

Another important industry in our district that I hope the Government will give assistance to—it is an old industry, and yet a new one—is the lead mining industry. I suppose it is one of the oldest industries in this State. It was allowed to lapse for a period of years because of the low price of base metals. In the last few years, however, we have seen the price of base metals rise to a great height. Today there is a certain amount of activity on the fields but, as it is of only a small nature, the prospectors and small mineowners experience a great deal of difficulty. I believe that to put the lead mining industry on a sound basis would require very little assistance in the first instance, but it would be an industry that would be valuable not only to the Northampton and Geraldton districts, but to the State and the Commonwealth in general.

I believe, in conclusion, that we should, wherever possible, assist in a policy of decentralisation. I think that one of the worst things that can happen to this State is what has happened in the Eastern States, and that is for the State to become top heavy by the centralisation of all its industries in one portion of it. It should be a vital policy of any Government, and of every member of this Chamber, to help anyone who is trying to decentralise industry.

On motion by Mr. Totterdell, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 10th August, 1950.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE.

*As to Car Mileage Subsidy to Officers.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Premier:

(1) How many State officers are subsidised on a mileage basis for the use of their own cars on Government service?

(2) What are the mileage rates (metropolitan and country) applying?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Not known. Each department and instrumentality has authority to authorise the use of officer-owned cars on State business.

If desired, a return will be prepared from information to be obtained from departments, etc.

(2) The mileage rates applying at the present time are—

Mileage Travelled Each Year on Official Business.

Metropolitan Area—

1—5,000 Miles:

Over 12 h.p., 6.4d.; 12 h.p. and under, 5d.

5,001—10,000 Miles:

Over 12 h.p., 4.6d.; 12 h.p. and under, 3.7d.

Over 10,000 Miles:

Over 12 h.p., 3.7d.; 12 h.p. and under, 3d.

**South-West Land Division—****1—5,000 Miles:**

Over 12 h.p., 7.7d.; 12 h.p. and under, 6d.

**5,001—10,000 Miles:**

Over 12 h.p., 5.9d.; 12 h.p. and under, 4.7d.

**Over 10,000 Miles:**

Over 12 h.p., 5d.; 12 h.p. and under, 4d.

**Other Areas—****1—5,000 Miles:**

Over 12 h.p., 7.9d.; 12 h.p. and under, 6.1d.

**5,001—10,000 Miles:**

Over 12 h.p., 6.1d.; 12 h.p. and under, 4.8d.

**Over 10,000 Miles:**

Over 12 h.p., 5.2d.; 12 h.p. and under, 4.1d.

**GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.***As to Number.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

What number of persons were employed in a full-time capacity in the Government service—

(a) salaried staff;

(b) wages staff

at the 1st July, 1947, 1948, 1949, and 1950 respectively?

The PREMIER replied:

Separate figures for salaried and wages staffs are not available but total figures, including Government, Trading Concerns, Boards, Trusts, Commissions, etc., are—

30th June, 1947—30,271.

30th June, 1948—31,970.

30th June, 1949—34,401.

30th June, 1950—36,985.

**MACHINERY PARTS, ETC.,  
SECONDHAND.***As to Control and Prosecutions.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Attorney General:

(1) Does he exercise any control over the prices charged on second-hand machinery parts, pipes, pipe fittings, agricultural implements, tractors, galvanised corrugated iron, and motor parts?

(2) If so, what method in each case is used in arriving at a maximum sale price?

(3) Have any prosecutions been made for overcharging on any of the above items?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) Machinery parts, agricultural implements, tractors and motor parts are not controlled goods.

Pipes, pipe fittings and galvanised corrugated iron are controlled.

(2) The details of the control are contained in Prices Control Order No. 47, dated 28th January, 1949, and gazetted on that date.

(3) No.

**LICENSING ACT.***As to Prosecutions.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Police:

There having been charged under Sections 147 and 149 of the Licensing Act during the year ended June, 1949, three licensees and managers, 13 barmaids and barmen, and one person under the age of 21 years, will he, for the purpose of comparison, state the number in each of the three groups who have been similarly charged since the coming into operation of the amendments of the Act in October last year?

The MINISTER replied:

In the period referred to, no charges were preferred against any licensee, manager, barmaid or barman under section 147, but 52 persons were charged under section 149.

**HOUSING.***As to Policy of Granting Permits.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it the policy of the Government to issue permits for the erection of dwellings to single men who have no family responsibilities?

(2) If so, what are the reasons?

(3) If not, will he state why it is being done?

(4) Is he aware that under the new scheme of granting permits over the counter, applicants are not questioned regarding needs or hardship?

(5) If so, does he approve, and why?

(6) If not, will he acquaint himself with the procedure?

(7) In view of what is occurring, as suggested in questions (1) and (4), would it not be preferable to increase the erection of rental houses for necessitous cases?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. A permit is issued for a home up to 12½ squares in area on a statutory declaration being completed by applicant and his fiancée establishing that they are about to marry in addition to a certification on the form of application that the dwelling will be used for permanent residence and that no dwelling is owned and available for immediate occupation. In a limited number of special cases permits have been issued for erection of very small homes.

(2) With the relaxation of controls on permit issues it was decided to widen the opportunities for the young couples about to marry who were prepared to finance the erection of their own dwellings.

(3) Answered by Nos. (1) and (2).

(4) Yes; when conditions are complied with by completing a certificate on the application form.

(5) I approve. To give effect to the relaxation of controls and simplify the procedure the applicant is required to furnish the certificate as set out in No. (1).

(6) Answered by Nos. (4) and (5).

(7) Persons desiring to build should be given the opportunity to do so. At the same time steps are being taken to increase the number of rental homes by the erection of pre-cut timber-framed homes and the importation of material and houses from abroad.

### ROADS.

#### (a) As to Assistance to Northampton Road Board.

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the amount of work that confronts the Northampton Road Board in the building of a road to the Port Gregory area, and the road to Murchison River, and considering the importance of this work, will he approve of a grant to the Board to enable them to purchase a front-end loader?

The MINISTER replied:

The ability of the Northampton Road Board to purchase plant has previously received consideration.

The conditions under which funds will be provided in the future are not yet known.

#### (b) As to Northampton-Northwards Section.

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Works:

Will he give an assurance that an early start will be made in continuing the construction of an all-weather road from Northampton northwards?

The MINISTER replied:

Construction and maintenance organisations have been working on this road for some time, and substantial authorised work still remains to be carried out.

#### (c) As to Merredin-Bruce Rock Section.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that the Merredin-Bruce Rock Road is reported to be in a deplorable condition?

(2) When did the P.W.D. reach a decision to bituminise this section?

(3) When will a commencement be made with this work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) No bituminous surfacing work is proposed at present.

(3) Answered by (2).

#### (d) As to Widening Canning Highway.

Mr. YATES asked the Minister for Works:

Now that the tram service to South Perth has been discontinued, will he give urgent consideration to the widening of Canning Highway from the Causeway to Canning Bridge?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes. Plans for portion of the work are nearing completion.

### ABATTOIRS.

#### As to Erection at Geraldton.

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Lands:

Will the Government approve of the erection of abattoirs in the Geraldton district?

The MINISTER replied:

This matter was discussed with the Geraldton Zone Development Committee recently when it was suggested that the district should ask for limited abattoir facilities with cold storage to provide a reserve for State consumption in periods of meat shortage. The request is expected and will be given consideration.

### HOSPITALS.

#### As to Visiting Fee for Pensioners.

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

In view of the answer given by her that with the exception of Wednesday and Sunday afternoons visitors to patients in the Fremantle Hospital had to pay a charge of 6d. a visit, will she see that old-age and invalid pensioners are admitted free on production of their pension cards?

The MINISTER replied:

This is a matter for the Board of Management.

### EDUCATION.

#### As to Guildford School Grounds.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that the children attending Guildford State School have difficulty in reaching the main entrance to the school buildings without having to walk through pools of water caused by winter rains?

(2) Is he aware that representations have been made to the Education Department extending over many years to have the grounds attended to?

(3) Will he advise if early attention will be given to the school grounds?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) The school in question has been on the department's list for attention since 1947, although it is understood representations were made long before that year without result. The ground was not in as bad condition as many others which have received attention since 1947, as soil conditions are much better.

(3) Treasury approval is being sought for certain proposed improvements.

#### BULK HANDLING.

(a) *As to Bin, Grass Valley.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What has been responsible for holding up the work of installing a bulk wheat bin at Grass Valley?

(2) Is it intended to have a bulk wheat bin constructed and completed at this centre this year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Lack of material for filling of railway yards.

(2) Yes.

(b) *As to Bins, Quelagetting and North Cunderdin.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Lands:

Is it intended to erect and complete bulk wheat bins in the Quelagetting and North Cunderdin districts in time to enable them to be used to handle the 1950 harvest?

The MINISTER replied:

The work in connection with the erection of bulk wheat bins at Quelagetting and Wattercarrin (North Cunderdin) districts has been held up owing to shortage of necessary equipment. It is intended that these should be available for use to handle the 1951 harvest.

#### TRAFFIC.

*As to Removal of Underground Conveniences.*

Mr. YATES asked the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Has a decision been reached between the Government and the Perth City Council concerning the removal of the underground conveniences from St. George's-terrace?

(2) If so, when is the removal likely to take place?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) The matter is at present the subject of discussion between certain departmental officers and representatives of the Perth City Council. A decision is expected in about one week.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Sixth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. TOTTERDELL (West Perth) [4.45]: The first thing that is usually done in this august assembly is to extend to you, Sir, congratulations on your re-appointment to the office of Speaker, and that I do with a great deal of sincerity. After 21 years in public life, today I find myself making my maiden speech in this Chamber and it is an extremely important occasion to me because it happens to be my birthday. Therefore, I feel very elated. In submitting this, my maiden speech, to you, I feel, in spite of my experience, almost as nervous as a bride.

That which I wish to bring forward first is a matter that is under review in Parliament and that is to advocate, if possible, a more progressive housing policy in this State. We have all heard many sad and pathetic stories as to the people's suffering and yet we do not seem to reach any solution to overcome the difficulty. This afternoon I hope to be able to suggest to this House some constructive suggestions as to how this problem should be tackled. Not for a moment do I claim that I am a broom and hope to sweep clean the terrible tangle this country is in, but I do want to feel, after having submitted my views, all the better for so doing.

In the first place, I wish to suggest a more vigorous policy by the Government, because the way we are going now this dreadful housing tangle is getting worse and I cannot see how we are going to get out of it. Our aim should be to make the people contented and happy and I for one will never be satisfied until everyone in the community has a decent house in which to live. It is well known that pre-war Western Australia produced 2,400 homes and this present year's target is 6,300. On the face of it that sounds very progressive, but it is not so good as it first appears. We have to remember that in the pre-war days 2,400 houses were not all the buildings that were being erected; we were constructing factories, industrial establishments and other large buildings at the same time, and, further, 2,400 homes were all that were required to meet the then needs of the day.

Today we find that the State Housing Commission has reduced quite a lot of the comforts and facilities which existed in the cottages built pre-war. The Commission has reduced the size of the rooms, and the ceiling height from 10ft. 6in. to 9ft. which, I think, is not a fair thing in this climate. Unfortunately, it seems to be a necessity for the time being as was agreed to by the Perth City Council, which is the mother of the councils, because its

members are of the opinion that it was helping the housing programme to move along. I suggest that the target for 1950 should be 10,000 dwellings and, if we do not reach that number, the needs of the community will never be satisfied. That target can be reached with a better balanced programme of building construction and with the workers engaged. We read dreadful things about the Trades Hall and of a bricklayer now laying only 400 bricks per day and so on, but I for one do not subscribe to that at all.

I consider, from my experience of building, that a bricklayer cannot lay a greater number of bricks in a day because of the poor quality article with which he has to work, and the fact that he has to turn over a dozen bricks to find one good face-brick. Therefore, because of that, at the end of a hard day's work, he has probably laid only 300 or 400 bricks. That is not his fault, but the fault of the material with which he is working. I feel that we could improve that condition very considerably. Let the Government produce more and better bricks; the bricklayer will then give a far better day's work than he is giving now. I am a bricklayer myself, and I speak with a good deal of feeling. The bricklayer cannot give the best results because of the poor quality of material he has to work with.

My object is to try to induce the Government to produce a better article, to get out of the building trade and get on to the production side. Let the builders, the men who understand the business, do their job, and we shall possibly have better results. We find, after five years of peace, or so-called peace, that we have only one decent brickyard in Western Australia. That is a shocking state of affairs. We should have at least four or five good brickyards, and, instead of our target being 5,000,000 bricks per month, or 50,000,000 per annum, we should make it 100,000,000 bricks. Give the bricklayers plenty of material and we shall have plenty of homes. Bricks come from Mother Earth and should be easy enough to make.

I do not think it would be out of place to quote Mr. Winston Churchill's famous slogan, "Give us the tools and we will finish the job." Give them more bricks and the bricklayers will build more houses. One cannot blame a man for going a little bit slow if he sees that for the next day he will not have enough material with which to start. It is only natural that he will take his time with a view to doing the rest later. I stress, therefore, that we should produce more bricks—swamp the industry with bricks. We have the best deposits of clay that it is possible to get in any country in the world and, instead of messing around trying to build timber-frame houses which, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, are made of

Baltic flooring, Japanese iron, Italian asbestos and German piping, we should produce more of our own materials.

It is a shocking state of affairs that we should have to import all this material, and at such tremendous cost. I repeat that if this Government would get on to the production side and leave building—about which it knows nothing—to the builders, we would have a much better result, a far happier population and a far more prosperous country. I believe that cement is not used to the best advantage. We have only one cement works, which is a dreadful state of affairs in a State like Western Australia. Last December I had inquiries made and I understood that 37,000 tons of English cement were on order for this country. That seems to be out of all proportion to the situation. It is the Government's job to see that more cement is produced and more bricks made available. I believe, too, that our timber resources are not being properly used. We read that the Commonwealth Government is going to erect a large building within the city area covering 43,000 square feet and using a good deal of timber—it is a two-storey building—and I think the timber and asbestos should be put to better use. Our State Government is just as bad, for we find the Railway Department erecting temporary buildings.

Even within the shadow of Parliament House we see the Public Works erecting a miscellaneous lot of shanties. That is a disgrace to any community and any country. I think, therefore, the first essential is to make use of the benefits given to us by Nature, and produce more bricks. The timber we are using in these temporary shelters can then be used in brick buildings and so more homes could be produced than are being produced now. It is really a shocking state of affairs that after five years of peace we have that dreadful, clumsy machine, which goes under the title of the State Housing Commission, continuing to operate and growing larger every week. This Commission, with its 200 or 300 employees, is a dreadfully expensive proposition and is costing the people who want homes a tremendous lot of money. My suggestion, therefore, is that the Government turn from the building side and go into the production of materials.

We could import machines quickly from England, and we could import the right type of men to work them. We could also save money if we imported their houses with them and so made them happy when they arrived. We would thus have a contented people in our midst. This, I think, is the solution of the dreadful tangle in which we find ourselves and is the only one that will get us out of trouble. Prefabricated homes are not a payable proposition; they are not economical, and have not been successful. The British Government has found it necessary to

subsidise prefabricated homes, and last year the subsidy was up to £10,000,000. It has realised that in ten years' time the subsidy will be so great that it will be better to scrap those homes. This is a lesson we should learn from the Old Country. It should not be repeated here. We should take advantage of their mistakes.

We do not want to follow what is done in England or in the Eastern States. Let us do something different and a little bit better ourselves. We have the warning from the Leader of the Opposition that this suggested flow of money will come to a full stop, and we shall then find ourselves in Queer-street. If we have laid our foundations solidly and well, then we can hope for a prosperous country and a happy and contented people. I think that covers the housing position, as I see it. I would urge Cabinet to consider my suggestion and, by slow strangulation, close down the Housing Commission. It will never be any good. It will never be profitable. Give private enterprise an opportunity! Some people may say that prices will rise, but I do not think that prices could go any higher than they are today. If private enterprise were let in, private builders would pop up like mushrooms and they would produce homes quickly. The Housing Commission is trying to produce homes quickly, but is not doing so quickly enough for my satisfaction nor, I think, to the satisfaction of any member in this House. Let us therefore, consider the idea of reducing the building side of the Housing Commission with a view to increasing the production of materials.

In the near future we have to look forward to new industries being started in Western Australia. These are very necessary and the present is an opportune time for the Government to say, "All right we will get into it and try it out. We cannot do any worse than at present, because we are doing no good now." Let us endeavour to do something different and give the builders full rein to do what they wish. Let them have an open go, and I am sure such a policy would bear good fruit. We should adopt some action along these lines, and I urge the Government to act accordingly.

Next I will deal with the matter of traffic. The problem in Perth is of great importance, particularly to the motoring public. That section of the community is a heavy subscriber to the revenue of the State by means of traffic fees and the petrol tax. Motorists are entitled to a great deal of consideration, much more than they are receiving at present. It is a matter of vital importance that parking areas should be provided in the city, and it is essential that we should consider the part the Government should play in

making that necessary provision available for motorists at the earliest possible moment.

My view is that it is someone's duty to establish parking stations because we must clear the streets of traffic. These stations must be arranged, and I shall later submit to the Premier a list of suggested sites, 25 in all, where we can resume the requisite areas and establish the parking grounds so that the motorist will enjoy greater comfort and safety. By this means, he will be allowed to use the city on his legitimate business in a more satisfactory manner. The police will be afforded an opportunity to control the situation by checking the parking of cars every 20 minutes or so, and thus clear the street kerbs of the difficulty we experience in these days. The trouble is reaching such serious proportions that it is for us to take time by the forelock and act now instead of waiting till the saturation point is reached.

The position in Melbourne and Sydney in this respect is positively dreadful. In the former city the authorities charge a fee of 1s. 6d. for parking a car and are losing a considerable amount of money annually by doing so. In Perth we must realise that parking is here to stay and, of course, the motorist is here to stay. In consequence, we must provide decent facilities for him, particularly in view of the fact that he is paying big money for the privilege of using the streets. When he comes to the city he should have provision made for the parking of his car. Therefore it is for the appropriate authority here—whether it be the Government or the Perth City Council, I do not care—to make available the necessary parking stations. I believe the interest and sinking fund charges to cover the cost should come out of the very generous donations made by those concerned in the payment of license fees and petrol tax. What I suggest could be done, and it is a sensible proposition that effect should be given to it.

The problem is becoming so serious that if we do not find some remedy, there will be terrible chaos in the metropolitan area and we shall have even greater congestion than is apparent in some of the other capital cities. The question arises as to who will be responsible for providing the necessary finance. The number of cars in respect of which registration fees and petrol tax are paid, has reached 100,000 and it is said that the number is increasing by 10 per cent. each year. That means that in 10 years 200,000 motor cars will be traversing the city streets. Members can visualise what terrible congestion there will be in days to come. Let this State give a lead to other parts of the Commonwealth and demonstrate how the traffic should be handled! Let us do it in such a manner that the authorities in other cities will ask why they cannot do

what Perth has done in Western Australia! This is a sensible proposition that can be effectively tackled if we handle it in time.

We must remember that of the 100,000 vehicles some 46 per cent. are in the city area. That in itself gives food for serious thought. The owners of those cars should be provided with reasonable service for the money they pay annually. I suggest, in all sincerity, that it is high time we took the matter in hand and submitted to the Treasurer—he is the gentleman, I presume, from whom we will have to get the necessary financial assistance—a proposition that will meet requirements and provide the necessary interest and sinking fund to cover the outlay. I say emphatically that parking stations must be provided. If we embark upon this very important proposition, I contend that the stations should not be made too large.

If we had parking stations to accommodate 350 cars each, that would be ample. If we were to provide very large parking stations, the effect would be to create therein such terrific congestion as would make the position worse than it is at present. The stations should be scattered all round the perimeter of the metropolitan area and thus provide more adequate and reasonable comfort for the motorists who must travel to Perth daily in the course of their work. The Commonwealth Treasurer has affirmed that the States are no longer in need of the main roads fund contributions because on the 28th February last a sum of £1,734,000 was standing to the credit of Western Australia alone in that fund. It will be seen that we have the money, so let us proceed to spend it judiciously.

Let us at once tackle this problem and give to the man who is the backbone of the country—I refer to the business man—reasonable comfort when he comes to the metropolitan area. It is a proposition that the Government must consider, and I feel that if we do it we shall accomplish something that has not been done in any other part of the world, except perhaps in America, and we will certainly give a lead to the rest of Australia. We as members of Parliament are the servants of the people just as I, as Lord Mayor of the City of Perth, am the servant of the ratepayers concerned. That being so, we have a job before us to do the best possible in the interests of the people.

Next I shall deal briefly with the question of town planning. I feel that I must take advantage of my first opportunity to present to the House my views regarding the necessity for town planning, and to bring under the notice of Parliament the very critical stage that has been reached in the development of Perth and its environs, which points to the need to have in evidence some more effective and progressive town planning than is apparent today. I can give members very good reasons why we should have a Town Planning

Act. Such a proposal has been before the present and previous Governments for a long time, but we have got nowhere with it.

I submit for consideration a conversation I had with Sir Patrick Abercrombie when he was here recently. During a chat he said, "Well, Mr. Lord Mayor, I do not think there is so much need for a master plan as there is for a master planner." I agree with him on that; I believe it goes all the way. We do need a master planner. I have no particular axe to grind for the City of Perth. Necessary and urgent as the matter is, I do not desire at this stage to plead the particular case of the City of Perth, but I do wish to point out on a broad and general basis how necessary it is for town planning to be given more encouragement than it is receiving at present, and that the local authorities generally should be encouraged rather than discouraged to proceed with town planning.

I feel sure that Parliament does not appreciate the great difficulties that beset local authorities when attempting to introduce town planning improvements. At all times we have been desirous of creating a town planning scheme, but whatever we have put forward seems to have been referred to the Town Planning Commissioner and, for some legal reason or because he has not liked it, we have not got anywhere. As members are aware, this city is in need of remodelling. It needs to be properly planned, and it will be planned by my council to the best advantage. We want assistance from the Town Planning Commissioner and we want to feel that the Government is behind us in our desire to plan the city for the future.

I hope that the population of this city will never exceed 500,000. When the population touches the half-million mark, I hope that satellite cities—Northam, Geraldton, Bunbury and so forth—will help to spread the population so that we shall have a country that is worthwhile and a capital city without the congestion that exists in Sydney. Town planning is a very serious matter and we want to feel that, when we do start planning, we shall have assistance from the Town Planning Commissioner and not obstruction, because that is what is happening.

I was greatly interested in the question on town planning asked by the member for North Perth, and the reply given by the Chief Secretary that there was no master plan. I knew that there was no master plan. I have seen two or three plans that have been drawn up, and, if any man can understand them, he is a very clever person. They just showed sections of roads with rings around them, and I would defy anyone to say whether those schemes represented good or bad town planning. When we have a proper plan, it will constitute the axle of the wheel and the work of the suburban areas will branch from it.

We cannot alter the position of the capital city. Therefore, if we plan a city for 100 years ahead and find after having done so it is submitted to the Town Planning Commissioner and he will not approve of it, we shall still be in trouble. I want that sort of thing altered. We do not submit foolish propositions; whenever we put forward something, it is usually good commonsense. I want to feel assured that in the planning of this city we shall do the right thing and will not make the same mistake twice.

I want the Government to feel that whatever I say I do so in a desire to assist the progress of this great State. I want members to feel that I am here to help. Any knowledge I have of the building trade, I shall be only too pleased to place at their disposal. Reverting to building, I ask members to listen to me when I say, "Restrict the State's building operations; give private employers a chance and see whether we cannot do something better than we are doing today." If the Government encourages the production of more bricks, cement and timber, we shall get materials that we badly need today.

*As to Leave to Continue.*

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: On a point of order, I should like to ask the Premier whether, in the event of a member's commencing his speech now and not finishing at the time of the adjournment, he will be granted leave to continue at the next sitting.

The Premier: I would have no objection to an hon. member's continuing his remarks. I do not know what your ruling would be, Mr. Speaker, but I recall that a previous Speaker ruled against it.

Mr. Marshall: But we have amended the Standing Orders to provide for it.

The Premier: In those circumstances I have no objection.

*Debate Resumed.*

HON. A. H. PANTON (Leederville) [5.16]: I know it is traditional for members, on rising to speak on the Address-in-reply, to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment to the high position you hold. I am in some doubt as to whether I should congratulate you or sympathise with you. Having had some five years in the Chair you now occupy, and remembering the last two years particularly, when the strength of parties was about the same as it is now, or even a little closer, I realise, as you do, the difficulty of giving an unbiased decision, particularly when one's own party is called upon to defend a ruling. Consequently, the longer I remain in this House, the more convinced I am that it would be much better if the Speaker occupied a position similar to that of a Judge of the

Supreme Court and were thus enabled to remain entirely outside of party politics. I feel quite safe in making the suggestion now because I am not likely to be a candidate for the position again, but such an arrangement would be beneficial to the occupant of the Chair.

As you are aware, Sir, most of us have entered this House having some ideal or other in mind. The member for West Perth has the ideal that most of us had, namely, that we were going to try to revolutionise the country and Parliament, but I am afraid that he will before long have the same experience as we had. I feel sympathy for any new member who has to sit behind any Government. The member for Fremantle and I, in 1924, had that experience. Like most new members, we prided ourselves that we were going to do lots of things.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Did not we do them?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I have not seen them; but I recall the late Hon. W. C. Angwin's becoming very annoyed with us one night and saying in his best Cornish style, "Damme, the Government got to get business through, not listen to idle talk." I do not think there has been much change over the last 26 years. However, it is good for new members to have an ideal. The member for Cottesloe, who moved the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, aims at improving the position of the school teachers, which constitutes a very good ideal. I suppose that his having been a teacher, it came natural to him. I want to wish him the best of luck. I hope he will not be disillusioned, but I am very much afraid that he will soon find there are such things as Public Service Commissioners, red-tape, classifications and other obstacles to overcome before he reaches his goal. One could go on in this strain. Take the member for Moore! In my experience in Parliament I do not know of any member who has been a greater individualist than he; but he, too, soon found that he was playing a lone hand and it was not much good being an individualist. So he very soon decided to be the member for Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. He has done a very good job. He certainly brought the member for Melville out, and the duel between the two of them has been very interesting to those of us on this side who know little or nothing about Co-operative Bulk Handling or about wheatgrowing.

The member for South Perth went on a different track altogether. He came here to clean up the Police Department. We all assisted him in his efforts, but I do not know whether it is much cleaner than when he started. However, he did his best about it. The ex-member for Middle

Swan was quite a different type. He had an idea that he was going to prove that Sir John Forrest and C. Y. O'Connor were not the originators of the goldfields water scheme and that a gentleman named Mr. Harper had something to do with it at a smoke-social at Kanowna—and these things do originate in people's minds at smoke-socials! The ex-member for Middle Swan put up a good case.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What did the member for Leederville come here to do?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: To keep members from rudely interjecting, but he has not been very successful. Of course, the ex-member for Middle Swan was led astray by the astute Minister for Education and put aside his suggestion for a Royal Commission, and another gentleman was made a court of inquiry. Billy was rather upset about that—over the result, at any rate—so he savagely attacked the Minister for Education and left for other pastures. I think the member for Murchison has been the most consistent idealist in this House. He set out to achieve monetary reform and during the last 20 years has kept at it. He did not give it up very easily.

Mr. Marshall: He has not given it up yet.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I do not know how many he has converted.

The Premier: He did not continue with it when he was a Minister.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: You, Mr. Speaker, had a very fine ideal when you came into this House. I remember that we were going to get lots of fish if only you could get rid of the shags in the Swan River. You put up a very good case; but unfortunately, like a lot more members, you soon realised that even the shags were going to beat you quite soon and that fish would be as scarce as ever. Talking of 1924, it may be interesting to a lot of members to know that of the 50 men who were elected to this House in that year only five are left. That is a big turnover in 26 years. I think that you yourself, the members for Fremantle and Murchison—who had three years' start on us—the member for Kimberley and myself are the only five that are left. So perhaps the young members coming in will appreciate the fact that there is a lot of turnover in this House.

Mr. Marshall: You do not want to dishearten them.

The Minister for Works: I must get my insurance policy increased, I think.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I was elected to the Legislative Council in 1919. That means I have had 29 years in Parliament, and out of 80 members at that time there are only five left.

The Premier: You mean 31 years.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes. It is 31 years since 1919 but there was a break in between. I am not speaking about that. Quite a big turnover has taken place in the intervening years. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I regret the loss of members who have passed out during the past 26 years that the five of us to whom I have referred have been here. I think it will be agreed that we have seen some very fine characters in our time and have made some very fine friends. The unfortunate part is that men do go out. I remember that fine character, a former member for Forrest, Peter O'Loughlen, once saying there was only one thing wrong with Parliament: There were not enough Ministerial positions to go round and elections came too soon.

The Premier: We will increase the number of Ministers.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Ten are no good: there are 50 members in this House! I think there was a good deal in what he said. It does not fall to the lot of everybody to grow old in the House. As a matter of fact, quite a number go out before they are old. Perhaps that is just as well, because the combination of Palmer and De Pedro, for some unknown reason, has not much love for old members, irrespective of how much they have done in the House or what service they have rendered. They started on Sir Hal Colebatch, who did a lot of work for this country in Parliament. Sir Norbert Keenan was the next culprit who decided to get old. Then Sir Frank Gibson had a very narrow escape. He was the third knight. I do not know whether knighthood has anything to do with it; but there was something about his not being endorsed. Some influence was then brought to bear and he was endorsed, which upset the previously endorsed candidate who left the field, and consequently Sir Frank was elected. I would like to warn the Minister for Health that they had their eye on her, too. But it is difficult to find out a woman's age so they gave it up and allotted her another three years. But I warn her she had better look to her laurels or hide her birth certificate, or they will be after her, too.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They tried hard to tip the Speaker out a few years ago.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Not on account of old age, surely! Then they thought, "It is no good dealing only with old people on our own side." So they picked on the old man for Leederville. I am particularly proud that after 29 years of parliamentary life the only thing they could suggest against me—and one finds out what a villain one is when one stands for Parliament—was that I was getting old. I know that one cannot prevent people from get-

ting old. Seventy-three years is old, they say. The question is: What constitutes old age?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I would like to see your birth certificate to believe that you are 73!

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I believe it! I would not mind their saying I was old, but they went further than that. When they found out that I had a lot of friends—and one makes friends after being 29 years in Parliament—and they discovered it was not going to be so easy to get rid of me, they said, "We know Pantan. He is not a bad sort of chap. He is a pretty good chap but he is very old and decrepit." I have doubts whether 73 is old but I do object to being called decrepit. As a matter of fact, I was so decrepit that I could hardly get over to Parliament House. If the elections had taken another fortnight I am satisfied I would have been in a wheel chair. The matter of coming to Parliament House is rather unfortunate. I went to the trouble to see how often I got to Parliament House, and I found that since the Premier has been in office we have had 171 sittings, and that I have not missed one sitting; nor have I missed one division. I think the Premier will appreciate, too, that some of the divisions were fairly early in the morning, but I was still here. I suggest that either by resolution or in the Standing Orders we provide that the Government, at the end of each session, publish a list of attendances in the House, and those who attend divisions. That should be done to prevent these people making statements of the sort I have described. I have given consideration to whether I should move a motion to have that done, or whether I should go about it in some other way.

The Premier: It used to be done.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It ought to be done. As a matter of fact these two gentlemen knew that. I am not going to be called decrepit until I do become decrepit.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Who were the guilty people?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: They were two chaps named Palmer and De Pedro. I do not know either of them; I have not met them. I suppose they were doing the job they were paid to do, and I am not growling at that. However, I am not going to give them another chance.

Mr. J. Hegney: This is an age of propaganda.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Well, I am not going to be the proper goose! I tell the Whip, seeing what went on during the last election as far as I was concerned, that I am going to give him a good deal of assistance to keep a quorum in the House. I tried hard to do that last session. For the benefit of new members I might say

that 17 is a quorum and that when the numbers are fewer than that, we call attention to the state of the House; and that is going to be my job this session. I suggest to the Premier that he warn his Whip, as he is not in the House, to keep a quorum here.

I listened with a great deal of attention on this occasion to the speeches of the new members, and I congratulate them on their maiden efforts, but I have a bone to pick with the member for Harvey. He congratulated the Government which is the right thing for new members to do; or any members on the Government side for that matter. Even the member for West Perth slang-banged or criticised the Government severely, and then held out the olive branch by saying he would support it in anything it did. But the member for Harvey—this was not his fault as he did not know any better; I do not mean that nastily, but he was not at all with the position—congratulated the Government on starting an experimental farm at Wokalup.

I am disappointed at the Government's starting an experimental farm at Wokalup. I had the honour of being instrumental in getting the Treasurer's consent to purchase that farm from the Ugly Men's Association. It was not acquired with the object of being made an experimental farm, but for occupational therapy for the inmates of the institution at Claremont. I was informed then that there were at least a couple of hundred men and several sub-normal children who would benefit if we had a place where they could do some farm work under supervision. They, perhaps, could not do a great deal of work, but they could do some. We eventually had the offer of Wokalup, and we purchased it for that purpose. I am not going to rush in and say why we did not go on with it; we were too busy fighting a war during that period. Now I find, according to the Press reports—and I always take the Press as right, particularly "The West Australian" when the McLarty Government is in—that there is talk about erecting some buildings at Claremont and that some land will be obtained somewhere—where I do not know—for the purpose of occupational therapy.

I suggest in all seriousness to the Premier, if there is an experimental farm at Wokalup, that he might, together with the Minister for Health, have a look at the position there from the point of view of erecting some buildings—not necessarily the buildings that the member for West Perth spoke of—suitable to house some of the harmless sections of that community down there, and also sub-normal children who, I believe, can be usefully employed on that work. They would be able to help in some way with the experimental farm even if they were not able to do some work for themselves. There is a beautiful flat

there of about 380 acres, and the first thing that was done was to produce some splendid meadow hay for the Light Horse.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: They grew a lot of flax.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes, and a lot of potatoes. There is also a fine hill there for cattle. When we went to purchase Wokalup I was advised that there was sufficient land there, and sufficient people who could help to work it under proper supervision, to supply most of the vegetables and a good deal of the meat required for the Government institutions. The first thing that will be said is that it is too far away for the relatives to see the inmates. Well, let me say after more than five years as Minister for Health that very few relatives go to Claremont to see the inmates. That point need not worry the Government or anybody else. Anyhow, in my opinion we have to consider the patients and not their relatives. So I hope—I am not saying this in any critical mood, except that I am disappointed that Wokalup is to be used as an experimental farm and not for the purpose for which it was originally intended—the Government, particularly the Minister for Health and the Treasurer, will consider what I have said and see whether it is worth while doing something about.

The Premier: I think the chief objection was that it was too far away for medical attention.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I will deal with that in a few minutes. They have medical officers there, and if they have a sufficient number of patients they can have a medical attendant too. Speaking on hospitals generally I want to say that the position has become serious. Just what the cause is I do not know except that people are now looking more to going into hospitals than to being looked after at home. Of course, quite a number of people have not got homes, but are living in rooms, and that sort of thing. Doctors prefer to look after their patients in hospitals, rather than in the patients' homes where there are no nursing facilities. It is almost impossible—in fact it is impossible in many cases—to find a bed in a hospital for an urgent case.

During the last five weeks I have been associated with three very urgent cases. One was a case of double pneumonia and, after ringing about seven or eight hospitals, the medical officer got the patient into the "Mount" hospital where he died. Another man had a very bad turn, and after trying several hospitals we ordered the ambulance out and sent him into the Royal Perth Hospital and said, "There is a patient, do what you can for him." Luckily a bed had become empty that afternoon and he went in there for a day or two. Only three nights ago a man that everyone here knows well and who is

very well respected—Hon. M. F. Troy—took a bad turn and became unconscious. His doctor did everything he could. Finally he rang me to see if I had any influence. He also rang Hon. J. C. Willcock. I put him on to the Deputy Premier because the Premier was at the C.W.A. Conference—or so I was told. The next morning I rang to find out how things were, and was told that the doctor had had to sleep at the residence all night because it was impossible to get Mr. Troy into a hospital. I freely admit that the doctor wanted him in a hospital where he would have medical attention close handy. And that can be done only in one place—the Royal Perth Hospital.

That brings me to the necessity for overcoming this difficulty of resident medical officers. Take St. John of God Hospital, at Subiaco! It is an excellent institution, with a large number of beds. The nurses are wonderful people, and yet there is not a resident doctor there. I say definitely that that hospital should have a resident medical officer. Any hospital with 100 beds, in my opinion, should have a resident doctor. I do not think that Kalgoorlie has a resident doctor, as yet.

Mr. Styants: No.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is not right. Times out of number, there are cases of sickness in homes and, in many instances, those people require treatment in a hospital where a doctor is kept at command. That cannot be so in any other place. I have known several men who were in St. John of God Hospital for operations. On one or two occasions those men have collapsed after their operations, and the hospital authorities had some difficulty in finding a doctor to attend them. It may be said, "What are the nurses there for?" The nurses are there to carry out the instructions of the surgeons, or whoever the medical officers may be. I have always said that surgeons do very good jobs on operations, but if it were not for the wonderful nursing, irrespective of the hospital, then the surgical treatment would not be of much value. The nurses are there simply to carry out, and they are expected to carry out, their duties as nurses and not as doctors. Therefore, I suggest to the Premier that he give some thought to this matter and maybe a subsidy of some sort could be paid to the bigger hospitals for the provision of resident medical men. I am sure that would assist greatly in overcoming the problems I have outlined.

The Premier: Do you say 100 beds?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am not particular as to the number; I mean hospitals such as the Mount or St. John of God Hospitals such as those should certainly have resident doctors. It might be said, "Why should we employ doctors to do that?" It is not essential to have a first-class, or what I might term a well-known,

qualified medical man to do it. In the Royal Perth Hospital there is a large number of young doctors who do their last 18 months or two years at that hospital to complete their medical education. They come under the honoraries who are really doing all the medical and surgical work in the Royal Perth Hospital. That, I will agree, is a big job.

I suggest that one or two of those young chaps could carry on the work of a resident doctor. I believe they receive, or did receive, about £200 or £300 per annum, with their keep. If one of those men could be appointed to a hospital, he could work under the advice and instructions of the medical men attending the patients. For instance, if Dr. Ainslie—I use his name because it is the first that comes to my mind—operated on a man, he would give instructions to this junior medical officer who would be on the spot if anything went wrong with the patient. I consider the appointment of resident medical officers essential, and it would be of great benefit. Therefore, I ask the Minister for Health to make inquiries into this aspect.

I have been advised that unless a doctor is an honorary in the Royal Perth Hospital, he is unable to have his patients taken into any of the intermediate wards. When it was decided to have intermediate wards in the Royal Perth Hospital, the idea was discussed with me by some of the people concerned. At that time it was suggested that 32 beds could be accommodated in each intermediate ward. I was a little sceptical of the idea, but when they told me the beds would cost about £3 3s. or £3 10s. a week, I was quite happy about it. However, what is the position now? I understand there are 32 beds in intermediate wards in the Royal Perth Hospital, and the beds are from £8 8s. to £15 15s. per week. The Royal Perth Hospital is a public institution and operating with public funds. Yet we have 32 beds tied up at £8 8s. to £15 15s. per week each. That was never intended for a public hospital such as the Royal Perth.

If those beds were available at all times and people desired to pay that sum, I would have no objection. However, there is always a tendency on the part of managers and secretaries to try to make their hospitals pay, although I know that they do not. There is always a likelihood that those 32 beds will be kept solely for people who can afford to pay those higher fees. A public hospital is a free hospital, and under the Commonwealth scheme of 8s. per day it is supposed to take patients into the public wards and treat them free. If they are treated by the honoraries, they are not charged anything for hospitalisation. But, with 32 beds at £8 8s. to £15 15s., the general tendency is to keep those beds, to the detriment of those who cannot afford that amount.

There are a certain number of honoraries for the Royal Perth Hospital, and unless a doctor is an honorary at that hospital he cannot follow his patients into the intermediate wards. As most members know, when a person goes into the Royal Perth Hospital, he is not treated by the doctor who is his medical practitioner, unless that practitioner is an honorary. If the patient's doctor is not an honorary, then the patient is treated by the honoraries and the junior staff. There is no complaint about that because, as honoraries, the hospital has the finest doctors available in Western Australia. But people have fads and fancies in regard to doctors, and very often they want their own doctors to attend them. If a person was to go into an intermediate ward, then his doctor was supposed to be able to follow him. Now I am advised by a medical man that if he wants to have a patient of his taken into an intermediate ward, he must do it through one of the honorary doctors. The patient, having been taken into the hospital, must then be treated by the honorary under whom he was admitted.

I do not think that was ever intended; in fact I know it was not intended, when we commenced to build the Royal Perth Hospital. Therefore I ask the Minister for Health to look into that matter as well and, if there is a possibility of altering the system of £8 8s. and £15 15s. beds, then it should be done. If a patient is recommended by his medical practitioner to go into hospital, then he should be permitted to go if there is a bed available. Not only should the patient be allowed to do that on his doctor's recommendation but the doctor should also be allowed to attend his patient unless, of course, the patient decides otherwise. I do not think the honorary staff should be permitted to run the Royal Perth Hospital, good and all as is the work they are doing; although I admit they are doing a wonderful job.

Another matter which should be attended to by the Government is the question of the closure of so many private hospitals in the metropolitan area. I am not certain, but I think there is only one hospital left between Leederville and Mt. Hawthorn—that hospital is in Mt. Hawthorn itself. I am not including St. John of God Hospital or the Mount Hospital in the category of private hospitals. I am talking about hospitals with a capacity of 25 or 30 beds. There was quite a number of them in Leederville—three or four—but they have all swung over and have become homes for elderly women who do not require medical attention. On inquiring as to the reason, I find that the people now occupying these homes—which have been set up in place of the hospitals—require very little nursing attention. They had to close owing to lack of staff.

I know that the staff problem is an extremely old one. When I was Minister for Health the reason given for the shortage of staff was that the wages were too low and the hours too long. I took the nurses' case to the Arbitration Court, and from then on their working conditions have been up to the standard of those in like professions. I also notice, according to the Press, that the Health Council, established by the present Attorney General, is recommending more wages and better hours and amenities for the nurses employed at the Claremont Mental Hospital. I am quite satisfied that that will not relieve the situation.

The reason for the staff shortages today is competition in other industries. In the first place a nurse cannot start her profession until she becomes 18. It used to be 21 years. Consequently, a girl of 14 or 15 on leaving school can enter a commercial college for 12 or 18 months and then start as a stenographer or a junior book-keeper, or, she can commence as a shop assistant or a factory hand working from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. five days a week and with little discipline. These girls, having had a taste of these working conditions and receiving good wages when they reach the age of 18 are very difficult to attract to the nursing profession. There is a good deal of truth in that because nursing means broken hours, night work, discipline and the passing of examinations during their three or four years training. The result is that they remain in the occupations which they commenced after leaving school. Anyone can enter the Treasury Building, large shops or factories and see the thousands of young girls working in these establishments.

The Minister for Health: We have sufficient trainees coming forward but as soon as they are trained about 80 per cent. of them marry.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is the trouble with so many bright, good looking young doctors around. I was leading up to that point before I was helped by the interjection from the Minister. When I presented the nurses' case to the Arbitration Court I raised the point of the great wastage in nurses through marriage but, unfortunately, there were three men on the bench and they wanted to know how the wastage came about. However, the fact remains that a large number of trainees are lost to the profession through marriage. A trainee has to pass through three or four hard years of work before she obtains her first certificate. She then probably seeks to gain her midwifery certificate and because she cannot obtain entrance to King Edward Memorial Hospital she goes to the Eastern States to qualify, and stops there. As to the number of trainees that leave to be married, at Xmas time I assist in the distribution of Xmas presents to patients at the Royal

Perth Hospital. His Excellency, the Governor, is always present on these occasions and in his speech to 60 or 70 fine looking young girls in uniform he usually expresses the wish that at the same time in the following year they will all be married and have twins.

I have chided His Excellency on several occasions that we want these girls to nurse several men and not one only. The Minister for Health, by interjection, might lead members to believe that there is any number of trainees and that the hospitals are well staffed. In fact, the Under Secretary for Health made such a statement through the Press two or three days ago. Although the Royal Perth Hospital and two or three of the larger hospitals are well staffed, that is because they are training centres, and have several trainees available. But what of the smaller hospitals which have no trainees? They are the ones that are suffering. I know it might be said that I am in a critical mood tonight, but that is not so because I am merely trying to be helpful. We could make a start, for example, in the schools, where they now have domestic science classes, by holding classes for nurses and thus start them out younger although not necessarily employing them in the hospital wards.

Today, the legend of the lady of the lamp has gone and the nursing profession is on just the same footing as any other. There are not many young girls entering hospitals today imbued with the legend of Florence Nightingale. They are looking for congenial employment and what the authorities intend to do about it I do not know. So we have the unique position of hospitals in the metropolitan area closing down and, at the same time, we have the Minister for Health receiving deputations requesting the building of new hospitals. I have no objection to new hospitals being built but I cannot see anything to be gained in building them at a high cost if staff cannot be obtained for them. Last year, the Attorney General constituted a Health Council and I had the audacity to say in this House that its formation was just sheer bunkum. As a result Dr. Bruce Hunt attacked me in the Press and although old and decrepit I replied to his article, following which Dr. Hunt made no further statement in the Press.

The Minister was good enough to show me some of the minutes of the meetings of that body and it was rather encouraging, from my point of view, to note that the Health Council, academically, is doing a wonderful job. It was also noted that the Minister sometimes attends its meetings. Its members carry resolutions and present papers but I do not know how much is being implemented as a result of that. I have asked the Minister through a question, which she intends to answer

next Tuesday, actually what is being implemented. There is one particular resolution that will appeal to all country members, particularly the member for Moore. This is the resolution that was carried—

That perimeter hospitals in the metropolitan area should be commenced at 100-bed units instead of 50-bed units as recommended by the sub-committee. These hospitals to be constructed at Midland Junction, South Perth, Nedlands, Claremont, in order of priority.

Does that mean anything? I have a good mind to read it again so that members can fully understand it. It means in effect that we have a Royal Perth Hospital and within, I presume, a reasonable radius of the metropolis it is suggested we build 100-bed hospitals instead of 50-bed hospitals as the sub-committee recommended, at Midland Junction, South Perth, Nedlands, Claremont, in order of priority. I can imagine the member for Moore speaking next year on the Address-in-reply if all these hospitals were started to the detriment of the building of hospitals outside the metropolitan area. Although we have a new, modern Royal Perth Hospital it is now suggested by this Health Council that we build another lot of hospitals in a ring around it of 100 beds each.

The Minister for Health: We are 800 beds short.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: But the building of these small hospitals is not going to overcome that difficulty. Even if 800 hospital beds were available there would not be the nurses to staff these or any other hospitals. If a lot more hospitals are to be built then, naturally, more staff is required. In each of them there will need to be a matron, assistant matron, staff nurses, trainees, and so on, and the recruitment of such staffs cannot be done. What the Minister should do is get the Treasurer to agree to build large convalescent homes—they could be in the same building if necessary—for chronic cases. Our hospitals today are holding a large number of chronic cases who occupy beds that could be used for acute cases, but the chronic cases have probably taken up these beds for three or four months to the detriment of those acute cases.

Irrespective of what the member for West Perth says, I think these buildings should be constructed. In addition to this, I have asked the Minister a question as to the large number of road accidents that occupy beds in the Royal Perth Hospital every weekend in the metropolitan area. I venture to say that it would be interesting to get an answer. There are a very large number of people who go into the Royal Perth Hospital weekly through motorcar accidents alone. The majority of them are very bad accidents, such as

fractured limbs, fractured pelvis, broken arms, concussion, and others which stay for weeks and sometimes months in the Royal Perth Hospital.

Just how this is going to be overcome I do not know. We may possibly limit the speed of cars. There should, however, be some sort of casualty wards for taking these people in. If somebody is seriously ill and wants to go to hospital, he cannot do so because somebody else has turned over a motorcar and broken his legs. I do not think any attention has been given to the cost of building these hospitals all round the district. To build a 5-roomed house costs about £1,250. If we consider, for example, a 100-bed hospital—

The Minister for Health: £3,000 to £4,000 per bed, I should think.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I was going to say £2,000 per bed. A reasonable hospital would require to have diagnostic facilities, a decent x-ray and other appurtenances. I do not think it could possibly be done for under £2,000 per bed—if it could be done for that. What is the use of talking about a resolution and carrying it unanimously? It is really more bunkum than I at first thought it. It looks very nice and reads very nicely, but for all practical purposes it is not worth the paper it is written on. I think the Treasurer would be most ill-advised to build hospitals round this spot. As a matter of fact, we had a good committee on hospitalisation—three medical men, the Under Secretary for Health, the Under Treasurer and myself. We travelled this country and decided on regional hospitals at Kalgoorlie and the ports. A lot of people got the idea that because we wanted to build regional hospitals with specialists for these hospitals we were going to do away with the smaller hospitals, but that was not the case.

So far as maternity hospitals were concerned, we wanted to take the hospitals to the mothers and not bring the mothers to the hospitals. We want to build up the country hospitals we have. Anybody wanting a special x-ray, and who happened to be living in Geraldton or any other part, would have to be brought to Perth for the purpose; there are no facilities anywhere else. I agree that facilities at the Bunbury hospital leave much to be desired. I read of the opening with a great deal of interest. It was, I think, in 1902 and at that time it was considered to be the best hospital in Western Australia. Today it is nearly the worst of all our hospitals. But, of course, 50 years makes a big difference—for instance, it has done so in the Attorney General and myself.

Fifty years is a long time and things become old and we become old with them. I hope if that resolution gets past the Minister—I shall give her enough

credit to think that it will not get past her—that it gets under a large pile of files and stops there. I think something should be done with the port hospitals. There is no doubt that those at Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany and Pinjarra are in a very bad condition—as a matter of fact, I should say that Pinjarra was the worst.

Mr. Guthrie: We at Bunbury are next on the list.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: So far as Bunbury is concerned, we found a block of land and had everything ready but unfortunately the work was not gone on with. I regret I have taken so much time in dealing with hospitals but it is a very important matter to this State. Most of the new members who have addressed themselves to the House have referred to matters affecting their constituencies, and I shall follow their lead and mention one or two requirements of the Leederville electorate. That centre has been a very happy place. It dates from many years back and little is wanted there at this juncture. Certainly, more houses are required but there appears to be no place for them. One matter that does require some little attention is the provision of further sewerage work, and in that regard I have today received a very promising letter from the Minister for Works.

I hope that the Minister who represents the Minister for Transport will ask him to consider the provision of another trolley-bus on the Cambridge street route. In the past Leederville enjoyed one of the best transport systems in the State, but with the growth of Floreat Park and other parts it is now impossible in the morning to get on the bus that traverses Oxford-street, and that applies particularly from the Leederville boundary to Mt. Hawthorn. I am glad to say that the Minister has provided another bus for the morning service, and I trust that as soon as another is available he will put that on as well for the peak periods.

I trust this is not my swan song; but, in case it is, I would like to say a few words to members. I have had many happy years here, and I do not know how much longer I shall be spared.

The Attorney General: You are not afraid of motorcars, are you?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No, but I certainly agree with the magistrate who said in court recently that pedestrians must look after themselves on the streets. In case this is my swan song, I take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the very happy time I have spent not only under your guidance, Mr. Speaker, but that of others who have occupied the Chair. I thank the electors who put me in Parliament and have kept me here. During a short address I gave at the Y.M.C.A. recently I was asked how to get

into Parliament and remain there. I replied, "I know how to get there, but you have not to be found out to stop there." I have not been found out!

I thank the electors of Leederville for keeping me in Parliament and I acknowledge the kindness of the many good comrades I have had in this House. I say to the new members that I wish for them as happy a period of 29 years in the Legislature as I have enjoyed. I tell them that my sincere desire is that they should make as good friends and colleagues in Parliament as I have—and we can all make good friends here if we wish to do so.

Mr. W. Hegney: You can alter your mind and have another shot at Parliament.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No. If I am too decrepit at 73, what would I be like at 76? I leave it at that. I hope the Premier will not regard my remarks as in any way critical but merely as an attempt to assist.

On motion by Mr. Grayden, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 15th August, 1950.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

*As to Test Bores for New Bridge.*

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Minister for Transport:

In connection with the proposed harbour extensions at Fremantle, would the Minister supply the following information:—

- (1) How many test bores were put down for the proposed new bridge?
- (2) When were the test bores put down?
- (3) Would he lay on the Table of the House the report regarding the bores?