a high rate of growth. The emphasis of plantation policy will be on planting the maximum of *Pinus radiata* in order to have supplies of softwood coming forward at the earliest possible date, but it must be noted that, due to the shortage of loan moneys, financing of the pine programme has had to be supplemented this year by money from Reforestation Fund, which should more correctly be used for the development and protection of the indigenous forest.

In other words, the programme of pine plantation which was supposed to be, and over the years has been, looked on as one of those things on which any Government could spend loan money with the expectation of its being reproductive—as Mr. Wise said in the remarks I quoted earlier—has not served that purpose; and we find that in the year covered by the conservator's report, he had to fall back on money taken from royalties on timber. That money, by the goodwill of this House, was added to last year by increasing the percentage available to him. It was done on the understanding that the funds would be used for the purpose laid down in the Act, namely, the regeneration of our natural forest. I am sorry to see from the conservator's report that money that should have been made available for that purpose has been

used for the less important one of pine plantation. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [8.51]:** The motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply to the Speech by His Excellency gives members an opportunity to deal with many matters affecting their provinces and the State generally. What struck me forcibly when I took my seat on opening day this year were the vacant seats formerly occupied by two of our colleagues who had departed this life during the recess. I refer to Hon. H. Hearn and Hon. Don Barker. Both of those members rendered valuable service to their constituents and made excellent contributions to the debates in this House; and it is with regret that I make reference to the fact that they have passed on to the next sphere. I join in the sentiments expressed by other members concerning them and the condolences forwarded to their widows.

I extend congratulations to the new members on their election and welcome them to this House. By their speeches they have given an indication that they will render very good service here, and I wish them well for the future.

Since last session, the former Clerk of Parliaments, Mr. Sparks, has retired from that position, and I feel sure that he left this Parliament with the best wishes of all members. Mr. Roberts has been elevated to the office of Clerk of Parliaments and Clerk of the Council, and Mr. Browne has become Clerk Assistant. In his place Mr. Ashley has been appointed Records Clerk. To the two first-mentioned gentlemen I express appreciation of the fact that they have been promoted, and I welcome Mr. Ashley to the staff of this Chamber.

For a great many years, both Mr. Lavery and I have endeavoured to induce Ministers in various Governments to provide an electric power supply for the district of Jandakot. I think everyone is well aware that that is one of the oldest settled parts in the Fremantle area, and quite a number of pioneers have lived there for many years. One of their main sources of complaint was that the high tension power line passed through their district to supply other districts while they were left without that facility.

It is pleasing to note that the Government has seen fit to induce the Electricity Commission to extend power to that district, and I take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Minister on behalf of the residents on the action taken to turn that district from darkness into light. However, there are a few railway cottages that are within the area that have not been served. I understand the Minister is negotiating with a view to having them wired for electricity, and I

trust that he will be able to give us something definite about the matter when he replies to this debate.

For a number of years we have battled for the provision of a water supply for Hamilton Hill, which is on the perimeter of Fremantle. While there are some people in that district who have their own water supply, there are others who are not so fortunate and have to depend on a system of tanks, because they are in an elevated position and sinking for water would be too costly. We do not seem to be making any progress with regard to the provision of a water supply for parts of that district.

Notwithstanding the fact that I have taken the matter up with Ministers in the present Government and, prior to that, with Ministers of the McLarty-Watts Government, we do not seem to get very far. I have been told from time to time that when the supply from Lake Thompson was made available, possibly some parts of the district would have reticulation. I trust that the Chief Secretary will have some information to give us as to whether it will be possible in the near future to make this much-needed facility available to the people.

As one who takes some little interest in local government in Fremantle, I have been approached on many occasions and asked why some of the railway buildings adjacent to the harbour are in such a dilapidated condition. Fremantle is the chief port in Western Australia and is the western gateway through which many important people from the United Kingdom and Europe enter the rest of Australia. The sight that greets them on arrival at Fremantle is not inviting.

I am one who has always endeavoured to make people arriving here feel that they are still within the British Commonwealth and in an English-speaking community. I feel that the first impression made upon visitors is a lasting impression, and one that we should endeavour to make as good as possible. So I urge the Minister for Railways notwithstanding the fact that the railways do not pay, will not pay and cannot be expected to pay—to make some funds available in order to brighten up these buildings which are on railway property.

We hear from many people that the railways do not pay. But as far as I am able to ascertain, the railways were used as a means of opening up the outer parts of this State. Frequently, by decisions of Parliament, railway lines have been built out into certain parts of the back country to open it up and enable it to produce. These lines have been built and the Governments who built them well knew, right from the start, that although they would be a great acquisition to the people living in the districts concerned, because it would enable them to have a

system of transport and so convey the necessities of life and make their living more comfortable, they would not be able to pay.

These railways are performing a good service to the State and to the people for whom they cater. When the lines are handed over to the Railway Department, it is well known that they will not pay; and therefore, in my opinion, we hear far too much about that fact when, in many instances, these lines have been built to open up the country. The building of lines in the outback parts of the State, thereby providing a permanent system of transport, has increased the value of the land they serve; and, as a result, the Government receives more land tax and a good deal of extra revenue is paid into the Treasury.

To my way of thinking, as the railways are responsible for the increase in land values in these districts, it is only logical that a certain percentage of that increased land tax should be paid into railway revenue. I have spoken in the House before in a similar vein in regard to this question, but I do not think any Government has yet taken any action in that regard. As time goes by, and costs continue to rise, we should realise that it is not so much a question of whether the railways pay but should consider the fact that they are serving the people in the outer areas. These lines are a means of communication for them and convey the product of their labours to the markets. In my opinion railway finance should receive a boost from other sources of revenue. Until that is done, we will always be faced with a deficit in our Railway Department.

I have already mentioned the fact that the buildings on some railway property in Fremantle are in a dilapidated condition, and are not an inviting sight for people who arrive in this State, or who travel on our railway system to the Eastern States. The question of the berthing of passenger ships is also one that has been exercising my mind for some time, so much so that on previous occasions I have produced photographs showing ships that have been berthed at A, B and C sheds in the Fremantle harbour.

We have been told by Ministers of every Government—who, of course, have received advice from their professional officers—that it is not safe to berth the large passenger ships near the entrance. But I can remember an occasion when H.M.S. "Hood"—which was a ship of large tonnage, and which had a much greater draft than some of the passenger ships—was berthed much nearer the entrance to the harbour than are many of the passenger ships today. I feel sure that no harm came to the ship from its being berthed in that position.

But for some reason or other these professional officers, upon whom the Ministers and the Government rely for advice, still

say that these berths are not suitable for passenger ships. So we find all the passenger ships in Fremantle harbour berthing at F and G sheds. I suppose that most people who visit a new country, or a new port, like to see the principal sections and, naturally, desire to see the capital city. When the ship berths at F or G shed the passengers, or the great majority of them, cross the Edward-st. bridge and catch a bus to Perth.

On the way they pass a few wool stores, some rusty locomotive sheds, and a few other buildings, containing certain industries. The impression gained must be a very poor one, and there is no doubt that the entrance to Fremantle from this direction, is something of which we cannot be proud. I have endeavoured to emphasise previously in this House, and in other places too, that if these passenger ships were berthed at A, B or C sheds the people would use the overhead bridge and thus pass through the business section of Fremantle and at least gain a better impression of the State. But, unfortunately, nothing seems to be done in that regard; and so I again ask the Minister to have some examination made or give us some facts as to why passenger ships cannot be berthed alongside A, B or C sheds.

There is another question that I would like to discuss—I have referred to it previously—and that concerns the lighting of highways. I know that the Chief Secretary is interested in the subject of traffic, and that he will agree that our highways are poorly lit; as a matter of fact their lighting cannot compare in any way with that of highways in the Eastern States. From what I have been given to understand, the trouble seems to be that there is no unanimity between the local authorities through whose districts the highways pass. So one has the spectacle of a highway passing through one local authority's district and being reasonably well lit, while in the next section there is a complete stretch of darkness. Further on, in the next district, the lighting might be quite good.

I think every member will agree that the eyesight of the average motorist is not good enough to be able to change quickly from light to darkness; and, as a result, motorists do not have proper visibility. I think this is a most important question, and one that should be given serious consideration to see if some agreement can be reached between the Government and the local authorities with a view to having a uniform system of lighting on our highways.

One other matter I have mentioned before in this House concerns pedestrian crossings. At one time I suggested that these crossings should be marked diagonally, so that a motorist approaching a crosswalk would be able to see more

clearly a pedestrian who happened to be crossing the road. If the lines were painted diagonally there would be a white background all the time and this would enable the motorist to see the pedestrian using the crosswalk.

With the crosswalk markings at present, the motorist sees one black section and one white section and if a pedestrian is walking over the crosswalk there are times when his clothes merge with the black section. A motorist approaching that crosswalk might lose sight of the pedestrian in the black patch, which would be most unfortunate for the pedestrian. So I think that diagonal marking would be of greater advantage to all and certainly would afford greater protection to pedestrians.

Then there is the question of lighting pedestrian crosswalks. They may be all right in the daytime, when they can be seen from a reasonable distance; but when a crossing is in a badly-lit section of the highway, the motorist is not given an opportunity of seeing the pedestrians using it. The time is long overdue for these crosswalks to be better lit. This is a question to which I am sure all members are sympathetic and will use their best endeavours to do something about.

I would now like to refer to physically incapacitated people. A number of these unfortunate folk have approached me to see whether it is possible for them to be provided with some form of employment. I know that some of them detest the idea that they have to receive an invalid pension owing to the fact, unfortunately, that their legs will not carry the weight of their bodies although their arms, hands and the rest of their bodies are perfectly healthy and, in many cases, they are most intelligent.

Outside that provided by a few establishments, no provision has been made for employing these people and making them useful citizens. If they could be employed, it would remove boredom, and the feeling that they are a charge on the community because they are receiving the invalid pension. I know of one person who has had several positions, and whose work has been most satisfactory. But for some reason or other, his employment has been terminated from time to time, and he has been forced to apply for the invalid pension. But during his period of unemployment this person is not satisfied to sit back and simply receive that pension. He is out every day, travelling from Fremantle to Perth, trying to find some other type of employment. He has a job a present which necessitates his travelling from Fremantle to Perth and back every day of the week. He does this and is very happy indeed to know that he is earning what he is receiving for his labours.



So if we can possibly find positions for these people we should do so, because I feel sure that not only will they be rendering a service to the community but such employment will help to place them in a position of independence; they will know that what they get, they earn. We do not find much in the way of employment outside the Commonwealth or State Departments for these people. There are, of course, those who are fortunate enough to obtain posts as lift attendants; but, as will be appreciated, there are not sufficient of these positions to employ all those to whom I have referred. Accordingly if members in this House know of any positions at all which are vacant, they would be gratefully accepted by these people, and it would be a great service if these unfortunate folk could be placed in employment.

I would now like to touch on the question of school buildings; and in doing so, I must congratulate the Government on what it has endeavoured to accomplish with a very difficult problem. During 1955 a total of 221 classrooms were erected; but still we have not caught up with the lag in that particular class of building due, of course, to the fact that during the war Western Australia was most loyal and did not expend any more money than was absolutely necessary, so as to enable the entire finances of the Commonwealth to be put into the war effort. On account of this patriotic attitude of our State, we are penalised because loans are made now and reviewed each year on the basis of what was spent during those periods.

So despite the fact that there has been a great increase in the population of this State we find that the classroom facilities are not adequate and the Government is finding difficulty in catching up with the position. As a matter of fact, last year 6,500 extra pupils were enrolled; and of course, accommodation had to be found for them. Accordingly it was necessary to import the Bristle type of prefabricated building. These were placed in many school grounds and they have served a very useful purpose. They provide quite good classroom accommodation; but whether they will stand up to our climate I do not know.

I know of one particular case in which a prefabricated building was erected as a hospital, and there has been a good deal of trouble because the roof has started leaking, and I understand that some sort of erosion is taking place. I am not sure whether that is caused by its close proximity to the sea, but I would like to find out whether this type of building will suffer from erosion.

Whether there are any more of these prefabricated buildings here I do not know, but I would urge the Government that where extensions are being made to public schools the additions should be carried out with materials similar to those with which the schools are built. I know that

has been done recently in one or two instances. In the case of schools that have been built of brick, the additions carried out have also been of brick. I am hopeful, therefore, that any further additions to schools in future will be in the same materials from which the buildings are erected. I trust that we will have no more of these prefabricated types of classrooms.

I would now like to refer to a very important matter, namely, the immunisation of children by the Salk vaccine against polio. It is most gratifying to know that the parents have co-operated to the utmost in having their children immunised against this most deadly disease, which has been crippling not only the younger section of the community, but older people as well. There has been some criticism of the immunisation, and of the vaccine used, but I think the Medical Department is to be congratulated for the way the case has been presented to the public by meetings throughout the State.

I had an opportunity of being present at one of these meetings, and I was indeed astounded to see the manner in which this system was explained by the professional men. The extent to which it was simplified was amazing, particularly when one bears in mind that these professional men had to explain the position in layman's language. As a layman who was present at those meetings, I wish to express my deep gratitude to those members of the medical profession for the great part they played in obtaining the co-operation of parents in this regard.

Everyone, I feel sure, will trust and hope that in the future the vaccine will be a means of immunising our people against this dreaded and crippling disease. I trust that it will prove beneficial not only to our country, but also to other countries as well. I had an opportunity of saying a few words at one of those meetings, and I told the people that 20 years ago when I became associated with the Fremantle Immunisation Committee there was a body of public opinion that was against the immunisation of children.

It took a long time and a great deal of propaganda and expenditure of money to counteract some of the beliefs that were expressed. I am very pleased to say that as the years have gone by we have not heard so much against immunisation. But 20 years ago when this first started, the incidence of diphtheria in the Fremantle district was 160 for the year; whereas last year it was down to 12. Members will appreciate the degree to which the disease has been controlled, when the incidence has been reduced from 160 twenty years ago to 12 last year.

We must also consider the fact that there is a considerable movement of population from one district to another, and there is also the question of migration to be taken into account. I think all will agree that immunisation against that

dread disease in early infancy has proved well worthwhile, and the expenditure that has been made on it has been returned fourfold to the people generally.

I would now like to touch on the matter of infectious diseases being contracted by people from various sources. Some people are naturally immune, while others are carriers. This makes it necessary for the general public to be protected; and as a result, we have institutions where these people are compelled to go for treatment under the Health Act. I feel that if a patient is unfortunate enough to suffer from some infectious disease, and he is placed in hospital for treatment as a means of protecting the general public, it is distinctly unfair that he should be called upon to pay a hospital charge which, indeed, can be quite substantial.

In the case of people who suffer from mental sickness and who are placed in some institution, there is no question of requiring them to pay for it, even though they may be placed in the institution for the protection of the general public. Accordingly, it is decidedly unfair for people who are placed in infectious disease hospitals to have to pay for this treatment, when they are put there for the protection of the general public.

That brings me to the question of hospital benefits. I think most of us know that various schemes are available today which are approved by the Commonwealth Government and under which, for a certain contribution per week, one is guaranteed 11s. or 12s. a day plus the 4s. extra if one is a member of a fund—apart from which the Commonwealth pays 8s. in the first instance.

It appears to me, however, that there is something wrong in some of these organisations, because there have been cases in which they have endeavoured to evade their obligations. I had one case recently of a young fellow with an infant child who was in Kellerberrin during an epidemic of diphtheria. He returned to Fremantle and decided that as he had come out of a district where diphtheria was rampant, he should have a swab taken to make sure that he was not carrying the disease around.

After the swab was taken and an examination made, it was found that he was a carrier, as was his child. The next day an ambulance came from the Infectious Diseases Hospital and he was transported to that institution for treatment. He informed the Royal Perth Hospital that he was a member of a certain health benefit fund, and gave the particulars. The hospital made a claim on the fund, but the fund replied that there was no record of the member. After some time, when nothing had been paid, this man received from the Royal Perth Hospital a demand for certain payments, but there was no deduction for hospital benefits. So, he

asked me to make some investigations. I found that because the Royal Perth Hospital had made a mistake in putting another "e" in the man's name, although the address was the same, the fund advised the hospital that it had no record of the man as a member of the fund.

If these funds are being conducted, as they are, on a non-profit basis; and if they are being run by certain hospitals in the metropolitan area, there is something wrong in their system when, because a mistake in the spelling of a surname occurs, although the address is the same, they say that there is no record of an individual being a member and, as a result, someone has to run around from one section of the department to another to find out what is wrong. This is not a question that the State Government has much to do with, but I feel that some investigation should be made into some of these cases.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: There are many of them.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I have had a number. If a person is a member of one of these benefit funds, one would expect that some investigation would be made before the hospital was told that there was no record of him; particularly when the facts are as I have stated.

We find that the ugly head of unemployment is showing itself in this State. I well remember that in the depression of the 1930's we thought we would never see anything like it again. Although I hope and trust that the present unemployment is not on a large scale, quite a number of people are now out of work. Contrary to what some people say, they are not unemployed; they are not looking for social service payments of £4 10s., or £4 15s. if they have one child, but for work; and they are prepared to work if they can get it.

Unfortunately, the present unemployment has been caused principally by a decline in the building trade. Deterioration in the building trade is a barometer of the financial position in other directions. This is something that should be taken in hand before, like the rolling snowball, it becomes bigger. If we take the purchasing power away from the individual, and he is not able to pay his rent and meet his other commitments, and is not able to purchase the necessities of life, not only is he unemployed, but a reduction occurs in the staff of the business places where he ordinarily buys his goods. So this has a snowballing effect.

One trusts that ways and means can be found for putting in motion some method of proceeding with certain buildings that are necessary. I find that the decline in the building trade is due to the fact that there has been a restriction of credit. I know some people who have houses that are part-built. They were told by the

banks to spend their own money and get the buildings up to a certain height, and then go back to the banks, which would arrange the finance. But having done that, these people are told that the finance is not available, and so they are not able to proceed.

In my district the local authority with which I am associated has certain lands that it makes available for industry; and when it does so, one of the clauses in the agreement is that the firm acquiring the land shall build a factory on it within 18 months. We have quite a number of genuine organisations which have obtained land for this purpose, but they have now had to come to the Fremantle Council and ask for an extension of time due to the fact that they are unable to get credit from the bank.

Buildings form one of the greatest assets that any country can have. If we put money into factories and homes, the asset is there; and they are also a means of providing employment; and if there is employment in a district, it is to the benefit of the district and the community too.

It is difficult to understand why there should be a restriction of credit, thus preventing people from being able to build an asset on their land. Because there has been a slackening in the building trade, we find that a number of people are unemployed; and as a result, there is unemployment in the brick industry, the timber industry, and other trades that are associated with the building trade. I have in mind that it is generally agreed that a local authority, or a country, cannot develop by its revenue but must resort to a system of loans. By doing that, it spreads the expenditure over a number of years, because the loans are repayable in 15, 20 or 25 years. As far as a local authority is concerned, it is only right that if certain roads, footpaths and reserves are to be created the people of the future should bear some responsibility for them because they will be using them.

Unfortunately, again through a restriction of credit, we find there has been a reduction to the extent of 30 per cent. in local government loans. So there are works that cannot be proceeded with. As a result, we find there is no avenue for employment in this regard. Men in the building trades, who are thrown out of work, cannot be absorbed by the local authorities if loan moneys are not available.

I do not profess to know anything about the financial arrangements of any particular country, but it has always been forcibly in my mind that it is remarkable that, if we become engaged in a war, there is an abundance of money, but as soon as we come to peace times there is no money available for works that would be creative and an asset to the country.

I trust that in the near future some endeavour will be made to see whether it is possible for credit to be released so that private people who desire to have finance, will be able to obtain it and thereby commence the building of homes and factories and so provide employment.

In the early 90's of last century the discovery of gold was responsible for bringing a large number of people here from the Eastern States which were then passing through a period of recession. That was the beginning of the improvement of the financial position of this State, so that it has progressed from the colonial days into a State of which we can all be proud.

Following the discovery of gold, we had the agricultural scheme introduced by the late Sir James Mitchell, and we then passed through a period of prosperity in regard to the primary production of this country. The export of primary products brought finance into the State and assisted our economy. So we go from one stage to another. We have come to the stage now when we are becoming industrialised. If I can assist in any way in establishing some industry, I am always prepared to do my share.

The secondary industries in this State, together with our primary industries and the production of minerals will, in the future, make for better economic planning than we had in the early days when we were dependent merely upon primary production. I am not in any way decrying primary production, because I fully realise what it has meant to this State particularly, and to the other States of the Commonwealth in the part it has played in our economy. Nevertheless, no country has become great on primary production alone. A nation becomes great because there is an equal balance between its primary production and its secondary industries.

We have only to look at our mother country, the United Kingdom. She first started off as a primary-producing country; but eventually, with the migration of artisans and other tradesmen who were brought from France and other European countries to start their industries, by the middle of the 18th century Great Britain became known as the workshop of the world.

Therefore, to my friends and colleagues I would say, "Let us do all we can to assist primary production, but also let us do everything we can to establish secondary industries in this State." There are one or two other questions that I would like to deal with, but I will not discuss them tonight. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. W. F. Willesee, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.47 p.m.*