

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 30th November, 1950.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

(a) As to Full-time Technical School for Northam.

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

Has final consideration yet been given to the advisability of establishing a full-time day technical school at Northam?

The MINISTER replied:

No. Statistics of the evening classes, commenced this year at Northam, are not yet to hand. When these statistics are received, the probable loading, due to apprentices and other day students in the district, will be added in order that the project may be considered.

(b) As to Pianos Purchased by Parents and Citizens' Associations.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Can he give any information about pianos that are being purchased by the Parents and Citizens' Associations for use in schools?

(2) Will the Education Department pay half the cost, and also advise the Parents and Citizens' Associations regarding the purchase of such pianos?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes; provided the pianos purchased by Parents and Citizens' Associations are approved by competent authorities as suitable for school purposes. The Superintendent of Music will advise and assist Parents and Citizens' Associations in these matters.

(c) As to New School for Innaloo.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the large number of rental homes being erected in Innaloo, will he give some information about when the erection of the new school is likely to commence?

The MINISTER replied:

The date on which new school buildings will be erected at Innaloo is dependent upon the time of arrival of the pre-fabricated buildings ordered from Great Britain.

(d) As to School for North Wembley.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Education:

As the building programme in North Wembley is so rapidly increasing, will he state when a start will be made on the school to be erected at the corner of Dodd and Harbourne streets?

The MINISTER replied:

Inquiries are now proceeding as to the urgency comparative with the needs of other areas, for erecting a school in North Wembley.

It is likely that the requirements of this district will be provided for on the department's 1951-52 building programme if such provision is shown to be justified.

BUS SERVICES.*(a) As to Suburban-City Beach Route.*

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will he state whether arrangements are being made for the week-end and holiday bus services to operate to City Beach from Victoria Park, embracing Subiaco, Leederville, Wembley Park and Floreat Park en route?

(2) If so, will a timetable be published in the Press?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Service to operate on Sundays and holidays commencing Sunday the 10th December, 1950. Buses will traverse Subiaco and Jolimont and proceed to City Beach via Cambridge-street and Oceanic-drive.

(2) Public being advised per medium of Press that a half hour service will operate commencing 9 a.m. ex Victoria Park and 9.15 a.m. ex Subiaco subject to amendment depending upon magnitude of patronage.

(b) As to Trolley-bus Extension to Oceanic-drive.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Can he inform the House when the extension of the trolley-bus service to Oceanic-drive will commence?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(a) Approval not yet given for such extension of trolley-bus service.

(b) Based on recent investigations it is probable this extension will be deferred until the traction power supply is improved by establishment of traction sub-station.

(c) Deviation of Jolimont bus into Oceanic-drive via Cambridge-street under consideration.

ROADS.*(a) As to Widening and Re-surfacing Herdsman's-parade.*

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Works:

As Herdsman's-parade is in such a deplorable condition, will he give consideration to the widening and re-surfacing of this road?

The MINISTER replied:

Consideration will be given to providing financial assistance towards the cost of any reasonable proposal that might be submitted by the Perth Road Board. It will not be possible for the Main Roads Department's organisations to undertake work on the road as they will be fully occupied for a long period ahead on works of greater urgency.

(b) As to Widening Scarborough Beach-road.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Works:

Owing to the growth of factories in the Osborne Park area, the increase in Commonwealth rental homes at Innaloo and of private homes in the Scarborough area, will he—on account of the ever-increasing traffic—give consideration to widening Scarborough Beach-road?

The MINISTER replied:

The suggestion for widening this road has already been considered and it is not possible to contemplate further improvement of the Scarborough Beach-road until more urgent works on roads that are the responsibility of the Main Roads Department have been attended to.

The Scarborough Beach-road is 21 feet, which is wider than many sections of the Guildford-Midland Junction section of the Great Eastern-highway and the Perth-Armadale-road between Nicholson-road and Armadale.

(c) As to Surfacing, Wundowie Township.

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

When are the roads in the Wundowie township likely to be surfaced with bitumen?

The MINISTER replied:

Waterbinding work is in progress at the present time and it is anticipated that all authorised work will be tar primed before Christmas. The final bituminous surface will probably be completed during the latter part of February.

(d) *As to Responsibility for Work.*

Mr. CORNELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Will he inform me whether the work referred to in the questions dealing with Herdman's-parade and the Scarborough Beach-road is the responsibility of the Public Works Department or of the local authorities?

The MINISTER replied:

Both roads are the responsibility of the local authorities.

RAILWAYS.

As to Homes for Koojeddah Employees.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

When is the department likely to construct new houses at Koojeddah for use by local railway employees and their families?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

Koojeddah is not included in any current housing programme.

SWAN RIVER POLLUTION.

As to Effluent from Gas Works and Power House.

Mr. YATES asked the Minister for Works:

As definite proof exists that the upper reaches of the Swan River are heavily polluted, mainly by effluent from the gas works and the power house, will he give an assurance that steps will be taken immediately to end this nuisance?

The MINISTER replied:

The hon. member for South Perth is assured that steps have already been taken with a view to cleaning the river in the vicinity of the gas works and the power house.

HOUSING.

As to Commonwealth-State Homes, Maximum Rentals.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Premier:

What steps have been taken to date to try to give effect to the motion carried in the Legislative Assembly during the current session in connection with the question of fixing maximum rentals for Commonwealth-State rental homes?

The PREMIER replied:

A copy of the motion, together with an appropriate extract from Hansard, was forwarded to the Right Hon. the Prime Minister and an acknowledgement has been received indicating that the matter is receiving attention.

SUPERPHOSPHATE.

As to Payments for Transport by Road.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Premier:

(1) How much of the £209,709 paid last year for transport of superphosphate by road was paid to Bell Bros. by the Government?

(2) How much of this amount was paid to other truck owners?

(3) How many trucks were engaged on this work?

(4) How many trucks owned by Bell Bros. were engaged on this work?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) £3,080.

(2) £206,629.

(3) Four hundred and eighty-one.

(4) Twelve.

HOSPITALS.

(a) *As to Dalwallinu Deputation.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the fact that he received a deputation this week from the Dalwallinu district on the subject of hospital matters, may members representing country districts take it for granted that deputations of a similar character are in future to be taken direct to the Premier?

The PREMIER replied:

I explained to the deputation that it was very unusual for me to adopt the course of receiving such a deputation and indicated that it was not to be regarded as a precedent. In reply to the hon. member, I would say that when deputations are being introduced, they should be taken to the appropriate Minister.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Hear, hear!

(b) *As to Accuracy of Press Report.*

Mr. ACKLAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Did she notice the report of my remarks in "The West Australian" to the effect that plans for extensions to the Dalwallinu hospital had been in existence for 10 years, but that nothing further had been done, and that the Under Secretary for Health interjected that my statement was not true?

(2) Seeing that she has viewed the plans, will she see that the statement reflecting on my truthfulness is refuted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) I have not yet had time to read the morning paper, but I expect to do so when I reach home in the early hours of tomorrow. If the hon. member will place the question on the notice paper, it will be definitely answered at tomorrow's sitting.

(c) As to Version of Member for Moore.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

As the statement made by the member for Moore in the question he just asked is not in accordance with the newspaper report this morning, will she carefully check the statement made by the hon. member?

The MINISTER replied:

As I have already said, I have not yet read the paper, but I will do so and will definitely check any statements that have been made.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Transfer of Land Act Amendment.
2. Marketing of Eggs Act Amendment (Continuance).
3. Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance).
4. Medical Act Amendment.
5. Country Areas Water Supply Act Amendment.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Section "B," 1950.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1950. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Kelly, leave of absence for one week granted to Hon. A. H. Panton (Leederville) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH (LATHLAIN PARK RESERVES).

Second Reading.

MR. READ (Victoria Park) [2.33] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is for the purpose of improving a subdivision of land for the use of the people for recreation and residential purposes. About 40 years ago a most undesirable subdivision was registered at the Titles

Office under which some few hundred quarter-acre blocks of land were subdivided in a peculiar manner. The land was situated exactly between the Victoria Park railway station and the Carlisle station and was shaped like a horseshoe with the narrow end fronting the railway line. This necessitated all the roads going through that subdivision being of a crescent shape. That being so, they did not coincide with or impinge on the roads which were surveyed in the other estates.

Consequently the Perth City Council undertook a re-survey and re-planning of that area and, in 1941-42, placed deeds of trust on certain reserves within the Lathlain Park area and immediately adjacent thereto, setting aside those reserves for recreation for the people forever. It is desired, as a result of the re-subdivision which has been carried out, that certain reserves should be deleted from that category and made available for other purposes. There was a small area in the centre of the subdivision set aside for recreation. This also was of a horseshoe shape and was about six to seven acres in extent. No road surrounded it and entirely bounding it were 38 wedge-shaped blocks. With respect to this area, Clause 2 of the Bill provides—

All that piece of land being portion of Swan Location 35 and being lot 224 on Plan 4570 and being part of the land comprised in Certificate of Title, Volume 786, Folio 58, which stands registered in the Land Titles Office in the name of the City of Perth, subject to a declaration of trust for the purpose of the recreation of the people, is discharged from all trusts now affecting the said land.

This is proposed for the purpose of allowing that land to be further subdivided. Clause 3 of the Bill deals with another portion of land of 14 to 15 acres also set aside for the use of the people. Part of this land is to be deleted from the deed of trust, the clause relating to it reading as follows:—

All that piece of land being portion of Swan Location 35 the subject of Diagram 12042 and being the whole of the land comprised in Certificate of Title, Volume 1075, Folio 793, which stands registered in the Lands Titles Office in the name of the City of Perth, subject to a declaration of trust for the purpose of the recreation of the people, is discharged from all trusts now affecting the said land.

If this Bill is passed it will do three things. First of all, it will allow the sale of 30 quarter-acre building blocks to the State Housing Commission. They are most desirable blocks, no longer required for the purpose for which the Trust was originally established. Secondly, it will allow a street to be connected with other thoroughfares

which go through this location. In the third place, it will give the people a recreation reserve of 22 acres in place of 6½ and 7½ acres. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Hon. V. Doney—Narrogin) [2.40]: The City Council was good enough to tell me something of the provisions of the Bill. I have made an examination of them, and I find that they conform to the requirements of the Town Planning and the Municipal Corporations Acts. Consequently, I raise no objection to the passage of the Bill; nor do I see that there are any grounds why the Governor, when the matter is submitted to him in due course, should do other than assent to the sale of the land to the State Housing Commission in the manner described by the member for Victoria Park. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FAUNA PROTECTION.

Council's Further Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendment No. 5 now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

The **ATTORNEY GENERAL**: The reasons for refusing the request of the Legislative Council have already been considered. They were that the amendment was not appropriate and would cause delay. In spite of our request, the Legislative Council has insisted on its amendment. I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendment made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The **ATTORNEY GENERAL**: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendment insisted on by the Council, and that the managers for the Assembly be Mr. Hearman, Mr. Kelly and the mover.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

MEAT SUPPLIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Consideration of Report.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [2.48]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the recommendations of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into ways and means of obtaining adequate meat supplies for the people of Western Australia should be carried out.

I do not intend to speak at length on the report. I assume that members have examined it and, if so, they will have noted the survey of the evidence contained therein, and the recommendations made by the Select Committee. I would, however, like to say a word or two about the reasons for our recommendations. Taking them seriatim, the first is—

That the price control of fresh meat be discontinued and price control of frozen meat be restricted to control of the profit margin between cost of the frozen meat out of the freezer and the consumer.

The evidence before the Select Committee practically all tended to indicate that price control of meat in this State, and by implication in the other States to a large degree, had been ineffective for a considerable time. In our comments on the evidence, members will notice the remark is made that the ineffectiveness of price control of meat is having a serious effect on lowering the standard of business morality in the butchering trade. That is an important aspect, in itself, and I, for one, as a member of the committee, fear that if this attitude were to spread into other sections of our trading community it would bring many difficulties in its train. It has its effect on the business houses themselves and is likely, unfortunately, to spread down to the employees of those concerns and unless price control were having some considerable beneficial effect in other directions that, in itself, could be a most important consideration in favour of the removal of controls.

The evidence indicates that the control has had very little effect in obtaining lower prices for meat for consumers in this State. It has been the practice over the years for the price of meat to fluctuate considerably from one season to another. In the period of short supply prices have risen, while at other times during the year meat has become much cheaper. Periods of both short and flush supply continue to be evident in Western Australia, but the evidence given before the committee disclosed that at no period of the year were the consumers of meat receiving much benefit—through prices—from the flush supplies that are available for portions of the year.

At the time when the committee was making its inquiry evidence was given—the committee had every reason to believe it was correct—that mutton and beef prices

as charged to the consumers, in the shops, were considerably above the selling prices as fixed by the Prices Commission and that, even then, the wholesale and retail butchers, between them, were not recouping themselves for their costs, whereas in the case of lamb, which was decontrolled, the price had risen considerably higher or to a greater margin than was customary in periods before price control operated. I refer there to the margin between lamb and ordinary mutton, for instance, but there was no indication that price control had been the cause of the margin increasing.

Apparently those people who desired lamb and could afford to pay for it were being charged, by common consent of the butchers, a higher price in order that the butchers might recoup themselves for whatever losses or lesser profits—if I may put it that way—were being obtained on mutton and beef. The fact that lamb was selling at a greatly enhanced price, in my opinion indicated only that the butchering trade was trying to get back as much from the consumers, either by way of the price for lamb or for mutton and beef, as would recoup it for the total cost of purchasing that meat in the saleyards of the State. Bearing all that in mind, the committee examined very carefully the other effects of price control.

The evidence given before the Select Committee, by people who were in a position to judge, was to the effect that although price control of meat had been ineffective and was having very little influence on livestock prices in this State, it was causing a great deal of uncertainty in the minds of producers of fat stock and was tending to induce producers and graziers who normally produced fat stock, particularly in the short supply period of the year, to change over to wool production. The very high price of wool is probably the major factor in causing the shift from meat to wool production. In addition to that we must take into consideration the fact that producers who cater for the market in the late autumn and winter have to provide special fodder supplies, and go to considerable trouble to supply the fat stock markets at that period of the year, and they have over them the threat that an attempt may be made to enforce price control more effectively.

The over-all result of that with regard to the fat stock market undoubtedly is that more producers are likely to avoid the risk and take the easy course of changing over to wool production. That has been happening for a considerable time, and I fear that unless some positive steps are taken to change the policy that has been followed in the past we will see an even greater restriction of the amount of fresh meat that is coming forward for

the people of the State, and hence this recommendation No. 1 of the Select Committee.

I realise—and I think the committee realises—that it is necessary for the State Government to give careful consideration to the possibility of an actual shortage of meat supplies, particularly during the short supply period of the coming year. While the position for the coming season seems to have been covered reasonably well, as is indicated in the report, if present trends continue there is grave danger that a very small supply of fresh meat will come forward during the short supply period, and the public of the State will have to rely to a large degree on whatever frozen meat is stored. Therefore the committee gave as its second recommendation that sufficient stocks of frozen meat should be built up, either by private enterprise—and if private enterprise is prepared to do it, well and good—or, if due to the uncertainties at present existing private enterprise does not build up sufficient stocks, by the Government.

Some action along those lines was taken last year, but the indications are that the deficiency in the late autumn and winter months will be greater in the coming season than it was last season and, therefore, there seems to be greater need now for the Government to examine the position closely and build up sufficient stocks. One cannot tell how the position may develop from year to year and I believe it will be necessary for Government officers to keep a close watch on the situation. But, it is clear that in the immediate future, at least, there are supplies, of lamb particularly, which can be obtained and put into store against that possible shortage. If they are needed, they will be there; if they are not needed, then the only cost will be for storage over perhaps six months of the year. If they are not needed they can still be passed into export channels and sold by whoever is holding them—either private enterprise or the Government.

Mr. YATES: Did you say that price control was effective?

Mr. PERKINS: Price control was ineffective.

Mr. YATES: But did you say it was effective during the period of short supply?

Mr. PERKINS: I stated that in my opinion the evidence disclosed that price control was not effective at any period. The evidence the committee received was that it was no more effective in the other States than it was in this State. There was one part of the State in which it was enforced vigorously, as is indicated in the report. That area was the Eastern Goldfields and, probably because it was a smaller community, it was easier for the prices officers to carry out the necessary enforcement measures. The result was

that a meat famine developed, and the evidence placed before the committee indicated that the Goldfields area was receiving only about 40 per cent., or less than 40 per cent., of its meat supplies through the butchers' shops. The balance was being obtained through all sorts of unorthodox and irregular channels; that is something which should not be justified from any angle. Obviously it is undesirable from a health point of view and must ultimately cost the consumers considerably more than if they obtained all their meat supplies through the butchers' shops.

There is another aspect which the committee has considered carefully. I believe that the third recommendation will adequately cover any danger which members may think might exist as the result of the decontrol of fresh meat supplies. That third recommendation provides that the frozen meat can be used to give the consumers an alternative source of supply at a reasonable figure if fresh meat prices soar to unreasonable levels. There is no doubt that fresh meat is preferred by the public if they can obtain it. But, frozen meat, and frozen lamb particularly, is difficult to distinguish from the fresh product. I feel that the public is adequately covered against any threat of excessive prices if they have the opportunity to purchase frozen meat at a time when fresh meat is in very short supply.

I notice that some representatives of the farmers' union are criticising these recommendations rather severely. They strongly object to the Government storing frozen meat. My reaction is that if private enterprise is prepared to build up sufficient stocks of frozen meat which, in the opinion of the technical officers of the Government, will provide an adequate reserve in the period of probable shortage, then it will not be necessary for the Government to build up any substantial reserves of frozen meat. Obviously, however, any Government has the responsibility to see that the consuming public has reasonable supplies of essential food-stuffs available to it. If a position seems to be developing whereby those supplies are not in sight, surely it is the responsibility of the Government to take some effective action to see that reserves are available.

If the Government will declare its policy then everybody will know just what the position is likely to be in the future, and people can plan their courses of action accordingly. I hope that whatever actions the Government intends to take on the recommendations made in the report, it will take them in the near future. I can think of nothing worse than action being deferred, say, until next March or April and, when we seem to be getting into a difficult supply period, the Government suddenly deciding that these recommendations are all right. If the recommenda-

tions are to have the effect that the Select Committee hopes that they will have, then it is necessary for the Government to declare its policy almost immediately. Obviously the people with feed reserves in the autumn will need to know at an early stage what the policy of the Government is going to be. The people will want to know whether they should reserve these feed supplies for the fattening of fat stock for the late autumn and winter markets. There is no doubt that it is highly desirable that we should encourage as much fresh meat on to the markets as possible, and use frozen meat only as a standby and reserve in order to protect the consuming public against a meat famine.

The Committee paid a good deal of attention to the supplies which may be available from the North-West. It will be noticed in the survey of the evidence that comment is made on the fact that the Wyndham Meat Works, as agents for the producers in the far North of the State, can and will market beef from that part of the State in the metropolitan area if necessary. That beef should be sufficient to make up the shortage of fresh beef supplies during those winter months from about May onwards. The committee also had some interesting evidence from Air Beef Ltd. Members will notice that recommendation No. 4 is to the effect that freezer space be provided at Derby to enable Air Beef Ltd. to make use of the freezing space that is available on the boats trading between Fremantle and Singapore. At present some limited use is being made of the freezer space on those boats, but unfortunately there is only a limited amount of freezer space available at Derby.

Practically the only meat that can be loaded is what is flown in during the period when the boat is in port. I understand there are only about six hours during which those boats can load this type of cargo and, seeing that the freezer space is available it seems desirable, from the point of view of gaining added supplies for the metropolitan area and also to give opportunities to those far north producers for a profitable outlet for their beef, to ensure that sufficient freezer space is provided there in order that beef can be flown in to the port, stored there until ready to load and then the freezer space can be filled during the few hours that the ship is in port. It does not amount to a great deal when looked at from the point of view of the total consumption of beef in the metropolitan area, but the recommendation was made because it appeared it would provide some small additional amount of meat and also open up a valuable market for those producers in that part of the world.

I hope the House agrees to the recommendations of the committee. I believe that while they will not solve the problem of meat supplies immediately, at least they

will bring the meat trade generally back to a healthier condition than it has been in for some considerable time. Difficulties have been increasing from year to year and I fear that, if no immediate action is taken, we will find that they will further increase unless something arises which is unforeseen to anyone at the moment. Responsible people representing the producers, the Livestock Salesmen's Association, as well as other independent people who appeared before the Select Committee, stressed the seriousness of the trend that has been developing for some time.

Probably the extremely high wool prices have been the greatest single factor to cause the changeover from meat production to wool production, but some of the controls which have been exercised have also had an effect in accentuating this undesirable trend. Therefore a necessary preliminary to bring the meat trade back to a healthier state is to accept the recommendations of the Select Committee and for the Government to watch the position very carefully and then, if the recommendations are not bearing fruit, to take whatever other action may be necessary. But merely to let things drift will accentuate the difficulties which the trade has met with in the past and, if no corrective action is taken, it will bring about a most serious position in the meat trade in the future.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [3.16]: I wish to place on record the impressions of the situation that I gained when listening to the evidence given before the Select Committee by all sections of the meat trade. There is no doubt that both the wholesale and retail butchers have had great difficulty over the last 12 months in providing sufficient meat for their customers, although they did not say that they had to ration them at any time. If it had not been for the action of the Government in putting 35,000 carcasses of lamb and mutton into cool storage, the rationing of meat supplies to the people would have been necessary. Various reasons were put forward as to what was causing the shortage, the principal one being the rapid increase in population over the last 12 months, which has been estimated at 26,000 people as a result of immigration. Many of those were adults, and a fair proportion of them were adolescents who would consume as much meat as adults.

When we take into consideration the average meat consumption for Australia at 206 lbs. per head per annum, which includes only lamb, mutton, beef and veal and excludes pig-meats, we find that to provide the annual ration for those extra 26,000 people it has required 5,326,000 lb. of meat for the 12 months, which is equivalent to 5,000 head of cattle at an average of 500 lb. per head and 70,000 sheep and lambs at an average of 40 lb. per head. Stock for meat supplies is not keeping pace with the increased demand brought

about by the increase in population. It is interesting to compare the meat consumption of four or five leading countries in the world with that of Australia.

The evidence submitted to us was that the Australian consumption of meat, including pig-meats, per head of the population was 226 lb. per annum, New Zealand 243 per annum, Great Britain 138 per annum, Canada 134 per annum, and the United States of America 138 lb. per annum. The increase in our stock for that 12 months, when we required an additional 5,000 head of cattle and 70,000 head of sheep, was very far short of the required amount. In the year 1949, we had 864,131 head of cattle and in 1950, 864,936; an increase of only 805 head, whereas the increased population brought from overseas would require in Western Australia an average of 500 head of cattle. In 1949 the number of sheep and lambs amounted to 10,872,540 and in 1950 they numbered 10,923,000, an increase of only about 51,000 head in 12 months. So it can be easily seen that the meat shortage in this State to a great extent has been actuated by the rapid increase in population.

The second reason that was submitted to the committee, which I consider to be a good one, was that because of the abnormal prices received for wool, they are resulting in a greater number of producers switching to the merino breed of sheep for the production of wool. I think this is having a great effect upon the amount of mutton and lamb that is available. We had evidence that pastoralists are competing against butchers in the Midland Junction saleyards, and those who have had a very good year as far as pastures are concerned—apart from water supplies—are buying sucker lambs at the saleyards in Midland Junction and taking them back to pasture, because by holding sheep for over four years they would, at the conservative estimate of £2 worth of wool a year, get £8 in a period of four years. If they put the lamb into the market, however, they would get a return of £3 10s. or perhaps a little over.

So far as price control is concerned, I am quite sure there has been no genuine attempt made to enforce it in this State. To say price control has been a failure is not making a comprehensive survey of the question at all. Everyone who gave evidence on this point before the committee, with the exception of the Price Fixing Commissioner, admitted that price control was completely ineffective, and that there was no attempt being made to enforce it. Therefore, to say that producers would not market their stock if there was price control is not a correct statement of fact, because we never attempted the strict policing of price control as far as the metropolitan area is concerned.

The only district to my knowledge where price control was strictly applied was the Eastern Goldfields, and it had the effect of bringing about the closing of the butchers' shops, and the people of Kalgoorlie were only getting, according to an estimate by the Master Butchers' representative of the Goldfields, 40 per cent. to meet requirements through their butchers. This has been and should be their source of supply but, as far as the metropolitan area is concerned, the representatives of the retail master butchers were refreshingly candid about the matter. They said that if price control and the present ceiling prices were enforced, they would have to close their shops. They estimated that from 5d. to 7d. a lb. was being charged in excess of the permissible ceiling prices. One representative of the retail trade went so far as to mention 11d. in excess for certain cuts of meat. When the retail people were asked if the price fixing authorities were taking any action against them they replied in the negative. As I have said, everyone, with the exception of the Price Fixing Commissioner, was quite clear that control was completely ineffective as far as the price of meat was concerned in the metropolitan area.

I should also like to express the opinion that the retail price of lamb being charged in the metropolitan area now, and for the past three months, has been exorbitant. We had evidence which indicated that the average price for lambs on the hoof at Midland Junction was 12½d. to 13½d. per lb. and that the cheapest cut that could be obtained—that is the forequarter, with the exception of the actual neck—is 1s. 8d. a lb., while the price for leg and loin is 2s. 6d. a lb. Some witnesses expressed the opinion that they considered that exorbitant profits were being made by the retail butchering trade because of these prices, that is 1s. 8d. for the cheapest cut and 2s. 6d. for a loin and leg of lamb.

I quite agree with the member for Roe that if we want the producers to market their stock in the lean period—during the winter months—we have to offer them some special inducement to grow special fodders such as peas and oats for their sheep and lambs, for the purpose of fattening them, in order that they can make them available for slaughter during the lean periods. To obtain stock in a killable condition during the winter months or lean period, means a considerable additional expense, and I am quite satisfied that if we require producers, and expect them, to market their stock in good condition during the winter months, we have to offer them some particular inducement to grow these special crops, so that they can get their sheep and lambs ready for the lean period of the year.

I have in mind the fraud that has been perpetrated upon every person in this State over the last 12 or 18 months, par-

ticularly on those people who are working under an award of the Arbitration Court, as far as the basic wage is concerned. We asked the representatives of the Master Retail Butchers' Association what prices were returned to the State Statistician for the quarterly adjustment of the basic wage, and they said they returned the ceiling prices. As they admitted quite candidly that from 5d. to 11d. a lb. was being charged over the ceiling prices, it does not require a mathematician to work out that any worker whose wage is fixed by the basic wage quarterly adjustment has been deprived of something like 7s. to 8s. a week, because of the incorrect figures supplied to the State Statistician for the compilation of the basic wage.

Mr. Griffith: Do you think many people are on the basic wage these days?

Mr. STYANTS: I should say that practically every worker in this State is affected by the basic wage. There are a great number who are actually on the basic wage, but practically every unionist has a margin which has, as its base, the basic wage. Therefore practically every member of a registered trade union is affected by the basic wage. I will agree, however, that not a great number of these people are actually working on the basic wage. I think he would be a man of very meagre ability who could not demand more than the basic wage for any class of work in this State today. I do not think there should be any shortage of supplies for the coming winter if adequate precautions are taken.

I would like to refer to an anomalous position that existed: Whilst there were 40,000 carcasses of lamb in cold storage here awaiting export, the Government had a man in the Eastern States buying lamb for the purpose of tiding us over the lean period this coming winter. While I commend the Government for its foresight in making provision for the purchase of these lambs, I think it is ridiculous to have 40,000 carcasses of lamb in cold storage in this State for the purpose of sending them overseas and at the same time having a buyer in the Eastern States to purchase lamb to bring it over here to be put in cold storage. I think that a better arrangement could be arrived at if a conference were held of all parties concerned. There were approximately 40,000 carcasses of lamb available for export, and I understand they will be exported this season, as against 100,000 or 120,000 carcasses last year.

The evidence given by a representative of the Commonwealth Meat Board showed that there were 300,000 carcasses of lamb available in South Australia for export, as against an average of 1,000,000, while Victoria had 1,000,000 available as against an average of 2,250,000. Thus, it is evident that there are ample supplies of meat to draw upon if private concerns are en-

terprising enough to purchase the lamb during the flush period and put it into cool store to tide over the lean period in the coming winter. According to expert evidence, these lambs would be available on payment of about 1d. per lb. over export parity.

We have to recognise that the overseas market is not as attractive to the producer as is the local market. The producer can get a better price on the local market than he can bet for meat that is exported. There is also plenty of lamb and mutton available in the Midland Junction saleyards. I understand that a Government buyer is operating there and is taking quite a number of the surplus stock available from week to week. The weekly yarding at Midland Junction is 24,000 to 32,000 head of sheep and lambs, and the weekly requirements are about 14,000, so there is plenty of mutton and lamb available in the flush season if foresight is shown—I understand the Government is doing this—to ensure supplies for storing for the winter months.

In addition, we were told by the manager of the Wyndham Freezing Works, Mr. J. J. Farrell, that he is expecting 33,000 carcasses of beef from the works this year. Contrary to the general opinion prevailing, all that meat is available for consumption in the State if the Government says it requires the meat. I was under the impression that that meat had been sold under a long-term contract to the British Ministry of Food and that it was not available to us. The reverse is the position. If the State Government says it requires that beef, it will be available for consumption within the State. Once the beef is declared to be surplus, however, it comes under the jurisdiction of the Meat Board, and under Commonwealth control, and is exported to England. Consequently, if the State Government does not declare any of the 33,000 carcasses in the Wyndham Meat Works to be surplus, it will be available for consumption here and will provide for the requirements of 165,000 people for a year. Thus, there is an enormous quantity available if it is required to meet any shortage of beef in the southern part of the State.

It is estimated that 5,000 carcasses from Derby would be available if additional freezer space were provided, as mentioned by the member for Roe. I understand that there is a small amount of freezing space, as well as an engine, at Derby, but we have no idea what cost would be involved in increasing it to a capacity of 120 tons which, the representative of Air Beef Pty. Ltd. said, was the freezer space available on the Singapore boats each fortnight. If the freezer space were made available at Derby by extending the existing works, it would be possible to build up a store of 120 tons of meat so that, when a Singapore

boat called at Derby for a limited stay of six hours each fortnight, this quantity would be available.

Judging by the evidence of experts, my estimate is that we shall require 120,000 carcasses of mutton and lamb to be put in cold storage to tide us over the lean period during the coming winter. With the frozen beef that will be available from the Wyndham Meat Works—provided the Government decides not to declare it surplus—plus the quantity that can be brought from the North-West on the hoof, plus the quantity of fresh meat that will be available in the southern part of the State, I consider there should be ample meat to meet requirements during the next 12 months, at any rate.

I suggest, as a short-term policy, that the Government should buy and put into cool storage the fresh meat now available. I am not adamant about this being done by the Government. Personally, I think that private concerns should be sufficiently enterprising to look after their own interests in the business.

The Premier: They are purchasing some.

Mr. STYANTS: But only a very small quantity. We made inquiries from private concerns and found that the quantity is limited. The majority claimed that they had not sufficient finance to buy stock now and hold it till winter. The cost of holding frozen meat over a period of six months is quite a nominal amount; it is estimated to be 26/32nds of a penny per lb., or less than 1d. per lb.

The Attorney General: Do not you mean per month?

Mr. STYANTS: No, for six months.

Mr. Perkins: About 1d. per lb. for six months.

Mr. STYANTS: The Government on its own, or in conjunction with private enterprise, should ensure that we have at least 120,000 carcasses of mutton and lamb in cool storage to tide us over the lean period in the coming winter. Those carcasses could be obtained as a result of the overflow of sales at Midland Junction in the flush period of the year, and there would be quite a lot available at a fractional cost over export parity in the markets of South Australia and Victoria. We are told that there is ample cool storage space available to hold that quantity of meat. We also require to make provision for the shipping of frozen beef and stock on the hoof during the lean period in the southern portion of the State. I understand that the manager of the Wyndham Freezing Works has been in negotiation with certain shipping companies to see whether this can be done. It would appear, therefore, that the Government is realising the necessity for getting these stocks of meat and putting them into cool storage for use during the winter months.

I think that the recommendation for lifting price control on fresh meat should provide sufficient guarantee to induce producers to grow special fodders and fatten their stock for placing on the market during the three or four months of the lean period. In accordance with a long-range policy—and I think we have to look at this matter from a long-range point of view—we should increase shipping space from North-West ports by providing another State ship. I understand from the Premier that he has been negotiating in that connection, but I do not know whether anything definite has been done.

The Premier: Plans are being prepared.

Mr. STYANTS: There is quite a lot of meat on the hoof available in the Kimberleys which could be obtained if adequate shipping space were available; and it is essential that we should have another ship on the North-West coast to bring those cattle down. One of the expert witnesses gave it as his opinion that there could be a tremendous increase in the production of beef in the North-West as a result of the provision of watering facilities, windmills and engines and supplies of steel fencing posts and galvanised wire. The productive capacity of the cattle-raising areas in the North-West is not being exploited to anything like the maximum extent, according to him.

More than one witness expressed the opinion that another great aid to production in the North-West—but this is something outside the jurisdiction of the State Government—would be some adjustment in the matter of income tax. It was contended that if the North-West were placed under the same conditions with relation to income tax as the Northern Territory it would be a big incentive to the producers to provide a greater amount of meat.

So far as the recommendations of the Select Committee are concerned, I do not agree entirely with the first one, although I would not have any great heartburnings if fresh meat were entirely decontrolled, and the sham and hypocritical price control that has been in evidence during the last 12 or 18 months were removed. At any rate, if meat were not reduced in price from what is actually being paid at present, the workers of this State would at least be compensated for the additional amount they are paying over the fictitious ceiling prices which are supposed to be operating when it comes to a matter of the compilation of the basic wage.

I notice that the employers' representative in the basic wage case in the Arbitration Court this week expressed the opinion that the correct price, the actual price being charged for meat, must be returned to the State Statistician by the retail master butchers as otherwise they would leave themselves open to a heavy penalty. That is the actual requirement, but it is

not enforced; and, contrary to the opinion expressed by the employers' representative, the retail master butchers assured the Select Committee that they returned for the purpose of the compilation of the basic wage the ceiling price and not the actual price. So even if meat did not drop in price—which only a super optimist would expect to occur—and if price control were released the worker would at least get some compensation in the computation of the basic wage.

I am very diffident about complete de-control of prices because I have noticed with concern that every article that is removed from price control immediately sky-rockets in price. I do not know of any articles from which price control has been removed that have not increased in price, in some cases rapidly and to great heights, and in other cases to a lesser extent. If we completely decontrol prices, I think there will be a tendency for those prices to rise at least to the stage where we would have buyer resistance. That is to say, saturation point would be reached, beyond which people would refuse to pay, just as occurred in the case of lamb. The price went to 3s. per lb. and there was consumer resistance, with the result that the figure was reduced to 2s. 6d.

I know that the theory has been advanced quite frequently in this House and in other places that if goods are decontrolled competition between business firms will not only keep prices down but will reduce them below those existing under price control. However, I do not know of any instance where that has occurred, and that is why I am diffident about subscribing fully to the proposition to decontrol meat. But I agree—and I say this very earnestly—that the master butchers, both wholesale and retail, have had the rawest deal for 18 months of any section of the business community in this State, or in Australia for that matter, because the same condition of affairs exists in the Eastern States.

Any body of business men should be permitted, by a reasonable ceiling price set on their goods, to deal legitimately and honestly and be able to earn a fair livelihood; but that is not the position with the master butchers. They have had to break the law to be able to carry on; and, as the member for Roe said, this is creating a very bad psychology amongst the employees, as well as the employers, in the meat trade. When the law is flagrantly flouted and no penalties are imposed, it brings about a general contempt of the law amongst all sections of the community; and particularly is that reflected amongst the employees of the meat trade, one of whom said to me, "You have to be a rogue to keep your job in the butchering trade."

The psychology is being created amongst the employees that if it is good enough for the employer to have a go at the pub-

lic by charging 6d. or 8d. per lb. over the permissible ceiling price, it is good enough for the employee to have a go at the boss if he gets an opportunity. That is the psychology which is being created, and it is most unfortunate. My idea—and it may be the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee—is that the margins of profit should be still under the control of the Prices Commissioner and should be rigidly enforced. It is of no use having price control unless it is enforced. If we could devise a system by which we got the wholesale prices paid by, say, the six leading wholesale buyers at the Midland stock sales each month, and permitted a reasonable percentage of profit to them so that they could trade honestly and make a fair living, and add to that figure a reasonable margin of profit for the retailer, and still retain price control in that way, it would be better than lifting it entirely. Although price control has not been very effective it might have had some slight retarding effect on avaricious master butchers. It is my opinion that exorbitant prices have been charged and unfair profits made by the retail butchers on uncontrolled meat such as lamb, veal and pig meats.

The other recommendations, Nos. 2, 3 and 4, I fully endorse. I hope that action will be taken to enable the master butchers in the area I represent again to give the service to the public which the public expects, and which, I believe, the master butchers should be in a position honestly to give. The Government recently spent £45,000 on modernising the abattoirs on the Eastern Goldfields, but the only use made of them in the last five or six months has been the killing of some 20 or 30 pigs, and the storing in part of the freezing space there by the master butchers of meat sent to them, for which they did not have accommodation in their shops. In addition, the Government has been forced into the position of dispensing with the services of some 10 or 12 employees there. About 30 apprentices to the butchering trade have had their indentures suspended, and some 40 or 50 butchers in Kalgoorlie have had to seek occupations in other avenues. I hope action will be taken by the Government to see that this state of affairs will come to an end, and that if it is decided to retain price control a realistic price will be set so that the master butchers can operate honestly and within the law.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—Mt. Lawley) [3.54]: No-one will deny that price control of meat is extremely difficult to carry into effect, but I say without hesitation that in this State it has been the same in every part. There is not the slightest doubt that the administration of the Commissioner has been the same all through the State. It may

be that because the Goldfields were a smaller community it was more effective than in the metropolitan area. The Commissioner, I understand, gave evidence to that effect, and knowing him as I do I have no doubt that it is correct. The Government has already set in motion several of the recommendations made by the committee. Last year a certain amount of meat was stored, and the same policy has been carried out this year. The Government is a buyer in the local market of all lamb and mutton that can be acquired at export parity or a little above it. As far as I am aware, all of the meat purchased in the Eastern States has been mutton. There may have been a small quantity of lamb. It is extremely difficult to acquire any mutton suitable for freezing in Western Australia.

It is hoped we will have reasonable stocks by the end of the season. In addition, the Government has for some months been trying to arrive at a method of transporting frozen beef from Wyndham to the metropolitan area. The problem of shipping freights is an extremely difficult one and it is hard to charter a ship with the necessary refrigeration to bring meat from Wyndham to Perth. However, it is hoped that suitable arrangements will be made in this respect. I point out, however, that this meat cannot be made available until some time after the middle of May, because slaughtering does not commence at Wyndham before then owing to seasonal conditions there.

Some comment has been made on the high price of lamb. I am of opinion that the retail butchers have been trying to carry out the price control regulations. It is quite probable that higher prices have been charged for the more expensive and luxury lines, such as lamb, veal and pork, to compensate for the lower prices that the butchers have been asking for the essential quantities of beef and mutton. I do think, however, that it is necessary to see, as far as possible, that those whose purses are most strained are able to get reasonable supplies for themselves and their families. I have not considered the report; nor has the Government, but it will do so. I do not know whether the Premier will speak on the motion, but if he does he will outline the position as far as the Government is concerned. Up to date, however, the Government has not decided what it intends to do in connection with the matter.

MR. OLIVER (Boulder) [4.0]: I think the Committee has done a very useful job and its report will serve to focus attention on what apparently will be a problem again next year. I think members will agree that we must continue to suffer in the future the high meat prices that have prevailed during the past 12 months. Whether the price of meat is controlled or decontrolled

I am afraid it will continue to be high owing to the shortage of meat. I am not clear as to what the Attorney General meant when he supported the Prices Commissioner and said that the price of meat was controlled in every part of the State.

The Attorney General: I said the control was administered in the same way in every part of the State.

Mr. OLIVER: That means, of course, that price control was almost completely ignored.

The Attorney General: It was very effective in the hon. member's part of the country.

Mr. OLIVER: The only reason why price control over meat appeared to be effective on the Goldfields was that the magistrate administering the law there apparently took a far more serious view of breaches of the control in that area than did magistrates in the metropolitan area. The fact that he made the penalties so high and promised to increase them if the transgressors appeared before him on further charges practically put the Goldfields butchers out of business. Obviously the only reason why butchers continued to trade in a comparatively normal way in the metropolitan area was that price control was, to some extent, ignored by them.

I am grateful to the Select Committee for having made the point that the wage-earner has paid more for meat than his wage provided for, because that is true. Several members made that point, previously, in this House. The question of decontrol is an important one, to which the Government will have to give very serious consideration. I am of opinion that if meat is to be controlled, with the old-fashioned ceiling price at the source of supply, and the fixed price in the retail trade, the same troubles will continue. I do not think that method will work as it contains far too many avenues of leakage for it ever to function successfully. While I believe in controls I think this particular system will require the closest consideration when the Government is dealing with it.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [4.4]: I commend the Committee on the work it put into this inquiry, during its eight sittings and the hearing of an abundance of evidence. I agree with most of the recommendations of the Committee, in the main, but I do not wish to commit myself in regard to recommendation No. 1. If we decontrol the price of fresh meat and retain control over the price of frozen meat, I am afraid that frozen meat will be sold at the decontrolled price, and the effect of that would be that the basic wage would have to be increased. We have heard this afternoon that some master butchers on the Goldfields charged as much as 11d. per lb. above the fixed price and the evi-

dence given before the Committee proved beyond doubt that the price-fixing administration in this State has not been effective. Apart from the evidence submitted to the Select Committee, I feel that ever since 1943 the control of meat prices throughout the Commonwealth has failed to act effectively, as we have had trouble with the control since that time.

I do not altogether blame the master butchers because the evidence has shown that many of them, especially on the Eastern Goldfields, have gone out of business. There were 11 butchers' shops operating at one time in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and today there are only five. I know some of those master butchers personally and they have been in the trade for practically the whole of their lives. I know of one who has taken on a job as an insurance agent and I feel that if he had been getting a fair margin of profit as a master butcher, under the fixed prices, he would have continued in his trade. I cannot see how recommendation No. 1 could have the effect desired and unless I get some clearer information as to how it is to operate I will not vote in favour of it.

Members know that notwithstanding the increase in the price of gold since 1949 the goldmines have not found it easy to carry on and, with the increase in the basic wage that must come if meat is decontrolled, I believe many of the mines will be in difficulties. The 41 per cent. increase in the price of gold that they received in 1949 has been whittled away, and even today some of the smaller mines are closing down owing to their inability to produce ore at a profitable rate. Some scheme for the control of meat prices will have to be evolved. Every year since 1942 or 1943 I have received a number of complaints about meat prices, and the control was not being strictly enforced on the Goldfields. Because the butchers seemed to be flouting the prices regulations other tradesmen in that area thought they could do the same.

I admit that the master butchers were the most heavily fined and severely warned. There were some prosecutions of grocers and other tradesmen, but the evidence disclosed before the Select Committee shows that the master butchers could not make a profit on the ceiling price of meat as laid down by the Prices Commission in this State. No-one can operate a business successfully if he cannot get a fair return for his money. I support recommendations Nos. 2, 3 and 4, but will not commit myself with regard to recommendation No. 1.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [4.10]: I agree with the member for Roe that if decontrol of meat is to be brought about, an early decision will have to be made. Therefore, the Government will give early consideration to the recom-

recommendations of the Select Committee. If it is decided to decontrol meat, then we should, first of all, advise the Prices Ministers in the other States. But, should the decision be to decontrol the price of meat, it will not mean that controls cannot be reimposed if the Government considers that the position has got out of hand. The recommendations have already been referred to by the Attorney General and in the main they are being carried out.

We have put into cold storage a large quantity of frozen mutton and it is being placed there from time to time. Arrangements have been made, as the member for Kalgoorlie said, to bring down much larger quantities of frozen beef from the Kimberleys this year than we did for the previous year. Also, more cattle on the hoof will come from the Kimberleys this year because we will have the "Dongarra" on the run. She will carry 200 cattle at a time. That will mean more fresh meat down here than was available last season. Early consideration will be given to the recommendations of the Select Committee and the Government will make an announcement in the near future.

On motion by Mr. Yates, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [4.13]: As is usual at this time of the year, there is not much opportunity to examine Bills unless one is a sleepless sort of person. Bills are introduced one day and debated the next, but the Government has a distinct advantage because it has a knowledge, many months ahead, of the proposed alterations to the law. This Bill contains some amendments that are vital in the administration of this legislation. There are also some new principles involved which will affect contributors, recipients of pensions and the question of reciprocity.

Perhaps one of the most important amendments is the clause which adds a new section and permits of reciprocity between the States where similar schemes are involved, as between the States and Commonwealth and the Commonwealth and the States, with the exception of Queensland which has an insurance fund. That fund is different from the normal superannuation provisions. Up till now there has been a difficulty with State superannuated officers leaving for Commonwealth employment and it has been, as it were, one-way traffic. We have had no provision to cover a superannuated officer from the other States or from the Commonwealth service who joins our service. There has been no continuity or comparison in contributions made by these officers

or of the benefits ultimately to be derived therefrom. The provision in the Bill, therefore, is most important.

There is a provision in the measure that where an increase in rates is involved, in order to maintain the pensions and benefits formerly contributed for, the State will meet the difference. That, of course, is a burden on the fund, but I presume that in spite of the actuarial attitude—which is usually more cautious than a particular race of people is supposed to be—there is a sufficiency in the fund to meet the one or two commitments which the Bill presents. There is also the question of the increase in the pension rate for children, which rate was not increased when the Act was amended in 1947. The proposal is that instead of 5s. per child it is to be increased to 7s. 6d.

The amendment to Section 6 of the Act appears to me to be clearly understood as applying to females and the limitation of age shall be at 60 years in all cases. The amendment to Section 36, as I understand it, is to clear up possible anomalies in regard to the period of contribution and the age, because the calendar year in respect of birthdays affects contributors. It is wise to clear up such an anomaly. In regard to eligibility and the amount to be collected under Section 44 of the Act, I presume, although the Premier did not mention it, that there must have been a risk of some pensioners getting more than they were entitled to get.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Therefore, the Bill will qualify the position. There is also a consequential amendment later on in the Bill. In discussion on this matter with the member for Kalgoorlie who, as this House knows, is interested in this legislation, a point was raised on the amendment to Section 57. I am sure the hon. member will raise that aspect when he speaks to the Bill. Section 57 is to be amended to provide that where a child is not maintained by the widow, and apparently the widow takes no interest in its maintenance, the payments are, through this Bill, enabled to be paid to the person who is maintaining the child.

The Premier: Is not that the same as child endowment?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, and I can see no objection to it. There could be cases where persons are maintaining children because of some connection or relationship, and they could be suffering a disadvantage over the persons who were recipients of pensions. In the main, the other amendments are consequential upon the principal ones I have mentioned and, although in some cases they break new ground, in general they are in the interests of the contributors, their dependants, contributors who have retired and surviving dependants. The parent Act took a lot of preparation and involved much discussion

before the Government introduced it initially because there were difficulties associated with many funds then in existence—such as the Police Benefit Fund and many others. So, it is a healthy sign to find that it is possible to broaden certain principles and make arrangements for added benefits without added contributions so early in the life of the fund. Without delaying its passing, and in spite of not having much time to delve into it, I support the Bill.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [4.40]: There is only one question upon which I desire some information, and that is the proposal to amend Section 57 of the principal Act. That amendment proposes to substitute for the words "living with" the words "being wholly maintained by." If the intention relating to the custodianship of the child is to be as outlined by the Leader of the Opposition, I have no objection whatever to the amendment, because I realise that in many instances a grandparent, sister or brother would take a child and wholly maintain it to permit a widowed mother to go to work. In the circumstances, therefore, it would be quite right to allow such relative to be the recipient of the benefits under the scheme. However, the amendment might have another effect. I want an assurance that such will not be the case because I consider the words "being wholly maintained by" may be construed to mean that, assuming the child to be a boy of 15 years of age, who sells a few newspapers and earns 30s. or 35s. a week, or an apprentice to a trade receiving the proper award rate, he would then be declared by the fund to be not wholly maintained by the guardian.

If that intention is to be construed into the clause, I am totally opposed to it. The few shillings that the child might earn should have no effect on the amount the fund is expected to contribute, because the mother is perhaps having a hard struggle to rear her children decently. I would, therefore like the Premier to assure me that the clause relates only to the custodianship of the child, and will not be construed to mean that it has any reference to any income which may be earned by the child and would, perhaps, render him ineligible for the payment of 7s. 6d. that is received by the guardian wholly maintaining the child.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray—in reply) [4.23]: I know there has been an extremely short period between the introduction of the Bill and its consideration, but even so, judging from the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, he seems to have a very good knowledge of every clause in the Bill.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I had a lot to do with its introduction, you know.

The PREMIER: Yes. So I think there is no need for any explanations other than those I have given when introducing the Bill. The Public Service Commissioner has had a great deal to do with the measure, and he is interested in what the member for Kalgoorlie has had to say. I can assure him that the fund will not pay any other party unless it is clear that the mother is not taking any interest in the child's upbringing.

Mr. Styants: It has no reference to any earnings?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Marshall: While we have the same provision in the Workers' Compensation Act, the Crown Law ruling is that they cannot pay in full.

The PREMIER: Well, I am assured that the matters raised by the member for Kalgoorlie relating to this clause will have no effect on the amount that will be paid for the maintenance of a child.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Hill in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Section 57 amended:

Mr. STYANTS: I accept the Premier's assurance that this amendment to the principal Act will not have the effect I am afraid it might have, namely, that it will refer to any income earned by a child. I would like an assurance from the Premier that if such an interpretation, which I fear, is placed on it and the income earned by the child is regarded as a disqualification against his receiving a pension under the scheme, he will bring a measure before the House during next session to have this provision amended.

The PREMIER: I think I can safely give that assurance. In reply to the member for Kalgoorlie during the second reading, I said that it was not intended that the pension would be affected in the cases to which he referred, nor that a guardian should be penalised. I do not think there will be any need for an amendment but, should necessity arise, I promise the hon. member that consideration will be given to it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 12 to 15, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS—SEEDS.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [4.30]: The Bill is designed for a very good purpose and I hope it will have the desired effect. I should think it would be in the interests of those members in whose districts the harvesting of clover and similar seeds takes place if they realise what is proposed. It is provided that all seeds shall be sold in packages, which, of course, covers a wide variety such as packets, sacks, bags, parcels and so on. When we appreciate the practices that are to be followed in dealing with such matters, this is certainly desirable in the interests of those engaged in the sale, in packages or in bulk, of seed cultivated in various parts of the State.

I am just wondering, however, whether the people in whose interests this legislation has been advanced have had a look at it. I do not know if members themselves have perused the measure. It is not every sleepless person like myself who can sit up reading Bills at all hours, and possibly some members have not had the opportunity to peruse the measure carefully. It deals with certain stringent provisions in an attempt to ensure purity in respect of seeds to be submitted for sale, wholesale or retail, and provides for all sorts of requirements in respect of testing and so on, and the responsibilities to be shouldered by the owners of such seeds.

For example, more than half the Bill deals with sampling, testing, prosecutions and regulations, all imposing responsibilities that may even amount to burdens upon people who sell seeds. It will be found that in the Bill are provisions for prosecution, prohibition, powers of inspectors, penalties for obstructing inspectors, the right of the Government to analyse and so on. In fact, matters in that regard comprise the greater part of the measure. While I have no objection to that if the legislation will attain the desired end, still some of these provisions may prove decidedly restrictive and irksome.

If the inspectorial staff of Government departments insist on rigid adherence to the law, that could quite easily be the position. The member for Avon will have a number of his electors particularly interested in this legislation and I would also expect to hear from some members sitting on the crossbenches regarding the matter of onus of proof.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That will have to come out.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is in the Bill.

Mr. J. Hegney: We must hear the Attorney General on that point.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Members have a responsibility carefully to scrutinise what may apparently be a most innocent piece

of legislation. I am prepared to give the Bill a trial in the interests of the objective the Minister has in mind, which is to ensure purity respecting the seeds submitted for sale and that they shall be according to label.

It is an interesting development that we can have in a State like, this, where seeds of various types are produced and offered for sale, legislation introduced to cover the industry, and it is more than half made up with provisions dealing with possible evasions of the law, which would seem to anticipate that the law will be difficult to implement. I leave that phase to those whose districts are most likely to be affected by this measure, but it is my responsibility to draw the attention of the Chamber to those particular provisions.

MR. MANN (Avon Valley) [4.35]: I am sorry that the Bill has not been given greater publicity. We have not had an opportunity to gain an adequate idea of its contents. The Minister briefly introduced the legislation. I am all for the production of pure seeds, but the whole problem of controlling that activity by way of legislation is difficult. There are many provisions in the Bill that require careful scrutiny. I think it should be further studied, and I would like the Minister to withdraw it for the time being. That would enable members carefully to study the contents of the measure and get down to a proper basis. Has the Farmers' Union discussed the Bill? Has anyone discussed it outside Parliament? Who prompted its introduction?

Mr. J. Hegney: Why consult the Farmers' Union?

Mr. MANN: It is interested in a question like this. I am quite aware that some people may be prepared to sell seed that is not pure, and it is essential that only pure seed should be allowed to go into new areas. The introduction of this legislation has been terribly hasty. So many Bills are coming down in the last hours of this Parliament. It is bad to rush legislation through.

Mr. J. Hegney: There is not much more time.

Mr. MANN: We can easily sit for another month or come back after Christmas.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: This introduction of Bills of importance at the end of the session is quite wrong, and it is wrong to rush them through.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: We have had plenty of time since the commencement of the session to deal with Bills of this nature. Often we have adjourned the sitting at an early hour when we could have sat on and given consideration to various measures. We are

expected to accept Bills brought here at the eleventh hour and to swallow them holus bolus on the basis of what the Minister says someone else has reported. I do not desire to oppose the Bill. I am certainly in favour of requiring pure seeds to be sold, but there appears to be some dreadfully restrictive provisions in the Bill. To police the legislation will be hard. The Minister would be well advised to reconsider the whole matter unless he can, when replying to the debate, explain why it should be passed at this stage. It is certainly hasty legislation. Bills that are rushed through do not receive the proper consideration of Parliament.

On the question of clean seeds, I believe it is essential to prevent the spread of noxious weeds in new areas. Already Government inspectors have full power in that respect. I have known of a property of 200 acres under clover seed waiting for inspection by a Government officer to approve of the seed as up to the required standard of purity for sale, and because the inspector found one cape tulip plant on the property he would not certify the seed.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Did you say one plant?

Mr. MANN: Yes, the inspector was right because from one such plant noxious weeds could be spread throughout clean areas. I emphasise the point that the Bill has been brought down hastily and as it concerns my electors to a very great degree it should receive proper consideration. It affects the constituencies of members representing areas in the South-West where clover seed is produced. If the Minister will give an assurance that the provisions of the Bill will be applied in a sensible manner, it will be all right. It is in the interests of people who are harvesting clover seed, and when inspectors go on to the properties for the purpose of seed certification they require 90 odd per cent. pure seed before they will consider granting a certificate.

Seed that is not clean and still has the cover on—that includes small seed as well—is sold privately. No seed is certified unless it is perfectly clean and polished. The residue, which contains the bacteria that helps the earlier growth of clover, is not sold except by the farmer. One farmer can sell to another any seed he likes, but the merchant cannot. The purpose of the Bill apparently is to provide that no farmer can sell seed to his neighbour unless that seed has been certified. That may be all right, but in my area it is hard to keep land clear of noxious weeds. If the Minister can give an assurance that these provisions will be observed with commonsense, and that the Act will be administered on sensible lines, it will be all right.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay—in reply) [4.41]: The Bill is not so difficult as the Leader of the Opposition made it out to be. The

hon. member referred to packages. There is a great variety of packages in which seed may be packed and in the past it has always been placed in some sort of container for marketing. The idea of describing the packages is to ensure that seed will be in a container and properly labelled as certified seed. A Bill of this description is of great value to the man on the land, because it is most important that the individual who is sowing the seed should have a guaranteed seed and the men harvesting seed for sale should be made to have it certified and marketed in a proper manner. Members will realise how serious it is for a farmer to go to the expense of preparing an area of land and ploughing it and fertilising it and then, when the seed reaches the stage of germination, discovering that that germination is very poor. He loses the result of all his work, and that is what we want to avoid.

Mr. Mann: That is provided for in the Act now.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The old Act is being cancelled. This is a completely new measure. I have with me the Agricultural Seeds Act, No. 21 of 1923. That is being repealed and this is the new one. I would inform the hon. member that I had a very sad experience that caused me quite a lot of trouble. I imported thousands of bushels of lupins from New Zealand. The germination from that seed was extremely poor. Ever since then I have been getting lupin seed through Yates—certified seed—and I can assure members that it pays. This Bill repeals the old Act. It contains quite a number of the provisions of that Act and to some extent it tightens up the sale of seeds. I suggest to the hon. member and to the Chamber as a whole that it is more important that the man who is going to sow seed should have a product that is guaranteed by certification than it is to worry about the man who is harvesting seed for sale. The latter must be brought into line and we must be in a position to know that we are obtaining certified seed that will germinate.

Mr. Marshall: I often wonder how our forefathers ever lived without all these restrictions.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Our forefathers had their troubles too.

Mr. Marshall: Admittedly your parents did!

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: After all, this was a very young State in the days to which the hon. member refers, and we did not have the noxious weeds and other troubles that we have today. The hon. member will realise that, as we proceed further, troubles will beset the agricultural industries. For the last few years we have been worried with many insect pests which have destroyed crops—pests that we have never heard of before. We

will always be faced with trouble, and it is most essential that we should keep up with the times and produce legislation that will give protection to agriculturalists.

Mr. Hearman: Do seed potatoes come under this measure?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill refers to all seeds.

Mr. Hearman: So no potato seed will be sold that has not been certified?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will have to be inspected to see that it is free of noxious weeds and labelled accordingly.

Mr. Hearman: At present the certification of potato seed is something different.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I could not say. I have not a knowledge of the matter. If the hon. member fears anything, he can bring the matter up in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Definitions:

Mr. HEARMAN: I would like an assurance from the Minister in connection with potato seed. At present there are in usage amongst potato growers the expressions "certified seed" and "uncertified seed." Certified seed is that which has been inspected by departmental inspectors and considered to be sufficiently free from potato diseases to warrant a certificate. Generally it means that the crop has been inspected three times during the growing period. The grower may have taken certain steps to eradicate diseases during the growing period, and certified seed is worth rather more than uncertified seed. I suppose a great deal of the seed planted every year in the potato growing areas is not certified seed within the meaning of the definition I have given; and under this measure it seems to me that potatoes would be included in the word "seed." That would mean that nobody could sell potatoes that were not inspected.

If the provision is agreed to as it stands it may embarrass the potato growing industry. If the definition of "seed" in the Bill were agreed to the measure would require a great deal of policing as regards the potato growing industry. I would like the assurance of the Minister that the definition of "seed" will not interfere with the present practice of growers in handling seed potatoes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think the growers will be embarrassed in that regard. All prescribed seeds will be subject to inspection and I think the present method of inspection of potatoes is satisfactory. The hon. member mentioned

that two or three inspections may be made of the foliage during the growing period. The measure will give the inspector power to inspect the seed—at any time—which a grower is offering for sale. That will be in the interests of the grower.

Mr. Hearman: What about the person who has not got certified seed?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I take it that following one of the inspections the seed would be certified.

Mr. Hearman: Even if it is not certified there is nothing to prevent the grower selling it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I take it the Bill will prevent that.

Mr. Hearman: I would say that more than half the seed at present planted is not certified and is not up to the standard that would allow it to be certified.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member will agree, the Bill can pass through this Committee and inquiries can be made in the meantime.

Mr. Hearman: I will agree to that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister could have allayed the fears of the member for Blackwood by pointing out that the legislation does not provide that potatoes shall come under it. Clause 6 of the Bill states that the Act shall apply to such seeds as are prescribed. The principle of the measure is to improve, in the interests of those who buy seed and of those who sell it, the practice under which seeds are bought and sold, inasmuch as there will be a guarantee as to quality and reliability. The Bill arises from a decision of the Agricultural Council to improve the quality of seed sold and thereby ensure better value for the money expended on seed. It has been quite common, on buying 100 lb. of seed, to find perhaps half of it rubbish.

The Minister for Lands: I mentioned the 1,000 bushels of lupin seed which I bought at 30s. a bushel.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If we can devise a scheme which will ensure that all seeds are true to sample and of a quality that will give good germination we will render excellent service to all concerned. If any injustice is discovered under the operation of the legislation representations will be able to be made to the department in order to remedy the fault. This measure is long overdue and, to make it effective, similar legislation in all the States is necessary. It is hoped that eventually it will be possible to rely absolutely on a certification of seed given by the Department of Agriculture of any State in the Commonwealth. When that can be done buyers will be more confident in expending their money on seed than they can be under existing circumstances.

Mr. OWEN: The definition of "seed" shows the word to mean any part of a plant in which it is reproduced sexually.

So-called potato seed is reproduced vegetatively. It is only when persons are endeavouring to produce new types of potatoes that they are grown from true seed, and therefore what is generally known as potato seed will not come within the legislation.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Report of analysis *prima facie* evidence in proceedings under this Act:

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I would like the Minister to explain the meaning of the words "*prima facie*" in the fifth line.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The meaning of the words "*prima facie*" was quite clearly explained last evening on another Bill by the Attorney General. It means—

The Minister for Works: Overlapping of the debate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS:—that a proven case has to be made out.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It means that it has already been made and has to be disproved.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. A case has to be made out that such and such is conclusive evidence. This provision allows the person charged to defend himself and the case has to be proved against him before any proceedings can be taken.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I do not think that is what it means at all. To test the feeling of the Committee, I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of Subclause (1) the words "shall be *prima facie* evidence of the identity of the seed" be struck out.

If some of the legal fraternity on the other side of the House rise to their feet they might be able to make out a better case than the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I trust the Committee will not agree to the amendment. The words "*prima facie*" can best be defined, in ordinary language, as meaning "at first sight" or, "on the face of it." So if the statement given by the officer who analyses the seeds is, "on the face of it" or "at first sight" proof that the seeds are not according to the standard required, it leaves the defendant fully at liberty to prove the contrary and requires, if he does rebut the evidence, that the complainant proves the evidence he has presented in rebuttal and that the *prima facie* contention is not correct. Therefore, the only thing that it does is to obviate the necessity of going through the whole of the analytical proceedings in the court unless the defendant is in the position to show that the certificate is, on the face of it, incorrect. It is a reasonable and just way to handle a case of such

a nature because it does not prevent the defendant from presenting the fullest evidence that the certificate is *prima facie* out of order, and then there is the onus on the complainant of proving that the evidence is wrong.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 20 and 21—agreed to.

Clause 22—Evidence of person being a seed analyst or inspector:

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: There is no doubt as to what this clause means. I do not want the defendant to be forced to prove the contrary. This provision of proving to the contrary is creeping into every Bill that has been introduced lately. I move an amendment—

That in line 5, after the word "Act," the words "shall be deemed sufficient unless the defendant proves the contrary" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I suggest to the Minister that he will have to report progress now and fix his Bill up because something has been done which, I feel sure, he does not want done. The striking out of these words renders the clause completely ineffective, incomplete and meaningless. Under those circumstances, is the Minister satisfied for the whole clause to go out? If he is, it is quite all right, but I would like to know if he is so satisfied.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I suggest that I leave the Bill as it is and I will have the matter examined with the object of a provision being inserted by another place.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 23 to 26, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—PERTH TOWN HALL.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [5.12] in moving the second reading said: The Bill deals with a new town hall site and undoubtedly it will be extremely interesting to many members in this Chamber because over many years this question has been discussed by interested bodies and at least it now appears that we have been able to arrive at an agreement with a view to reaching some finality in the matter. During the last half century, many proposals have been made in regard to a site for a new town hall. One of them made in 1906 reached the stage of being introduced in a Bill

to this House and passed, but it failed to pass through another place. Shortly afterwards a proposal was considered for the use of portion of Stirling Square for the town hall, but nothing came of it. Other proposals were made in the years intervening between 1908 and 1922, but none of them reached fruition.

In 1933 suggestions were made by the City Council for the use of portion of Government House grounds; portion of the Esplanade and Supreme Court Gardens, or for a site on the Esplanade between William and Barrack-streets, but these proposals did not result in any agreement. A subsequent suggestion in that year for the use of portion of Stirling Square was rejected by the Government at that time. In 1945 a joint committee was set up, consisting of senior Government officers and representatives of the Perth City Council. This committee gave consideration to 27 proposed sites. The second choice of the majority of the committee was what is known as the Stirling Gardens on a site situated approximately where the Department of Agriculture and the temporary buildings of the Australian Broadcasting Commission are located.

This committee presented its report on the 30th July, 1946, and some time after the present Government took office in 1947 the City Council was approached with a proposal for the exchange of an area in Wellington and Lord-streets, where the municipal depot is situated, for the Stirling Square site. This proposal was not acceptable to the City Council at that time. Subsequently, a sub-committee of Cabinet negotiated with a committee appointed by the Perth City Council with a view to reaching an agreement. The joint committee made recommendations which were finally agreed to by the Government and the Perth City Council, subject to parliamentary approval. The recommendations agreed to were:—

The Government to grant the council a title in fee simple of an area of land for a new city hall, forming portion of the Stirling Gardens site with a frontage of approximately 212 feet to St. George's terrace by a depth of approximately 415 feet. The balance of the Stirling Gardens area to be vested in the council in perpetuity as a reserve for beautification and recreation, the maintenance of gardens to be the major item of beautification; agreement to be reached between the council and the Government as to the retention of suitable space between the existing Supreme Court buildings and the proposed council buildings.

For the information of members, there are two plans on the walls of the Chamber which set out the agreement between the two parts.

The Government to agree to the widening proposals of St. George's terrace and Barrack-street by approximately 20 feet; the council to agree to transfer to the Government its land at Wellington and Lord-streets, of approximately 5½ acres, with a frontage of nearly 300 feet to Wellington-street opposite the Royal Perth Hospital.

Mr. Graham: Does that include the hotel?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, the plans will show that. This land is required by the State in connection with the expansion of the hospital and is to be transferred to the Crown in exchange for the land granted to the council for the City Hall, nothing being paid in connection with the exchange but subject to the right of the council to remove its improvements on the land in Wellington and Lord-streets, which may be required in connection with the establishment of a new municipal depot. The recommendations continue—

The council to agree to the buildings occupied by the Department of Agriculture and by the Australian Broadcasting Commission remaining on the Stirling Square site for such period as may be agreed upon, free of rental to the Crown; the State to agree to the council remaining on its depot land in Wellington and Lord-streets, free of rental, until such time as the new municipal depot shall have been established by the council; the Government to make available, free of charge to the council, a strip of Crown land along the northern side of Wellington-street, forming part of the land held and used for railway purposes as soon as the Railways Commission has completed remodelling of the railway goods yard; this land to be used for the purpose of widening Wellington-street by 24 feet, the cost of the work to be borne by the City Council.

This Bill, if passed, will bring to a conclusion negotiations which have been carried on over a very long period, and I commend the proposed agreement to the House for approval. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

As to Papers.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I would like your guidance, Mr. Speaker, before I move the adjournment of the debate. I think this Bill cannot properly be debated until all members have a knowledge and background far greater than that given by the Minister. I would ask that all papers dealing with this matter from 1940 onwards be tabled, including the report of the special committee appointed by me.

Mr. Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition asks if the papers can be tabled?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: I take it that the Leader of the Opposition would like all papers dealing with the negotiations since 1940 onwards to be tabled.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Thank you.

The Minister for Lands: I can see no objection to that, and I will have them available as soon as I can.

Debate Resumed.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

BILL—WELSHPOOL-BASSENDEAN RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.]

MR. BRADY (Guildford - Midland) (5.20): In speaking to the second reading of the Bill, I want to say that I feel it is being unduly rushed. It would have been much better had the Government held the Bill over until next year instead of bringing it down at this stage of the session and expecting members to vote intelligently on it, or appreciate the significance of this vast move. It is a project involving half a million pounds, and I believe that some of the road boards have not yet any official intimation as to what it entails. I know the Bassendean Road Board heard a rumour in the middle of November, and when they made an inquiry, they were told it was more or less secret and confidential, that they should not have the information, and should keep it to themselves. I venture to say that there are some residents who do not know that this land is being resumed, and are likely to lose their houses in two years. The road boards have not had time to discuss this matter and I think businessmen and others likely to be affected should have been given time to consider it.

I was very annoyed last night when the Minister mentioned that a committee had been considering the matter. There are three prominent officers, including the Lord Mayor of Perth himself, on this committee, and it would appear that their main objective is to help the City of Perth to get over some of its traffic problems and to help solve some of the goods-shed problems in West Perth. It seems to me, however, that the interests of working-class people have not been considered at all. I want to enter an emphatic protest that there was not a representative of my electorate of Guildford-Midland, or of the local governing bodies, on the committee. There have been rumours that something was in the air, and any argument by the Railway Department or any other department that they were to keep it secret does not carry any weight at all. I think it

would have been better if the local governing bodies had been asked to sit on the committee and put forward their views for consideration.

I would like to know the position in regard to the 60 per cent. traffic from the South-West line coming through Perth on to the Great Eastern line. I cannot see how that is possible, but it may be so, and if it is I am not opposed to the idea of having another line coming from the South-West and connecting with Bassendean. I think, however, that a proposition should have been put up which would have obviated the 60 or 70 people in Bassendean losing their homes as they will do under the present scheme. About half-a-dozen houses, built about three years ago at a cost of anything from £1,500 to £2,000, are going to be scrapped to bring in this new railway. With the acute housing shortage we have today, it is not necessary that this Bill should have been dealt with this session at all. I think a Select Committee should be appointed to go into the ramifications of this scheme and to consider it.

Having regard to the remarks of the Minister last night, I am not satisfied that there is any necessity for any traffic to go through the City of Perth at all. I think it could be by-passed and that the traffic could go through Cottesloe to Fremantle, and possibly from Welshpool through Victoria Park to Fremantle. If a Select Committee were appointed, it could go into these details. Possibly the line could be terminated at Guildford, Midland or Bassendean. The Railway Department, by means of its buses, could handle passengers coming from the country, and by this means could also handle its own passengers. As I said before, traffic could be by-passed so far as Perth is concerned, possibly through Welshpool and Victoria Park. I believe in years gone by these possibilities were considered, and I think it was an impossible proposition to introduce the Bill last night and expect me, as member for the district, and also the general public, to grasp the significance of this move.

Assuming that the Government has made up its mind that the project is going through, whether or not there is any objection to it, I would like, as far as the people of Bassendean are concerned, to see it brought through Belmont Park, Whatley station and in front of Crescos, and thence to the final terminus instead of the route at present proposed, through what we might call the back of Bassendean and along the river foreshore. That would mean that, instead of having to abolish the 15 houses, as under the present scheme, no houses at all would have to be abolished. By doing that it may be possible to take in a project considered for many years, and put forward by the Bayswater Road Board, of having something in the nature of an overhead bridge somewhere near

Whatley Park. The road should be straightened out in that area so that the traffic would not have to go over that part which is now at the southern end of Cresco's factory.

Under the proposition I am putting up the line could go in at the top end of Cuming Smiths and Hadfields, and if it is accepted, I believe anything up to a mile-and-a-half to two miles would be saved; 15 new homes would not have to be pulled down; and certain other transport difficulties in connection with roads might be solved in that area. I hope the Minister will endeavour to have that alternative route considered. Apart from the question of saving these homes from being demolished, my proposition would prevent the river foreshore being spoilt. It might also make it possible to have the road traffic carried through Bayswater conveyed over the proposed new route which could pass over a subway or, alternatively, the road could be run over a bridge across the railway in that area.

In considering the plans for this project which was explained by the Minister, I cannot help noticing, and it seems rather significant, that whilst the workers' homes have to be demolished, not one factory, as far as I can see, will be affected by the proposal. It would appear that the civil engineers who considered this projected railway went out of their way to avoid demolishing factories, whether large or small. They have given very little regard however, to the homes of the working people. I mention that because it seems we are getting to the stage already reached in America many years ago, where industry, profits and capital must be considered to the exclusion of the welfare of the people and of their future.

I want to register a very strong protest that these factories should be avoided and workers' homes abolished. The reason for this is, I presume, to permit industry to expand. We might well consider the advisability of pushing out some of the industries into more distant parts of the metropolitan area rather than interfere with the homes of people. I estimate that not fewer than 100 to 150 people will be directly affected if this project is carried out. Approximately 100 will lose their homes and another 50 will be affected by the noises from trains and the risk of damage from fire, etc., caused by the trains running past their homes. This will lead to a depreciation in the value of hundreds of workers' homes in the Bassendean-Bayswater area.

It is not necessary that this project should be gone on with as regards bringing the line out directly opposite Hadfields, cutting through Geraldine-street along Eileen, Kathleen and Hardey-streets to the river. Requirements could be met by adopting another route, namely, cutting through from Whatley Park, in front of the Cresco

Works and along the main line up to Cuming Smith's and between that and Hadfields, as shown in the plan before the House.

I greatly regret that the local authorities were not taken into the confidence of the committee because they could have been of assistance to it, and probably could have been the means of saving a considerable proportion of the expense that has been entailed in drawing up plans and estimates, taking aerial photographs and carrying out all the preliminaries necessary to such a work. No doubt the members of the committee were men of high qualifications, but I cannot help thinking that, when framing their recommendation, they had uppermost in their minds the idea of relieving the traffic congestion in Perth, particularly in Roe and Wellington-streets, and also relieving the pressure on the goods sheds at West Perth. I am not sure that this is not another aspect to which consideration should be given.

If commercial and industrial people wish to build their premises on the other side of the Beaufort-street bridge, they must expect to put up with traffic congestion. All of them seem to desire to keep their premises within a mile square of the Perth railway station and the General Post Office. If the Government favours decentralisation, as we are led to believe it does from the propaganda that has been issued from time to time, it should discourage these people from building their commercial and industrial enterprises adjacent to the Perth railway station. They should be told to get out behind Morley Park, Bassendean, Welshpool and Belmont, into outlying areas that have not been developed. The Government, by endeavouring to relieve the pressure on the goods sheds at West Perth, only encourages these people to concentrate their activities within a mile of the Perth railway station.

I am not satisfied that it will be in the best interests of pedestrians to widen Wellington-street and Roe-street. At present traffic has to keep down to about 15 miles an hour in order to reach its destination in safety, but if those streets are widened, speeding up will ensue, just as happens in other parts of the city at present, and pedestrians will be exposed to greater risks than they are now.

Mr. Griffith: What about the Safety Council?

Mr. BRADY: The Safety Council had no representation on the committee and it should have been represented. That is one of my criticisms of the committee. Representatives of the Safety Council, Public Works Department, Main Roads Department and local authorities should have been given an opportunity to explain their angle.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: There are only two sorts of pedestrians—the quick and the dead.

Mr. BRADY: Apparently the City Council intends to pass the buck to the Perth Road Board, the Bayswater Road Board and the Bassendean Road Board by diverting all the heavy traffic to those districts, and those local authorities are already hard-pressed financially and will not be able to bear the additional burden. All the disabilities arising from heavy traffic passing over roads will be transferred from the City of Perth to those local authorities.

The more I consider the matter, the firmer I become in the belief that it should be referred to a Select Committee for further investigation. I believe the Bill will be tackling the problem in only a piecemeal fashion, whereas we should have a plan envisaging traffic requirements in all respects for 50 years ahead. This project, as I have pointed out, will deal with only one aspect. I am not at all opposed to the construction of the line if it is proved to be necessary to by-pass the traffic coming from the South-West to the other line. If it is necessary, let us go on with its construction, but we should consider the other aspects involved and also whether it would be advisable to continue to bring passenger trains from the country into Perth.

I devoted the whole of this morning between Bassendean and Bayswater in an attempt to gain some information that would enable me to protect the interests of the local authorities and the people likely to be affected. I found that the existing main line from Bassendean to Perth, allowing for a 10ft. strip on either side, occupies a space of about 30ft.; that is to say, the two lines plus the 10ft. clearance on either side occupy 30ft. I understand that with a line of 3ft. 6in. gauge, a clearance of 3ft. 6in. or 4ft. 6in. is recognised as being sufficient. In addition to the 30ft. of space I have mentioned, there is an additional 30ft. on either side so that approximately 100ft. of space is reserved for the main line.

I mention this in support of my proposition that the line should be taken from Whatley Siding near Bayswater, across to Cresco's and along one of those 30ft. strips either north or south of the present line, and it could then pass the Cresco Works, the new machinery shed belonging to Westralian Farmers Ltd. and Hoskins' proposed new foundry and behind Cumings Smith's works. I mention this to show the Minister that, as a layman, I believe there are possibilities of constructing the line along that route. I hope that this point will not be overlooked when the matter receives further consideration.

I should like to move at a later stage for the appointment of a Select Committee in order that the project may be examined more fully. Such an inquiry would enable the local authorities and people likely to be affected to give the matter proper consideration. I believe there are 50 or 60 people who will be affected and who will not realise the significance of this move

until they read the newspaper report, and probably some of them will not appreciate its significance even then, because I am of opinion that the story given to the House does not constitute the whole story. Doubtless the Minister has told the story so far as he knows it, but the location of the marshalling yards on the north side of Bassendean will mean that the line will leave the Bassendean station at right angles and thus leave the present main line entirely. Thus many business premises will be affected as a result of the line taking a different route into Perth.

The matter is too important to be rushed through at this late stage of the session, and I hope that I shall receive some support if I decide to move to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. I have made these remarks because I feel upset at the knowledge that the local people have not been given an opportunity to discuss the project, and I trust that the Minister will not endeavour to get the Bill through before the local authorities have been afforded an opportunity to state their views.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.43]: I join with the member for Guildford-Midland in entering an emphatic protest against the Government's action in submitting a Bill of such importance in the dying hours of the session. There has not been sufficient time to inform ourselves as to the merits and demerits of the proposal. I also protest against the action of the Government in consulting all the authorities concerned, except those through whose districts the railway will run or in whose districts the marshalling yards will be placed. The local authorities have been entirely ignored.

The Bayswater Road Board, which will lose a substantial portion of its territory if the project is carried out, knew nothing about it until this morning when I contacted its members about 11 o'clock and brought the proposal to their notice. Now they are keenly interested, and are very apprehensive of the effect that the project will have on their district.

Undoubtedly there is a congestion of goods traffic in Perth, and it is understandable that the authorities should be anxious to by-pass the city with a lot of traffic, if that is at all possible. The block on which my parents reside and where I lived as a lad was to be resumed for the purposes of a railway to be constructed south of the river. From time to time the question of building a line south of the river has been considered. It was discussed by the Town Planning Commissioner, who submitted a report before 1930, but nothing definite was done. Doubtless the Minister gave the House all the information that had been supplied to him, but we have been given no indication whether this project will dovetail in with a scheme to divert the route of the line

to Fremantle to the south side of the river, which has been mentioned for a long time, for the purpose of diverting traffic from the city. The Minister said that if the proposition were agreed to, 60 per cent. of the traffic would by-pass the city.

The Minister for Education: No, I did not. I said that 60 per cent. of the traffic on the South-West line would be re-routed to the eastern line.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The case then is not so substantial because this will not relieve the traffic to or from Fremantle. The cartage of super. from the port will continue and wheat from the wheatbelt areas to the bulkhandling installations at the port will still have to pass through the city. Whilst some relief may result from the proposition, a large amount of traffic will not by-pass the city.

As far as the timber industry is concerned, most timber merchants who fabricate timber are located in the city itself. Bunnings, Millars and Whittakers are on the western side of the city of Perth, and although the State Sawmills have a yard at Carlisle, they also have another at Mt. Hawthorn. Therefore the haulage of timber will still go through the city, and the proposal will not bring any relief. If the machinery measure—the Bassendean Marshalling Yards Bill—is carried, it will mean the excision of a good portion of land in the Bayswater territory. It will also affect many workers who have permits to build, and others who are in the course of erecting homes, and still others who have recently built homes, because they will have to move.

The worst feature is what happens when Governments—Commonwealth or State—make resumptions. The Commonwealth Department of Works and Housing resumed an area at Redcliffe during the war for the purpose of an airport. The compensation paid in respect of many houses there was quite inadequate compared to the disabilities with which the people had to contend. Some occupants of houses were told they had to go, and yet the houses remained. I know of one man who returned from the Middle East, and he had a wife and six children. He was absent without leave for some weeks because his wife and family who were under an eviction order had to get out of their home. The house, however, was not demolished but was subsequently let to an Italian family. The woman who was evicted has never forgiven the department for that. Other houses have not been demolished although they are inside the airport area. No doubt the Minister has made provision for compensation beyond what is provided under the Public Works Act but even so, because of the existing housing conditions, I have no doubt that many people will not be able to establish themselves the same as they are today. Unless the Government places them in houses I have

no doubt that many of them will suffer considerably. About 35 houses will be resumed at the western end of Bayswater, nearest Perth.

When the Bill was introduced last night at about 12.30 a.m., I examined the plan, and subsequently contacted the local authorities, and they have since been active in the matter. They have had an interview with the Minister for Railways and Transport, and he suggested they see the civil engineer, which they did, but they got no satisfaction from him. It is disturbing to them because they knew nothing about the proposal. The chairman of the Bayswater Road Board was told by the civil engineer that the department was only sorry because it could not go ten chains further towards Perth. Whilst it is submitted that what is proposed in the Bill will deal with the problem for the next 50 years, if the civil engineer wants now to go ten chains nearer to Perth, then the time may not be far distant when cash will be paid out for further resumptions on the western side of the Bayswater railway station.

In addition to local authorities, there are many people interested. I doubt whether half the members in this Chamber have read the speech of the Minister who introduced the Bill. Of course, they could not do so unless they had a proof of it. Very few members heard him as he was talking to a lean Chamber because the hour was late and the sitting long. I doubt whether 50 per cent. of the members know the substance of the matter with which we are dealing. The measure is important because of the amount of money to be expended under it, and because of the number of people who will be disturbed. Certain local authorities should have been consulted and their advice sought. To expect the Bill to be passed within 24 hours is altogether too much.

The member for Guildford-Midland suggested that the matter be referred to a Select Committee. That is a good suggestion. All the ramifications could be considered. Further north of the area outlined in the plan, there are hundreds of thousands of acres practically not being used at all. Even though it might mean that the line would go a mile further in, if some of that country were used we would have a larger area to draw on compared with the present proposition. In view of the fact that the present area may not be long enough, a Select Committee, if it were appointed, could consider that aspect. No doubt when the Minister speaks in reply he will point out that it was a comprehensive committee with expert knowledge that made the recommendations, but even expert knowledge is not always right. Those administering the railways seek to economise in their operations, but the

convenience of residents of long standing must be considered. In the main, where it is possible to preserve the rights of the individual, it should be done.

This scheme will deface the district of Belmont. At least half a dozen road bridges will have to be constructed, and there will be many crossings. The Belmont Park Road Board, which has a limited revenue, is apprehensive that its road system, built at considerable cost, will suffer, and that the Railway Department will not effect necessary repairs. The line will cross the Great Eastern-highway, where it will have a bad effect. The Minister said last night that to establish the marshalling yards at the eastern end of Midland Junction would cost approximately £900,000 and the operation costs, when the yards were established, would be £90,000 odd per annum. That scheme was ruled out because the proposition now before us was more economical.

Reference was made by the member for Guildford-Midland to the line traversing Hardy-road. I remember some years ago putting up a proposition to the then Minister for Works, and the late Commissioner of Main Roads, to build a road right through. I understand the Housing Commission holds a good deal of land there for the purpose of building workers' homes, and I believe that recently it resumed a considerable area. The proposed line will run along the river through a beautiful residential area. The railway will have a detrimental effect there unless the existing track is used as a double line. Before 9 o'clock this morning I received a telephone call from a person who was keen on by-pass roads, and such things, and he pointed out to me that the Government would be wasting money by running a line almost parallel with the existing railway for a couple of miles; and that the existing line could be used. No adequate reasons have been given to show why that line cannot be used.

The Minister for Education: Is that the Perth racecourse line?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: No, the existing north-eastern line. I am told that not all the information has been made available to us. I understand, from speaking with the engineer, that the existing north-eastern line will be displaced by the line going through the marshalling yards at the back of Cresco's. That line will not function, and instead of the main line coming from Perth, it will run through the marshalling yards and so be removed from its existing location. That is the information given to the representatives of the Bayswater Road Board this afternoon.

Mr. Marshall: How are they going to connect up with Bassendean?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: This chord line, referred to by the Minister, will come in just before the Bayswater Station, near Cuming Smiths. The second main railway line will come through Bayswater and then divert a little to the north-east, go through the marshalling yards and come into Bassendean Station that way. That information has not been supplied to us, but the members of the Bayswater Road Board are particularly concerned about the excision of portion of their residential area. It will have a deleterious effect on that particular district because the township, shopping centre and residential area is hilly country and from an ascetic point of view it will be destroyed if people have to look at marshalling yards.

If the matter were submitted to the road board for it to put up a proposition to the Minister, and in turn to the Civil Engineer, an alternative site could be suggested which would not destroy the beauty of the town. The Minister may not know the geographical features of this area but the suggested site is near Beechboro-road. People would not want to build anywhere near marshalling yards while the residents who are already there will have to put up with the noises of shunting and so on which are connected with such yards. Therefore, in all the circumstances, I suggest that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee.

This question has been delayed for 50 years now and one more year will not make much difference. It will be all the better if we can get the right site and, if a Select Committee is appointed, we will be able to obtain co-operation from all the parties concerned. It will also give people in the district an opportunity to submit their points of view and we could have information from the department as to what is intended in the future in regard to a railway line on the south side of the river.

Mr. Marshall: How does this affect the Belmont Park Road Board?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: It bisects the Great Eastern Highway coming from Leake-street and intersects the highway at a point in Aurum-street, continues almost diagonally across Belmont, over Fulham-street and almost directly on to the Welshpool crossing. So, it runs practically diagonally across Belmont from the Ascot Hotel.

Mr. Marshall: Does it not join up with the Belmont line?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, where it comes in just near Bayswater. The proposition is for the line to come from Hardy-road in Bassendean. There is a proposed bridge across the railway line and the line then turns in an easterly direction and cuts almost diagonally across Belmont until it gets on to the eastern side of Oats-street.

The area around this street has been developing in recent years. The line continues on until it reaches the Welshpool crossing.

Mr. Styants: How many level crossings do you think they will need?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I have not had time to examine the position, but over the main highway, and the main roads such as Belmont Avenue, it is proposed to build road bridges. Why not take the train over the bridges and leave the roads as they are? I make that as a suggestion although I am not an expert on that aspect of the question. But, the proposal will deface the Belmont district. We have often heard requests about a line on the south side of the river. It has been suggested that a line should come in from Greenmount, before it reaches Midland Junction, and that it should then be taken through on the south side of the river to Fremantle.

Mr. Yates: Do you think we will ever get a railway line on the south side of the river?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I do not know, but correlated with this proposition is the question of the uniform gauge. The Commonwealth report on the uniform gauge proposal suggested that there should be an independent line coming from Kalgoorlie, running on the south side of the river and into Fremantle. We have had no indication of what is intended and whether that proposition will be carried out. All these aspects are important and they should be considered. We have come to the stage where we should consider an over-all plan and not have it submitted piecemeal in this fashion.

The Bill is of great importance to the people in the locality and a considerable number of them will be disturbed. These people have not been approached on the matter, all reports having come from departmental officers. There may be other points of view from the commercial interests and people who are vitally interested in the proposition. They may be able to make important contributions and suggestions. Therefore, the Bill should not be placed before Parliament at this stage of the session. We have no guarantee that the boundary will stop at Beechboro-road in Bayswater. Maybe the department will want to go closer to Perth.

I lived for many years in New South Wales and worked in the Railway Department in that State. The difficulty there was that the population increased around the running sheds and marshalling yards and those yards had to be shifted miles out of Sydney. Why does the department want to go only a few miles out of Perth? Things will only get more difficult in a few years. Surely there are other areas of land in this country which are further removed from the metropolis than five or six miles.

We are frequently told that there is no land available in Western Australia but there are thousands of acres a little further out north of the Cresco works. If that land had been chosen it would not have disturbed anybody. It is just hungry sand. The area is removed from all existing facilities such as water supplies, schools, electric light and gas. But, if this proposition is agreed to people will be forced out into that area and in most cases those who desire to live in the district are workers. While this proposition may satisfy the department it certainly does not satisfy the people in the locality.

A Commonwealth Department established a factory in the centre of Bayswater a few years ago. That factory had a bad effect on the residential area. The Commonwealth just resumed the property and ignored the road board altogether. The Government apparently seems to be doing the same thing in this case. We have town planning laws and schemes and we request the co-operation of local authorities and this is the sort of thing we are going to do.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What sort of factory did the Commonwealth Government put there?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Some kind of aircraft factory at the corner of Garratt and Guildford-roads. The Commonwealth did that and ignored the wishes of the local authority. When the department had finished with the building it was just left. The same thing happened with the Guildford airport. The local authority complained about the Commonwealth over that matter. The Commonwealth just resumed the land and destroyed the general layout of the district. Members are supposed to inform themselves on these points, but we have not been given all the information and the public has not been considered. Therefore, the proposition outlined by the member for Guildford-Midland is a sound one, and if he will move for the Bill to be referred to a Select Committee I will support him because it will give all the parties concerned an opportunity to submit their points of view.

If the Bill is agreed to, this railway line will destroy the eastern suburbs which are working men's areas. Therefore, I hope that the Minister will agree to the appointment of a Select Committee. I feel certain he will. We will then get an idea of an overall plan and not have it submitted to us in a piecemeal fashion such as this. Town planning is an important factor and while the City of Perth and the Lord Mayor were anxious to get rid of their difficulties the baby has been laid at the door of the road boards in this particular area.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [6.12]: The ground concerned in this matter has been thoroughly covered by the two previous speakers and I enter the debate only because portion of the Bayswater district is included in my electorate. Over a considerable number of years the general consensus of opinion has been that there is an urgent need for a re-alignment of railway and traffic activities in the city and metropolitan area. The Town Planning Commission submitted a report, if my memory serves me rightly, some 20 odd years ago and there have been all sorts of movements to get co-ordination of traffic generally—the various aspects associated with the Railway Department, the standard railway gauge and a score of other such matters have been discussed. But, for some reason or other, the Government brings this Bill to us at this late stage in the session when members have little if any opportunity to analyse the proposition not only from its immediate effect but also as to the effect it will have on the future

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. SHEARN: At the tea suspension I was drawing attention to the need for the compilation of a complete town planning scheme for the metropolitan area, which would obviously include matters concerning the railways which are so important in relation to the development of the State. They are most important as they play an essential part in connection with any rehabilitation proposals involving the removal of the marshalling yards, by that means assisting in relieving the congested traffic conditions in the city area and also in connection with the traffic coming from the northern portions of the metropolitan area into the city proper.

In that connection it is unfortunate that the Government has not seen fit to take the public generally into its confidence, at least in some measure, with reference to town planning matters. The Government is to be commended upon the principle involved in the Bill but it is most unfortunate that it should be brought down at this late stage of the session because of its great importance, particularly to the suburban areas that are directly affected. I refer to the Bayswater and Bassendean areas. I hesitate to think that it was intentional, but it certainly represents an affront to those local governing bodies when one learns from the Minister that the Perth City Council had a representative on the committee which dealt with the subject in recent months.

Despite the fact that the other local authorities are so vitally concerned, they knew nothing about the matter and one would have thought that they would have been invited to participate in the consideration of these proposals. When we hear talk about lack of co-operation on

the part of local governing authorities, I ask the Minister if this is an indication of the way in which the Government can expect co-operation from them. In this instance the local authorities and their residents are vitally concerned. In both the local governing areas I have referred to, their roads will be affected if this scheme becomes an accomplished fact.

In these circumstances all local town planning goes by the board and all matters relating thereto. Moreover, various residents will be deprived of their recently-acquired homes. I am perfectly aware that all such matters have rightly to be subordinated to the general interests of the State. But surely local authorities directly representing the people concerned should have been taken into the Government's confidence. On these grounds I feel somewhat alarmed at the attitude adopted in connection with this Bill. I am hopeful that the Minister, when he replies to the debate, will be able to give the House some assurance that, outside the general principles involved, there will be no bar to consultations taking place between the local authorities representing their own interests and those of the ratepayers concerned and the Government, and that proposals which I know will be submitted in connection with the matter will be taken into consideration.

Unless some such assurance is received I will have to decide, and not until then, whether I shall be able to support the second reading. Although I have no technical knowledge of railway matters, it may easily be that questions of vital importance will ultimately be associated with the project. There is the matter of the convenience of the personnel associated with the undertaking concerned. I do not know what the Government proposes to do in relation to that aspect, as well as in connection with other factors. Having due regard to the great importance of this Bill to the country generally and to the people concerned in the immediate district, it will be for the Minister to give some definite assurance that the local authorities I have mentioned will be consulted in relation to the counter proposals which have been already informally discussed with the members for Middle Swan and Guildford-Midland and myself this afternoon.

If I can get that assurance, it may be quite possible to support the Bill. Unless that assurance is forthcoming I will be very reluctant to allow this measure to be unduly hastily passed through the House, leaving it to chance as to what the ultimate result will be with reference to the local authorities concerned and those whose properties will be affected because of this proposition.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned till a later stage of the sitting.

BILLS (6)—RETURNED.

- 1, Constitution Acts Amendments (No. 2).
 - 2, Lotteries (Control) Act Continuance.
 - 3, City of Perth (Leederville Park Lands).
 - 4, Bankruptcy Act Amendment.
 - 5, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).
 - 6, State (Western Australia) Alunite Industry Act Amendment.
- Without amendment.

BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS.*Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 13 and 14.

In Committee.

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

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendments made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council and that the managers for the Assembly be Mr. Nalder, Hon. J. T. Tonkin and the mover.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—RAILWAY (UPPER DARLING RANGE) DISCONTINUANCE.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.*Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the Bill, and had appointed the Minister for Agriculture, Hon. E. H. Gray and Hon. A. R. Jones as managers for the Council the President's room as the place of meeting and the time 7 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 7.43 till 7.48 p.m.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.*Conference Managers' Report.*

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have to report that the managers appointed by the Assembly met the managers appointed by the Council and it was agreed to reinstate

proposed new Section 22A in the form embodied in the Bill as transmitted to the Legislative Council. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—WELSHPOOL-BASSENDEN RAILWAY.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle)

[7.50]: I agree with previous speakers that it is very wrong that the Minister should introduce a Bill like this last evening and then expect the House tonight to know enough to enable a intelligent vote to be cast. We have had no chance of perusing the Minister's statement. We heard him last night discussing the Bill for a few minutes, but we need more time to make a decision. I agree that some relief should be given in respect of the bottleneck at the Perth railway yards. I consider that a railway route south of the river is sure to be established, and is very necessary. I do not know whether I am right, but I gather that when the railway is constructed from Bassendean to Welshpool, transport to Fremantle will be via Armadale, and when super. leaves Fremantle by train it will be taken to Armadale and thence to Welshpool and up to Bassendean. I do not know whether that is correct, but it is necessary that something should be done with the bottleneck.

As a layman, I would like the Minister to tell me why the present line from Bayswater to the Ascot Racecourse should not be used in this scheme. The Bill suggests that the new railway should come from Bassendean and meet the Ascot railway at the river, cross it parallel with the river and proceed to Welshpool. I want to know whether the Minister has any information why the present line from Bayswater to the Belmont station at the racecourse cannot be used. If it were, it would lessen the length of the line by two or three miles. I would also like to know which way it is proposed to cross the Great Eastern-highway when the railway line reaches that portion of the route. Will it go across the road over a high-level bridge, or will there be a high-level bridge for pedestrian and motor traffic? It is important to know how it is proposed to cross this very busy road. I do not think the Bill should be passed this evening. Unless we are given more time to consider it, I intend to support the suggestion of the member for Guildford-Midland that it be referred to a Select Committee.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [7.53]: I fully appreciate the necessity for something being done, and the need may be urgent. I feel, with other members, however, that sufficient time has not been

allowed us to give the proposal the consideration it should receive. This is the first occasion of which I know where it has been proposed to construct a railway—in this case of no great length, but it is a railway and has to be constructed—in relation to which we have had no advice concerning the advisory committee's views on the proposal. On all previous occasions when a Bill has been presented to Parliament to give authority for the construction of a railway, it has been accompanied by a report from the advisory committee, and that report has always been very informative and has usually given a fair outline of the proposed route. We all know what the battle of routes really means when different interests are fighting to have a railway constructed along a particular route. On this occasion, we have had no information from the advisory committee; and whether any alternative proposals were submitted to the Government for consideration, we do not know.

I happen to know this area fairly well. The route will cross a multiplicity of roads. I admit that many of them would not be considered of major importance, but they serve a sparsely-populated area and it was that area to which I made reference recently when speaking about the compulsory acquisition of land by the State Housing Commission. On that occasion I referred to the fact that there is a big area of land in this district which would be suitable for the Commission's purpose. I think the Commission is not unaware that this will be a thickly-populated district in course of time. If the proposed railway is constructed, it will be a source of danger, because it will cross a multiplicity of roads.

I agree with those members who have contended that the local authorities concerned should have had an opportunity to express an opinion on this proposal. I cannot support the measure as it has been introduced, because I consider there are alternatives that might be acceptable and would serve the purpose of the Railway Commissioners equally well and would not involve complications such as this proposal presents. But on further consideration, and given opportunity to hear those responsible for making such recommendations, I might be convinced that this is the best possible proposal, in the circumstances. The only actual justification submitted by the Minister when introducing the measure was that the Commission and the Perth City Council were anxious that the congestion due to the marshalling yards being located in Perth proper should be removed. That is all right for the Perth City Council, but I do not think it is a sufficiently weighty reason why the Government should ask members to deal with the measure so expeditiously as this. The Bill was introduced only last night and members have had no time in which to consider the proposal.

I do not know what progress the Government has made in its negotiations with the Commonwealth with regard to the broad gauge railway. Two propositions were submitted, as members know, and in them I played a part. One proposition was for the proposed new railway to go south of the river and the other for it to go north of the river, the northern route being that most favoured by the then Commissioner of Railways. If that route is considered by the present Railways Commission to be the more favourable of the two, the locating of marshalling yards at Bassendean would multiply the difficulties involved in changing over to the broad gauge. From memory I think the deviation was proposed to commence somewhere near Guildford. It was to leave the main trunk line there and run more or less parallel to it but some miles further to the north and, therefore, if the proposed new marshalling yards were located at Bassendean they would be right in the way.

If negotiations with the Commonwealth Government have gone far enough and it is proposed to adhere to the suggestion that the new railway should take the northern route, the marshalling yards will have to be placed somewhere other than is now proposed. I agree that with the greatly increased traffic that is handled by our railways the present marshalling yards at Perth are far too small and there must be a great deal of congestion there when railway officials are marshalling trains at that centre, but I feel that the matter cannot be so urgent as to justify our being obliged to reach a decision on the question this evening. The Minister has already informed the House that it is not proposed to construct the railway, with which the Bill deals, for about two years, and the matter therefore cannot be said to be terribly urgent. The Government could easily pick this legislation up again next session, by resolution, from the stage where it now is and in the meantime the proposals of the member for Guildford-Midland could be referred to a Select Committee, which could be converted into a Royal Commission during the recess so that all those concerned could be examined. In that way Parliament could have placed before it recommendations such as would avoid any serious conflict of opinion on the matter among members of this Assembly.

The Premier: What would be the good of a Royal Commission? Our railway advisers have gone into the matter thoroughly and have made this recommendation.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister never said that the Railway Advisory Committee had sanctioned the proposal after considering any alternative suggestions. If members are not given full information they cannot be blamed for taking a course

different from that desired by the Government. We know, from the speeches of members, that there are several local authorities vitally interested in the matter and that they will remain interested in it until the question is finalised. Members should not be asked to make a stab in the dark when dealing with a measure such as this. In the final analysis we are responsible for the construction of the railway—if it is constructed—irrespective of what the Railway Commission might favour and, without reflecting on the Railway Commissioners, I would point out that, with one exception, they are new to this country and might not be able to judge, as wisely as can those who have had a great deal of experience in this State, just what is best in relation to a proposal of this kind.

Technically it may be a simple proposition to construct this railway, but we are the representatives of the people and must take a broad view of the matter. We should not subscribe to a proposal that may ultimately be very costly to the taxpayers unless we first give it the fullest consideration. We have had experience of rushing through legislation of this kind only to find, after the lapse of a few years, that mistakes have been made. If the matter were to stand over until next session a thorough inquiry could be instituted. I would remind the Government that if our hopes for the expansion of this State are realised, Western Australia may, within a few years, be supporting a population of millions, and in such an event even the proposed marshalling yards at Bassendean would probably prove to be as congested as are the present yards at East Perth. Our city must expand north and east. It cannot extend westwards further than the ocean and the river hinders expansion to the south. If the Government agrees to a thorough investigation being held members will then, next session, be able to record intelligent votes on this legislation.

HON. E. NULSEN (Eyre) [8.12]: I am at a loss to understand why the Government should bring down such an important measure in the last week of the session. Having been given only a week in which to consider the question, I know nothing about the proposal and it is beyond my understanding why the Government should bring down a measure that might easily cost the taxpayers £350,000 or more, and expect the House to deal with it at such short notice. The Government should hold the measure in abeyance for 12 months and thus give members the opportunity of understanding what they are being asked to vote on. I am satisfied that not more than 20 per cent. of members in this House know anything about the proposal. We are told that experts have examined the proposition, but members know that such experts are not responsible for

the expenditure of the money involved and they sometimes make mistakes. Unless the Government follows the course that has been suggested it may find that there is an adverse vote on the measure. Should that occur it will not necessarily be due to any defects in the project, but will be because members have not been given the opportunity to understand it.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [8.15]: I was extremely surprised when the Government brought down the Bill before the House last night. It is one which involves, without the resumptions of land for the marshalling yards, an estimated expenditure of £350,000. It has to be recognised that we have not had an opportunity to know what the proposal entails. Last night I listened to about three-quarters of the Minister's speech until I was called to the telephone, but even during that time I gained only a sketchy idea of the question. I have not a copy of the Minister's speech and neither has any other member except he who got the adjournment of the debate. "Hansard" is not available to members at the moment so consequently we have only a hazy idea of the proposition.

Instead of the proposal costing only £350,000, I should say it will be nearer £750,000 because that figure does not include the cost of the resumption of land for the marshalling yards. Also, I do not know whether the amount estimated includes the cost of removing the East Perth loco. running sheds to Bassendean. So it will probably be like most other departmental estimates; 100 per cent. under the actual cost. I realise the necessity to relieve not only the congestion in the goods yards at Perth, but also in the bottle-neck which leads into those yards and the Perth Central station. Something will have to be done soon to overcome that congestion. However, it must be done with the least inconvenience and with the least amount of expenditure.

I have no objection to any proposal being put up by the Government to overcome those difficulties, but I want to know what is involved before I am prepared to vote for it. All I know is that the proposal is roughly to construct a loop line from Welshpool to Bassendean to by-pass Perth and East Perth. The marshalling yards will be established at Bassendean, for which some 428 acres are to be resumed, and the proposal includes the shifting of the East Perth locomotive shed to Bassendean. As to what is involved in the locality over which the line has to traverse, I have only a hazy idea and, before I am prepared to vote for the construction of the line, I want to travel over the suggested route and see what is to take place and what is involved. I can understand the members of the Perth City Council, who represent the business interests of the community, being particularly anxious to get

rid of the Perth goods yards because they are committed to quite a laudable project for the widening of Wellington-street, which will do quite a good deal to relieve the congestion of traffic in that area.

These representatives of the Perth City Council are, in the main, the representatives of the business and commercial life of the community, who have contributed more by their lack of foresight to the congestion of traffic in the Perth city block than any other section of the community, and especially that area in the vicinity of the railway station. Those commercial and business interests have kept all their establishments in the central block of the city and are, of course, particularly anxious to have every facility at their command to keep the trade in those three or four city blocks.

If such firms as Boans, Foys and Harris, Scarfe & Sandovers had taken a long-range view in the past and had established some of their businesses and large emporiums on the northern side of the railway, that would have done much more to relieve the traffic problem in the City of Perth than would the widening of Wellington-street. I know that quite a number of such firms would be favourable to the complete removal of the Perth railway station from its present site. Many large towns in the world would give quite a lot to have the railway station there in a position comparable to that at Perth where the trains can disembark their passengers almost in the heart of the city. Therefore, quite a lot can be said for the retention of the railway station on its present site.

What all the large capital cities in the Eastern States have had to face in the past is the same as what we have to face now. I fully realise that the areas which were reserved for railway operations some 25 or 40 years ago are totally inadequate for the job today. Eventually, when I get to know the whole of the implications behind this scheme, I may be prepared to vote for it. However, it is not fair to the members of this House to bring down a Bill of this magnitude some four or five days before the close of the session. Only a week ago the Premier assured us that he had no more important Bills to bring down, but in my opinion this is the most important piece of legislation that has been placed before the House this session. It demands a greater fund of knowledge and investigation by members before we are prepared to vote for its adoption or otherwise. Of course, the resumptions which will have to be made will now be costly, but it is inevitable that such steps will have to be taken in the area proposed, or in another area, for the purpose of shifting the Perth marshalling yards now or in the near future and, the longer we delay, the more costly will be the resumptions. Therefore, I have no objection to discussing the proposal when I know all the merits and demerits associated with it.

On a casual glance at the Bill I should say it is going to be the most expensive railway line the Government has ever put down. Its cost is to be £350,000, exclusive of resumption costs for the establishment of the marshalling yards. As there are only 6½ miles of line involved, the cost works out at £55,000 a mile and when we consider that the average cost of a railway line is £7,000 per mile, it must be realised that something elaborate is entailed with this particular line.

The proposal involves two alternatives. We are either going to have a number of level crossings, which will act as a trap to the unwary and careless drivers of motor vehicles, and which will be accentuated by the rapidly increasing number of motor vehicles in the metropolitan area, or we will have to close a number of streets. Not only will resumptions have to take place, but the proposal will affect all those unfortunate people who have invested their life savings in properties along the proposed route. Also, if the streets are closed in the area affected, it will retard for all time the progress that is being made in the vicinity. However, that position will arise no matter in which direction the proposed route travels, and it may be found that this will be the best proposal, but I want time to investigate it.

Another important feature which comes to my mind as an ex-engine driver, who had to travel to work at all hours of the day and night, is that the homes of the employees who work in the locomotive and traffic depots will be disrupted by the shifting of the loco depot, and Basendean will become the point of starting for many of the trains which will be manned by shunters, drivers and guards. The Railway Department will very quickly send a notice to its employees if they are living at a greater distance than three miles from the depot, because it considers that any point outside of that distance is too great for a call boy to travel in order to call the men in for work at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. There are hundreds of employees, including guards, shunters, drivers, firemen and cleaners who are required to go to work at all hours of the day and night, and who now have their homes within a three-mile radius of the main railway depot and the Perth railway station, where guards and shunters have to sign on.

What is going to be the arrangement for those men who have to go to work at such times? The railway management usually sends out a notice to such men in the form of an ultimatum when they have to live beyond the three-mile radius of their starting point. I would not be surprised if that will be the attitude adopted if this proposal comes to fruition and then, as a result of industrial trouble which may arise afterwards, the men will be called all kinds of Soviet agitators and will have all the blame placed upon their shoulders.

There are hundreds of men who have invested their life savings within three miles of the loco sheds because the Railway Department has demanded that they should live within that radius. So, in addition to other information, I want to know what is to become of these men who are now residing within reasonable distance of the Perth railway station and the loco sheds when the depot is shifted to Bassendean. Also, because of previous experience which I have had with Government departments, I am not at all assured that those people whose homes will be resumed will get a fair financial return for their properties from the Government. I have had a considerable amount of experience with Government departments and Ministers.

The other evening I told the story of a man who, in 1927, paid £75 for a block of land which was being compulsorily resumed after he had received a notice above the Minister's own signature and was eventually compensated to the extent of £35. Today the purchasing power of that amount would be worth about £18 compared to what it would have been worth in 1927, but the Minister said that to hear such tales of injustice was repugnant to him. The Minister was responsible for it, and so was the Government. Although special provision is made in this Bill to give the Minister or the Government the right to make an additional amount of compensation available to these unfortunate people over and above that which is usually decided upon in the Public Works Department, I have no confidence in it because of previous experience.

I do not believe that these people will be compensated to the extent of the cost in which they will be involved in a replacement of the homes that are resumed. I understand there are some nice brick and tile homes which will have to be resumed, and we know that at the present time, if these people were prepared to give vacant possession and to put their homes on the market, they would get £3,500 without any difficulty at all. But I guarantee the Government would not give them £3,500. The Government will put up all sorts of specifications and will finish up by giving them £1,500 for these properties.

There is much to be considered, and though I realise the necessity for this and I think that the quicker the job is done the least amount of dislocation and the least amount of resumption will take place, I have not had time to study the Bill and, at the present moment, I do not propose to vote for the second reading. But if it is held over till the next session, or referred to a Select Committee or Royal Commission, in the meantime I would be able to make myself conversant with everything that is connected with the proposal, and I may then be prepared to vote for it.

On motion of Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

BILL—BASSENDEAN MARSHALLING YARDS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [8.33]: This Bill is in the same category as the previous one and at this stage I think they are both connected. Accordingly, I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has just made a speech.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th November.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [8.34]: This Bill proposes to insert in the Constitution Acts Amendment Act a definition to cover self-contained flats. At present there is no definition in the Act covering either self-contained flats or flats of any kind. However, there is a Crown Law ruling which gives to the residents of certain types of flats the right to have their names placed on the Legislative Council roll as householders. That ruling by the Crown Law Department is accepted and operated upon by the Electoral Department. The ruling is a fairly broad one with the result that many people who occupy varying types of flats within the State are upon the Legislative Council electoral roll today as householders and, consequently, are entitled to record a vote at Legislative Council elections.

This Bill, if it were to become law, would insert in the Act a definition covering flats, that is self-contained flats only. In my view once a definition of that kind is inserted in the Act the existing Crown Law ruling would automatically cease to operate. The result would be that only persons occupying self-contained flats in accordance with the definition in this Bill would be legally entitled to be enrolled for Legislative Council elections.

The definition of self-contained flats as contained in this Bill is a very restricted one. For instance, such a flat must not only have separate sleeping and cooking accommodation, but it must also have separate bathroom accommodation. I think it will be very quickly realised that a great number of flats self-contained and otherwise, in this State today would be completely outside this definition. Most self-contained flats which would come within this definition would be flats of a fairly modern type and the rental to be paid per week for each one of them would, in the great majority of cases, be

a very heavy one, and one which the ordinary worker could not possibly meet. Therefore most of those people who would be given the legal right to be enrolled in the event of this Bill becoming law, would be the people whose political opinions for the most part are in the one direction. That would be unfair enough in any event.

When we consider that the insertion of this definition in the Act would put out of commission altogether the existing Crown Law ruling, we realise immediately that many hundreds of people now entitled to be enrolled and who, in fact, are enrolled as householders in connection with the flats they occupy, would lose their legal right to enrolment altogether. Therefore, this Bill in its present form is not acceptable to me. In passing I would like to mention that two or three weeks ago this House passed a Bill which I introduced for the purpose of giving the right to be enrolled for Legislative Council elections to the wives of all householders; it also proposed to give the right to be enrolled to returned Servicemen and returned Servicewomen. That Bill was dealt with in another place tonight, and was defeated at the second reading stage by 16 votes to eight votes. In the face of that I think members of this House should unani- mously refuse further to consider the Bill now before us.

The Attorney General: Do not you think it would be a good idea to get a definition? That ruling could be attacked and cause great disruption.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think that might be a good thing in a way, too. It might help to bring to a head the refusal of the majority of the members of another place to allow any reasonable liberalisation of the franchise for the Legislative Council.

The Attorney General: This could be very easily amended to meet with your wishes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is so, but I think, in view of what has happened in another place tonight, we should as a protest no longer consider this Bill now before us. The majority of the members of another place have refused to give the right of enrolment for the Legislative Council elections to even ex-Servicemen and ex-Servicewomen, yet they are asking us, as members of the Legislative Assembly, to give the legal right of enrolment to people occupying self-contained flats, making the definition so restricted as to render it possible only for people who can afford to pay £5 a week rental to occupy this class of flat to have a legal right to vote for the Legislative Council. I oppose this Bill and I hope it will be defeated.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—
That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	22
Noes	21
Majority for		1

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Griffith

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Fox	Mr. Read
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Wise
Mr. Marshall	Mr. May
Mr. Needham	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Totterdell	Mr. Panton
Mr. Boveil	Mr. McCulloch

Motion thus passed.

BILL—AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD.

Council's Further Message.

Message from the Council insisting upon three amendments to which the Assembly had disagreed now considered.

In Committee.

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

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: For the reasons previously given, I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendments made by the Council.

Mr. RODORED A: We are entitled to more information than the Minister has given. We have not the information available to the Minister and we ought to be told what we are voting on.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am astonished at the hon. member because the amendments are printed on the notice paper, and we have already voted not to agree to them. The Council wishes to reduce the strength of the board from nine to eight. As the Government is finding the bulk of the money, it should have majority representation. Another amendment is consequential in that the Council proposes to delete the reference to the Chief Warden of Fauna, who was to be the ninth member.

Mr. RODOREDA: I thank the Minister, but, in courtesy to the Committee, he could easily have given that information in the first instance.

The Minister for Lands: I explained the position before and we are only continuing to disagree.

Mr. RODOREDA: We are entitled to be informed on each occasion exactly what we are voting on.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Why should we be in such a hurry by taking the three amendments together instead of dealing with them seriatim? If they were dealt with seriatim, members would have an opportunity to speak on any one of them.

The CHAIRMAN: The practice has been that where amendments have already been disagreed to, they should be taken together. That was my reason for accepting the motion.

Question put and passed.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council and that the managers for the Assembly be the Hon. J. T. Tonkin, Mr. Nalder and the mover.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1950-51.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day: Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

Vote—Child Welfare, £137,450 (partly considered):

Mr. MARSHALL: I understood the Minister to say that, when the increase took place and recipients came under the Commonwealth Social Service scheme, it was intended to reduce the allowance by the amount granted by the Commonwealth. I should like to be clear on that point.

The MINISTER FOR CHILD WELFARE: The position is rather the other way round. Those who do not receive pensions will be increased, it is anticipated, by the amount that the Federal pension is increased so as to keep them on a comparable basis.

Mr. Marshall: I think you speak with two voices.

The MINISTER FOR CHILD WELFARE: No, that is what I said. I have read the "Hansard" notes of my remarks quite recently.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £744,930:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. D. Brand—Greenough) [8.55]: In this my first essay to introduce the Estimates of a very important department, I wish to say at the outset that I have taken advantage of the opportunity, not only to acquaint myself with the various aspects of administration of the several departments under my jurisdiction, but also to travel somewhat in the country and see first-hand the problems which we face as a Public Works Department and which indeed are State problems. I consider that, of all the important problems that face the department, the one of greatest interest to everybody and most important to the State as a whole, if we are to carry the population that this part of the Commonwealth must do and if we are to continue to absorb the number of people arriving here, is that of water supplies.

Mr. Oliver: I should say so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Those who live in the drier areas of the State are fully aware of what an adequate water supply means to their districts, and those who live in towns or districts in areas of secure rainfall appreciate what it must mean to be without an assured water supply. During this session we have heard quite a lot about water supplies. We had a very interesting debate, and I am afraid that it robbed me of a good deal of thunder for this occasion when dealing with the Estimates associated with water supplies.

As members are aware, a sum of £1,000,000 has been allowed out of loan funds for the comprehensive water supply scheme. The first stage of the scheme consists chiefly of the laying of steel mains to carry the water to the areas to be reticulated. The smaller pipes required for reticulation, I hope, will be manufactured locally. I am pleased to learn that Hardy's Ltd. is establishing a factory where it is hoped fibrolite pipes will be manufactured in greater numbers, thus assisting us in carrying out the very necessary work of reticulation in towns and districts after the water has been delivered there through the steel mains.

Mr. Cornell: Are you satisfied with the efficiency of fibrolite pipes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not a technician, but I understand that certain concrete pipes have not stood the test of time. However, as a layman, I must accept the advice of my officers and technicians. They have a full appreciation of the great expense that is being incurred, and they know that every effort must be made to see that the best quality pipe is used. When the comprehensive scheme was first mentioned here, we visualised that all the steel required for the mains and construction would be produced in the Commonwealth at a reasonable cost. But, owing to industrial hold-ups and shortages of steel and shipping, the output from the Broken Hill Pty., the only producer of

steel in the Commonwealth, has been so limited that only a small tonnage of steel plate has been available to this State for the manufacture of steel conduit. Because the Government recognised the importance of the scheme, and that in this financially buoyant time we should take advantage of the situation and get on with the job, it placed large contracts oversea for the supply of the necessary steel plate, which was landed in Western Australia, up to a few weeks ago, at a cost of approximately twice that of the local product.

Unfortunately, because of the worsening of the international situation, and because the great nations are preparing for war and building up their defences, we have found it most difficult to purchase steel at less than £57 a ton. In fact, I might say the Government is perturbed because certain contracts—especially those with British firms—have been cancelled. In spite of all these difficulties, and even taking into consideration that in the last two or three days the Korean war has developed to such a stage that nothing can be expected from international sources, it is hoped that the main arteries will be laid within three years, and that the laying of the smaller or reticulation pipes will be pushed ahead as supplies of conduit become available.

In connection with the comprehensive scheme and the Goldfields main, a contract has been let for a new electrically-powered pumping station at Mundaring to replace Nos. 1 and 2 pumping stations—the old steam pumps—which are now in operation. A contract has also been let for two pumping stations to be installed at Wellington Dam on the Narrogin main. Certain improvements have been made to the Goldfields water supply main. It has been pointed out in various debates that a bottle-neck existed at Grass Valley where the water was forced through a 24-inch main over a distance of two miles. That section has now been replaced by a 36-inch main, and it is hoped to duplicate the other two miles of 24-inch main, thereby eliminating the bottle-neck which for so long has decreased the amount of water which should be available. A diesel-operated booster pump of large capacity is being installed on the main at Kellerberrin, and this, no doubt, will increase the quantity of water pumped from there. To assist in building up a reserve, a new 8,000,000-gallon storage tank has been completed at the No. 8 pumping station, and, although on inquiry I find that the reservoir is not full, advantage is taken from time to time to turn the water into it. An additional 25,000,000-gallon storage tank will be constructed at Kalgoorlie. These tanks should greatly improve the water supply position during the summer months for the Eastern Goldfields.

An important part of the whole of the Goldfields system is the Mundaring Weir. An amount of £300,000 has been provided in the Estimates to make such improvements as are necessary there, and great progress has been reported this year. The top wall was raised 3 feet prior to last June, increasing the capacity from 4,650,000,000 to 5,300,000,000 gallons. Unfortunately, the winter rainfall was not sufficient to fill the enlarged capacity; in fact, the reservoir, early in October, held only 3,800,000,000 gallons, or approximately three-quarters of its original capacity. Because of the increasing demand on water supply in Western Australia—in particular the demand which will be made in the lower rainfall areas—it is necessary to make provision to catch whatever surplus water is available—not only for two or three years, but even for five years. With that in view, it is anticipated that we should raise the Mundaring reservoir wall by 32 feet and increase the capacity to 15,000,000,000 gallons. This work, we hope, will be completed by the middle of next year.

The other dam, which is part of the comprehensive scheme, is Wellington, and £50,000 has been provided for the work which it is anticipated will be done there during the current year. The work will consist of preliminary operations, such as the preparation of foundations, the erection of plant, and the accommodation for workers, etc. As the sections of work at Mundaring are completed, the men and plant will be systematically transferred to Wellington. In previous debates, some question was raised as to whether there would be sufficient water in the Wellington Dam to meet the demand which will be made upon it if such extensions as are envisaged for the future—they might even reach Lake Grace and Albany—are made. I am assured by the engineers that every precaution has been taken, and that when the dam is completed its capacity will be 42,000,000,000 gallons, whereas its present capacity is 870,000,000 gallons. It is estimated by the engineers that a safe draw would be 21,500,000,000 gallons. This allows for evaporation of approximately 3,000,000,000 gallons a year, and also for the years when the dam does not fill. The figures were calculated on the past 50 years of rainfall records available to the officers.

The anticipated wheatbelt requirement from Wellington Dam is 1,500,000,000 gallons on the basis that the whole of the original scheme is put into operation. The present irrigation draw from Wellington is 6,000,000,000 gallons, and the additional irrigation requirement is 12,000,000,000 gallons. The total predicted requirement is 19,500,000,000 gallons, leaving a margin of 2,000,000,000 gallons for Wellington. Therefore, I say there is little need to fear that adequate margins have not been allowed at the Wellington

Dam beyond the anticipated draw, even taking into consideration the fact that greater extensions will be made than have so far been approved. We have not been unmindful of the fact that the whole of Western Australia is not being catered for by the comprehensive scheme. As the Estimates of the Public Works Department were not discussed last year, I would be in order in pointing out that in areas such as you, Mr. Chairman, represent—Lake Grace and further east and south—and in areas north-east of the boundaries of the approved comprehensive scheme, the only way in which an attempt can be made to provide adequate water is to build reservoirs and water catchments.

As you, Sir, will know, great progress has been made in the provision of key dams and reservoirs in areas which, only two or three years ago, were without water for most of the year. Although this system necessitates the carting of water, which is very costly, it does give security to the people who live in those parts when faced with a long, dry summer. On completion of the construction of key dams at Pingrup and Ongerup, the Public Works organisation moved into the area represented by you, Sir, and, in September, 1948, constructed several new 2,000,000 gallon key dams. In this connection, the localities surrounding, Kukerin, Jane's Tank, five miles north of Lake Grace, Lake Biddy and Lake Newdegate come to mind.

The Public Works Department has recently completed a 10,000,000-gallon reservoir at Dingo Rock, and the water is reticulated to Beenong Siding, close to Lake Grace. This is to remain a reserve supply. That area has been fairly well catered for although at this juncture I am reminded that such towns as Dumbleyung are not well provided with water and, per medium of deputations who recently waited on me, I realise that the districts in and around that area are facing a serious problem this year. I am of the opinion that the Government should follow whatever course is possible to take advantage of good catchments so as to provide reserves of water anywhere throughout the State. It was pointed out to me by this deputation from Dumbleyung, that an excellent catchment area was available but that the reservoir was totally inadequate to take the water which ran off. I have requested the Government immediately to call tenders for the excavation of a dam at the lower point of that catchment area, which I hope will act as a reservoir and provide some margin in the years to come.

Mr. Cornell: What about Mt. Barker?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mt. Barker has had its share of publicity and I do not intend to give it an extra mention this evening. An area which, in some

way, has been neglected—and I do not want to be charged with being parochial—is the Midlands. When I say "neglected" I am not inferring that it has been overlooked by the previous Minister or the previous Government, but the fact remains that areas situated between the Midland and Wongan lines are without secure water supplies. Those areas lie within the light rainfall districts. The department therefore has asked that an extensive survey be made to ascertain how towns such as Dalwallinu, Carnamah, Mullewa and so on can be provided with an adequate water supply. We must provide these towns with water if we expect the country people to remain in those districts. If the farmers who now live around those areas are to remain there when they retire, I am afraid that we must provide them with amenities; water is one of the first essentials in that regard. Farmers must have those amenities if their conditions are to be comparable with those of their city brothers.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is the determination of the population everywhere.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, as the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, water determines the number of people who can live in Western Australia, and particularly in the drier rainfall areas. Geraldton, which is one of our larger towns going North, is one of the most difficult centres to provide with an adequate water supply. The present system is most inadequate and I have requested that the officers of the department make thorough investigations as to how a greater quantity of water can be made available and also water of a better quality. Any member who has journeyed to Geraldton will appreciate that the water there is not the best. At the catchment area on the Wycherina reservoir, certain bores have been put down and water is available although it is not of high quality. Geraldton boasts of a tomato-growing industry, and as this industry has expanded a great amount of water has been drawn from the scheme which was intended originally to supply only the town.

The department has put down a 10in. bore in the district and this is expected to relieve the potable water position for the town of Geraldton and the surrounding towns. New pamona pumps have been delivered to Wycherina and record pumping has been carried out there. Surveys and investigations to date reveal that we might have to go as far south as Gingin in order to get potable water of any quantity to supply those areas which are situated even as far north as Geraldton.

There are some places in this State where water carting has been going on all the year. There is one place that I know, Mullewa. That is a big railway centre and water has been railed from

Geraldton and other places for each of the 365 days. Water is now being railed to Bruce Rock, Kondinin and Narrogin and it is anticipated that water will be railed to Katanning and perhaps Boyup Brook. The railage of water constitutes a huge outlay financially. I am of the opinion therefore that in spite of the prohibitive costs of steel and production, the Government is justified in pushing ahead as fast as physically possible with the provision of water in every centre of the State.

Some attempt has been made to supply water to towns in the North-West. The provision of water to such towns represents a colossal cost to such a small population as we find in Western Australia. If adequate water supplies and finances are to be made available to these towns then I am afraid that the Commonwealth Government must subsidise freely. A sum of £33,000 has been made available for the completion of the Port Hedland water supply scheme. The rate of progress of this work is entirely dependent on the supply of pipes. I understand that two or three miles of piping have been laid and four or five miles are in sight. But I fear that the progress of this scheme will be delayed because the steel for the pipes is not forthcoming.

Mr. Marshall: How are you going to get on with the agreement to supply water for Katanning?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will talk about that later. I know that the member for Murchison has a fair knowledge of all the difficulties which face any Government. At present the extension to Mt. Barker will not worry the Government, and I can assure the hon. member that such undertakings as those to which I now refer will be carried on in the priority they were given originally.

Mr. W. Hegney: What is the priority for Port Hedland?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To finish the work as the steel becomes available! Some effort has been made by the Government to assist in the water supply scheme at Wittenoom Gorge. The sum of £25,000 has been provided for this work, and I understand that during this week the 4in. pipe-line that has been provided by the Government is being connected to the 2in. pipe-line provided by the company. This will provide a supply to the town which will only just meet its needs and help it over this year. When steel is available—it has been ordered, by the way—the 4in. line will be completed and their water problem will be overcome.

In this department we are also dealing with such works as the Fremantle Harbour. This has been the subject of much controversy throughout the year, mainly because of certain resummptions associated with the proposed up-river development, and with suggestions and inferences made

by laymen that further pollution of the river will take place as a result of this up-river extension. The Government has called in an engineer from South Australia so that we might have another opinion as to whether the harbour should be extended seawards or up-river to Point Brown, as suggested in Col. Tydeman's report.

For improvements at the Fremantle Harbour approximately £400,000 have been provided on the Estimates. Of this amount, £70,000 has been allocated for works in progress, including reconditioning of the berths, £100,000 for the provision of sidings and rail connections at Leighton Beach and £176,000 for new work in the first stage of the implementation of the Tydeman scheme. Not until we receive the report of Mr. Meyer—I understand the report will be coming forward within the next two weeks—can the Government make any decision as to whether the development will be up-stream or seaward.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Of course, none of this expenditure will be from revenue in any case.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. I now come to the Bunbury Harbour. A sum of £250,000 has been included in this year's Loan Estimates for the Bunbury development scheme. Satisfactory progress is being made with this work. The dumping of stone on the breakwater groyne is proceeding and also on the sand groyne extension on the east side of the bay.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Did you say Albany?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I said Bunbury, and I am sure the hon. member heard me correctly. Work is also proceeding on the new groyne being built near Turkey Point.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The member for Albany will feel that that is not justified.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Chairman knows that we acted on the advice of the same authority as suggested the improvements at Albany Harbour. If his opinion was considered suitable for adoption in connection with the work at Albany, I feel sure we are justified in accepting his suggestion in connection with the Bunbury project. Dealing next with the Albany harbour, £250,000 has been provided for work there during the current year. The preliminary work is in progress at that harbour in preparation for the arrival of the dredge "Sir James Mitchell." The first stage of the development of the Albany harbour project is the reclamation of approximately 60 acres of land and the provision of two additional deep water berths.

The dredge "Sir James Mitchell" arrived from England some weeks ago and, after being refitted in Fremantle, is now in Albany prepared to go ahead with the work. Some criticism was heard in respect of the substantial alterations that the department had to make to the dredge

after it arrived from England. Upon inquiry I found that the work cost approximately £500 and that amount was exclusive, of course, of the work that normally had to be done after such a long voyage, such as repainting and slipping for general overhaul. The improvement generally of the Swan River has not been proceeded with because of activities having relation to the substantial reclamation work that has to be undertaken and work in other directions as well. I refer particularly to the construction of the Fremantle harbour and the Causeway, together with other work associated with the latter undertaking.

On the question of river pollution, as a Bill dealing with that contentious subject is to be placed before Parliament, I propose to say nothing more about that until the legislation is before members. The architectural branch of the department has been particularly busy during the past four years of which I have knowledge. It has been called upon to provide plans for schools, hospitals, police stations and all manner of work.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is pleasing to hear the word "hospitals".

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The architects could not spend half a day on a hospital for Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Each case is treated on its merits, and the Works Department can act only on the recommendations of the other departments concerned. In those circumstances if there is any criticism regarding the priorities given to districts, I trust members will be fair enough to level it at the appropriate Ministers and so allow them to share in the comment. I noted the interjection by the Leader of the Opposition in respect of the hospital at Carnarvon. As regards that work, the department has done everything possible to expedite the carrying out of the recommendations of the Health Department.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I appreciate all you have done, but I would be glad if specifications could be drawn up to enable tenders to be called.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall take a note of that, too. Some criticism of the architectural branch has been on account of delays in getting out plans and specifications for works that have been approved. I have made such investigations as are open to a layman, and I feel sure that everything possible is being done under the difficult conditions in which these officers work. The drawing office and the planning room are both heavily engaged. The member for Northam will appreciate that ample space is necessary if we are to have efficient and expeditious drawing and planning. When the member for Northam was Minister for Works, he made provision that was to be, and still is, temporary. On my part I issue a warning that we may yet have to erect

another temporary building similar to the one that was put up behind the Barracks in order to cope with the demand for plans and specifications from other Governmental departments.

Mr. Marshall: Some 25 years ago they were going to remove all those buildings and complete Parliament House. I suppose you would say we are making good progress in that direction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would not suggest anything beyond what the hon. member himself would suggest, and I trust I am no more to blame for the position than he is.

Mr. Bovell: He has been here all that time and you have not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I understand he is the Father of the House.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Is that the justification for the non-completion of Parliament House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Possibly. It will interest members to know that 50 per cent. of the work in the construction of buildings and so on has been carried out by contractors and 50 per cent. by the Public Works Department itself.

Mr. W. Hegney: How do they compare?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They compare very favourably. Competition is a good thing for everyone concerned and for every organisation. Although there is not so much competition among building contractors, the fact that the Public Works Department is carrying out day labour schemes in competition, has a beneficial effect and the system is working out well. Over two months during which some £600 worth of work was approved, there was from 7 to 8 per cent. difference between the estimated cost of the work carried out by the department and the tenders received from contractors. I am told by my officers that that is just a little above the margin anticipated even in pre-war days. There are some places where contractors are being paid big money for constructing special buildings, such as schools and hospitals. Upon investigation I find that the charges are largely justified because labour is not available and must be drawn from the city.

It is most difficult to hold men in the country districts except under the best of living conditions, even to providing accommodation at hotels. In these times we cannot blame tradesmen for asking for big money because it is available to them in the city. These are difficulties that face the Government, and despite the fact that they involve increased costs, I feel that in these times we should take advantage of the fact that money is available to provide such conveniences and services as the State requires to meet its rapid development. We come next to the problem of metropolitan water supplies. There is an

increased demand for water in that area and it is not anticipated that restrictions other than on the use of mechanical sprinklers and so on, will be imposed this year. At the same time some steps must be taken to cope with the increased gallonage per head that is being used in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Cornell: Why do you not start now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As regards that suggestion, great difficulty confronts the department because it cannot obtain sufficient meters to meter each house. There is a rapid expansion in the number of houses within the metropolitan area, and the department has not been able to get anything like the number required to meter them.

Mr. Cornell: Could not they be obtained elsewhere?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. We found we could not obtain all the meters required locally and a contract has been let in England for 10,000.

Mr. Cornell: But you are 40,000 short.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say the exact number but I do not think it would be that many.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: There is one at my place you can have.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In addition to the contract for 10,000 that has been let in England, another contract has been let locally for another 10,000, making 20,000 that will be at the department's disposal, and I feel sure that will substantially meet the leeway. It can be readily understood that in the sandy soil here a great amount of water is absorbed in comparison with the experience in other cities. Nevertheless, a real effort must be made to cope with the gradually increasing demand per head because it is anticipated that the limit is 110 gallons per head per year. At present the consumption is about 97 gallons per head per year as compared with other cities where the average is 80 gallons. The department is making a survey of the demand which is likely to be made upon the water available to the city in the next few years.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Did you say 100 gallons per year per head?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Most of us drink that much.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What is wrong with you?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I meant 100 gallons per day. I thank the hon. member for the correction. We realise that the Canning Dam will not provide all the water necessary in the coming years, and the department is now making a survey of the Wongong and Serpentine Rivers with a view to constructing reservoirs

there. Action has been taken in connection with the construction of a reservoir at Kangaroo Gully. Personally I do not know where that is, but it is in close proximity to Canning Weir, and I understand that 1.2 million gallons will be available from that source. It is the intention of the department to sink another bore within the metropolitan area. It is thought that the system would stand another subterranean bore and that would provide a further 1,000,000 gallons. It can be seen from what I have said that the department is not unmindful of the fact that in the immediate future years a great strain will be placed on the supply of water for the metropolitan area.

I am most anxious that a survey should be made of all rivers close to the metropolitan area with a view to ascertaining both the quantity and quality of water available. I am also anxious that we should proceed with the work as soon as possible, because in these very difficult times we cannot anticipate obtaining the necessary technical labour and material to proceed with such big undertakings. It is anticipated that next year the No. 1 Yokine reservoir will be officially opened, and at this time next year the No. 2 reservoir will be filled. That will provide a great margin of reserves here in the metropolitan area and it is expected that two more such reservoirs will be constructed within the next three or four years.

In respect to drainage of the areas surrounding the city, the department faces a very real problem. A colossal expenditure is envisaged when the comprehensive drainage of the areas from the foothills towards the coast is carried out. As members will know, we have been very fortunate in the last two or three years inasmuch as the rainfall has been reasonably light; but a repetition of what occurred in 1946 will bring very real problems with respect to drainage and the general raising of the water level in areas such as Belmont, Bickley Valley and Riverton. The department is busily engaged in making surveys and getting out estimates. I think that even when the member for Northam was Minister for Works certain surveys were undertaken, but it is only now that we have been able to anticipate receiving reports thereon. I understand they will be ready in from four to six months. It is expected that reports of the surveys of the areas in and around Belmont on the edge of the Guildford aerodrome will be available within two months and that some effort to begin the work of draining that area will be made within three months.

Mr. Griffith: From now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Another real problem that faces the Minister for Works is road construction. Although money is available, the department has not been able to take full ad-

vantage of it simply because the technical labour and the necessary machinery have not been procurable. The normal revenue from petrol taxation under the Commonwealth Aid Roads and Works Act during the last two years was as follows:—

1948-49	£	1,326,311
1949-50		1,699,567

At the Premiers' Conference discussions took place regarding future finance for road works, as the Commonwealth Act terminated at the 30th June, 1950. Legislation has only just been introduced in the Federal House which renews the Road Agreements with the State and, I believe, covers a period of five years.

Mr. W. Hegney: Is that £1,700,000 from petrol tax?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Pending the introduction of the Federal legislation, the Main Roads Department's programme has been based on funds provided under the terms of the old Act, the amount covered by the programme being £1,800,000. Funds estimated to be available under the new legislation amount to £2,188,000, or approximately 21½ per cent. more than has been provided for in the approved programme on the basis of the old agreement. Approximately 35 per cent. of the total funds will be made available for declared main roads and traffic fee roads in the metropolitan area. The remainder will be expended on developmental roads which include any roads that are not declared main roads, together with minor funds on other works in connection with transport.

There has been a steady increase in the annual expenditure since the war, as shown by the following figures:—In 1945-46 the expenditure was £383,508; and in 1949-50 it was £1,651,067. There are 3,154 miles of declared main roads in this State and these are the permanent responsibility of the Government; and there are 6,741 miles of important secondary roads and 5,508 miles of school bus routes. For all this mileage the Government has made itself more or less responsible, although in the case of school bus routes and secondary roads there is no declared responsibility.

Although there has been a substantial increase of funds available to the department in recent years, there have, on the other hand, been increasing costs. For instance, timber bridging cost 11s. per square foot in 1938 and 30s. this year. Comparable wages costs, including the effect of reduced working hours, and taking 100 as the base figure, are as follows:—1937-38, 100; 1949-50, 217.

There has been a great demand for surfacing of roads. I can appreciate, with metropolitan and country people, that we must have surfaced roads if we are to cope with the demands that modern traffic makes upon them. But

the amount of work that can be done in one year under existing conditions is severely limited. With the heavy truck traffic that operates on much of our road system it is essential to ensure a suitable gravel or macadam pavement before any class of surfacing is attempted. During 1949-50 the following surface work was carried out—

	Miles.
Retreatment of old surfaces	35
New bituminous surfacing	154
Tar priming gravel bases (to be surfaced during the 1950-51 summer) —	95

There have been many requests from local governing authorities for the distribution of the plant pool fund which originally amounted to £180,000. Of this, some £132,000 remains and the Government has decided that an allocation to local authorities shall be made. I realise that when the allocations are made public there will be much dissatisfaction, but I can assure members that a good deal of work and investigation have been carried out in respect to the basis on which the funds should be allocated. I hope within the near future to be able to advise local authorities of the money that will be available to them to assist them in the purchase of plant.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [9.53]: The Estimates before us cover the activities of some of the State's most important departments and I am sure members generally appreciate very much the wide field covered by the Minister in placing those Estimates before us. In the first place I would ask the Minister to have action taken, if he is able to obtain Government approval, to have this Chamber air-conditioned before the commencement of next winter, so that in cold and hot weather alike it will be possible to regulate the temperature in such a manner as to make conditions tolerable for those who have to work here.

The Minister for Works: I suppose I will have to make arrangements for the hot air from time to time!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I was going to add that it would be a good idea if the Minister were at the same time to make arrangements for some sort of devastating gas to be poured into another Chamber which helps to make up this Parliament.

Mr. J. Hegney called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There are many phases of these Estimates that I would like to discuss, but as the time available to members in which to discuss all the Estimates during the remaining few days of this session is so extremely short, I will resist that temptation. Instead I will.

touch upon only two aspects, both of which are closely related. I will deal first with what appears to me to be the increasing difficulty of having public buildings erected in country districts. Whenever a new public building is to be constructed in the country or additions are to be made to an existing public building there is usually considerable difficulty and delay experienced in obtaining contractors who are prepared to undertake the work.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The country is not alone in that.

The Chief Secretary: The position is more acute in the country than in the city.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am sure that the position in that regard is much more acute in country districts than in the metropolitan area. I find the problem very difficult in my own electorate, the furthest part of which from the metropolitan area is only 96 miles from Perth. It is therefore easy to imagine how much more difficult the situation must be in districts far removed from the city. The town of Baker's Hill is only 40 miles from Perth and the Minister for Education agreed, well over a year ago, to have a new brick school constructed at that centre. In due course the plans were drawn and as soon as possible thereafter tenders were publicly called. When first they were called there was no response. Public tenders were again called after an interval of two or three months, and again there was no response. For a third time tenders were called and not even one tender was submitted to the Public Works Department. I can quite understand builders and contractors, most of whom are located in the metropolitan area, not being anxious to go to the country to carry on their business activities. They naturally prefer to work close to their places of business and as close as possible to the homes of the men they employ.

The Chief Secretary: That is the point.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: While that situation is understandable from the point of view of the contractors and of the men they employ it does, at the same time, impose considerable penalties and disabilities on people living in country districts. It is not easy to make constructive and helpful suggestions to the Government in connection with this matter. The Minister said tonight that his department, in giving consideration to tenders submitted for work in the country, makes special allowances for the additional costs that are imposed upon contractors, especially in respect of the labour they have to employ in the country. That special allowance made to contractors might have helped in some instances but I am sure it has not helped at all in many others. The Minister and his departmental officers should give serious consideration to the question of trying to expand the Public

Works Department day labour construction organisation.

The Minister for Works: Would not we be up against the same problem in regard to holding men in the country?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister would be up against that problem, to some extent, but I think it could be tackled on the basis that I have suggested. If that were done, the Minister might find it possible to recruit a number of men who would be prepared to become part of a permanent Public Works organisation, once they knew that it would operate continually in country areas for the purpose of building schools, hospitals and other public buildings and for making additions to buildings of those types in various country centres.

I can understand workers in the metropolitan area not wishing to go to a country job for a period of perhaps six weeks or even longer, but if the problem were tackled more or less on the basis of permanency and a special organisation established, on the lines that I have suggested, it might easily be found that building tradesmen could be attracted to the organisation in the same way as many other classes of workers, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, have become part of Government organisations that operate continually in country districts. I have in mind the Main Roads Department, practically the whole of the activities of which are centred in country areas. Some members might think that almost all the men employed by the Main Roads Department are navvies or unskilled workers. That was the case many years ago, but is not so today under modern methods of road construction and maintenance.

The Chief Secretary: They have considerable difficulty in keeping their organisation together in these days.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The majority of the men employed by the Main Roads Department today are either skilled or semi-skilled workers, and that department has been able to maintain its organisation at reasonable strength throughout the years. Even today, with the intense competition for labour in all directions, the department is able to maintain a fairly substantial organisation throughout the State. If it is possible for that department to build up such an organisation operating almost entirely in country areas, it might be found practicable to develop a Government building organisation to operate exclusively in country districts to erect or make additions to public buildings.

The Minister for Works: Because we could not get tenders for the school at Mullewa we utilised day labour there, but it was painfully slow. It would take some time to build up an organisation such as the hon. member suggests.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I agree that one could not throw a suitable organisation together in a month or even in three months, but the present public works building organisation has been in operation for at least five years, and its men have had a great deal of experience. Among them must be many who would be capable not only of working within the organisation suggested but also of developing it in order to tackle the acute building problems in country centres. I am not suggesting that the Minister could suddenly wave a wand and put into operation an organisation of the type to which I have referred. The matter would require a great deal of consideration and a lot of careful organising.

Great care would have to be taken to ensure that the right type of men were required. One would have to try to secure building tradesmen with a sense of responsibility towards the State as a whole. Unfortunately, in later years all too many people in this State have become city or metropolitan minded. They prefer to live and work in the metropolitan area. Western Australia still depends very largely on wealth producing activities in the country. People engaged in such pursuits are to a great extent dissatisfied with the conditions existing today in country districts. They feel that the public services available to them are not as adequate as are similar services operating in, and available to the people of, the metropolitan area. To the extent that the metropolitan area is further provided with those facilities and country districts provided with less of them will the balance be weighted in favour of further centralisation.

I know the Minister for Works is completely in favour of decentralisation and would be prepared to take any practicable action to ensure that every possible incentive should be established in country districts, not only to keep existing country populations reasonably satisfied, contented and well served, but also for the more important purpose of attracting greater population to those areas. I understand that among the new Australians and British migrants being brought to Australia at present there is a fair percentage of building tradesmen. I should hope that amongst them there is quite a percentage of single men. If so, it might not only be possible but also reasonably easy to recruit building tradesmen of that type into an organisation of the kind I have suggested.

The Minister for Works: Up to the point that Mr. Mather is assisting, we did not make very much progress in obtaining the technicians that have been arriving here.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I hope the Minister will keep on trying. For instance, new Australians who come here are under contract to work wherever directed by the Commonwealth authorities. It should be possible for the Minister or the State Gov-

ernment to prevail upon the Commonwealth authorities to direct skilled building tradesmen among the new Australians in order that they might become part and parcel of a Government organisation which would carry out in country districts Government building operations. If something of this kind is not attempted and achieved, as time goes on there will be less and less private building contractors available to undertake Government building operations in the country. If the position becomes worse than it is today, then the country people are going to be short of hospital, school and other accommodation of a public character, and there is no doubt about the detrimental effect that it will have upon country people in the long run.

As I said before, I am well aware of the difficulties the Minister would be confronted with if he decided to act upon my suggestion, and if he should do so, I hope that out of his endeavours will come some measure of success. I know that in his anxiety to achieve a measure of success he will leave no stone unturned in trying to develop some method of improving the present unsatisfactory situation. For instance, the Minister can well realise the state of mind of parents of children at Baker's Hill. They have had a new brick school approved now for the best part of two years, plans have been prepared and public tenders called for on two or three occasions. However, no tenders have been received, and of course no start has been made on the much-required new school. The example of Baker's Hill school could be multiplied by several members of the Committee many times. I was interested to hear the Minister refer to the great pressure which is upon the officers of the architectural division of the Public Works Department. I know from correspondence I received from various Ministers and departmental heads just how acute that pressure is. The pressure upon the Principal Architect, Mr. Clare, and his officers has been so great that it has not been found possible to date to have any plans and designs drawn up for proposals which have been approved by some Minister or other.

The Minister for Works: I have requested the Principal Architect to take a personal interest in obtaining such technicians from immigrants as are available in order that their services might be taken advantage of.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: However, the Minister tonight referred not only to the shortage of officers in the architectural division, but also to the extreme shortage of suitable office accommodation. If there is necessity for the Government to provide additional accommodation for these important sub-departments, then I think it should be provided as early as possible. If it is to be provided in the form of temporary accommodation, that will be un-

fortunate but, under existing conditions, cannot be avoided. Even though the member for West Perth, who happens to be Lord Mayor of the City of Perth, might become very wrathful at any proposal to erect any further temporary accommodation for Government officers—

The Minister for Works: In this case I understand he is quite prepared to agree.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —I think the existing situation is so difficult and urgent as to justify the Government in taking any steps it considers necessary in that direction. Until such time as the architectural division is enlarged, both in regard to personnel and accommodation, it will not be possible for proposals even to be developed to the planning stage to provide the many additional public buildings which are required and the many additions to existing public buildings which are also required. Until the Government can develop either a complete organisation of its own to operate in country districts or can increase the number of private buildings contractors prepared to go into the country to do such work, then beyond any shadow of doubt, people in country districts will not only continue to suffer extremely grave deficiencies in hospital and educational facilities, but also those deficiencies will become more acute as each month and year passes. Those were the two particular phases of this section of the Estimates which I considered would be most advisable for me to discuss, and I am sure the Minister will make every effort to do the best thing possible to improve matters relating to those two questions.

MR. GRIFFITH (Canning) [10.26]: When speaking to the Address-in-reply debate in the early part of the session, the Press reported me as wanting water in and water out. I still want water in and water out in the Canning electorate. I was most interested in the Minister's remarks. I know the Government is having a great deal of trouble in securing the necessary piping for the water reticulation schemes but, at the same time, I want to draw attention to one or two problems which exist in my electorate. The Government has agreed to provide a water reticulation scheme at Riverton on the basis of a guarantee by the residents of the district, which guarantee has already been signed by them. The amount of piping which is to be used for this undertaking has been ordered and is, I believe, now on its way from England. The only thing holding up the Public Works Department from going ahead with the Riverton scheme is the shortage of piping. Some hundreds of people reside in that area and already, on the 30th November, they have started to cart water from Cannington. I would also like to point out that the Riverton area is only a few miles from the heart of the city.

Mr. J. Hegney: That scheme has already been approved, has it not?

Mr. GRIFFITH: I have already said that it has been approved. I have discussed this question with the Minister and feel sure he will endeavour to do something to alleviate the hardships they are suffering. When replying, I would be grateful if he would indicate to me that he has investigated the matter with a view to providing temporary relief by securing some piping to take the water only a short distance over the Canning River and connect it to a stand-pipe, which will avoid the necessity for residents of Riverton carting their water several miles at a great deal of expense. For the Minister's benefit, I am obliged to read to the Committee a letter I received from the Under Secretary for Public Works, dated 29th November, 1950, in reply to a complaint I made to him about the water pipes in Orrong-road, South Belmont.

Last week we had one or two extremely hot days and the water main in Orrong-road burst. That was not the first time this has happened, but during the last 12 months it has burst on several occasions. I am told that the headmaster at the Belmont school, by reason of the fact that there was no water to operate the cisterns in the lavatories, was obliged to close the school and send the children home. Quite apart from that fact residents right along the whole of the pine-line were without water for a considerable time during the day. I have a letter here which I received from a resident of the district indicating that during the past 12 months the people on that road have been without water on a number of occasions. The letter is written by Mr. R. F. Samuelli under date the 2nd November and it says inter alia—

Last night, for instance, between 8 and 9 p.m. we were unable to have the cup of coffee we normally have after our meals, and this morning without warning, when I went to get my boy's breakfast just after seven, again no water, and it is 8.30 now and the water is still off.

I appreciate the difficulty of the Public Works Department in providing these facilities, but when I read the letter from the Under Secretary for Works which I have here I feel sure the Minister will agree that the contents of it are not what we desire. The letter is addressed to me and reads as follows:—

In reply to your letter of the 8th inst. regarding the attached communication signed by R. F. Samuelli, I beg to inform you that Orrong-road is served by 4in. asbestos water mains and bursts in this road and others in the same area are fairly regular. The department has not the new pipes available to replace these mains, but the asbestos mains in this area will be included in the next contract for

lining pipes in situ, which will commence about March, 1951. In the meantime I am afraid nothing can be done to relieve the position. Consumers would be well advised always to have a small quantity of water on hand for domestic use, because there is no controlling the time at which the bursts occur.

I am deeply in sympathy with the Under Secretary for not being able to indicate to me when the pipe-line is going to burst, but at the same time I am sure the Minister will agree that this is a matter of the utmost urgency. The Under Secretary says he can promise no relief until March, 1951. What does he expect the people in this area to do during the months from December to March of next year? It is likely that this pipe-line will continue to burst and the people in that district will be without water.

Mr. J. Hegney: It is not the only place where pipes burst.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I am sure the member for Middle Swan cannot conclude from what I said that I implied that this was the only place where pipes burst. Nevertheless I am sure the hon. member will agree that this is a matter of the greatest urgency. I hope the Minister will have his department look into this matter so that some quick relief may be given to the people in that area.

I would like to turn now to the matter of drainage which the Minister mentioned. When I made my first speech in this House I spent a little time on drainage in the Canning area. The matter is probably more important now than it was then. I propose to peg away at this matter of a comprehensive drainage scheme in the Canning area until some action is taken. I said at the time that a contour survey was being made of the area. I am pleased to hear from the Minister that it is now almost completed, and that we can expect some action in the near future. I was delighted, and I am sure the residents in the East Belmont area will be equally delighted, to hear what the Minister had to say, in regard to the commencement of the drainage of that land situated near the Guildford aerodrome. He indicated that the matter of drainage from the foothills to the river would present to the Government a very serious problem.

To the best of my knowledge there is no provision in the Metropolitan Water Supply Act to deal with land drainage. I believe that special legislation will have to be brought down to deal with this matter, and that the Treasury will have to provide a special grant of money which I understand will run into many hundreds of thousands of pounds. I am unable even to hazard a guess as to how much it will cost. I am confident, however, that this matter is of the greatest importance and I am pleased also that the Minister realises that. He mentioned that in 1946

the water levels of the State reached a record high. I can very vividly remember that in that year the areas of Welshpool, Cannington, Queens Park, Belmont and the surrounding districts were entirely flooded out.

Mr. J. Hegney: In 1945 and 1946.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I thank the hon. member. I also believe, from the information I have been given, that it is revealed that the water levels are now on the point of reaching a further all time high, and that in the next couple of years it is anticipated that further trouble will be experienced. The building programme in the Canning area—and when I use the expression “Canning area” it is by no means limited to the Canning electorate, as the member for Middle Swan knows, but it is that territory which runs from the foothills right down to the coast—is accentuating the drainage problems. As the Housing Commission and private builders continue to add further buildings to the area, so does the problem of drainage become more complicated.

It is unfortunate that that particular section of my electorate seems to collect all the water, or the majority of the water which comes from the foothills, and it is with that in mind that I again stress to the Minister, and to the Government, the utmost urgency in carrying on as speedily as possible with the comprehensive drainage scheme in the Canning area. I would like once again to express my thanks to the Minister for telling the House that the Government is conscious of the responsibilities it has in connection with the Canning drainage scheme, and I hope it will not be long before the work is actually commenced.

MR. GUTHRIE (Bunbury) [10.38]: I welcomed the reference to Bunbury harbour which was contained in the Minister's speech and the indication that £250,000 is to be spent this year on the scheme. Satisfactory as this may be, I am forced to question the absence of any reference to immediate steps to use the outports of this State to capacity. We have heard much—too much, I suggest—of what is going to be done at Fremantle. No one will deny that the arrangements at Fremantle need a very great deal of overhauling. But the outports, and Bunbury in particular, could serve to relieve the congestion at Gage Roads if determined steps were taken now to provide the requisite facilities. No steps are taken, however, and the only explanation voiced whenever the subject is discussed is the suggestion that Fremantle interests are able to pull strings so strongly that the Government's actions take on the appearance of a preferential treatment.

MR. HILL (Albany) [10.40]: In his remarks the Minister referred to the fact that the Government was carrying out a scheme suggested by Colonel Tydeman

both in Albany and Bunbury. I think it is fair to point out that I can safely claim to be responsible for both those reports.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HILL: When four years ago the then Minister for Works visited Albany he did not speak for two minutes and I realised then that his harbour scheme was useless. Two or three days later I came to Perth and went to the Public Works office and asked if I could look at the plan for Albany. I was told that, being a member of Parliament, there could be no objection. I looked at it and said to the officer of the department, "Do you know what you ought to do with this?" He said, "What?" I said, "Wrap it up very carefully and put it in the fire, as it is a scheme which is no good at all." He wanted to know what was wrong with it and I said to him, "You know how important the matter of transport is to-day," and I suggested he have a look at the motor road. He looked at it. It was a motor road to a port half the size of Fremantle along Stirling-terrace and Brunswick-road, 30ft. wide, over the hill 140ft. high and down to the port.

I assure the Committee there was a tremendous outcry when I told the people of Albany about that. A day or two later I met a civil engineer of the Railway Department and asked what he thought of Mr. Hawke's scheme for Albany. He said he had not seen it and I told him it provided for eleven berths and no extra rail accommodation. He replied that it was ridiculous. I was not present when the member for Northam referred to me as a delightful fellow. I am afraid he is more polite than is the member for Narrogin. I would not agree to the scheme as prepared under the direction of Mr. Hawke. Fortunately we have Colonel Tydeman in the State. That gentleman was given a freehand to report on Albany. The report was laid on the Table of the House and in it he tells us that Albany has a natural harbour, with unlimited room for expansion. I am sure the Colonel would not mind my mentioning what took place in a private conversation. He said, "You could not provide what nature has given you at Albany for £500,000,000." Here is a report of the Outports Royal Commission, on which there were three Labour members, with the member for Kalgoorlie as chairman. Part of the report on Bunbury reads—

To get an expert opinion as to whether the silting can be controlled and at what cost, Mr. R. J. Dumas, Director of Public Works, was furnished with a number of questions and called by the Commission as a witness. His answers to these and other queries are set out on pages 712-717 of the typewritten evidence.

Mr. Dumas considers that the silting can be controlled at a cost of approximately £500,000, and if this is

done, the cost of maintenance should be very light. In view of the large sum involved, and as we now have an engineering expert here, in the person of Colonel Tydeman we suggest that he and Mr. Dumas confer as to the best method of controlling the silt.

A couple of years ago I urged the then Minister for Works to get Colonel Tydeman to report on that harbour. The report of the Outports Royal Commission goes on—

The estimated cost of providing two berths of 32ft. with a passageway to the ocean and sufficient manoeuvring room is £500,000. As already over three-quarters of a million pounds has been spent there and the estimated cost of preventing constant silting and providing two berths with 32ft. of water is £1,000,000, it will require a great tonnage of cargoes to warrant this expenditure.

It is recommended that the first requirement is to put in hand the works to prevent silting. When it is established that silting is no longer taking place, no dredging will be needed to maintain a 27ft. 6in. depth of water. This depth should be generally sufficient for present needs and the further question of providing two berths of deeper water can be held in abeyance for further consideration as the development of the district warrants.

That was our recommendation. Here is Col. Tydeman's report on the Bunbury Harbour issued last year. It has never been laid on the Table of the House.

Mr. J. Hegney: Why not?

Mr. HILL: I cannot answer that question. Col. Tydeman's terms of reference were—

- (a) To report on the development of Bunbury port.
- (b) To examine the Stevenson Young proposals for the development of Bunbury.
- (c) To report on alleviation of port and estuarial siltage.

The financial aspects of the port were outside his terms of reference. Now let me read what the Commonwealth Grants Commission in its eighth report had to say—

The expenditure out of loan funds on outer harbours in Western Australia is large and it does not appear to us that a sufficient attempt is made to get an adequate return from the users in the districts served. If the traffic will not stand the cost, there is no reason for expenditure on harbours unless it is essential for the in-

dustry of the district, in which case the industry should be charged through a special rate. This policy has been tried in other parts of Australia, and insistence upon it has on occasions led the people of a district to decide that the expenditure on a harbour was not really necessary for their interests. A multiplication of harbours is uneconomic. It is true that in Western Australia the port of Fremantle returns a large profit, but this does not make up for the losses on the other ports. In any case the profit of Fremantle is no excuse for an unscientific and unco-ordinated policy of harbour development. A large expenditure has been made on the Bunbury Harbour, which is only about 100 miles from Perth, and it is doubtful whether it has succeeded in overcoming the disadvantages of the port.

I suggest that members read the speech made by the late Hon. P. Collier when speaking on that problem in 1933. In that year a sum of £161,000 was voted—

Mr. Guthrie: Why not deal with your own port and leave others alone?

Mr. HILL: We have to face facts and I want to speak about this criminal waste of public money. Let us go back 25 years when the Bunbury Harbour Board showed a profit of £796. Now here is the report of the Auditor General just supplied to the House—

Bunbury Harbour Board, year ending 30/6/49—Loss £38,383. For year ending 30/6/50—Loss £46,580. Accumulated loss 30/6/50, £636,796.

The loss in the shape of working expenses without allowing for interest for the whole year 1949-50 was £18,024. The surplus over working costs at the Albany Harbour from the 17th April to the 30th June, 1950, was £254 6s. 11d. Now let us turn to page 20 of Col. Tydeman's report on Bunbury—

FULL FUTURE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE DREDGING COSTS (EXCLUDING RIVER SILTING).

	Quantity (in situ) Cubic Yards.	Unit Rate	Annual Maintenance Cost.
Northward Land Drift	70,000	5/-	17,500
Southward Land Drift	65,000	5/-	16,250

Bunbury Port must ultimately equip itself for Annual dredging maintenance quantities and costs of these amounts.

Now we come to a week ago. Here is a Press statement by the Minister for Transport—

Improvements at Albany and Bunbury, to cost about £1,000,000 at each port, had been put in hand by the present Government. While it was confidently expected that much greater use would be made of these ports when the facilities were provided, it must be remembered that

the Government had no power to compel shipowners to use any particular port.

The Government cannot control shipping. It is failing inasmuch as it is not adopting a port policy to suit modern ships and conditions. For the million pounds expenditure at Albany we would have one of the finest harbours in the world with two modern berths. Half of that expenditure on Bunbury is to be devoted to another round in the fight against nature; the other half will give only two berths that would be inferior to what we are practically scrapping at Albany. Albany is a natural harbour; Bunbury is a silted-up port. Some time ago I made a trip to Queensland. Before leaving for the East a prominent resident of Bunbury said to me, "Before they put that groyne in at Bunbury, the silt used to go out to sea. Now it goes straight towards the jetty. What will happen when we get the old-time wet winters I do not know."

A few weeks later I was in the office of the Harbour Master at Newcastle. He said, "These dry years are favouring us, but when we get our old wet winters. I do not know what will happen." A very wet season has been experienced in Newcastle this year, and last week the wireless stated that seven dredges were working 11 hours per day on five days a week to deal with the silting. I went on to Queensland and on the way back travelled with Mr. Corser, M.H.R. He said, "Our trouble in Queensland is that we have too many ports. It would be better if the Government realised that and concentrated the trade on fewer ports and closed down Rockhampton in favour of Gladstone." Later on we had a visit to this house from the Commonwealth Director of Rail Transport and I asked him how the Gladstone and Rockhampton controversy was getting on. He said, "The trouble is that Gladstone is only 300 miles away from Brisbane."

What will be the position here when a million pounds has been spent at Bunbury and a million pounds at Albany? We shall have a third-rate port between two first-class ports only 300 miles apart. I venture to say that in 10 years' time the Treasurer will not be a happy man when he finds the Bunbury returns showing a loss of £80,000 a year. We shall have the member for Blackwood saying, "They spent a million on Bunbury and now the harbour is of no use to us." The late John Curtin tried to build a naval base at Cockburn Sound at a cost of three million pounds.

Mr. J. Hegney: When?

Mr. HILL: Between 1942 and 1945.

Mr. Fox: Was it three million pounds?

Mr. HILL: Then Admiral Fraser came out and after inspecting Cockburn Sound he said he would not use the base. There

were five dredges working on the base for two years and over half a million was spent on fortifications at Garden Island alone.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That was not done by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose you suggest.

Mr. HILL: When Singapore fell, Commander Collins wanted to cut out Fremantle and use Albany. It was intended that Albany should be the main naval base in Western Australia. Then Lord Mountbatten, after Admiral Fraser, came out, said, "You have a place named Albany. I want to see it." He was flown there and when he saw the harbour he said "There is your naval base already made for you."

Mr. Guthrie: He should have known that without needing to be told.

Mr. HILL: On three occasions the Imperial Government has wanted Albany developed as a naval base, but on each occasion political pressure by Labour politicians has resulted in favour of Fremantle. If members want to study a bit of rotten work, let them consider the expenditure on Fremantle to make it a naval port.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What progress are you making with Mr. Menzies in power?

Mr. HILL: I wish the hon. member could have been with me this morning when I was speaking with a senior military officer. Let me mention another matter. Mr. Lemmon and the Chifley Government were going to do wonders about decentralisation. They set out and spent £75,000 on building a wool shed at Albany and a similar amount was to be spent at Geraldton. We have the shed at Albany, but the buyers cannot be compelled or persuaded to go there. Our duty is to adopt a port policy that will suit modern shipping, but the trouble is that the three political parties are more concerned with Bunbury than with establishing an economic port system for Western Australia, and I challenge anybody to contradict that statement.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [10.59]: In April of this year I approached the Works Department with the idea of getting some information that might enable me to put up a proposition to the Government for a flat rate on water throughout the State. I am sorry to say that the information I sought reached me only today, and I do not think it would be quite fair to read it to the Committee because I have not had sufficient time to study it carefully. However, I hope to have an opportunity to make a suggestion for the Government to consider some time during the next session. I have been able to look at it casually, and I believe it would be possible to increase the city water rates by a few pence and reduce those in the Goldfields area by

shillings, and by lesser amounts in the intervening districts. It is a matter which needs careful study and it must be left to some future time. The Minister referred to the Architectural Branch of the Public Works Department. That branch is the bottleneck for all the work undertaken by the Government. I am of the opinion that a lot of the work it does is unnecessary. We know that in many instances the same style school building is required for different centres, except for the foundations, so that the top structure could be blue printed rather than separate specifications being made out in each case.

Two years ago the Public Works Department prepared plans and called tenders for a school at Bolgart. The people there were not satisfied with the site, and I think their decision was quite right, and so did the department later. It was decided that the school should be built in a different spot. Instead of using the same plans and specifications with a possible alteration in respect of foundations, the Architectural Branch prepared an entirely new set. I know that in other parts of my electorate, because of delay in the preparation of plans and specifications, approved works have been held up for many months. I am not a builder, and know little about building, but it seems to me that where we have standard buildings, standard blueprints could be prepared rather than have separate plans drawn for each building, apart from any necessary variations in the foundations.

Some time ago the Minister was good enough to intimate to me that if the people in the northern section of my electorate wished to have a comprehensive water scheme, an application by them would be favourably considered by the Government, and an approach would be made to the Federal authorities for financial assistance. I have already been able to tell the Minister that the people, by unanimous vote at meetings, have requested that be done, and by today's mail I received the first petition, on which there were 190 signatures of ratepayers from the northern section of the Wongan-Ballidu Road Board, asking to be included in the proposed scheme. No doubt in the near future one will come to hand from the Dalwallinu Road Board. The Minister made reference to a proposal for a comprehensive water scheme to be based on Gingin Brook. It is gratifying to know that that suggestion is proving to be reasonably practicable, and there is a possibility of its becoming an established fact at a later date.

One other matter to which I would like the Minister to give consideration is the expenditure of a portion of the loan funds by letting some of the big loan works by contract. I realise that I cannot discuss the expenditure of loan funds tonight, but we could spend some of our Main Roads Department money in that way. That department has such an accumulation of

funds that we might be able to interest contractors, even outside of Western Australia, if the contracts were big enough. Transport is a matter of extreme urgency. The Main Roads Department does not seem to be able to handle the funds it is accumulating, and I am of the opinion that if we could let sufficiently large contracts to enable contractors to provide the necessary plant we might very quickly increase our communications.

Progress reported.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the conference managers' report.

BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Council's Further Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and had appointed Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham, Hon. L. A. Logan and the Minister for Agriculture as managers for the Council, the President's room as the place of meeting and the time 10.30 a.m. on Friday, the 1st December.

BILL—FAUNA PROTECTION.

Council's Further Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and had appointed Hon. N. E. Baxter, Hon. H. Tuckey and the Minister for Agriculture as managers for the Council, the President's room as the place of meeting and the time 6.45 p.m. on Tuesday, the 5th December.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Welshpool-Bassendean Railway Bill, and Bassendean Marshalling Yards Bill.

The PREMIER: I ask leave to make a statement in connection with the Welshpool-Bassendean Railway Bill and the Bassendean Marshalling Yards Bill.

Leave granted.

The PREMIER: I have tried to tell as many members as possible, and I have sent a note around to others, notifying them that tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock the Chief Commissioner of Railways, Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Rayner, and the Chief Civil Engineer, Mr. McCulloch, will come to Parliament House where they will be glad to meet members who are interested in these two Bills. It is suggested that the meeting could take place in the Ministerial room, but if it is not large enough other accommodation will be found. I hope that those members who

are interested will make every effort to attend, because the Government regards these Bills as urgent. If we cannot get on with them the railway rehabilitation scheme will be postponed for, probably, 12 months.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.13 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Friday, 1st December, 1950.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.