

does not, so I consider that we are restricted in the amendments to those dealing solely with the qualifications of women. As stated by the Leader of the Country Party, Clauses 5 and 10 are merely consequential amendments upon including qualifications of women in the Jury Act. That being the case, every subsequent reference to "man" in the Act must be amended so as to include women. The easiest way to do that is by altering the word "man" to "person". On consideration of the whole matter, I have not the slightest doubt that this is not a borderline case, and I must uphold the ruling of the Chairman of Committees.

Committee Resumed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 5A provides that a woman qualified and liable to serve as a juror may cancel her liability to serve by service of written notice on the sheriff. On the reading of that, a woman can do so at any time.

The Minister for Justice: Up to the time she is sworn in.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not think Crown Law opinion is to that effect. I do not see why she cannot, because there is reference to a next time. Subsection (4) says that a woman may from time to time cancel her liability to serve.

The Minister for Justice: There is a clause dealing with that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know that a judge may excuse a woman at any time before a jury is sworn in, but the proposed new section does not provide that a woman, five minutes before being sworn in, cannot give notice.

The Minister for Justice: She can, until she is sworn in.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am not sure whether she is unable to do that even then. If one were to read the two subsections together, the implication would be that in addition to notification to the sheriff, the judge could excuse a woman from service. There is nothing to say that after a woman has been empanelled she cannot walk out.

I understand the system of selecting juries to be as follows:—The summoning officer empanels the jury: by this, all he does is to select certain names from a jury list. The selection is the impanelling. He sends out notices, and he may, under the existing Act, excuse some people, in which event he strikes their names from the panel. After he has dealt with the matter, he hands in the list of the remaining names to the court or judge who issued the precept for the jury. After the list has been handed to the judge, I contend that a woman could decline to serve. The object of my amendment was to make it clear.

The Minister for Justice: That practically means the same as what is contained in this clause. Once a woman is empanelled, she is sworn in.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: She is not sworn in until days afterwards.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Section 20 repealed and re-enacted:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That the word "district" in line 28, page 4, be struck out and the word "districts" inserted in lieu.

Later I shall move for the insertion of the word "and" between the words "Perth—Fremantle", and for the deletion of the reference to the Swan magisterial district which no longer exists.

Amendment put and passed.

On motions by the Minister for Justice, clause further amended by inserting the word "and" between the words "Perth—Fremantle" in lines 28 and 29, and by striking out the words "and Swan" in line 29, page 4.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 20th September, 1955.

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

ELECTORAL.*Swearing-in of Member.*

The **PRESIDENT**: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy in the South-West Province caused by the death of Hon. C. H. Henning, showing that Francis Drake Willmott has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear-in the hon. member.

Hon. F. D. Willmott took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

QUESTIONS.**TRAFFIC ACT.***(a) Disallowance of Regulations and Protection of Public.*

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) In view of the disallowance by the Legislative Council of traffic regulations No. 190 and 191, has the Government regazetted major roads?

(2) If not, can he give any indication as to how soon the public can be given protection?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: May I make a statement, Mr. President?

The **PRESIDENT**: Yes.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: I am not very happy about these questions without notice being shot at Ministers all the time. The practice is becoming rather prevalent, and I do not think members are really fair when they indulge in it. However, these questions happen to concern one of my own departments, so I am in the rather happy position that I can answer them now. The replies are—

(1) No.

(2) The matter is receiving consideration.

(b) Regazetted of Major Roads.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

This is a question which I am sure can be answered, because it affects one of the Chief Secretary's departments. Is it the Government's intention to regazette major roads?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY** replied:

I thought that I had already answered the question, but again the answer is "No".

CITY OF PERTH.*Availability of Zone Map.*

Hon. H. HEARN (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

Referring to by-law No. 33 made by the City of Perth under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906-1953, and the Town

Planning Act, 1928-1953, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 18th February, 1955, will he make available the map mentioned in these new by-laws in order that members may be able to see the implication of the zoning regulations.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY** replied:

Again this is a question affecting one of my departments, and in answer, I will say that I think it is possible for the map to be made available.

POLICE FORCE.*Resignations.*

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it correct that a number of plain-clothes and uniformed police resigned from the service during 1954?

(2) If so, was this due to red tape and lack of co-operation between the administrative staff and the individuals?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY** replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. Apparently greater opportunities were then offering in business employment outside the service, and these opportunities appealed to men to get away from shift, week-end and public holiday work.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.*Procedure.*

The **PRESIDENT**: I wish to draw members' attention to this point: If they are to ask questions without notice, they should ask them under the heading of "Questions" and not under the heading of "Notices".

MOTION—BETTING CONTROL ACT.*To Disallow Licensing and Registration Regulations.*

Debate resumed from the 6th September on the following motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham:—

That regulations Nos. 24, 31, 68 and 92, made under the Betting Control Act, 1954, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 6th May, 1955, and laid on the Table of the House on the 9th August, 1955, be and are hereby disallowed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [4.43]: I wish to emphasise that in my contribution to the debate I am supplying information given to me by the department. As members know, one often notices in the Press a statement that a person is merely quoting and is not necessarily giving his own person opinions. Sir Charles Latham, in discussing regulation No. 24, said that it was a shocking thing that no conditions were specified on book-makers' grandstand enclosure licences, and that for this reason he desired the

disallowance of the regulation which provides for the issue of the licence in the form objected to by the hon. member.

Section 33 (b) (iv) of the Betting Control Act states that the Governor may make regulations to provide for the "terms and conditions upon which licences or respective classes of licences may be obtained and which shall be observed by the holders of licences." The licence itself certifies that the holder has been licensed as a bookmaker in accordance with and subject to the provisions of the Betting Control Act and regulations. Accordingly it was considered that as any conditions imposed when a licence was issued must be those, or part of those specified in the Act or regulations there was no need to list all these conditions on the blank licence forms.

Different conditions apply in the various parts of our large State, and to incorporate all conditions on licence forms might mean an amount of unnecessary printing, as similar conditions are not incorporated in all licences. In addition, the Act or the regulations might be amended to provide new conditions or to amend existing ones. These amendments would not then appear on the stocks of licence forms on hand.

To sum up, it can be said that there are no conditions, other than those in the Act and regulations, attached to the issue of bookmakers' licences. The days and hours of business are the only conditions attached to certificates of registration of premises. These were not inserted in the forms in the appendix as they have to be varied according to the location of the registered premises.

The next regulation the hon. member dealt with was No. 68. The objection here was to paragraph (5), which sets out that where a registration is refused the application fee shall be forfeited to the board for the benefit of the public revenue. I understand that this was done for a purpose. It was anticipated that in the early stages, when applications were first called, there would be a number of people who would have a very remote chance of getting licences but who would make application because it was costing them nothing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: A sum of £2.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am talking of the early stages. So the board decided that it would charge a fee which would accompany applications with the idea of limiting the applications to those who had a reasonable chance of success.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That was very unfair.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That was the reason for doing it. Following that, the matter has received attention; and, as the provision had served its purpose, the Minister for Police announced recently that it would no longer be enforced,

and all fees paid by unsuccessful applicants would be refunded. The same thing will not happen in the future, and that was the reason for the Minister's announcement.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: A very plausible excuse!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member analyses the position, he will see that there is a lot in what I have said.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There is nothing in it at all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is a lot in it. The endeavour was to find out those vitally interested and who had a possible chance of success. The charge was made on that basis. It is therefore unnecessary to disallow the entire regulation, as paragraph (5) can be cancelled by departmental application. The applications which come in from now on will be only spasmodic, or odd applications, and there is no need to apply that part in the future.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It will be disallowed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member objected to regulation No. 92 under which the board can vary the days on which premises may open for business according to what part of the State they are in. He considered that bookmakers should be allowed to open when they liked, regardless of where in the State their premises were. The board's opinion is that it is very necessary to ensure reasonable control over registered premises and licensed bookmakers to make the opening and closing of premises obligatory; but it would not be practical to compel licensees in many small towns to keep their premises open when there would be little or no business done, thereby preventing them from taking other additional employment.

The board states that many such betting businesses would not of their own accord maintain the bookmaker but, on the other hand, if licences were not issued in many such cases, illicit betting would take place and so defeat the object of the Act. The board considered that Sir Charles's statement that, "If the bookmaker wishes to keep open and does not make a living, it is nobody's business but his own," is not sound reasoning in regard to a business such as betting which, owing to its characteristics and the effect it has on the community at large, requires to be controlled by a special Act of Parliament.

Also, Mr. Baxter could see no reason why betting shops outside the 11-mile limit should be forced to close on days on which metropolitan shops are open. The board's attitude is that country shops should not be compelled to open for Eastern States racing on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, as the business done

on those days would not justify their keeping open and, as I have said, would make it difficult for the bookmakers concerned to take other employment to augment their incomes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They take up the business and they should give the public the service.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the explanation offered by the board and I submit it to the House without any further comment.

On motion by Hon. J. Murray debate adjourned.

MOTION—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME ACT.

To Disallow Improvement and Appeal Regulations.

Debate resumed from the 14th September on the following motion by the Hon. J. McL. Thomson:—

That regulations Nos. 18, 19 and 24 made under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme Act, 1954, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 4th February, 1955, and laid on the Table of the House on the 9th August, 1955, be and are hereby disallowed.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [4.51]: In supporting Mr. Thomson, I would first like to deal with regulation No. 18. This has been laid on the Table of the House in an incomplete condition; and no matter how one reads it, to make any sense of it is not possible. I do not know whether the reason for it is a misprint or whether the fault lies between the time it was printed and the time it was laid on the Table of the House. It certainly makes no sense, however, and I feel sure the House will disallow it. Apart from that, I do not care for the manner in which the original regulation was drafted. It is particularly severe on settlers.

The regulation deals with the care of improvements to properties; and, in effect, provides that buildings, fences and other permanent improvements such as sheds, etc. shall be kept in a good and tenantable condition by the lessee in accordance with the terms of the lease; and upon inspection by the Minister or his authorised agent, if those improvements have not been kept in a good and tenantable condition in the opinion of the agent or any representative of the Minister, the Minister can go so far as to cancel the lease and forfeit the holding. That is a very severe penalty, in so far as it relates to buildings, fences and sheds not being kept in a good and tenantable condition.

Something should be provided in the regulation which would give a man an opportunity to put the improvements into good order before the holding is forfeited. After all is said and done, the lessee is

paying for those improvements. He is purchasing and not leasing them. If he were only leasing the property and paying an annual rental I would agree that the regulation should be enforced. But where he is paying for those improvements annually, and on a basis laid down under the regulation, he should have some protection.

Another regulation Mr. Thomson has moved to disallow is No. 19, and this deals with practically the same subject. I cannot see why these two regulations could not have been incorporated as one. Regulation No. 19 deals with structural improvements.

The Minister for the North-West: With purchase.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: And the other one deals with improvements also. I admit it deals with purchase, but purchase is also involved in the previous regulation. Under that regulation they are not merely leased improvements but improvements that are being paid for on what might be called a time-payment system. In so far as it relates to the settler, regulation No. 19 is even worse because, if he defaults in the payments on the improvements on his property, the Minister may forfeit the holding and any purchase moneys he may have paid in. This cuts right across the principle of justice provided in the Mortgagees' Rights Restrictions Act which is in force in this State.

Anybody who purchases property or goods under a system similar to that governing purchases made by the war service land settlers of their improvements and buildings, and is not able to continue his payments, does not have his goods or property seized without having some equity. But under this regulation the Minister could forfeit all his interest in the property and improvements and he would not get a single penny. It is entirely unfair. For instance, if a man paid £1,000 or £2,000 on structural improvements, and his holding were forfeited he would not get a single penny for it.

The Minister for the North-West: There is an appeal board.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I admit that; but it is subject to certain conditions. We will deal with that in the next regulation. My main grouch in this connection is that the board has jurisdiction to investigate and determine such matters arising between the settler and the State as the Commonwealth and State may agree warrant investigation and determination. This means that before the board can adjudicate on a dispute between the State and the settler, he has to get the permission of the State for the appeal to be heard. That, of course, means that an appeal can be stultified by a settler being refused permission to appeal to the board. The gun is loaded all the way in favour of the State.

This regulation should be disallowed. If we are going to have an appeal board, let it be a board that can arbitrate on the evidence submitted by both sides, and not a board in connection with which one side has the power to say that the other side has no right of appeal unless he has the permission of the Government to do so. If one went to a court of law against another person, and that person had the right to say whether or not one could appeal, it would cut across the principles of British justice. A person should not have to obtain the permission of the State before appealing; and for those reasons I support Mr. Thomson, and hope the House will disallow the regulations.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [4.58]: I am very sceptical of the reasons put forward by the previous speakers on the motion to disallow these regulations. The Government is spending a lot of money to settle men on the land, and there must be certain regulations which will help to keep them up to standard. When they were speaking on the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment Bill, I heard members saying that tenants should carry out certain repairs; indeed, one member said that they should get up on the roof and repair the tiles, if necessary, and that if they did not do so, they should be evicted from the house.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Tenants have a right of appeal, but these people have not.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The Government will not penalise settlers unnecessarily; it will not be hard on them.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: How do we know?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: As far as I have been able to see, all Governments, no matter what their political colour, have been most lenient in matters like this. No Government would unnecessarily penalise a settler; nor would it forfeit his property without sufficient evidence. It might take that step against people who were not co-operating and who were letting their properties go to ruin.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Do you not think the individual has the right to appeal?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Of course he has! If any person was suffering hardship, and the Government felt that its agent or representative was acting in bad faith, I feel sure the Minister would take action against that man. No Government would evict a settler unless it had the necessary evidence before it which showed that he was acting contrary to those regulations. I oppose the disallowance of the regulations, and I trust they will be permitted to remain.

On motion by Hon. L. C. Diver, debate adjourned.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Commonwealth and State Housing Supplementary Agreement.

2, Honey Pool.
Received from the Assembly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eleventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 1st September.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [5.41]: I notice that the Government has expressed itself as satisfied that the economic conditions of the State are sound. I must say that the reasons advanced in the Governor's Speech for the Government's confidence in this regard do not seem very convincing to me, unless it has succeeded in solving the problem of how we can continue to maintain the present level of prosperity in this country, and economic stability, while our imports so greatly exceed our exports. After all is said and done, if we reduce the matter to family terms, what we sell overseas is the income of this country; and, on all the latest figures, Australia's position is not such that I imagine any thinking person can feel particularly happy about it.

We have the spectacle of every one of our major export industries facing a serious, if not a grim future; and while that continues, the maintenance of our present level of spending and general enthusiasm for a good time within Australia seems to indicate an economic mad-house of boom and bust, with very little regard for the ultimate condition in which we may find ourselves. Our imports into this country for 1954-55—that is, to the 30th June this year were about 40 per cent. greater than for the 1938-39 period, before the war. On the other hand, our exports for that same period were 6 per cent. lower. Consequently, it seems a very difficult matter for us to feel particularly complacent about the economic soundness of our community.

It has been the deliberate policy of all Federal Governments in recent years—in fact it goes back to well before the last war—to foster and encourage the secondary or manufacturing industries. Most of that encouragement has been in the form of tariff protection, though depreciation in the exchange has also helped considerably. I think we have reached a condition wherein there is not much prospect of any major departure from that

policy, as the experience of the last war seemed to indicate that unless a country was well industrialised, under modern conditions it had little hope of defending itself.

In addition, with the stepping up of immigration and the urge and need for population, it has been accepted as necessary that we should develop still more the manufacturing or secondary industries in Australia. So while, to many people, it may appear that we have gone a little too far too fast in that regard, I do not see much prospect of any major departure from that policy. We have reached a position where, as a result of the developments in manufacturing, those industries and the people engaged in them, plus our improved standard of living—that is, of the general mass of the people—have created a demand for imports which our secondary industries cannot pay for with the export of manufactured goods.

So, while the demand for imports has increased, the duty of providing overseas exchange to pay for them still rests almost entirely with those export industries that have traditionally provided Australia's overseas funds and, with falling prices—and more particularly a growing restriction in markets for our primary industries—we are faced with the position that the manufacturing industries are not sufficiently efficient or competitive to be able to export and help pay for our imports, and the traditionally exporting industries are not able to pay for them either. That is why, to my mind, the picture at the moment is not a particularly happy one.

In addition to the tariff protection and such advantages as a depreciated exchange affords local industry, we have import restrictions, which present indications seem to suggest have come to stay. In fact, they may, in the next few months—according to recent Press reports—be considerably extended, with the result that our high-cost non-competitive manufacturing industries inside Australia have been and will continue to be largely insulated against any competition from outside which might compel any marked reduction in their prices and, consequently, a reduction in the costs of our exporting industries—the primary industries.

That is the aspect of it that particularly concerns me—the effect of all this protection on the farming industry, because eventually those costs come home to that industry, which has no opportunity of passing them on in regard to that portion of its production that is sold overseas; that has to be sold on the world's markets. Only just recently, the Federal Minister for Commerce and the Australian Agricultural Council, which comprises the Ministers for Agriculture from the various States, issued an appeal to the export industries—which obviously are the primary

industries—for greater production, apparently hoping against hope that with falling prices the average farmer would exert himself to produce still more for export, even if he had to sell it at a loss. To my mind, under the present conditions, and having regard to the world outlook, any farmer who set out markedly to increase his production in any respect would be a fool to himself.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Would that include fat lambs?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Yes, because there has been a marked drop in the return from them. Of course, no one can speak for the future. I do not fully understand the 15-year meat agreement, but there may be a measure of stability in regard to meat exports. It has not really been tested out to see how it will go. If stability is achieved as a result of that agreement, it is possible that some extension with regard to meat export could be undertaken by the producer.

I am speaking from the producer's point of view. I am afraid that certain of our publicists and men in positions of authority in the political and governmental world are not so much concerned with the return to the producer as with getting sufficiently large quantities for export in order to build up credits in London. I, personally, am more concerned with what happens to the producer; and the present situation seems to have such a striking similarity to the 1928-29 period that I am surprised that action has not already been taken in an endeavour to steady the position or soften the blow. In some quarters there seems to be very little concern about the fate of the primary producing industries.

I can remember the year 1929-30 when, in order to build up Australia's overseas credits, the farmer was urged to grow more wheat. He did so; and in the following year—I think it was 1930-31—Australia produced a record crop of wheat; and the result was that the more the farmer grew, the more he owed to his creditors, because the price of wheat slumped until there was nothing in it for him, and very little for anyone else. I see no reason why he should be led into doing that again, if we are to experience anything like the conditions that obtained from 1930 onwards—and it certainly appears as though that could happen, and that such times might be almost here again.

What Governments do not seem to appreciate—if they do they give small heed to it: and that applies also to some of our publicists, who obviously do not appreciate the significance of the position—is that primary production, and land settlement schemes, particularly the land development schemes of which we hear so much, and which are so necessary in this country, cannot hope to succeed unless the price for the product of the land is such as to

give a reasonable return to the man on the land. Unless something in the nature of a near miracle occurs within a very short period to correct the present trend and give the lie to the present indications, this community could easily be faced with the task of having to carry many of the people who are now being prevailed upon to participate in land settlement schemes.

After all, why should anyone engage in agriculture or primary production at the moment, when it is certain that if prices remain as they are such a man will have years of struggle and hardship, with only a very problematical reward in the future, and that with the maintenance of anything like the present level of spending on the part of the rest of the community he will be, to use a colloquialism, just a mug? Mr. Diver, who anyone with a knowledge of farming will agree is one of the most practical-minded members of the farming community in this State, said, when speaking to the Address-in-reply, that it would cost £10,000 for a man to establish himself on a light lands farm. I see no reason to quarrel with that figure, and I do not think anyone who knows the position and is realistic about it would question that statement.

The Minister for the North-West: To what area would that refer?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I think he referred to 5,000 acres, because one would need about that much light land. In view of future prospects, any man who had £10,000 in cash today and put it into a proposition of that kind would be a fit candidate for entry into a mental home, as there are ample opportunities existing to invest £10,000 much more safely, and with a more assured return, than by putting it into light land in Western Australia. If he had not the cash and must rely on borrowed capital he would condemn himself and his family to half a lifetime of struggle and privation; and again he should be put in a mental home.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It would still be private enterprise, if he worked for himself.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: No; he would be working for his creditors, and that is where the hon. member is mistaken.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You are possibly right there.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Despite the publicity and boosting that it has been given in an endeavour to show how easy wool growing is, I think that wool growing is in the most unfavourable position of all our major industries at the present day, speaking from the grower's angle. The outlook is not bright from the community's viewpoint, either, as wool is not now building up such tremendous overseas credits as it did a little while ago. Yet the community is not very concerned whether wool provides such credits if that can be

done in some other way, even by borrowing from the International Bank. From the viewpoint of the farmer who produces it, and despite all the boosting that is taking place at present, wool has the most uncertain, and I think the most unfavourable prospects of any of our primary products today.

The wheatgrower has his production stabilised, and there is a guaranteed return for 100,000,000 bushels of export wheat, on top of which there is, of course, the return for the wheat used within Australia. But even the total amount there represents only what we would call a small or below average crop, although it does give him that measure of stability. However, the wheatgrower may find in the very near future that it will be necessary for him, collectively, to reduce his production so that it comes within the ambit of that total stabilisation.

The butter producer is in a somewhat similar position, although I doubt whether his outlook is quite as favourable. He, also, may be faced with the necessity of reducing his production to a level where the Australian people, through the Federal Government, will be prepared to accept it for stabilisation purposes. To the uninformed it might appear that the solution of the wheatgrower's troubles could be found almost immediately in changing over to sheep and wool growing, but there is nothing further from the truth.

Since the end of the war, the wool growers of the British Empire—up to three or four years ago—sold 13,000,000 bales of wool which had accumulated during the war period. From the end of acquisition by the Wool Realisation Committee until such time as the 13,000,000 bales were entirely disposed of—what was known as the Joint Organisation which handled that disposal instituted and insisted on a reserve price below which wool was not sold—the prices bid for wool at auction continued to go up. That was in spite of the apparent surplus 13,000,000 bales.

From the time when that wool was disposed of and the Joint Organisation handling its disposal as well as the current clips was wound up, the level of wool prices has continued to fall, which seems rather ridiculous, if we believe in this almost divine law of supply and demand about which some people talk so much. The only point, of course, was that there was a reserve price below which the wool was not thrown away; but the return has now reached a level at which there is nothing in it for the wool producer, with the exception of the pastoralists, some—though not all—of whom may find present prices profitable.

There appears to be every indication that wool prices will fall further; yet there is the extraordinary position that, throughout the world internal business and the

standard of living in the various wool-consuming countries have never been better. In the U.S.A., which is the largest user of wool in the world, business activities are at an all-time high; but despite that, wool, of all the major commodities, continues to fall in price.

I do not know whether other members read a statement by the chairman of the executive of the International Wool Secretariat, Mr. J. H. Moolman, of South Africa, who said—

Based on a 1934-38 index of 100, American cotton now quotes at 516 and Indian cotton at 681 with silk at 543 and all textiles at 509. The July index figure for wool was 472 and with this further decline in wool prices wool is now substantially below the other fibres quoted.

Wool has come down even further since then. That was reprinted in Western Australia on the 8th of September. Mr. Moolman concluded by saying—

I have carefully scrutinised the wool picture all over the world through the channels of our international organisation and I find no justification whatever for the sharp decline in wool prices. I can see no reason why they should not harden before long.

For my part, I see, in those circumstances, no reason why they should.

If business activity and the spending power of the people in countries such as the U.S.A., Great Britain and Western Germany are on the level that they are today, and in view of the fact that the price of wool has made an almost sensational slide in the last three months, apart from the steady fall last year, I cannot contemplate any reason why the price should go up. The only contingency I can bring to mind which would increase the price of wool is another world war. In my 60 years of life, only on two occasions have I known the wool industry to be really prosperous, and both of those have followed a world war, when wool was being sold by an organisation that set a reserve price.

Another extraordinary feature of the present position is that woollen clothing is no cheaper than when wool was selling at 15s., or £1 per lb. Therefore, surely the whole subject calls for more attention than it appears to have been getting recently. There is no surplus of wool at present, and it is being lifted as soon as it becomes available. Whatever might have been said a few years ago about the existing system of selling wool, it certainly does not apply to the conditions ruling now. The subject calls for more interest today than by growers only.

I am afraid that our people are inclined to look on this matter as a problem which confronts only those who produce wool, but it is more than that. Today

the money derived from wool virtually represents the income of the Australian people. At the moment about 25 per cent. of that income is going down the drain. We put 4,000,000 bales of wool into a heap and say, in effect, "Come and buy at your price or offer us what you like, and you can have it"; and what is more, they get it.

We have buyers operating on the primary markets and there have been instances of where as many as 18 have deputed one man to do the buying for them; and then we talk about free competition! We have central banks throughout the world restricting overseas credit as we are doing in Australia today. We have the same shortage of foreign exchange and, some countries have a shortage of sterling credit with which to buy; consequently they are subject to control by their central banks as to how much they can spend on wool and, naturally, if they can buy it cheaper that requires so much less sterling. If any member cares to read some of the trade reports on wool and wool marketing, he will see that that is even hinted at in some places—namely, that the difficulties of some foreign exchanges and overseas credits are causing concern in regard to the prices they are paying, and in some instances this will ensure a reduction in price.

I never have been greatly impressed by the talk and propaganda we hear on the necessity of meeting the market when the price of wool is below an economic level. One rarely, if ever, sees a reduction in wool prices reflected in a reduction of the prices of woollen clothing. It is ridiculous to suggest that the manufacturers, for the sake of 1s. or 1s. 6d. a lb. under present conditions are prepared to have £2,000,000 worth of machinery and factory equipment lying idle, and some thousands of trained operatives dispersed on the labour market, when they can sell their finished product profitably.

Whilst the synthetic fibre threat has to receive a certain degree of consideration, I think that at times it is over-emphasised for obvious reasons. Although it cannot be ignored by the wool grower, I doubt whether it represents the threat that some publicity would have us believe. With very little cotton accumulated—apart from that in the U.S.A.—and with no wool surplus, if it were not for artificial fibres I suggest to members that half of the people in the world would be going naked—

Hon. L. Craig: That is very interesting.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There are many naked now, are there not?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: —and some members would probably enjoy that spectacle. Maybe I have been in the wool industry too long, and have taken too great an interest in it, but I consider that much of the propaganda we hear today and a great deal of the talk that is taking place is on a parallel with

what we heard in 1931 and 1932. It is not without some significance to me that the New Zealand wool clip last year—that is, to the end of June, 1955—brought prices less than 1d. per lb. than offered in the previous 12 months. The Australian wool clip was 10d. a lb. cheaper.

Hon. H. K. Watson: They were different classes of wool, though.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Yes, they were largely different classes of wool. Whereas the Australian clip was possibly made up of 80 per cent. merino, the New Zealand clip would be 80 per cent. cross-bred wool. Also, in the latter country the wool cannot be sold under a floor reserve price. Maybe that country was fortunate in that, at the time, Argentina, the other major source of cross-bred wool, was withholding wool from sale and disposing of it by barter agreement because the man who was running the country at that time—he is now deposed—would not let the wool be exported under a price that was regarded as reasonable. Despite that restriction, the last figures I saw from Argentina—which went back to about April—showed that there were only about 300,000 bales of wool accumulated in that country. Considerable effort was made to dispose of them and I think I am quite safe in assuming that there is no surplus wool available there now.

In New Zealand the significant fact is that the buyers have to meet the reserve price or they do not get the wool. In Australia we throw it at the buyers at their price and they get the wool. A point that is also not without some significance—and this may be informative to some members who are interested in wool—is that under the British Government's proposals for the next five or 15 years, during this season, the English grower of wool is guaranteed 4s. 10½d. a lb. for his fleece wool, whereas during the last sales we had in this State I understand the price averaged 4s. 2d. a lb.

Hon. L. Craig: Sixty-six pounds a bale.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It all depends on the weight of the bale. Members will realise that this is rather an extraordinary position. Admittedly, it was a cross-bred and rough type of wool. However, if the demand exists for that type of wool, it seems obvious that the demand is also present for a better type. Marketing in regard to our merino wool in this country seems to have become a debacle; while we see reasonable stability arising in other countries where some effort is made to maintain a standard level of values.

As I said earlier, this matter has now passed the stage where it is the concern of the wool growers alone. It now becomes a question of how long the Government of the Commonwealth charged with the responsibility will continue to ignore the fact that the Australian people's income

is already down below the figure obtained 12 months ago by some 25 per cent. Despite the interjection made by a member a few moments ago, I think it is obvious that prices are destined to go lower; and despite the fact that Mr. Moolman, the most authoritative man on wool in the world today, has said that there was no reason why the prices should have fallen. As I have tried to indicate, commerce and trade, within those countries which are large users of wool, has never been better. I can think of no circumstances at present that will cause wool to rise in price or even hold it at its present level.

I realise that the subjects I have discussed tonight are not usually referred to in an Address-in-reply debate, but it seems to me that the immediate outlook for wool—to put it mildly—is not promising. I do not want to see develop the chaotic conditions which occurred in the early 1930's and which affected the farming community so harshly. Those conditions also affected other sections of the community, but the representative of the farmers is charged with the responsibility of being spokesman for them in this House.

While wool occupies the position it does in the economy of this country, I should think that the Minister for Agriculture in this State, when next he attends an agricultural meeting in Canberra or Sydney, should give some thought to the position as it obtains at the moment, with a view to ascertaining whether it is possible to interest those people who have the authority to do something in regard to the wool market, but who just content themselves with issuing statements about the need for more production of primary products for export, when they know full well that it will not pay the growers to produce one of the primary products.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.45]: I support the motion, and before proceeding with the few matters I wish to discuss, I would like to offer my congratulations to Mr. Willmott, the new member of this House, who was sworn-in this afternoon as a representative for the South-West Province. I have not had the pleasure of meeting him personally, but I understand that he is highly regarded in the district from which he comes. His father was a member of Parliament, and I feel sure that Mr. Willmott will prove to be a decided acquisition to this House. I think he will find it difficult to follow in the footsteps of the highly respected member whom he succeeds, but that was a task which all of us had to contend with in our day. I feel sure he will rise to the occasion.

Recently, I studied the figures in connection with Legislative Council elections, and these give emphasis to a subject which we have debated for many years—the need for some improvement in the franchise for the Legislative Council. My research

shows the position to be as follows:—On the 30th June, 1955, the total enrolment for the Legislative Assembly in this State was 335,000, but the total enrolment for the Legislative Council was 90,000. Those figures are as at the 30th June this year, and I repeat them. For the Assembly, there was an enrolment of 335,000, and for all the provinces represented in the Legislative Council the total was 90,000.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Of course, one is compulsory and the other is not.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I have worked out the percentage. The proportion of Council enrolments compared with Legislative Assembly enrolments is 27 per cent. In other words, of the people who are entitled to vote at Legislative Assembly elections in Western Australia at the present time, a little over 25 per cent. are on the roll for the Legislative Council. To my mind, that state of affairs should not exist, and the matter should receive urgent consideration.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What would be a fair percentage?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: At the recent election for the South-West Province, there were 10,513 people on the roll; and of those, 5,600 voted, a percentage of approximately 50. In the South-East Province, the enrolment was 4,462; and of those 2,900 voted, a percentage of 65. Here is another set of interesting statistics. In the 1954 elections, the percentage of people voting, compared with the numbers on the roll, was approximately 49, or less than one-half of the total number enrolled. Taking the 1954 figures again, of the total number enrolled, 71 per cent. were men and 29 per cent. were women. So that on the 1954 figures less than one-third of the people enrolled were women.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Is that the total for all provinces?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes. Those figures will cause many of us to think. The more consideration we give to them, the more will we be impressed with the need for doing something to improve the franchise.

Hon. G. Bennetts: By making the enrolments compulsory.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: My suggestion is for a select committee to be appointed to make proposals to improve the state of affairs I refer to. In this life, one of the fundamentals is that everything changes. As I have tried to point out previously, our democratic institutions must be prepared to face the prospect of change and keep abreast of the times. All of us realise full well that in these days a lot of people hold views about changing the whole world set-up by revolution.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would you abolish the Legislative Council?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Certainly; he would do it quickly, if he could.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: If at any future time, and in the wisdom of the people who are elected members of the Legislative Council and of another place—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Or who are directed by Trades Hall.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: —It is decided that the Legislative Council should be abolished, I am not at this stage going to criticise something which future generations may do. If future generations decide that it is a good thing to live on some other planet, as seems within the bounds of possibility, I at this stage am not going to say that they will be foolish to do so. I earnestly contend that the set-up whereby only 27 per cent. of adult voters hold a franchise for the Legislative Council, is a bad one. Apparently I am not alone in that view, because members will recall that over the years the only two daily newspapers in this State, "The West Australian" and the "Daily News," have from time to time advocated a broader franchise. Leaders of all political parties have publicly stated that they would encourage such a move. But we in this House have done nothing about the matter.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You will not get any better legislation if that happens.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That might be so. I would not say that we would have any better legislation, but here is a proposition apropos what the hon. member has just stated. The law says that when courts operate they must have all the appearance of doing justice. That is a well-known maxim. Although justice must be done, it is also necessary that all the appearances of doing it must be present.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You must have been reading the views of Lord Chief Justice Hewitt.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is a fundamental maxim of law with which not only lawyers but laymen are conversant. No doubt at a later stage in the session this matter will be dealt with. At this stage I sincerely hope that members will give it serious consideration. I am fast becoming one of the oldest members in this House, having been elected in 1936, which is a long time ago. Over all those years, not one modification or liberalisation of the franchise has been effected. As a body, we should give the matter serious thought. My suggestion is that a select committee, comprising all shades of opinion, should be formed to make some proposition which will meet with the approval of the majority of the House.

I now turn to the all-important question of the position of gold in the State's economy. From time to time I have drawn attention to the anomalous position which has arisen because the price of this commodity was fixed arbitrarily in 1944 at

35 dollars per fine ounce by the International Monetary Fund, over whose policy we in Australia appear to have had very little influence. It often seems to me that the Federal Government should press the issue much harder than it apparently does. Over the years the lone champion in the cause for an increased price seems to have been South Africa, whose economy is vitally bound up with the production of gold.

We have read in the Press recently that South Africa raised the issue again at the meeting of the International Monetary Fund held at Istanbul this month, but very little mention was made of Australia's attitude, although we are signatories to the Bretton Woods agreement and are members of the fund. The Federal Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, was present at the meetings of the fund held a few days ago. It seems to me that, as our interests in this regard are so closely allied with those of South Africa, there should be closer collaboration between the two countries with a view to influencing a strong agitation for correcting a position that places an unduly harsh burden on one of our greatest primary industries. As I have already pointed out, the price of gold was fixed in 1944 at 35 dollars per fine ounce, and although 11 years have since elapsed, no change has taken place.

Hon. G. Bennetts: But there has been a big change in the cost of supplies.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I was about to mention that. What has happened to the price of other commodities is too well known to need elaboration. I think it is one of the marvels of our times, and certainly it is a great credit to all concerned, that the goldmining industry has been able to emerge from these difficult years in a comparatively prosperous state.

A few figures will show what an important industry goldmining still is and what a great part it continues to play in the economy of the State. The number of men employed in the industry at present is 5,766. The production of gold for the year 1954 was 850,540 ounces, worth approximately £13,500,000. Until the 31st July, the production so far this year has been 492,326 ounces, worth close on £8,000,000 or, in other words, over £1,000,000 a month.

What the industry means to the State in the way of supporting communities in far-distant centres and thus helping to cope with the evil of centralisation is almost beyond estimation. At least we must realise that the well being of our State is inexorably bound up with the goldmining industry, and the more it expands and the more prosperous it becomes, the better off we shall all be.

It is pleasing to be able to report that the industry is facing the future with confidence. In this connection, I should like

to read an extract from the report of Mr. R. J. Agnew, president of the Chamber of Mines of Western Australia, delivered at the annual general meeting of the chamber held at Kalgoorlie on the 24th May last. At page 9 in the report of the proceedings he said—

With the extension of industrial activity in the coastal areas, attention has been rather drawn away from the goldmining industry, and from time to time one hears remarks of a disparaging nature regarding the future of the industry. It is true that during the year one of the large producers has been forced on economic grounds to cease operations, but this must be accepted in mining where the stage comes in the life of every mine that, owing to either falling-off of grade, lack of reserves or economic conditions, it is impossible to carry on further operations which at one time were showing a profit.

Mr. Agnew there was referring to the Big Bell mine.

The really disturbing factor in the industry is that no new mines are being found to take the place of those which necessarily from time to time must go out of production. All mining is a wasting asset and every mine must eventually become exhausted. It is hoped that the subsidy recently introduced by the Federal Government will encourage prospectors. The lack of confidence in goldmining which one hears from time to time comes entirely from people outside the industry who are not in a position to know the true facts.

We certainly have our difficulties and if, as appears likely, further inflation is to take place, these difficulties will be increased. I can only repeat what I had to say a few years ago and that is that among those who are in a position to know, there is no lack of confidence. The industry, due to foresight and the spending of large sums of money of recent years, is in a position to immediately take advantage of any improvement in the economic set-up. We have always faced up to our problems and so far have been able to meet them. There is no doubt in our own minds that we will face up to future problems as we have done in the past and, so far as is humanly possible, we shall overcome them.

Members will note that Mr. Agnew drew attention to the problem of finding new mines to replace those which necessarily must go out of production from time to time, and pointed out the necessity for encouragement to prospecting. In this direction I feel that the present State Government is deserving of commendation.

A drilling programme has been put into active operation and last year an amount of £65,000 was spent in this way. Drills are now working at Day Dawn, Cue, Pilbara and Yilgarn, and it is earnestly hoped that this policy will lead to the finding of new mines in at least some of those areas.

Assistance to prospectors has been increased and at present there are 82 prospectors receiving assistance under the Government prospecting scheme. The scheme is still capable of improvement, and I trust that its scope will be increased from time to time in the light of experience. I take a good deal of satisfaction from the courageous decision of the Government to build a new State battery at Menzies because I, with other Goldfields colleagues, was a constant advocate for this to be done. The battery started crushing in January of this year, and, to the 31st July, it had crushed 2,776 tons of ore for a return of 1,574 oz., with a further 526 oz. estimated to be in the sands, a total of 2,100 oz.

As further evidence of the brighter outlook, it is worthy of mention that Wright Bros., who are prospecting just out of Leonora, recently dollied 341 oz. from 5 cwt. of ore and won a further 1,167 oz. by berdan pan. At Mt. Monger, another party of prospectors, Tarabini and Cabrini, recently produced 1,330 oz. from approximately 215 tons of ore. These results are very encouraging and are justification for the Government assistance granted to prospectors, particularly those engaged in the hazardous work of prospecting for gold.

Another decision which was made by the Government and which is deserving of commendation was to refrain from pulling up the railway lines to Wiluna and Laver-ton. Both of those districts are still on the map, and although their populations have dwindled a good deal, there is every possibility that they will survive. Without railway communication, however, there would have been no hope for them. I am grateful to members of this House who some time ago assisted me in carrying a motion urging the Government to allow those two lines to remain. We can look back on our action at that time and feel that we have been fully vindicated.

One of the greatest problems facing this country is that of centralisation. It has been shown beyond all question that the centralisation of huge populations in cities is not in the best interests of any country, particularly a young country like Australia. It is disturbing to think that here in Western Australia, well over one-half of our people live in the city. Yesterday I received a copy of that excellent report by Professor Gordon Stephenson and Mr. Hepburn. In a little brochure accompanying the report, I read a very interesting passage.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

[Mr. Heenan, having been taken ill after the suspension of the sitting, was unable to resume his speech.]

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [7.30]: I take this opportunity of congratulating Mr. Willmott on being returned to this House. The name of Willmott has, for a long time, been associated with the politics of this State. I remember the hon. member's father, who was a Minister in the Government for a number of years, and rendered great service. More recently we had the member for the former electorate of Sussex, who also rendered a great deal of service. I am sure the hon. member, now that he has joined us, will add to the fine reputation they have left behind them. So I congratulate him, and I also congratulate the House on his being with us.

One usually refers to the Governor's Speech on these occasions, and I think we can readily endorse some of the things His Excellency was good enough to tell us. He said that the economic condition of the State continued to be sound. Generally speaking, I suppose we can agree that that is right. I think that in a general way Western Australia is living in a great state of prosperity, but there are warnings of some little difficulties that might lie ahead of us. We can manufacture a sufficient number of articles in this State to meet the requirements of the purchasers here, but our market is limited to the State itself.

I cannot picture our being able to enter into competition with any other part of the world if we have over-production. Our overseas commitments have always been maintained by the surpluses we have received from primary production—wheat, wool, metals and so on—for which we have had no ready market here. A great deal of the prosperity that we have benefited by during the last five, six or seven years has been due to the fact that the commodities we have exported have brought a high figure. Now there is a recession in prices, and it is creating a good deal of thought in the minds of people as to what might lie ahead of us.

Personally, I believe that the Press of Australia and Western Australia has materially assisted in the downward prices of some of these commodities, because from time to time it has published statements to the effect that we will have difficulty in getting rid of our surplus wheat, wool and other commodities. It creates a position where the buyers convince themselves that the sellers anticipate they will have to take a lesser price; and I believe that limits the market. I think the buyers have said this: "There are surpluses there, and we can keep reducing the price until we get down to the figure we really want." So we may not be able to maintain the degree of prosperity that we have had in the years gone by.

If that is so, it throws a greater responsibility on our Commonwealth and State Governments, because they have been in the habit of borrowing considerable sums of money and building up the indebtedness of Australia and of this State; and in consequence, a much greater load is being put on the people who have to find the finance. That would not be so bad if we could build up our population rapidly in order to ease the liability.

The latest figures I have are for the last half-year ended December, 1954, when the population in this State increased by only 5,504. Of that number, 3,862 came from the metropolitan area. For the first time in our history we find ourselves with a much greater population in the city than outside of it. This, of course, will add to the difficulties ahead of us because the people in the country are the ones who produce the finance to enable us to meet our overseas debts, and also to provide a good deal of the security enjoyed by the people in the metropolitan area. We must do something to discourage folk from coming into the city. I regret to say there has been very little done in that direction.

Whilst I was overseas recently, I noticed that the Government in England and Northern Ireland was doing everything possible to meet the conditions of the people on the land. Telephones, electric light and water supplies were being made available to all the farmers. I admit it is much easier to make those amenities available there than it is here, because those farmers have much smaller holdings than ours have. All the same, we are doing very little in this State. Even the Eastern States are doing much more to provide amenities for the people on the land.

I made a trip from Canberra to Melbourne not very long ago, and I found that where the overhead electric cables were running there was a distributing line which gave cheap electricity to the farmers. Here a few of the smaller towns and farms—very few of the farms—have electric current made available to them; but generally speaking, not much has been done. I think we could do a lot to encourage people by giving them cheap electricity, and so make conditions in the country much better than they are.

It is true that Governments in the past have built schools and hospitals and today things are much brighter than they have been in that direction. I have repeatedly stated in my public life that Governments have shown very little confidence in the rural areas by reason of the fact that they have erected cheap, wooden schools. It seems to me that it was anticipated that there would not be a long life where those buildings were put up. We have now got over that state of affairs because we have been erecting substantial

buildings, and this seems to indicate that we have more confidence than we had in the past.

Hon. A. R. Jones: There are still plenty of wooden schools.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They are not going to be pulled down and destroyed.

Hon. A. R. Jones: There are new wooden schools.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I suppose so; and I know that some asbestos schools are being built.

I am pleased to know that in Western Australia, particularly, there is a better feeling between the employers and the employees than there has been in some periods in the past. We do occasionally have industrial troubles, but not very serious ones. I point out that next July, in England, there is to be a gathering known as the "Commonwealth and Empire Wide Conference." This conference, which is to meet at Oxford, will be presided over by the Duke of Edinburgh, and the only people to be invited to it are the representatives of the industries and of the employees concerned in those industries.

That is a very wise step. After all, if we bring these two sections together we will materially help to bring about a better understanding. No country can prosper or have stable industries unless there is good feeling between employer and employee; and round-table conferences are a great benefit in that direction. I hope that Australia will take a lead so that we will be able to get a better understanding between these two sections.

I mentioned a little while ago that the finances of the country were going down, and I want to point out that last year, with a population of just over 600,000 people, we spent about £40,000,000. That is a fairly large amount of money. So long as we get some earning capacity from it, we may not be doing anything that is wrong; but if we spend money without getting a return, we will have difficulties ahead of us.

It is true that the people are better off than they have been. I notice from the Savings Bank returns for the last half of 1954, that, for every man, woman and child in Western Australia, there was £95 in the bank. That is a good record, and it does belie the idea that we have a lot of poverty; because, after all, this is the people's savings bank—the workers' bank—and if there is that amount of money, it seems there is not too much poverty about. When we consider the sum that goes into s.p. betting—certainly it circulates—we must realise that a tremendous amount is spent, and a lot of it is lost.

The Minister for the North-West: A lot went in oil shares.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. It was marvellous how quickly the money was produced for the purchase of oil shares. Of course, some people had money saved up during periods of good fortune and they were prepared to take a risk on oil shares, especially after oil was first found. I am hoping, of course, that that will continue; but nevertheless the years ahead are not going to be as easy or as prosperous as the years through which we have just passed. I do not think we need be fearful about it so long as we meet the situation as it arises, and provided we have a remedy ready to meet it.

I cannot remember any other period when our industries have increased so rapidly as they have in the past five years. It does not matter where one goes, industrial establishments seem to be springing up, and the goods produced by those establishments seem to be as good as any imported from the Eastern States or elsewhere. Not only is that good for the State, but it also provides an avenue of employment for our young men after they leave school. So I think we can give ourselves a pat on the back for having availed ourselves of the opportunity given to us by the prosperous period through which we have passed.

I know, and I am sorry to say it, that in some instances monopolies seem to be growing up, and that is not a healthy sign. Monopolies get so strong on occasions that they keep other people out of business; and one of the worst monopolies in this State is in the newspaper business. Today we are not getting the same service as we did a few years ago, and at present we have really only one newspaper and it is controlled from the one office. It is a pity, and I regret it, that this state of affairs has occurred. This Parliament suffers because of that monopoly.

The other day I had given to me an old newspaper, "The West Australian" of the 2nd November, 1938. It is a little ragged now; but in those days the Legislative Council had its deliberations printed in a column and a half, and the Legislative Assembly had two and a half columns devoted to its business.

Hon. G. Bennetts: And now we get nothing.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Nowadays there seems to be no desire to educate the people. After all, we are their mouth-piece, their representatives; and if the people are not educated in the right direction, we cannot expect anything else but misunderstanding. The Press today—and I do not speak only of our own Press—seems to think that all the public wants to read is something about racehorses, sport, murder, tragedies or anything else that can catch the headlines.

Hon. H. L. Roche: You are quite right.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is a most unhealthy situation; and I am hoping that it will not be long before the Press realises that it has a great responsibility in training the minds of our young folk and getting them educated along decent lines and thinking decent, wholesome thoughts. That cannot be done by the class of news being printed now. It has been said by the Press that the newspapers give the people what they want. That is a poor outlook. This Government could give the people what they wanted; but would that be good for them? That is one aspect to which members should give consideration.

The Minister for the North-West: They give us plenty of comic-cuts these days.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Even they have been restricted a little. After all it is bad education, and it is a bad state of affairs when we have monopolies like this. Only a little while ago advertising rates were increased and the price of the paper was also increased.

Hon. A. R. Jones: And they charge for delivery now.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Like the breweries; they are giving more water than beer.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am not a beer drinker, but when the hon. member speaks he can tell us about it. He is an expert in that field; and he would know whether the beer is good, bad or indifferent, or whether it has been watered down. The newspapers have a far greater responsibility than they seem to be prepared to shoulder at present. So I hope that they will give some consideration to what I have said and that they will accept some of the responsibility which I maintain is theirs.

I notice that there has been a good deal of talk about increases in the cost of living. I have used the last statistical returns available, made up to the end of December of last year, and I notice that in a number of districts prices have fallen. These figures apply to 31 towns and refer to food and groceries. In 17 towns prices have fallen; and in the others, prices have risen. In the last quarter there was a fall of 50 points in the metropolitan area, and in the following towns prices have increased by the number of points shown:—

Towns	Points
Bridgetown	10
Dalwallinu	32
Esperance	3
Greenbushes	24
Jarrahdale	5
Kalgoorlie-Boulder	17
Keekatharra	27
Merredin	16
Moora	28
Mullewa	22
Narembeen	13

Towns	Points
Norseman	16
Northampton	9
Pemberton	4
Southern Cross	8
Three Springs	2

I do not know whether price fixing would have anything to do with that, but I would say that a good deal depends on the competition in those places. Where there were co-operative stores I would say that in all probability the cost of living would go down.

I now wish to say something about the action of the Chief Secretary as Minister for Local Government. I refer to his idea of forcing the local authorities to enlarge their territories. That is something that we ought to leave to the local authorities themselves. I do not think for one moment that enlarging local authorities' territories will lessen the cost of running the districts concerned. I think that it will remove a lot of the local interest that exists at present. I find that, generally speaking, where a local authority's area is large, less work is done for the ratepayers concerned.

I am glad to know that the Government has realised the error of its ways in the seizing of people's land, and I understand that it does not intend to engage in any more land seizures. I use the word "seizures" because that was the heading given to it in the Press. It would seem to me to be an appropriate word because in many instances that is what happened when land was taken from people. Some folk, as they have grown old, and in order to provide something for their old age, have invested their few pounds in land; and in some cases they have found that that land has been resumed by a land resumption officer.

I think I have mentioned one particular instance. An old lady of 79 years of age, who worked hard as a cook on the Goldfields for many years, bought some land at Scarborough, and paid the rates and taxes on it for a number of years. The land was resumed suddenly—four acres of it—and all she got was £400. She did not have enough savvy, or enough confidence in her local members; and as a result, did not complain about it to them to see if they could get a fairer deal for her.

She saw me recently; and when I asked about it, the authorities were prepared to give her back two quarter-acre blocks of land, provided she paid the cost of the survey. I do not know whether she had to pay for the cost of the survey of the two blocks only; because, after all, the people who bought the other land would be paying for the survey of those blocks in the purchase price. That is not an isolated instance—there are plenty of them—but I think it was rather brutal treatment.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Which Government was it?

The Minister for the North-West: Where was it?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It was under a Labour Government.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I will tell you something about the other Government in a minute.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That will be all right; the hon. member can balance it up in that way. There has been a lot of talk about the resumptions for Kwinana. Both Houses of Parliament were responsible for that. Those resumptions were made under an Act of Parliament, so there was nothing unfair about it. But in these other cases a departmental officer was concerned. I am fearful that Ministers are led too much by their departmental officers; and as I said before, the responsibility is ours. We represent the people; but I am afraid that some Ministers are allowing civil servants to do things that we ought to do ourselves, because we are responsible to the people for them. The departmental officers make these resumptions and fix the prices for the land concerned, and the Minister knows very little about it.

I want to compliment the Government and the Town Planning Commissioner on what they have done with respect to the city. I have not a great deal of interest in the city. To me it always seems to be growing; and as it grows, it creates its own problems. There now seems to be an attempt to do something for the future; but by the time half of what we are planning is done, we will have to start all over again with our plans for the future, because the growth of the city is so hard to control and we do not know what is ahead of us.

When I first came to Perth, many years ago, Murray-st. was just a little track, with sand on each side of it; and the story told to me then was that Hay-st. was so wide when it was built originally that the authorities found it too costly to bring the gravel from the Darling Ranges by bullocks and drays and decided to give the owners of the land on each side some of the land set aside for the road because they did not want it. So members can realise that we cannot foresee what is ahead of us. A good deal has been done in trying to make some plan for the future, and I hope that it will be successful.

I wish to ask the Government to have some inquiries made into the question of using sewage for farming purposes, as is being done in nearly every part of the world at present. Almost every small town in the part of England I visited, and in Northern Ireland, has its own sewage farm. It is marvellous what can be produced; and in many towns and cities, half of the milk suppliers use fodder produced on those farms. One has only to go to Werribee, near Melbourne, and the farm near Adelaide, to realise what can be done in this regard. We are short of water in Western

Australia, particularly during the summer period, and yet we find a terrific quantity of sewage flowing into the sea when it could be used by vegetable growers and the like.

Many people say it is objectionable to have our foodstuffs grown in this way, but that is all nonsense. The earth soon converts the effluent into fertiliser, and it is valuable in the growing of vegetables. Werribee, which is about 60 or 70 miles from Melbourne, has a large sewage farm.

Hon. G. Bennetts: And in South Australia they have a good one.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. It is some distance from the city.

The Minister for the North-West: Twenty or thirty miles.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Probably that is further than we would have to go. We have a type of sand here which would easily swallow the moisture.

There is another matter I wish to mention. I regret to say that in our agricultural areas, every time we have a year of heavy rainfall, such as the year we have just had, a great deal of salt is brought down from the salt-lake areas. Members will see what I mean if they look at a map of Western Australia and start at about Mt. Magnet and Menzies and trace the lakes down until they come to the Avon River.

Hon. W. R. Hall: As far as Esperance, too.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is so. That water all runs into the Swan River eventually and then out to the sea. The great danger is that when those lakes cease to run, the water lies there, and this results in a great deposit of salt. In some areas there is a depth of almost 1ft. of salt.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Are they not all salt lakes?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes; but the point I am making is that the salt can be picked up in thicknesses of 8in., 10in., and even 1ft. in some places. It is coming down through our agricultural areas, cutting the land away, and infiltrating into the soil. We should investigate the possibility of initiating an engineering scheme by which we could have a channel from lake to lake. I know that the farmers in the wheat belt would be glad to pay for the channel that would go through their own farms, because every year this salt menace is spreading further. It is no good a farmer cutting a channel through his own property if the man next door is going to do nothing about it, because the salt will pack up and spread through the country. A good deal of land is being wasted, and this could be obviated, I am sure.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: It is estimated at 2,000,000 acres.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know it is a very large area, and I see it every time I go to the country. This year has made the position worse. In the early days when land settlement took place in the agricultural areas there was no trouble. The water that came down was quite fresh. As clearing has taken place and more water has gone into these lakes, especially in periods of heavy rainfall, such as this year, the water has come down and can be traced right through.

I remember having spoken to the late Mr. Hedges, who was a very good engineer. He was the contractor who built the railway through the Darling Range to the Goldfields. He said that all they planned was to get a good grade to Kalgoorlie. That is the only thing they were thinking about. Now we want to bring our export produce to the ports and not take it to the back country. He said had we at that stage started off and followed that chain of lakes, we could have doubled our railway cartage by the grades coming down. If members look at the map, I think they will see whether that would not have been a good idea. It is too late now, because very shortly we will be carrying our goods by air and by road.

I now want to say a word or two about the remarks made by Mr. Heenan concerning only 27 per cent. of the people having their names on the Legislative Council roll, as compared with the number on the Assembly roll. That is easily explained. Nearly all the men who have their names on the Legislative Council roll are married men with wives and sons and daughters. The sons and daughters are unmarried and live with their parents; and in consequence, they are not entitled to have their names on the roll.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What about the wives? Would you say it is democratic that they should not have a vote?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If they are like some of the wives I know, I would say we would be far better off if they did not have a vote.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What an intolerable answer!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member knows as well as I do that the wife does exactly as her husband does; she asks for his advice. Not all wives have minds of their own, like the hon. member. This State is as well managed as any other State. I know the hon. member feels that if the same conditions applied here as apply in Queensland, we should have a Labour Government for the rest of our lives. In New South Wales we do not hear the

sentiments that are expressed here. The members in the Legislative Council there are not paid nearly as much as we are, due to a very good Constitution framed by sensible men. The Labour members there do not advocate the abolition of the Council.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: There is no analogy with Western Australia.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: As I have said, they do not advocate the abolition of the Legislative Council.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is on the platform.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member is interjecting a great deal to-night, and I wonder if she has forgotten that she has made her contribution to the debate on the Address-in-reply.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I have not forgotten.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am satisfied that we have a very good Constitution here; and while it is good, we should maintain it, and we will then get on very nicely. There is another simple explanation to the remark made by Mr. Heenan. A lot of people do not want to vote. As a matter of fact, we know very well that if we did not have compulsory voting, we would have very small polls.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Why do we not give them the right?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Every adult over the age of 21 years has the right until he is thought to be too decrepit; even then he has the right to a postal vote. I do not think there is much difference between the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You know there is a vast difference.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There is very little difference. After all, the people who pay the taxes should have the most say in the government of the country. We would have the same sort of Government if we had complete franchise. All the Government would have to do would be to make a greater contribution to their salaries than they do at present. We have had a good deal of prosperity. Let us be careful and thoughtful of what we do in the future. The State is progressing favourably; but there are difficulties ahead and we should meet them. If we do, Western Australia will be very successful.

We are fortunate to have an oil refinery company spending large sums of money, and the State will benefit by its work. We will probably have cheaper road material than we have now.

Hon. A. R. Jones: You do not get cheaper petrol.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The petrol has to be brought here. I would say that the conversion of crude oil into usable oils would be more expensive here than in Port Said or Aden where there are big works. There they seem to spread the distribution of their wealth in many places, and it is to the benefit of the people in those places.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Why is it to their benefit if they pay more for it?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: We may have to pay a little more, but our people are paid better than those in Port Said and Aden. If we have high labour costs, we must meet them; but the money is distributed afterwards, so in the long run we are not very much worse off.

Once again, I would like to ask the Minister to check what is being done by public servants. In replying to a question on the disallowance of regulations, the Minister was good enough to say that the answer was put up for him. Civil servants framed these regulations. In every Act of Parliament there is provision for regulations. But they are not made by the Minister; they are made by the public servants, who also provide fines and penalties for infringement of the regulation.

We are handing over great power to the public servants, and they are not responsible to anyone but the Minister. The Minister has a busy time. While I am here I propose to go through clauses of any Bill that provide for regulations, and see if I cannot persuade members to cut out those provisions that give such power to public servants. If we want regulations, the power should be given to Parliament to provide them. We should not draft a Bill with half a dozen clauses and say that the rest will be in the hands of the public servants. I would like to quote to the House an utterance of Sir Winston Churchill's. It is as follows:—

We must beware of building a society in which no one counts for anything except an official or a politician; a society where enterprise gains no reward and thrift no privilege.

If we take those few words of Churchill's to heart, we will look after the interests of our people and see they are governed properly.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [8.13]: I would like to congratulate our new member, Mr. Willmott. I would point out, however, that the hon. member has a very high standard to maintain if he is to follow that set by the late Mr. Henning. That gentleman was very well liked; and he was a member on whom we could rely for very sound advice in relation to dairy farming. I know Mr. Willmott comes from the same area, and I feel sure his knowledge and experience of the dairying industry will be invaluable to us, and will assist us in our debates.

It was pleasing to see that the Speech of His Excellency the Governor contained so much information as to what this Government has achieved. I am very pleased with what has taken place in all parts of my district.

Hon. L. C. Diver: What about the shipping service to Esperance?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I will tell the hon. member about that in a minute. Mr. Heenan spoke about the goldmining industry, which is important not only to the Goldfields but to the whole State. Reference was made by Mr. Roche to the drop in the price of wool and wheat. The time may be near when we shall be looking to the goldmining industry once again to pull the State through a lean period, as it has done on several occasions in the past.

I am sorry to say that a lot of changes have taken place in the industry. Different properties have been amalgamated because some of them did not have sufficient milling processes for the ore being recovered, and the expense of putting in new mills was too high. The amalgamation provided a cheaper overall with regard to crushing facilities and the gaining of ore. The ever-increasing cost of production has led to a number of grades of ore having to be by-passed in order to enable sufficient profit to be obtained for the money invested. It will be understood that the by-passing of certain grades of ore means the shortening of the life of a mine.

I was pleased, during my recent visit to Bullfinch and Southern Cross, to see the great strides that had been made by the Western Mining Corporation. I give full credit to that company for renewal of the life of the Golden Mile. Some years ago, the company went into production in a big way. It spent a large amount of money in opening up mines and put Kalgoorlie on a good footing. It expended over £1,000,000 at Bullfinch; and I discovered the other day that it had crushed 36,000 tons in a month, and values had jumped considerably.

It is expected that at the Fraser's Range mine at Southern Cross, which is being developed, values will increase the further down operations are taken. On the open cut at Bullfinch, the values are increasing. Production has occurred at a great depth there. It is expensive to pull the ore at the open cut by big diesel trucks, but the quantity of ore being put through is yielding a payable extraction, which the company deserves.

I am a member of the Prospectors' Association, and one of the pioneers. I am also a member of the Historical Society. In February, at the annual meeting of the Prospectors' Association, pleasure was expressed concerning the assistance given by the Government, and that provided by Governments all along. The latest

help afforded prospectors in regard to drilling has given them an idea of the parts of the State in which they are likely to find valuable ore. The drills will show at what depths it is possible to obtain payable ore; and they will know that if there is no possibility of a proposition being payable, it will be no use their tackling it.

The association is pleased with what is being done, but is rather perturbed about the lack of proper assistance from the Federal Government. Members say that more assistance could be given, and if that were done, prospectors would be able to move into other areas and possibly find new fields.

Mining is different from farming. Seeds can be put into the ground and they will grow, but with mines it is different. Minerals are constantly being removed, and eventually the life of a mine is extinguished. Mines have a limited life. Consequently, we have to see that prospectors go further into the bush. The School of Mines at Kalgoorlie, with the aid of the Prospectors' Association, has everything at its fingertips necessary to educate men in respect of different classes of minerals; and I am sure that if we can obtain some assistance from the Federal Government, good will result.

At Kalgoorlie next Friday, the new reservoir, capable of holding 25,000,000 gallons, will be opened. We are lucky to have that reservoir. Gold Mines Ltd. of Kalgoorlie has just completed construction of its big plant and will be putting off about 130 men next week. That is bad for the Goldfields, because there is a certain amount of unemployment already. However, the company will use 4,000,000 gallons of water every 28 days, and it will be seen that there will be a big drain on the Goldfields Water Supply. I am afraid that we will be lucky if no water restrictions are imposed in Kalgoorlie in the coming months, particularly in view of the quantity of water that is being taken from the main to Bullfinch and down to Norseman in connection with the extra production taking place in both those centres, and also the quantity of water that is being taken to Bruce Rock, Narembeen and other places.

The previous speaker referred to sewerage. We are very fortunate in Kalgoorlie in that the amount of water being used in that connection is yielding benefit to the town because, as a result, lucerne and other crops are being provided, and that fodder is going to dairies to provide food for stock. But for that, we would have been short of lucerne and other stock food.

Concerning the dairying industry, I know that the dairy farmer with a herd of 25 to 30 cows is in a bad position. I know one man in the Margaret River district who this year will be down

£200 in his production; and we must do something about this matter. The industry must be encouraged, because it is vital to the State.

I am also perturbed about the poultry industry. A few years ago, we had at least a dozen flour mills. What do we find today? With no export markets for flour, we have only one mill at Northam. That mill could supply the whole of this State with flour; whereas previously a dozen mills were in production. Flour milling has declined in this State because mills in other parts of the world have undertaken the production of flour.

Reference was made by Mr. Roche to light lands. He said that between 5,000 and 10,000 acres would be the area of land required to enable a man to farm such light land successfully. I disagree with that. It was originally thought in Esperance that 5,000 acres would constitute a suitable property. Finally, however, it was agreed by the Agricultural Department, and by people now farming in the district, that only 2,500 acres is necessary. It has been estimated that £10,000 would be required to establish a settler.

I was talking recently to Mr. Noel White who has for many years been a farmer in a big way in the Meekatharra district. He went to Esperance three years ago and spent over £39,000 in the district. On one property at present he is running 600 head of cattle, and I forget how many thousand head of sheep; and he was telling me that the clover he has established is amazing. He would welcome a visit from anybody who cares to inspect his property, and he does not consider there would be many properties better than his.

At one property in the district, 30 cwt. of clover to the acre was being cut after the farm had been established for two years. I think members from farming areas will agree that is very good. Is that not so?

Hon. L. Craig: Very good indeed!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: A Press reporter said to this man the other day, "You are a long distance from the market." He agreed. He said that he would put another £1 per head on his stock to get it to market, and would be showing £1 per head over what would be produced in other parts, because he had a regular rainfall, subterranean water, and plenty of land at a cheap rate—land easy and inexpensive to clear, and capable of providing remarkable growth. These things he considered compensated for the distance from the market and the extra cost thus involved.

A number of people from the Eastern States have taken up farming in that area. In my opinion, and in that of all the people in the district, it is no use anyone going there to farm unless he has at least £10,000 to invest. I would like other members to visit that district. Two years ago,

I took about 20 farmers there from various parts of Western Australia—men who were able to give an authoritative opinion on the quality of the land, including Mr. Diver; and all of them were very impressed by the district. I hope and believe that Esperance will one day be one of the best light-land areas in the State.

What I have always harped upon as being necessary, and what I have put pressure on the Minister to provide for, is the return of our ship. That would give us a chance to allow people in the district to receive some cheap superphosphate from Albany. Pyrites are being produced at Norseman, which is 120 miles from Esperance. I think of the Minister for Health, Hon. E. Nulsen, who has always said that we have a down-grade from Norseman to Esperance. He pointed out that it is only 120 miles to Esperance and advocated a superphosphate works there.

I do not suggest that we should have there a works to supply the whole State; but superphosphate could well be manufactured there as the pyrites is available at Norseman; and with super manufactured locally, the huge tracts of land available in the high rainfall area, easily cleared and suitable for the establishment of subterranean clover, would soon make the district into a wonderful place.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You would require a pyrites treatment plant there also.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: When I speak of a superphosphate works I mean, of course, a works including a pyrites treatment plant. Had we a ship calling at Esperance we could get our superphosphate from Albany much cheaper than we can at present. I have asked the Minister to supply me with the relevant figures, and I am certain that such a vessel would also be very valuable for bringing timber from Bunbury to Esperance.

At present, all the timber requirements of the district must be railed from Bunbury and through the metropolitan area to Norseman and Esperance. A lot of building is taking place in that part of the State; and so, for the shipment of timber alone, a vessel would be of great value. Fortunately there is plenty of land available in the Esperance area, and the Minister for Agriculture is speaking of a land settlement scheme there. I hope it will be proceeded with, because it would assist those who have not the requisite amount of money of their own to develop the land.

In the Esperance district there is a place called Shark Lake—about eight miles from Esperance—and for some years past we have been negotiating to have a siding established there, as Shark Lake is at the junction of roads from different parts of the district. At present all

the freight has to go into Esperance; and men such as Mr. Noel White, who get a lot of superphosphate, would have eight miles less to cart it if the siding I have mentioned were established. It would be of great advantage to settlers in surrounding areas for both receiving and despatching goods.

There is another siding 12 miles away known as Caitup; but the ground there is mostly waterlogged; and if goods are left there, they have to remain in the siding until the motor trucks are able to get in to take them away. The result is that at present almost all the freight is taken into Esperance, and the owners have to bear the cost of road freight back to their properties.

During my recent visit to Esperance I again visited the local hospital. For years it has been agreed that improvements should be made to that institution. On this occasion there were five patients in the hospital. Three patients were on a louvred verandah on which shrinkage had caused a gap of half an inch between the weatherboards, with the result that the patients were in a terrible draught. One man, in fact, had to go home because it was felt that he would be better off there under the existing conditions; so I hope the Government will hurry up with the improvements to that hospital.

I would like to stress that long-term leases would be of great help to settlers in the Esperance area. Norseman has the second biggest mining industry in the State, and it is a very important area as regards both pyrites and gold production. For a long time we have been battling to get a road built through from Coolgardie to Esperance. At present, construction is well on the way; and I think that before Christmas there will be a sealed road as far as Norseman.

At the mission station at Norseman, where there used to be 36 native children, there are now 65, and the Government has done a wonderful job there by the granting of funds for the erection of buildings and so on. That mission now has one of the best dormitories to be found in any part of the State, and it has been elaborately fitted up for these young children. The mission children are transported into the town to attend the local school, where they take their places among the other pupils. It is a step in the right direction—getting these children at an early age—and if we educate them and keep them away from the older natives we will be able to do a great deal for them. However, if they are allowed to mix again with the older natives they will eventually become a menace.

At Merredin a few days ago I was perturbed at the conduct of natives there who have their citizenship rights. I saw two of them with nine or 10 bottles of beer, leaving the hotel; and about two hours

later the policeman came along with a native woman, who was making a terrible show. An old man was running up the street; and he made a great deal of fuss at the police station, until he was put into the clink also. That was all due to natives with citizenship rights supplying liquor to the others. The sergeant of police at Merredin told me they are having no end of trouble there for that reason. He said, "This is a daily occurrence. Things are dreadful here, and I do not know what we are going to do about it."

Hon. H. L. Roche: Have you told the Minister for Native Affairs about that?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No; I have not told anyone yet. If we give natives citizenship rights we must see to it that they are kept away from the others, because a number of terrible crimes have been committed lately in Western Australia by natives, and I believe most of them have been due to natives who hold citizenship rights supplying liquor to the others.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: So you think it is due to drink?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I have already mentioned the great work done by the Western Mining Corporation at Bullfinch, and I am very pleased that we have a black road there now, as the company will be carting a very large tonnage of ore from Southern Cross to Bullfinch, a distance of 22 miles, in order to keep the mill in production. For that reason alone the road is essential.

I note that the Government has decided to establish a four-year high school at Merredin; and it has already done a great deal of building there, both as regards State rental houses and accommodation for railway employees. There is now under construction at that centre a £25,000 railway barracks which will be a credit to the State. It is a beautifully-built structure; and Merredin, with the diesel traffic and all the branch lines running from that centre, will soon be one of the most important country towns in the State. I understand that many big firms, such as Elder Smith's and others, are likely to build there.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Is the railway barracks being built by day labour?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No, by contract. A few years ago, when Mr. Simpson was Minister for Railways, I often spoke to him about the terrible condition of the railway barracks at Merredin. The old building is still there, and I cannot understand why some of the railway employees never burnt it down, because its condition was such that it must have been unhealthy and unhygienic. I think that after all these years those men have earned the building that is now being erected. Admittedly there is still a lot to be done at

Merredin in regard to the loco., and so on, but the building of the new barracks is certainly a big step forward.

During my visit to Esperance with the Premier a few weeks ago, there was brought to my notice the case of a man with five children who, according to the doctor who recently visited the school there and examined the children, all have teeth which are in bad condition and in need of dental treatment. There is no dentist at Esperance, and so the father of these children would have to make an appointment two or three weeks ahead and then take them to Kalgoorlie for treatment. Many parents are not able to afford either the time or the money to take their children to Kalgoorlie for attention of this kind. The Minister for Health informed me that the department has been unable to get a dentist to set up in practice at Esperance.

There is also no dentist at Boulder, and I made application to the Dental Board of Western Australia for one to go there. The board advertised through its usual channels and I received one reply a month ago. We are still negotiating with that person, and we offered him the top floor of the Boulder town hall if he would commence practice in that centre. In the Boulder district there are 7,000 people in the municipal area alone, to which can be added another 2,000 who live in the outskirts.

Hon. L. Craig: Have you no dentist in Boulder at all?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No; there are three in Kalgoorlie, but none in Boulder, and the waiting list of patients is extremely large. One of my own children required dental attention recently, but we had to wait a week before we could obtain an appointment. Members can therefore clearly realise how people in the remote outback areas are suffering great disability in regard to dental and health services generally.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They have a very good member, anyhow.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Most dentists are anxious to practise in the metropolitan area where there are all the facilities and every amenity offering, but they are reluctant to go to outback places such as the Goldfields.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Join the Country Party and we can all work together.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I will say that the Goldfields people have enjoyed an improved railway service by the introduction of the new diesel locomotives. They have assisted greatly in speeding up the schedules. Passengers now leave Kalgoorlie at 8.20 p.m. and arrive in Perth about 10 a.m. This makes the train still a little late on arrival in Perth, but that is due

to the lines being relaid and ballasting work being carried out. Therefore, the Goldfields people have to suffer a little inconvenience until that work is completed.

Another important feature is that the diesel trains are much cheaper to run than the steam trains. Figures which I have in my possession show that diesel oil costs 1s. 9d. per gallon and a locomotive consumes 1½ gallons for every mile it travels. In comparison, when I was working on the Commonwealth railways, a steam train required 4½ tons of coal to travel 100 miles with coal costing £28 per ton. It also had to take on a considerable quantity of water.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You must have been very thirsty.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Another important factor was that much delay was occasioned at the different stops when coal and water had to be taken on, especially at such places as Zanthus, where we would be held up for as long as 20 minutes to fill the water gins and to reload the bunker with coal before we could continue on to Rawlinna. The diesel trains, however, do not require this servicing, and the fuel they use is much cleaner to handle; and as a result, the service naturally is speeded up.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The men have a gentleman's job on the railways now.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes. I have two sons-in-law on the railways, and they go to work dressed as I am now; and when they come home one would think that they had never been to work. Of course, they do not work such long hours as we do here.

During my recent visit to Queensland and other parts of Australia, I made a point of studying the train services whenever possible. In comparing them, I would say that there is no doubt that the Commonwealth railways have the most outstanding service in Australia; and the next best is that service between Adelaide and Melbourne, which provides twinette railway cars. The Spirit of Progress in Victoria also gives a very excellent service; but the passengers have to sit up. On the Queensland railway service, the sleeping accommodation is excellent and hot water is also provided in the compartments. This year that State has converted the sleeping cars to twinettes.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Are they not on the Sunshine express?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes; and that is a very excellent train. The Queensland trains running between Brisbane and Sydney are not as comfortable as those on other lines; and, with the exception of the Sunshine express and the Overlander, which runs from Brisbane to Rockhampton and beyond, and the Commonwealth railways, the Western Australian service compares very favourably.

The latest compartments on the Westland are fitted up very comfortably; and in view of the fact that they are hauled by diesel locomotives and are fitted with a good type of coupling, the ride is very smooth. Hot water is also provided in the compartments for passengers. Further, the Railway Department in this State provides a good sleeping berth, not only to the first-class passenger, but also to the ordinary working man who occupies a second-class compartment; and that is an admirable improvement. When I was the head conductor on the Commonwealth railways, and travelled on the Commonwealth trains to Adelaide on my holidays, I was provided only with second-class accommodation. On occasions I have taken six members of my family with me.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Where did you get the other one, then?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I have another child, but he was not with us on that occasion. I was about to say that whilst travelling on that train we had to sit up from seven o'clock at night until nine o'clock the following morning nursing our children; and no consideration was given to second-class passengers. At that time all the Commonwealth Government was concerned about was the extra revenue it received from such travellers. If one went out to Sydney, there was the same poor type of compartment, in that no sleeping accommodation was provided. Therefore I maintain that the Western Australian Government Railways are giving excellent service to all passengers, both first-class and second-class.

Nevertheless, I have noticed that this week the Railway Department has neglected the comfort of Goldfields passengers. Up till now, if the Westland was running, the department would have a dining-car in readiness to be attached to the Goldfields train. Apparently our railway commissioners are adopting the viewpoint of, "We will cut expenses. What are the Goldfields people to us? We will take our dining-car and attach it to the Westland and the Goldfields people can make whatever dining arrangements they like." I am opposed to such a policy. The Goldfields people pay the full fare in the distance they travel from Kalgoorlie to Perth.

Hon. L. Craig: Not you and I.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No. The ordinary passengers pay the full fare, but the interstate passenger on entering this State pays only a proportion of the rate that is charged to travel between Kalgoorlie and Perth. Nevertheless, apparently the policy that is to be adopted in future is that interstate passengers are to get preference in regard to the dining-car, which should be attached to the Goldfields express. If the Railway Department is to be adamant on this latest move, it should advise the

people on the Goldfields and give them a day's notice that there will be no dining-car attached to the Goldfields express, and that they should bring their own food. Goldfields residents would then have adequate warning should they intend to travel to Perth.

Hon. J. D. Teahan: That is on the 8.20 p.m. train out of Kalgoorlie?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes. I would also like to point out that in Kalgoorlie at present a committee has been formed to look after the welfare of the aged people. There are many pensioners and elderly people on the Goldfields. Many of them are pioneers who blazed the track from Perth to Kalgoorlie, and several are now in their eighties. Dental treatment and optical services for these people on the Goldfields are sadly lacking.

At the moment the position is that if a medical certificate is obtained stating that an aged person's teeth or the lack of spectacles are affecting his health, we can secure a free rail pass for him so that he may travel to Perth for treatment. However, at least one month's or two months' notice has to be given of the intention to bring such persons to Perth, because the waiting list is so long; and, further, it is extremely difficult to get them treated even on arrival in the metropolitan area. Many of these old-age pensioners, if they are paying rent, are in dire distress, and are having a bitter struggle.

Before I continue with these remarks, I would like to relate an experience I had the other day. I was passing through the Supreme Court gardens on my way to the office of the Minister for Justice. It was just after the lunch-hour period, when many people visit these gardens to have their meal; and I happened to notice an elderly man pulling scraps out of one of the rubbish bins. I asked him, "What are you doing there?", and he replied, "I am getting something to eat." I said, "Is that necessary?" He then went on to tell me that he was paying so much a week for rent, and told me the amount he was receiving as a pension, and I believed his story.

Hon. L. Craig: Some of those old men are extremely eccentric.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes; but I would say that this old gentleman was honest. He explained all the circumstances to me, and I gave him 2s. I am a member of this committee who care for the aged people on the Goldfields; and during my visit to the Eastern States, I made a point of visiting all the homes for the aged I possibly could. I would like to point out that after we concluded the arrangements to have these elderly people brought to Perth for dental or optical treatment, we then have great difficulty in finding accommodation for them before and during their period of treatment.

We find, too, that we are handicapped in endeavouring to secure clothes for them. Mr. Teahan is also a member of the committee to which I belong; and we are appealing to the Goldfields residents continuously for any old clothes they can donate to be worn by these aged people; and they are always willing to assist a good cause. At present however, we are having great difficulty in securing trousers of a suitable size for them. Most persons today find that such articles of apparel are most expensive and they endeavour to get the greatest wear out of them before they are disposed of.

Last year we set out to give the old people a holiday. We have one of the finest buildings in the State used as a home for the children of the Goldfields. This was purchased from funds subscribed by people on the Goldfields and with the assistance of the Lotteries Commission. Each year the Goldfields residents subscribe to a fund for sending 200 children to Esperance, and all expenses are paid.

This year we were able to collect an additional £1,210 for the purpose of sending 100 old-age pensioners to Esperance for a holiday. The old people really enjoyed it, and they had three weeks there. We have an option on a building in Kalgoorlie which will cost £3,000 to set up as a convalescent home. If we can find the finance through the ready assistance of the Goldfields people, and through voluntary contributions of small amounts, such as 6d. a week from the pay of workers, and through donations and street collections, we will be able to purchase this home.

We are seeking to do this because the old people of the Goldfields cannot be admitted to homes in Perth. I have made many applications on behalf of them for admission to the Mt. Henry and "Sunset" homes, but the waiting list is terrifically large. We should have a much larger allocation to meet the needs of the old people than we have at present. On my last visit to the two hospitals in Kalgoorlie I found that in the Government hospital there were 25 old persons admitted as patients, some of whom were bedridden. Had there been a convalescent home other cases now admitted could have been sent to the home and the beds at the hospital would be available for more needy cases. In the St. John of God Hospital there were 16 to 20 of these old people. So it will be seen that it is very necessary for the Goldfields to provide accommodation for the old. In the outback places we always seem to battle to raise our own funds.

I shall now refer to the railways. Recently, in a newspaper, I saw an advertisement calling for employees. The Railway Department invited young men to join the service. Each advertisement costs

£7 10s., and every week one advertisement appears in the Kalgoorlie newspaper, and the same advertisement is published in all the newspapers in the State. The trouble is that today the Railway Department is not getting the right type of employee. I know the obstacle—the salary in the railways is not encouraging. I believe that railway employees are underpaid.

Take the fettler, for instance. People do not recognise his position as important, but I give it the No. 1 place in the service. It is like erecting a building. If the foundation is not present, nothing can be put on top. These men go out on the tracks where the amenities and accommodation are rotten. They put up with all the hardships, and have difficulty in getting food sent to them. It is time that something was done to give them some form of bonus payment to encourage them to stay at their jobs. I know a lot of the employees in the railways. When I travel through my electorate, no matter what worker I meet—road worker, water supply worker, railway worker—I stop my car and talk to him. The result is that I have much information about their conditions.

At present the Railway Department is building cottages along the line with the object of cutting out some of the delays occasioned by the changing of staff. The Commonwealth has always recognised that the changing of staff on long trains takes six minutes. On some occasions, I myself could not do it in six minutes, and I was pretty active as a guard. We used to get trains 60 to 80 coaches long. We were expected to run down to the engine, run back and book the train off.

The department is building cottages to accommodate one person each along the line. They are built in the most awkward places out in the bush. If the department finds difficulty in getting employees in Perth and Kalgoorlie, how will it find employees to occupy the cottages so built? At Noongar, 12 months ago, there were two nice cottages, but they were dismantled and taken away. Today the department is building two more, but they are not in the same class as the former ones. At another spot out from Kalgoorlie, the department recently closed a siding where there are six houses for the fettling gang; but today it is putting up another siding a mile further on. I do not know why it built a siding further up and erected married men's quarters.

The Government will have to do something about getting a suitable type of employee for the railways. Today the suitable type can find employment in other spheres and get better wages. What happens in regard to their days off happened to me many years ago when I was station-master. When it comes to a holiday, they

are booked off; but they are expected to answer the bell when it rings. If they do not, they are in trouble. Yet they are supposed to be booked off. Where men are isolated and retained at a post, some privilege should be extended to them by the payment of wages for remaining on the job.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Or allowing them to accumulate the holidays.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: They are booked off, and that is taken from their holidays at the end of the year. They would not get a holiday in lieu. For the loss of a holiday on that day they should be paid full-time as a compensation for being in the bush. On the Trans-line the railway employees get a district allowance according to mileage. It is an incentive to keep them. I would ask the Railways Commission to consider giving the workers a special allowance for their isolation in the places I referred to. Such an arrangement would be better, and sufficient staff would be found.

When I was in the Eastern States recently I saw a wonderful development in the Commonwealth railways on the line running from Leigh Creek to five miles outside of Port Augusta. A system of flat-top trucks is being used. One train can bring in 3,000 livestock with the use of two diesel cars coupled together. The livestock is not taken off the narrow gauge trucks from the north. A set of rails is built on the flat-top trucks on the broad gauge, and the narrow gauge trucks run over them. The cattle are not unloaded, but taken in their original trucks on to the broad gauge trucks. That is an innovation in the railways and it has proved very successful.

I draw attention to another matter. The other evening I asked a question as to whether it was advisable to engage youths of 19 to carry out all the responsibilities of police officers. I think that the age is too low. I am aware that some of them are very capable of carrying out their responsibilities; but in my opinion, many of them are not. I give an instance of what happened to me some time ago.

I was standing in front of Boans with the chairman of the Cunderdin Road Board. We were standing just off the gutter, side by side. We could not have moved any further off the footpath. A young constable came along and said "Move on. You are obstructing the traffic." I said, "I do not think so. We are talking business for the moment. I do not think we are obstructing the traffic, and you have no right to shift us." He said, "Get off on the road and out of the way." I said "We cannot get off on to the road. We are likely to be prosecuted for obstructing the road traffic. In fact we might be killed."

He then walked past on his way, because of something which drew his attention. In the meantime a police sergeant and an inspector whom I knew came along. I said to the inspector, "Give Mr. Dennis and me a ruling as to whether we are obstructing traffic or are within our rights in standing in our present position for a few minutes." He asked, "Why, George?" I replied, "That young constable told us we had to get on to the road or move on". The reply was, "He evidently does not know much about the law". I said, "We members of Parliament make the law and ought to know where we stand, and so ought he".

Hon. H. K. Watson: You could have referred to him as being in the category of the weak-minded.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: A week ago I was walking down Hay-st. and a truck pulled up at the kerb. Another car came along, bumped the truck-door and bent it. Another of these young constables was close by, but he did not even see the accident. The truck driver directed his attention to it, and he replied, "It has nothing to do with me". The truck driver said, "I think it has; you are a constable and we want you to take notice of it." The constable took out his book and then told the driver he had better go to the station and report it.

Today I asked a question regarding the plain-clothes and uniformed police who have resigned from the service. These men are very efficient officers; I have spoken to them and I know their reasons for leaving. To train these men has cost the State a good many pounds, and when men have been trained for this work, we want to retain them. Their reason for resigning was that they were not satisfied with the service, that there was too much red tape and that there was no way of getting over it; one was never right and had no say. They thought they would set up in business for themselves.

I understand that lately a big improvement has been made and that conditions are now much better. I know that some of the young constables will make good men, but it is a big responsibility that has been placed on some of them. Take a recruit 19 years of age; it is rather difficult for him to have to go into a hotel in the course of his duties. Some of the older men have told me that a number of the constables are too young for that class of work. A better system needs to be worked out.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: From an outsider's point of view, the system of promotion is very unfair.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes. I understand that an improvement has been made. Members will recall that years ago we had a very efficient force which had a very good name. The men were well trained and great interest was taken in the force. It

may be that the men of today need better supervision or better pay. I am afraid I have occupied a good deal of time, but I wanted to say a few words on behalf of my constituents. I support the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) 19.211: I take this opportunity of congratulating the House Committee on the appointments in the Chamber, particularly the great improvement in the lighting. This Chamber now compares very favourably with any I have seen in Australia. I have not seen them all, but I have been in most of them, and I consider this Chamber is now most impressive and equal to or even above the general standard in Australia.

I wish to congratulate Mr. Willmott, the new member for the South-West Province, on his return, and sincerely hope that he and I shall be able to get along as well as Mr. Henning and I did. During my term as Minister, Mr. Henning was very helpful in his advice when I was handling Bills on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture.

I have been supplied with replies to various questions asked by members on agricultural matters. In discussing farming matters, Mr. Logan suggested the introduction of some sort of insurance to cover damage to grape crops. The possibility of such a scheme to meet certain types of crop losses was examined earlier this year in connection with the flood losses to grape growers in the Upper Swan district.

It was found, however, that the premium that it would be necessary to charge for flood cover only would make this insurance prohibitive. It would be possible to inaugurate such an insurance scheme only if the charter of the State Government Insurance Office were widened to permit it to accept the settlers' payable insurance over their fixed and movable assets as well as the flood damage insurance. The Government was prepared to advance loans to viticulturists who were unable to carry on after the floods early this year, but very few applications were made for such assistance.

Hon. L. A. Logan: That is wrong.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The mere fact of their not applying for assistance suggests to me that they did not require it. The normal course in extending assistance to banana growers or other primary producers unfortunate enough to meet with disaster has been to grant it on lenient terms through the Rural and Industries Bank. I do not know whether the grape growers applied to the bank, but if they did, they would have received consideration equally with other primary producers.

According to Mr. Baxter, the Government should by now have established a citrus experimental farm, and I can advise him that endeavours have been made over a number of years to secure an area of land on which to establish a horticultural research station. Suitable types of land are scarce, and when it was available, the high costs involved prevented its acquisition. However, consideration is now being given to a site in the hills. If this station can be established, experimental work with citrus will certainly commence. From the latest information I have, I feel safe in saying that arrangements have been made to acquire a property for this purpose in the hills district.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I thought it had already been acquired.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There have been negotiations and I understand that is so. Several members drew attention to the serious financial problems that many young farmers are experiencing. There can be no doubt of the importance of prospective farmers' realising that substantial capital reserves of their own are essential in these days for those wishing to establish themselves on the land.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Where are you going to find them?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There is quite a general demand for land, but whether the applicants have the money to finance its development is another question. If they have not the money to finance its development, I suggest that they should never take it on. Even today certain blocks very close to Perth would have been improved if the question of finance had been considered rather than who was the applicant. I know a property 61 miles from Perth that by now would have had £2,000 expended on it. It was allotted nearly two years ago, and from my observation, not a tap has been done on it. It is obvious that some folk who have not the capital have been fortunate enough to be allotted properties.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Is not that the responsibility of the Land Board?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I point out that the decisions might not be based upon whether the applicant has the necessary finance or the ability or intention to develop the land or merely proposes to squat on it, hoping for values to rise. The Land Board could be misled.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It is.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not think it is right to allow such an occupant to remain in possession of a property for so long. The Act should be policed. If allottees do not carry out

the conditions, the land should be forfeited and granted to somebody who will develop it.

It was said by Mr. Jones that the position many poultry farmers are finding themselves in is due to under-capitalisation; and that, as a result, there is under-development. I understand that on many poultry farms poor farm layout and small flock size per unit of labour are serious handicaps to efficiency in egg production. I am told that the operators of such farms seldom have sufficient finance to improve working conditions on their properties, and may be either unwilling or unable to borrow the necessary additional capital. Whether special financial assistance should be made available to them and to other farmers similarly placed, as suggested by Mr. Logan and other speakers, is a matter for careful consideration, and I have passed the suggestion on to the right quarter.

When he suggested that nobody knew much about the problem of deficiency of trace elements in this State, Mr. Jones was far from the facts. Trace element nutrition of crops and pastures is a field in which the Western Australian Department of Agriculture is regarded as leading the Commonwealth.

Hon. L. Craig: Yes; and by some, almost the world.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: As a result of the department's work, the area in Western Australia top-dressed with copper has risen to over 1,000,000 acres this year, a tenfold increase in eight years. The area top-dressed with zinc is about 750,000 acres compared with nothing eight years ago. These areas are probably greater than the combined totals of all other States. Despite their successes, officers of the department are well aware that there is a great deal more yet to be done, and they are working keenly on the matter.

It was suggested by Mr. Jones that assistance in animal husbandry could be given to farmers by the department. Under the present organisation of the department, animal husbandry services are distributed in a number of divisions, as follows:—Fat lambs and sheep and wool in the wheat and sheep division; beef cattle in the sheep and wool, dairying and North-West division; dairy cattle and pigs in the dairying division; and poultry in the animal division. The activities of the Veterinary Branch embrace the control of disease, the investigation of outbreaks of disease, the provision of extension and advisory services, and research into animal disease problems. Unfortunately the staff is considerably below strength—

Hon. A. R. Jones: That is my complaint. It is not that I have anything against the men who are working there, but we have not sufficient of them.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: As I was saying, unfortunately the staff is considerably below strength, and endeavours to recruit additional veterinary surgeons during recent years have not proved successful. Private practice and other avenues of employment have proved more attractive and more remunerative than Government service, and there is a shortage of veterinary surgeons in all States. To overcome this difficulty, a scheme for the training of veterinary cadets was introduced in 1950, and two appointments have been made annually since that time.

One cadet has already obtained his degree and is now a member of the staff. Three others are expected to graduate at the end of 1956, and thereafter two should become available each year to the department as veterinary surgeons. This appears to provide the only means of recruiting and maintaining an efficient veterinary staff, but several years must of necessity elapse before it will be possible to obtain full requirements.

I would advise Mr. Jones that the need for further professional and technical staff to advance soil conservation and soil erosion control is appreciated. A number of vacant positions exist in the Soil Conservation Branch, as well as in other major branches of the Department of Agriculture. Many new appointments have been made to all branches of the department in the past two years, but there remains a shortage of suitably trained people. The soil conservation service adopts several ways of giving advice and assistance to farmers, both singly and in groups.

Local organisations, such as pasture improvement groups, have given active encouragement and are to be commended for their efforts. Some districts have been less active than others in this regard. It is not felt that widespread and effective soil conservation and erosion control can be achieved by regulations and compulsion. The willingness of farmers to take positive action is the key to the problem. They require advice, assistance and encouragement, and within the limits of available staff these services are provided.

A question concerning the Mines Department was raised by Mr. Davies, and the following information has been supplied:—

Generation of electricity. There is no shortage of electricity in this State nor apparently likely to be for many years to come in view of the provisions at East Perth, South Fremantle and Bunbury.

The quantity of electricity used today, compared with 20 years ago, illustrates the expansion that has taken place in the supply and use of power in this State. For the year ended the 30th June, 1935, the maximum load was 22,000 kw. At the 30th June this year, the peak load had been increased to 109,000 kw. In 1935

98,000,000 kw. were generated, and in 1955, 462,000,000 kw. were generated. That is an enormous increase in the 20 years. We are advised that there is not likely to be any shortage of electricity supplies in this State for many years, and that is a very fine thing.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Do those figures cover small country supplies throughout the State, too?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No; they refer to the metropolitan system. Mr. Davies also raised the question of briquetting, and this is the reply received—

It is not necessary to briquette Collie coal for domestic and other use since Collie coal is a hard black coal available in lump form. Furthermore, it does not briquette in the same way as lignite from Yallourn as it has not the right composition and physical nature for briquetting.

The investigation of the manufacture of coked briquettes from Collie coal has reached the stage of pilot plant development. The manufacture of coked briquettes could become a major industry at Collie.

Regarding gas manufacture, I have received this reply —

The Lurgi process for manufacture of gas from Collie coal was investigated and reported upon five years ago, when it was considered that the smallest economically-sized plant was too big for the gas consumption of Perth and Fremantle put together.

Gas production in the metropolitan area by the State Electricity Commission, however, is now largely based on the use of Collie coal in place of imported gas coal. The method of production rests on work done by the Mines Department Laboratory officials at the Fremantle Gas Works in 1948-49.

I was interested to read Mr. Logan's remarks concerning the State Shipping Service. The hon. member did not blame the State Shipping Service entirely for the closure of the flour mill at Geraldton. I made some investigations into this matter and I checked on the quantity of flour shipped from Geraldton to North-West ports for five years, and part of this year. In 1936-37—at that time the State Shipping Service accounts were based on the financial year, whereas now they are based on the calendar year—116 tons of flour were shipped to North-West ports from Geraldton. In 1938-39, the figure rose to 189 tons; and in 1952, it was 155 tons. In 1953, it was 133 tons; in 1954, it was 141 tons; and for the eight months up to the end of August of this year, it was 103 tons.

So, on that basis I suggest there has been no falling off of the quantity of flour shipped from Geraldton to North-West ports since 1937. The quantity has fluctuated slightly, but there has not been a drop to such an extent that it would be the means of closing the mill. The peak year, on these figures, was 189 tons in 1938-39, which amounts to only about three and a half tons per week. So I do not think it can be fairly claimed that lack of shipping from Geraldton to the North has been entirely responsible, or indeed responsible to any appreciable measure, for the closure of the mill.

In the "Daily News" of the 21st June, 1955, a report from Geraldton was headed, "Lack of Orders Stop Flourmilling." The report states—

Because of a lack of export orders, milling of flour at the Victoria District Flour Milling Co. has been suspended indefinitely. Announcing this today, manager E. G. Hussick said that a general lull in orders was being experienced by other mills throughout the Commonwealth. No employees of the company had been put off.

On the occasions when the ship has missed the port, I have received complaints from Geraldton. The situation has always been unavoidable when one of the State ships has by-passed Geraldton, or else it has either called at a week-end, or has not loaded flour, or it was fully loaded when it got there. I know the disappointment that is felt, even when there is only one ton to go out. It is also a big disappointment to the bakers in the North because they prefer Geraldton flour to any other.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It is the finest in Australia.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The bakers in the North say it is the best flour for them to handle.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They ought to get some and give it to the bakers here. It is crook here!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Occasionally a ship misses Geraldton—not very frequently but perhaps two or three times a year—and I can imagine that the bakers in the North would be at some disadvantage and would naturally order from Perth to make sure of getting their flour.

I quite realise that a regular shipping service to Geraldton would have an effect upon the economy of the town. I am hoping that perhaps by this time next year it may be possible to guarantee such a service. We have a ship now being built in Newcastle which, according to contracts, would have been in service at the end of this year; but, unfortunately, the dockyards are a few months behind here and there, and it now appears that we will be lucky

if we can take delivery of the ship before April or May of next year. That is most unfortunate.

We had planned that it would be here before the "Koolinda" went for her annual dry dock in the new year. That causes so much disruption to the passenger and freight services to the North-West ports and Darwin. It is unfortunate but unavoidable.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Is there a charter ship coming on to the run?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We have chartered a ship from the Commonwealth, the "Daylesford." It is a "D" class ship, purely cargo, such as the "Dorrigo" and "Dulverton." When it was arranged with the Commonwealth that we were to take over the ship, we were advised that she would be ready for us in April this year. Unfortunately, the job of converting the ship from coal to oil fuel, and also reconstructing the crew accommodation has taken many more months than was first thought, at the end of the last year.

However, that is another unavoidable circumstance and the position is that they expect to begin loading cargo in Melbourne tomorrow and then sail for Fremantle. That has been expected on several occasions and has not eventuated, so I would suggest that anybody's guess is as good as mine as to when we will actually get the ship, but I believe that it is almost completed and ready to be handed over to us.

That ship will be on charter until the new vessel arrives; that is, the ship under construction at Newcastle, the "Koojarra." We had hoped to have it right through the peak season. Shipping is a problem during the winter time because of the seasonal industries. We have the beef and live cattle, the two whaling stations, wool and other industries which are of a seasonal nature. A lack of shipping means a good deal of disorganisation and a good deal of disappointment for many people. However, as I said before, we hope to have the situation cleared up by next winter, the beginning of the peak season. We should be able to put the ship into service by the end of March or perhaps in April.

Another ship is also being constructed in Scotland. It is a passenger-cargo ship and Denny Bros. tell us that it will be delivered by the middle of 1957. That being the case, it would be quite safe to assume that an adequate service will be available on the North-West coast within the next 18 months. It will be a great asset to have two extra passenger ships on that coast because between them they can shift something like 2,500 passengers in 12 months. In addition to being an asset for the people living in the North, it would also be an inducement for tourists to travel to the North during the winter

months when the residents of that area are not travelling to and fro. This should be a good advertisement for the North even though it has had plenty of publicity in the last few years, particularly in the light of the proposals to Canberra which have been made on various occasions in regard to taxation and the motion moved in this House by Mr. Jones.

Altogether, the present Government has committed itself to the expenditure of almost £2,500,000 for vessels for the State Shipping Service. Most of the money has been paid in instalments as they have become due and the balance owing on the "Koojarra", which was left in abeyance for some time, has been paid. In addition, there were deposits and instalments for the "Dulverton" and "Dorrigo."

Hon. A. R. Jones: What about a ship for Esperance?

Hon. G. Bennetts: Mine will be worn out before it gets there.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Mr. Bennetts is still interested; he has never lost heart in that direction. I take it he means that gallant little vessel, the m.v. "Kybra". I can assure him that when the position in the North is eased—there are no railways or other forms of transport in that area—the Government will give every consideration to the placing of a ship on the South-West run. But I think Mr. Bennetts recently received some information in connection with transport by sea and rail to Esperance; and if I am not mistaken, I think that rail transport is a little cheaper so that I do not think anything would be gained by running a ship down there. It would certainly increase costs, according to the latest information I saw.

A question was raised by Mr. Willesee regarding schoolchildren in the North. Last year and the previous year it was arranged that camp schools should be extended to the North-West for schoolchildren in that area. Unfortunately, because of eye complaints in one instance and whooping-cough in another, two of the camp schools had to be abandoned, under instructions of the health authorities, and only one was ever held. It was a most successful camp and was held at Port Hedland; though, of course, it was not as successful as those held at Point Peron and other areas in the south for children in the lower half of the State.

So, to overcome something which is a problem, members of the North-West discussed with the Director of Education, the Minister for Education, and the Education Department's supervisor for the North-West, the possibility of a scheme for the children of that area. They decided that the North-West schoolchildren will be given at least one holiday in the city during their school career, and it is proposed that children between the ages of 12 and 13 or in the 12 to 13 age group will be

brought down each year to Point Peron. They will spend the first three weeks of that school year—in February—in a camp there.

That will be an advantage to many of the children from the North because most of them would not, at least until their working life, see the city. The scheme will be of more educational value than a camp school concentrated in a North-West town. Although they met children from other towns, they did not, in that camp, get any appreciation of what a city looked like, and they missed all the educational points that are available to children in the city, such as the Zoo, the oil refinery, the museum, the weirs and so on.

These tours will be arranged for the children from the North who will be able to see for themselves just what these big industries look like and will get a full appreciation of city life. It will improve their education and outlook tremendously. These schoolchildren will be transported free and it is estimated that 100 of them will be brought down for the initial year. The parents will be required to contribute £6 towards their food and accommodation and £1 for excursion money, a total of £7 for the three weeks.

The children will have three weeks at Point Peron, and, through the co-operation of the Public Health Department, a schools dental officer will be stationed at the camp to ensure that all children will receive dental treatment while in Perth, and arrangements will be made for all children to have a medical examination prior to leaving the North-West. So in lieu of the school camps this scheme has been arranged and will commence next February. I am sure it will have beneficial results and will help to broaden the minds of the children living in those remote areas.

I know that members will be interested in some remarks I have to make as one of the members appointed by Parliament to the all-party committee which approached the Commonwealth Government in Canberra with a request for special funds for development of the North-West and Kimberley districts. At Canberra on the 20th June the committee was met by the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden. The conference lasted for over two hours and the committee was commended on the preparation of its submissions and of the detailed presentation of them by the various members of that committee who handled the different subjects.

As you know, Mr. President, there were quite a number of them. They included the Ord River irrigation scheme with which is tied up the extension to the Wyndham jetty, which at present has only one berth. Then, again, there is the Black Rock scheme at Derby to provide a deep water port, and a port to accommodate oil tankers. We hope, of course, with the investigations that are proceeding, that we will find oil. The Commonwealth Government was requested to share with the

State Government in the sealing of the road from Ajana to Carnarvon, a distance of 250 miles. There was also a request that the Commonwealth share, on a 50-50 basis, in the cost of the two vessels that are being constructed for the State Shipping Service. I might offer a brief explanation in that regard.

Normally, a ship being built in an Australian shipyard, is subsidised by the Commonwealth to the extent of 25 per cent. in order to encourage shipbuilding in Australia, and to help keep the yards going. As the ship that is now being built in Scotland could not have been commenced before the one at Newcastle is finished, and since it was urgently needed, the Commonwealth permitted us to buy overseas. Those two ships will cost in the vicinity of £1,000,000 each. Despite the fact that there is a 25 per cent. subsidy on the Australian ship, the cost of that vessel will be higher than the full price of the vessel being built in Scotland. The committee thought it was fair that as the State Shipping Service was as important to the North-West as the railways are to the southern part of the State the Commonwealth Government should lift its subsidy to 50 per cent. and also share 50 per cent. of the cost of the Scottish built vessel. No information has come to hand yet concerning that proposal.

There were two other proposals. One was support for the application by the Australian Blue Asbestos Co. for tariff protection against imported asbestos, and the other was for taxation relief. Of the proposals put up, advice has been received from the Prime Minister that two have been rejected. It is, of course, well known by now to the public that the two rejected were the case put up by the Blue Asbestos Co. at Wittenoom Gorge and the proposal for taxation relief. No information whatever has been received as yet from Canberra concerning the rest of the proposals, but it is reasonable to state that several of them will take quite a lot of consideration, particularly the Ord River and Black Rock projects. We do not expect any hurried reply to be made.

The decisions made on the two rejected proposals are of great importance to the North-West. The news that the Tariff Board had recommended that no assistance whatever be given to the Australian Blue Asbestos Co. to ensure its continued operation was a great shock, particularly as it affected an area which would be without people were it not for the activities of this company. It is fair to state that the Tariff Board did suggest in its report that the Commonwealth might take a different view and consider the importance of the industry in the economy of the North, its importance in the decentralisation of population and the desirable effect it would have of keeping services in operation and of keeping a considerable number of people in the North, if only from a defence angle.

The roads are kept in good order; and jetty facilities, shipping, air services and so on all derive benefit from the Witteboom Gorge project. The rejection of the committees proposals has come as a great surprise to the company and to the Government, and indeed to "The West Australian" which had a leading article concerning the Blue Asbestos Co. and taxation in this morning's paper. I agree with what "The West Australian" had to say, namely, that the Commonwealth had failed to grasp the importance of the North-West to this State and, indeed, to Australia.

It is a remarkable fact that very few Commonwealth Ministers have ever seen or set foot in the North-West, and yet it comprises one-sixth of the area of Australia. The Minister who is responsible for developing the country, the Prime Minister and the Treasurer—three very important persons—should have a look at our North-West and acquaint themselves first-hand, and on the spot, with the tremendous problems that exist up there regarding the future development of that part of Australia.

Had they perhaps taken a quick trip around and spent some time looking at that territory, they would realise that something has to be done if the few people who are now in the North-West are to be encouraged to remain there. Otherwise it will take very little in the way of a drop in wool prices before many more sheep stations fold up, many more than the number that folded up in the last depression and which have never restocked again. It would not take very much more of a decline to make many sheep stations in the North-West uneconomical to run. I sincerely hope that such a state will not be reached.

The cost of transport in the North is terrific, and depreciation is heavy. The cost of labour and food is very high when compared with what obtains in the southern half of the State. However, shipping freights are low, being about one-third of the normal interstate freight rate that applies around the Australian coast, so it would be impossible to reduce them. When goods are conveyed to the ports, they have to be taken inland and, in some cases in the Kimberleys, up to a distance of 500 miles. One can guess how much more is added to shipping freights. The cartage rate from Derby to Hall's Creek is £20 per ton, and there are several stations beyond Hall's Creek.

With the drop in price of export beef that took place this year, though not a large one, even cattle stations in the North will find it very difficult to carry on. I am afraid that, without a thorough knowledge of the North and without a close investigation of the industries that are endeavouring to exist or expand, the Federal Government cannot have a real appreciation of the motive that actuated Mr. Jones to introduce his motion for the development of the North-West. He took only one short

trip to the North but it made him realise the difficulties which will confront the State Government should it attempt to rehabilitate that part of the State.

Its present condition is due to compulsory neglect during the war years, which developed because it was a war zone area and no maintenance work could be done there for some years. This applied also to the jetties, supply provisions, roads and public buildings. Special funds should be provided by the Commonwealth Government to put them back into first-class order. On top of that is the need for development. Without additional finance it is impossible for the State to build dams and irrigation works at a cost of from £15,000,000 to £20,000,000 for the Ord River project alone.

Before the Commonwealth Government makes its decision on those very important developmental projects, I suggest that the Prime Minister and those chiefly concerned should fly to this State and make a quick inspection of the North. During his short term in office, His Excellency the Governor has made two extensive tours of the North-West, and the people appreciate it very much. He has a full recognition of the difficulties confronting industries and the people living there. There is nothing to prevent the Prime Minister, Sir Arthur Fadden or other Federal Ministers, from flying from Canberra. It could be done in a few hours and they could spend one or two days flying around the Kimberley and Witteboom Gorge areas which are affected by the proposals submitted. The whole question could be decided in a week-end.

Lady Slim was able to fly to Derby this year and open the Flying Doctor Service. In addition, she spent three days inspecting the A.I.M. hospitals and missions in the Kimberleys. She did not consider it was an effort, and she was very satisfied with the knowledge she gained.

When one considers the refusal of the blue asbestos application, one cannot help but wonder why some industries which are struggling, are refused assistance, while others, which are thriving, continue to receive it. As an instance, I quote General Motors Holdens. We all know that protective tariffs are imposed on all imported motorcars, tyres and accessories. What is the effect of that? It means that the Australian-made car can be sold slightly under the price of the imported car.

When a company can show a profit of £10,000,000 a year, what further protection does it need? If it is given this protection who pays for it? The answer is, the Australian public and the person who buys a motorcar. Whether he buys a Holden, a Ford or a Vauxhall, he contributes to that £10,000,000 profit because he is paying more than its true value, the price having been fixed at just below the price of the imported car. Even if the difference is only £10, it is a consideration for the purchase of a motorcar.

The whole point is: Why do such industries continue to enjoy protection when other industries, such as the Wittenoom Gorge asbestos project, which in 12 years spent over £1,500,000 on development, are refused recognition after assistance had been recommended? In the case of the asbestos industry, no protection is given against the imported article which is mined and produced by cheap labour in South Africa. It occurs to me, as it must have occurred to everybody, that remote control is of no benefit to any part of the country.

Hon. L. C. Diver: I take it that you do not believe in unification.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I believe in federation, if that is what the hon. member means. I believe that the finances of the Commonwealth should be distributed in a much better manner than they are today.

We all know that if the taxing rights were returned to the States, we would be in a bad position, and the same applies to the petrol funds; but the day must come when some alteration must be made to the present system because the person with the purse is the ruler. We can see what is happening in Western Australia as far as the North-West is concerned, and I might also say as far as the whole State is concerned, because the £2,000,000 for shipping has to come out of the money required for works in other parts of the State. We cannot spend the money on both; all of it has to come out of the loan funds. Therefore, for such an area there should have been special consideration on a very large scale so that the normal work could be carried on in the southern half of the State.

I was rather fortunate to be in Canberra on the first day of the sitting of the Loan Council and was privileged to be present as an observer. It was amazing for me to notice how millions were handed around, £20,000,000 here, £20,000,000 there cuts here and a little extra there; and I could not but feel that we in Western Australia were a long way away, judging by the hand-out we received. One aspect of finance that struck me very forcibly as encouraging the Federal Government to squander money was the fact that the States have to finance all their public works out of loan funds. On those funds we have to pay interest, whereas the Commonwealth works are being financed out of revenue. To do this the Commonwealth taxes us a little more. That struck me as being rather unbalanced, but there it is.

The finances of the country rest entirely in the hands of the Federal Treasurer and he has the final say. I listened to each Premier putting the case for his State, substantiating the case he had made for loan funds, and at the end, no consideration was given to it. The answers were there ready to be given: That struck me as being rather futile because the country's banker in effect said, "You

are getting this, that, and that. Whether you like it or not, that is all you are going to get and there is no redress." That comes from concentrating the finances of the Commonwealth in one central authority which I think is a mistake. There should be a reorganisation, but what system should be adopted, I have not considered, and I might not be capable of working out such a system.

The rejection of the request for a taxation concession for the North came as a great disappointment, not only to people in the North but also, I believe, to most people in the State. Business people in Perth to whom I have spoken support a form of tax concession for remote areas, believing that it is the only way to attract people to those parts and get them developed. Without doubt that is the only way to achieve anything in the direction of decentralisation. We must provide inducements for people to go and live in the remote areas.

Th committee took the original case of the North-West Development Committee, which proposed that 60 per cent. of all income earned in the North should be free of taxation, and that the other 40 per cent. should also be free of taxation provided it was reinvested in the North.

Hon. L. A. Logan: What was the estimated cost of that?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I heard it estimated at £2,000,000 or £3,000,000, but the amount is very hard to assess. I have not been able to find it in any of the Commonwealth reports, and the only way to work it out would be on market values, wages, business turnover and so on. I believe the amount would be somewhat higher than £2,000,000 or £3,000,000. The proposal for the 60 per cent. and 40 per cent. concession was first taken to Canberra in 1950 when Messrs. Leslie, Thomson and Hancock, who comprised the North-West Committee, waited as a deputation on Sir Arthur Fadden, to whom they were introduced by the Leader of the Country Party, Hon. A. F. Watts in company with the then Leader of the Opposition, Hon. F. J. S. Wise.

The taxation proposal has been submitted and re-submitted during the last five years. The members of the North-West Committee asked me last year to accompany them to Canberra and introduce them to the Opposition. The Government did not give the case much thought. A report had been prepared by the Taxation Department, but the Government would not make it public. It still remains secret, as does the Dundas report of which we heard so much.

Hon. H. K. Watson: When was that report submitted?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: In 1950.

Hon. H. K. Watson: And no satisfaction has been received?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Apparently nobody got any satisfaction about the Dundas report.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Have you seen it?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes, and there was nothing in it to hide. That proposal was taken to Canberra, and because the committee was not getting very far, the present Government was asked to submit it to the Federal Opposition. That was done, and we were surprised to find that the Opposition had a committee working on northern Australia, and it has a policy for taxation concessions in remote areas. In fact, it was the Chifley Government that instituted the "A" and "B" zones, which meant only £80 on an income of £10,000, and amounted to nothing. There was no inducement in that; it would only pay the return plane fare to Wyndham.

The all-party committee which met the Prime Minister in Canberra on the 20th June submitted as an alternative, that the "A" and "B" zone allowances should be considerably broadened; that the concessions should be increased; and that all capital expenditure in the North-West should be an income-tax deduction. It was argued that in consequence the wages and salaried men would be induced to remain there, and that an efficient type of labour would be attracted. On the capital side the argument was: Why would anybody build a hotel, block of flats, house or residential in the North when he could build it in Perth and be assured of getting the customary 10 per cent. return on capital? I do not know whether it is higher now, but 10 per cent. was always regarded as the normal thing before inflation. That was the minimum. All flat-builders expected it, and they got it, and that was all right.

Who is likely to build in that chancy area when he can build here? What pastoralist is going to plough back his profits in the leasehold country of the North when he can buy freehold land here—hotels, flats or anything else—and be assured of getting a good return and having security without having to contend with cyclones or droughts? I think those arguments are reasonable and logical. If there is no inducement it will not be possible to attract capital which, in turn, attracts residents.

It appears that the rejection of the taxation proposal is going to have a detrimental effect on the North. Those who are there will lose a lot of heart and become discouraged, and people here will certainly not be looking that way. Strangely enough, when the committee left the conference with the Prime Minister and Sir Arthur Fadden, they talked among themselves; and they were all of the opinion that something would be done about taxation because of a remark made by the Prime Minister, who said that proposals were being examined, and that what

the committee put forward would be considered in the final examination; and he made reference to the Budget.

We have now been informed by a letter dated the 13th September of this year from the Prime Minister to the Premier that the proposals have been turned down. The Prime Minister said—

I informed the deputation that the Commonwealth had been examining similar propositions and that its proposals would be considered in the final examination.

Referring to the taxation figures he said—

You will notice from the Budget proposals introduced by my colleague, the Treasurer, and from the Budget speech that my Government has decided that in present economic conditions it would not be in the national interest to make taxation reductions or extend the field of concessions this financial year. We have therefore been unable to provide for any extension of the present taxation concessions for persons living in isolated areas.

When the Budget was brought down the Press referred to it in all sorts of terms. Some described it as "calamity," others as "stay-put," and others as "mark-time," and so on. As far as the North is concerned, it should be referred to as the "keep-out" Budget because I think it will keep plenty of people out of the North-West, and it certainly will make many there think seriously of getting out. It is a great disappointment indeed that nothing has been done.

I shall close my remarks by just making a short reference to the seasonal conditions in the North. Although the season has been an extremely good one in most parts of Western Australia, and indeed in Australia, there is one small section of the North-West—although in area it is about the same size as the South-West Land Division; that is from Geraldton to Albany—which has missed out. This area, the lower Murchison, and the coastal areas of the Gascoyne, is in a serious drought condition. The sheep stations there are suffering from the effects of drought.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Meekatharra is all right, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes. The Upper Murchison is quite all right, but the Murchison between Mullewa and Gascoyne Junction on the back road had 2½ inches of rain in 1954, in small falls which grew nothing. I doubt whether they have had as much this year. It is very serious to places such as Mt. Narryer, Byro and Bidgemia over on the Gascoyne, and it extends a little inland up Beringarra way and then it runs down to the coast. In that area there is bound to be a great loss in sheep numbers, and with the price of wool having fallen considerably in recent sales, the pastoralists there are going to suffer quite a setback this year. There

is nothing we can do about it. I merely mention that this huge area of the State is in a drought condition.

I only want to make one brief reference to the oil search in the North. It is well known that Wapet has carried out an extensive oil-drilling programme, and it will be carrying out a much bigger drilling programme in the future. It was, perhaps, a little unfortunate for the company and for some of the investors throughout Australia—perhaps overseas as well—that oil was found in the initial drill, because it encouraged the company to get ahead of the work of its seismograph crews and scientific advisers. At the oilfield recently I was amazed to see where several holes had been put down around that which members have seen, and still no oil was discovered in exactly the same strata. As I see it, this oil search is a complicated business; and apparently oil, like gold or fresh water, is where you find it. I will conclude by saying that the drillers and all concerned with the search for oil are enthusiastic. They say they feel certain that, although it may take a long time, they will be successful in discovering oil somewhere in our North-West.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Griffith, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.42 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 20th September, 1955.

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City of Subiaco	2 5	2½	2 5	2
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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Fire Rates, Metropolitan District.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

What was the annual general rate struck and the annual fire rate struck by each of the local governing authorities within the metropolitan fire district during the year 1954 and the current year?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied: