

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 30th October, 1946.

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

QUESTIONS.

FRUIT CASES.

As to Estimated Demand, Production, Etc.

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Forests:

1, What is the estimated demand for fruit cases this year?

2, What is the estimated production in this State?

3, If a discrepancy exists, what steps will be undertaken to overcome the shortage?

4, Has an investigation been made to find out why there should be an annual shortage of cases when there are 128 saw-mills registered in this State; if so, what is the reason?

5, If for any reason sawmillers are reluctant to cut cases, thereby causing a substantial loss to some growers, have any steps been taken to overcome their objections; if so, what steps?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2,750,900 cases, on basis of 1,500,000 for the apple crop, which is considerably in excess of last season's pack.

2, Estimated in June at 2,000,000 cases.

3, The following steps have been taken to overcome the shortage:—

(a) Five additional permit areas in apple-growing districts have been advertised by the Forests Department, four of which were applied for. On two of these areas mills are now in production, but output from one will be very much smaller than that proposed in the sale. A third mill is nearing completion. About 120,000 cases should be produced at these mills.

(b) In answer to further inquiries for case cutting in the South-West where timber supplies can be made available two additional areas are being advertised.

(c) Arrangements have been made for one metropolitan mill to cut fruit cases exclusively. Anticipate 200,000 cases from this source.

(d) New production has been arranged from several other sources from which it is estimated 80,000 cases will be produced.

(e) Fourteen new case mills on private property have been registered since June, which should also assist in closing the gap between requirements and production.

4, Fruit cases in common with all other classes of timber have been in short production. Last year the total production of timber was only two-thirds of the normal pre-war cut. The position is improving.

5, Answered by No. 3. It is of interest that the production of cases of all sorts in Western Australia now totals approximately 4,000,000. At existing prices it is not considered economical to cut more than a small percentage of fruit cases in general purpose mills due to great waste in sawing and additional handling costs. The State Saw Mills, to assist the fruit industry and in order to keep up with its commitments under the agreed yearly quota as fixed through the Forests Department, has found it necessary to divert fitches for bigger section timber of a higher market value to the production of fruit case material.

SCHOOL BUS SERVICES.

As to Jacketup, Moortvale and Badgebup Areas.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Education:

1, Has a decision been reached in regard to approval of the proposed school omnibus services from the Jacketup and Moortvale areas, respectively, to Gnowangerup, and from the Badgebup area to Katanning?

2, If services have been approved, what are the proposals and when will tenders be called?

3, If decisions have not yet been reached, will steps be taken to ensure that they will be reached in sufficient time to warrant the expectation that the services will start not later than the beginning of the next school year?

4, How many children is it estimated will be covered by the services if approved?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Decisions have been reached in regard to approval of the proposed school omnibus services from the Jacketup, Pallinup and Moortvale areas, respectively, to Gnowangerup, but not in regard to the proposed service from Badgebup to Katanning.

2, Tenders for the three services to Gnowangerup have been invited by notices published in "The West Australian" of Wednesday, the 16th October, 1946, and in the "Primary Producer" of Thursday, the 24th October, 1946.

3, Steps are being taken to ensure finality being reached in the Badgebup-Katanning proposal at the earliest possible date.

PETROL PUMPS.

As to Applications to Instal.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Transport:

1, Is he aware of the existence of a committee or board to which applications by garage proprietors and/or others for the right to dispose of petrol to the public from pumps are referred?

2, Has this committee any statutory powers, and if so, from what statute are they derived?

3, Is he aware that autocratic decisions are made by this body granting petrol pumps to newly constituted businesses, and refusing them to persons who held fuel pumps before the war, especially where they resume business in new premises?

4, Is he aware of, or will he ascertain the personnel of this body and inform the House thereof?

5, Is he satisfied that the operations of the body in question are fair and reasonable, and if so, will he state why he forms that opinion, and if not, will he take steps to have the position improved either by representations to the Federal authorities (if necessary) or by action through his own department?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes. There are two committees.

2, No.

3, No. The decisions of the committees are in the nature of recommendations to the Liquid Fuel Control Board.

4, The advisory committees are:—(a) The State Advisory and Consultative Committee, which consists of the branch managers of the oil companies; (b) the committee of the W.A. Service Station Association.

5, The issue of motor spirit retailers' licenses is controlled by the Commonwealth Liquid Fuel Control Board and I am advised that provided a person is of good character and has suitable premises the policy of the board is to issue a license, provided the applicant submits evidence to prove he is in a position to retail motor spirit.

ROYAL COMMISSIONS.

As to Reports on Timber Mill Housing and Outports.

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

1, Have reports been received from the Select Committees or honorary Royal Commissions appointed to inquire into—(a) housing of timber mill workers; (b) outports of the State?

2, If so, when were these reports presented?

3, When will they be available to members of this House?

The PREMIER replied:

1, (a) Yes; (b) Yes.

2, (a) 11/6/1946; (b) 6/8/1946.

3, Owing to heavy pressure of work at the Government Printing Office, it has not yet been possible to have these reports printed. The typed copies have been receiving the consideration of the Government and arrangements are being made for them to be laid on the Table of the House forthwith.

MEAT.

As to Operation of Weight and Grade Method.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Has he taken any action to obtain from South Africa a report on the workings of the "dead meat weight and grade basis" referred to on page 4 of the report of the departmental committee of inquiry on slaughter, grading, and selling of fat stock on hooks?

2, If so, what is the nature of the report?

3, If no report has been obtained, will he endeavour to obtain one before the end of the session and make it public?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, Yes. A number of requests have been made, the last being on the 30th September, 1946, but no replies have been received yet from South Africa.

3, Yes.

EAST PERTH CEMETERY, CLOSURE.

As to Use of Site for Governor's Residence.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Lands:

1, Have any steps been taken in recent times to close the East Perth Cemetery with a view to the utilisation of the area for other purposes?

2, What was the date of the last action taken?

3, What stage was reached in the most recent approach to this question?

4, What were then the proposals and the estimated cost?

5, Why was not the scheme further proceeded with?

6, Is it his intention to initiate further moves to secure this area?

7, In view of the extent and general excellence of the site, will he have investigated the possibility of the abandonment of it as a cemetery with a view to the construction, ultimately, of a new residence for the State Governor, thereby enabling the removal of the present residence and facilitating progress with the development of the plans for the erection of the proposed new town hall, civic centre, government offices, etc.?

The MINISTER replied:

1, The East Perth Cemeteries Act, No. 9 of 1932, assented to on the 7th November, 1932, removed the cemetery from the control of trustees appointed under the various religious denominations, and vested the land in His Majesty. Section 3 of that Act provided that, although vested as aforesaid, the land shall continue as a disused burial ground within the meaning of the Cemeteries Amendment Act, 1902, but instead of being vested in trustees under the provisions of that Act shall be placed under the control board appointed under the Parks and Reserves Act (State Gardens Board) with all the rights and obligations of trustees under the Cemeteries Act, but without any vested estate or interest in the land.

2, Since placed under the control of the State Gardens Board in 1932, no definite proposal or scheme has been put forward to utilise the area for other purposes. The date of last action in regard to making other use of the land was 1930.

3, At that time, the Education Department was endeavouring to secure a suitable site for the building of the East Perth Girls' School and the East Perth Cemetery area came under consideration in that regard.

4, It was proposed that the remains, relics and memorials in the cemetery might be carefully removed to Karrakatta, the graves filled in, and the grounds made suitable for the purpose. The estimated cost for the suggested removal, as quoted at that time (1930) by a leading firm of undertakers was £4,155.

5, The Director of Education, after viewing the site and considering the suggestion

fully, decided that the site was not suitable. Nothing further was done as a result of this decision as regards proceeding with the suggested removal of relics and memorials.

6, It is the intention of the Government to give consideration to this question at an early date.

7, There is no connection between the two matters (East Perth Cemetery and Government House).

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Loan, £5,050,000.

Introduced by the Premier.

2, Timber Industry (Housing of Employees).

Introduced by the Minister for Forests.

BILL—STATE HOUSING.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [4.39]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.40]: I feel in all the circumstances of the case that a few words by me on the third reading of this measure might not be amiss, for I submit that the Minister for Agriculture in his recent remarks has misinterpreted that part of the Royal Commission's report which states that no obstacle shall be placed in the way of farmers destroying vermin on their own property for their own benefit. The Minister described it as—I think his words were—a new philosophy and he poured ridicule on the proposal from start to finish. On the contrary, I submit that some alteration of the existing state of affairs is absolutely requisite and that, as no other and better alternative has been placed before us, much more favourable consideration was warranted for a proposal on the lines set out in the Royal Commission's report.

It is true that on page 11 of the report the words I quoted just now, and which were used by the hon. gentleman, were used by the commission. They were put there to indicate the commission's belief—which I have expressed before but can reiterate now—that the farmer who in the past had undertaken to the best of his knowledge and ability the destruction of vermin on his own property should be allowed to continue to do so, and that the activities of local authorities, under the proposal to place the onus on them, should have been applied to those cases where destruction of vermin had not taken place by the individual farmer to their satisfaction. We endeavoured to indicate in other parts of the report that some such alteration in procedure was necessary in the national interest, because the situation that existed, as I explained before, was that prosecutions did not have the effect of destroying vermin nor of relieving the active farmer from reinfestation of his property from the surrounding properties that might not have been attended to and upon which vermin might be flourishing.

The Minister suggested that my references to prosecutions were based on a supposititious case. I told him by interjection that that was not so, but that they were based on facts. The Minister is of course in the unfortunate position of not having had experience of the destruction of vermin as a farmer, nor has he had any personal experience of the position that arises out of prosecutions. He is guided entirely by departmental officers, who have chosen, for reasons best known to themselves, to adhere to a practice which has undoubtedly been a failure for 30 years, and will continue to be a failure for another 30 years if it be so long allowed to continue. But I can assure the hon. gentleman that from one angle I do know something about vermin prosecutions.

About seven or eight years ago I conducted some 22 prosecutions in a country court on behalf of one local authority for offences against the Vermin Act, the property-owners not having carried out the destruction of vermin to the satisfaction of the board's inspector. In each of those cases—one or two may have been withdrawn because of difficulty of proof, but in the great majority—convictions were re-

corded and fines imposed ranging, as I said, up to about £2. A little less than 12 months afterwards, 10 or 11 of those persons were prosecuted again with exactly the same result. It was only a short time afterwards that I saw the report of the vermin inspector employed by the Department of Agriculture, and he observed with respect to that district that it was one of the worst areas in the locality so far as vermin was concerned, because the prosecutions and the fines imposed had resulted in nothing being done.

In some cases the job was, I am frank to admit—and I am speaking as a member of the House now—beyond the capacity of the individual farmer to tackle; but, as the law stood, the board carried out its duty by prosecuting the men concerned. However, the prosecutions did not destroy any vermin, and a further prosecution of some of the people did not in the majority of instances destroy any vermin either, but left it upon the properties to attack those, the owners of which, either through fortunate circumstances or great diligence, were able to effect some improvement on the properties which they held. Knowing those things, having those things in the background, and having moreover the varied types of evidence produced before the Royal Commission, we did, as the Minister said—I am quoting again from the report—cast around for something which might bring about some improvement.

We came to the conclusion that while the individual farmer who was eager to do the work, and thereby save a considerable cash expenditure, should be at liberty and encouraged to do so in his own interest, in the interest of the community at large and in the interest of national solvency and wealth, the local authorities should undertake, upon the properties in respect of which they should have conducted or had conducted prosecutions, the work which would be likely to relieve the diligent and fortunate farmer from a responsibility which otherwise would be for him a recurring one. The Minister contends that the net result would have been that the average farmer would be willing to pay, in addition to the rates he was paying to the local authority and in addition to the contribution he was making to the Central Vermin Board, half the cost which

was recommended and which had been incurred, rather than carry on with no cash cost to himself the work upon his own property. In fact, I think the Minister said that actually it would be putting a premium on laziness.

It occurs to me that the effect would be to destroy vermin, and that is what I think we are all seeking to achieve, although we may differ—and differ very strongly—as to the methods which might be adopted to achieve that desirable result. I repeat, there is nothing in the report to justify the observations made by the Minister in respect of that part of the report when speaking in reply to the second reading debate on this Bill. Apparently, both he and his departmental officers cling to the outworn idea that the vermin is the exclusive property of the farmer or the pastoralist. They refuse to recognise that the vermin is a national enemy, particularly rabbits and foxes, which have invaded this State and have been allowed to infiltrate all over it because of earlier failures of Governments and citizens to realise the ultimate result of their incursion, and more recently I would say by the piecemeal methods that have been adopted for their suppression.

The Minister seemed anxious to draw all sorts of peculiar analogies, and I propose therefore to draw one which I think is far more realistic in character in this particular instance. I have already said that the incursion of vermin, particularly foxes and rabbits which are not native to this country, was in the nature of an invasion and has resulted in our acquiring a national enemy. If an enemy of another sort were to invade our shores with the obvious result that large portions of the country would be laid waste, and he were not stopped, can I imagine the Minister taking the view that it would be the duty of each village, township and individual to fight him and try to drive him from our shores and prevent him causing the damage to which I have referred? Of course I cannot imagine his saying so.

The Minister for Agriculture: But I would say so!

Mr. WATTS: The Minister would say nothing of the kind. He would say that we were faced with a national enemy and that all the resources of the country should be used against him.

The Minister for Agriculture: But there would be an obligation on each village to play its part.

Mr. WATTS: But the Minister would not stop there as he did in regard to vermin.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, I did not.

Mr. WATTS: The circumstances are analogous and the Minister for Agriculture should not stop at that point in the case of vermin. He would not say to the inhabitants of Geraldton or Bunbury, "You are responsible for repelling the invasion."

The Minister for Agriculture: They are responsible for playing their part.

Mr. WATTS: Yes, and the part that the farmers would play in the scheme put forward by the Royal Commission would be to contribute substantially towards the funds to be used to wage war against the enemy to which I have referred. They have made in the past and will in the future continue to make substantial contributions towards that end, but the Minister's policy is not only to make them provide the sinews of war but to be the only people in the army.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, it is not.

Mr. WATTS: Yes it is.

The Minister for Agriculture: Then the proposal to appoint additional inspectors means nothing.

Mr. WATTS: That proposal will, in itself, never destroy any vermin. One of the great faults in connection with the appointment of inspectors is that it has never been recognised or admitted that they ought to be working inspectors. They simply wander around and order other people about and direct prosecutions to be made, when they think it necessary. They have never by their own physical efforts destroyed one atom of vermin except on Government reserves or when they have invaded the property of a farmer and have in some cases, doubtfully within the Vermin Act, done the work themselves. But as I was saying, the Minister for Agriculture would doubtless agree that all of the national resources of men, money and materials should be used against an enemy in a co-ordinated way. I submit that, to a lesser degree, vermin is a national enemy laying waste a portion of the nation's wealth. To that extent the same principle should be followed.

In attempting to recognise that principle the honorary Royal Commission made certain recommendations, the bulk of which are included amongst those that have not been accepted, directed at making a State-wide attack on a national or State-wide enemy. Although I admit the recommendations were by no means complete, they did aim to achieve, and I think would have done so, a greater measure of co-ordination than can be possible under a continuance, even on an enlarged scale, of the system that has been in operation for the last 30 years. Apparently the Minister denies the necessity for any improvement in the methods of attack because, although he rejects the proposals, he has not carried out my original suggestion to him in this House to produce something more constructive and more likely to be effective. The same system of isolated and unco-ordinated attack is to continue. Most of the shortcomings of past methods will be carried on and most of the results of those shortcomings will, in consequence, exist for a long period.

I doubt whether in ten years from now, unless some substantial change is made in the system of attack on vermin, we shall find any considerable improvement. Not only the farmers, but other citizens of the State, whether they know it or not, are vitally interested because of losses that might be suffered to the national income; and they will know whom to thank for that state of affairs, if it continues, as I submit it will. Now I would like to turn to the question of the mobile units. The department has for many years used doggers or trappers against the dingo. It has not had sufficient of them, by dozens, to cope with the problem on a broad face. The men who have been employed have done very good work, but there are vast areas of the State where they could have been employed, but they were not made available even before there was a shortage of the necessary labour. The absence of sufficient numbers of these men has not been viewed as a ground for having no doggers or trappers at all or for abolishing them altogether.

The Minister alleges that 230 mobile units would be required to do the work all over the State and alleges that is what the commission recommended, and he says, in effect, that if he cannot have 230 he will have none. That, I think, is the logical conclusion to be arrived at from the hon.

gentleman's remarks. Because there have not been nearly sufficient of them to cover all the vast areas of the State where their services would have been invaluable, we must have none. Because we want 230 mobile units and we cannot afford anything like that number we should, in the Minister's opinion, promptly say that we shall have none. To be quite fair the Minister should have admitted that the commission recommended these units mainly for Crown lands which local authorities were not to cover. The recommendation of the commission dealing with these units, is to be found on page 10. It states—

We have recommended that the Agriculture Protection Board should have power to organise such units, particularly for the destruction of vermin on Crown and other vacant lands. It seems to us that it is both necessary and desirable that these units should be formed in order that they may be sent to any area in which outside and well-equipped assistance is necessary for vermin destruction. They would, it seems to us, be particularly valuable in the areas in Schedule "A."

At that stage the commission was endeavouring to make two points, namely, that these mobile units would be valuable particularly for the destruction of vermin on Crown and other vacant lands, and in the areas in Schedule "A." Any reasonable man—and on this occasion I am not including the Minister for Agriculture as I generally would in the phrase "reasonable man"—would have conceded that advantage could be taken of the recommendations made by the commission to try out the mobile units on (a) Crown lands, and (b) on Crown lands within Schedule "A." In Schedule "A" are those areas which are classed as the North-West and outer areas of the State, and do not come into the settled areas and the South-West land division, but the Minister, as I have said, seeks to make it appear that the recommendation of the commission was that these mobile units should be instantaneously created—or created as soon as possible—and despatched all over Western Australia, in sufficient numbers to cope with the whole of the problem, without any regard whatever to the financial reserves that might be available to the board, committee or department controlling the affair. I have no hesitation in saying that such a point of view is ridiculous. It is quite contrary to the Minister's usual approach to

matters of this character, and I can only suppose that such a policy has been suggested to him by those who advised him. I cannot conceive any reason why they should so have advised him, but if he was not advised in that direction I cannot for one moment understand why he should have introduced such arguments into his remarks yesterday.

I would like now to deal with the question of the Railway Department. In the course of his remarks the Minister, after directing attention to the situation that arises when farmer "A" disposes of vermin and farmer "B" does not—and apparently having in mind, though he did not say it, the fact that if there is vermin left on the land of farmer "B" it will almost certainly re-infest the property of farmer "A"—proceeded to commend the Railway Department for destroying vermin only on those parts of its reserves—some thousands of miles of them in Western Australia—that are adjacent to the properties of farmers who have destroyed vermin on their own land. That argument, if it be correct and sound, must pre-suppose that vermin, and particularly rabbits, do not travel any considerable distance, because if the vermin did so it is obviously useless destroying them on limited areas of railway reserves in the belief that they will not, from other portions of those reserves—in the same way as they do from other portions of farm lands, in all probability—once again invade the portions of the railway reserves that have been dealt with, together with farm lands that have been treated.

We all know perfectly well that rabbits travel hundreds of miles. In fact, I do not doubt that they are travelling hundreds of miles at the present time in order to invade, in fresh numbers, certain portions of Western Australia where people have begun to congratulate themselves, in recent weeks, on the fact that they have not so many rabbits as they once had, and therefore, as it always seems to me—and apparently the idea was agreed to by other members of the commission—it is the duty of the Crown to set an example to its subjects, and so it appeared to us that it was the duty of the Railway Department, as of all other departments concerned, to set an example to persons who ought to be en-

gaged, under the existing law, in the destruction of vermin. For the same reason the commission recommended that special provision should be made regarding abandoned farms, particularly those that were subject to mortgages either to Government institutions or private persons, in order that there might be some revenue derivable from them which could be utilised by local authorities as part and parcel of the plan for attack on the vermin of the State.

Last of all I wish to turn to the statements made by the Minister in connection with the farming properties to which he referred at Williams, Gnowangerup and other places where, if a mobile unit were employed it would, he said, take 12 months, two years or an indefinite time—which I think were the respective periods mentioned—in order to cope with the vermin on those properties. If it is going to take 12 months, two years or an indefinite time to make some satisfactory attack on the vermin on those properties, by a mobile unit comprised of three men, and constantly employed, what hope has the individual landholder, who has many other things to do in order to maintain his property, of doing anything else for that period, together with as many men as he can muster, but effect the destruction of vermin?

I am inclined to doubt very strongly the time which it was alleged would be taken by such a mobile body, if it existed, in destroying the major portion of the vermin on a property such as was referred to, but if it is going to take that time and if the circumstances are as the Minister indicated, then it is obvious to me that it is beyond the physical and economic possibilities of the farmer himself to cope with the problem, and it is therefore high time—if those be the circumstances—that some measures were indulged in that would, in cases such as that, not only in the interests of the man who happens to hold a particular property, but in the interests of all other sections of the community and particularly of the other rural areas, allow an attack to be made, through assistance of some kind supplied by a central authority, because if we are going to say, as the Minister said yesterday, that these operations—as he understood them—are quite beyond the financial capacity of the State, how much more beyond

the financial capacity of the individual, in cases such as those to which the Minister made reference, must the problem be?

It seems to me the situation is such that the individual cannot be expected to tackle those problems on properties such as these—to tackle them successfully. He is compelled either to do the job partially, which cannot be of ultimate satisfaction to the community as a whole, or abandon all other operations, thereby nullify the farming work that he is supposed to be carrying on, for an indefinite period or for a period of 12 months or two years, as the case might be, in order to attempt to destroy the vermin. I submit very strongly that, although the proposals put forward by the commission may have been capable of improvement—I have never stated that they were perfect in any way—they at least were a genuine attempt to effect some improvement in an existing state of affairs which this Bill, or any suggestion made by the Minister, certainly does not do. It leaves the position substantially where it was, and does not relieve the worst difficulties that exist in regard to vermin destruction.

The Bill makes very little extra provision for the worst cases, particularly those in the outer areas of the State, and in consequence it does not strike me—I am convinced it will not strike any independent and knowledgeable observer—as being a very substantial contribution towards the remedying of a situation which has dissatisfied the great majority of people for a number of years. I do not propose, of course, to oppose the third reading of this measure. It may make some small contribution towards a solution of the problem. I am prepared, like other members who have spoken on the subject, to give it a trial, but I contend that the Minister's reception of a bona fide attempt by the commission—in a unanimous report—to solve the problem, and the arguments that he used against it, did not amount, as I think they ought to have amounted, to a reasonable review of the commission's report and the circumstances that exist throughout the State in regard to vermin.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Freemantle—in reply) [5.10]: I do not intend

to say much at this stage, because I believe I have dealt at some length with the arguments that have been advanced by the Leader of the Opposition, when dealing with the second reading, but I think I ought to point out to the House that he makes statements from time to time that cannot be reconciled, and it is therefore difficult to know which of his statements ought to be followed. The main thesis of the argument of the Leader of the Opposition—and of the proposals of the Royal Commission—was that the responsibility for getting rid of vermin should be shifted from the owner of the property, who should be relieved of all onus or responsibility, and placed on the local authority, to do the job for him. The report of the Royal Commission says—

That the local authority be empowered to recover one-half of the cost, not exceeding 12s. 6d. per man day, from the occupier of the property, or in the case of unoccupied properties to claim assistance from the Agriculture Protection Board. It will be noted that by this means such occupier will be relieved of much expenditure which under the present law he now has to make on his own account, and of the bulk of the work involved therein.

There is a clear indication that it is recognised that this work, which under existing law the land owner must undertake for himself, will be done by the local authority at a cost not exceeding 12s. 6d. per man per day, and that will mean relieving the land owner—I am quoting the words of the commission—of much expenditure which under the present law he now has to incur on his own account, and the bulk of the work involved therein. There is a definite indication that this means some advantage in money and labour to the landowner, yet we find the Leader of the Opposition saying this, when speaking on the second reading of the Bill—

This placing of the obligation on them to pay firstly the rates and secondly the contribution, and thirdly 12s. 6d. per man day towards the work to be done by the local authority could very easily, and we felt probably would, turn out to be such an expensive proposition to the individual that he would immediately seek to minimise it. After one or two shots he certainly would seek to minimise the cost by doing the work himself.

Mr. Watts: That is the argument I have been advancing all the time.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
The hon. member went on to say—

That was the reason underlying the proposition we put forward that the onus should be substantially placed on the local authority. So the Leader of the Opposition argued in this way: The landowner under the existing law will not do the job. If we get someone to do it for him more cheaply and relieve him of the necessity of doing some of this work, that will force him, after one or two shots, to do what he would not do before, and do something which the Leader of the Opposition has already said is economically and physically impossible for the man to do. Frankly, I find it absolutely impossible to follow that reasoning. And that is the fundamental recommendation of the Royal Commission upon which it built a number of other recommendations that I could not accept.

The Leader of the Opposition stated that he regarded vermin as a national enemy and in no way the property of the landowner. I submit that if a landowner netted his property and had but few rabbits left—perhaps half-a-dozen—and that those rabbits bred up with the result that he had some thousands of rabbits, they would definitely be his property and he would be at some pains to assert his right to them—

Mr. Watts: What proportion of the property would be rabbit-netted?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
—the landowner would be at some pains to assert that those rabbits were his if the pelts were worth a pound apiece. The landowner would be the first to say, "Get off! These rabbits are my property, and I am going to destroy them and get the money value for the pelts." This is being done to some extent at present because rabbit pelts are worth selling. But if they are worth nothing, the farmer is to be told, "No, the rabbits are not your property; they belong to the nation, and therefore we are going to call upon the resources of the nation to destroy them."

We were told that we could liken rabbits to an invading enemy, and that we would not expect the local people to take any action against an invading enemy but would accept the invasion as a national responsibility and go to war with the enemy. As a matter of fact, we would do nothing of the sort. The very first thing that any self-respecting people would do would be, not to claim that the repelling of the enemy

was a national responsibility, but to look around for a rifle or a pikestaff or take the first thing at hand and meet the enemy, knowing full well that the nation would back them up. How far would any country get if the people adopted the attitude that there was no responsibility on them to take action against an invader until the nation itself moved? We would be overthrown. History is full of examples of local people having been the first to go forward to meet an invader, knowing that they would have the backing of the nation subsequently. That is exactly what this Bill proposes to do.

Mr. Watts: The thing I cannot find in the Bill is the subsequent backing.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The measure proposes to enable the Central Vermin Fund to spend additional money on inspectors, who could go through the various districts, advise the local authorities and the district inspectors, and themselves take part in the work of eradicating the vermin. It also proposes that additional doggers may be put on, where necessary, for the purpose of destroying vermin. It proposes also to energise boards that previously have been slack in their work into taking some action. It proposes also to encourage the boards to keep their inspectors on full time, and not dispense with their services whenever they feel they are getting on top of the vermin menace, thus allowing it to breed up again.

Behind all this, there is still the proposal of the department to assist boards that prove their bona fides by assisting themselves. As in the past the services of men have been made available to boards and additional poison has been provided for them, so under the new scheme, where any board shows a willingness to get busy with the work of destroying vermin in its district, the fullest assistance will be made available by the department and by the additional inspectors the department intends to employ. My view is that any plan built upon a proposition that the responsibility for getting rid of vermin should not rest upon the owner of the property is doomed to failure from the outset. Therefore the department would not accept that suggestion. We felt it to be absolutely essential that the first responsibility for action should be accepted by the property-owner in whose interest it definitely is that action should be taken.

In this regard I have had the assurance of the Road Boards' Association that it did not like this recommendation of the Royal Commission, in fact disagreed with it, and felt that the responsibility for getting rid of vermin should continue to rest upon the property-owner. Because I could not accept the recommendation of the Royal Commission and remove that onus from the individual, I was bound to reject a number of the other recommendations. The commission went to a lot of trouble, covered a lot of ground and put forward a number of recommendations, more than half of which I propose to adopt, and so far from disparaging the excellent work it did, I commend it, but I say the commission was very much astray indeed when it built up a number of recommendations upon the entirely wrong basis, in my view, namely, of shifting the onus of doing the work from the property-owner to road boards.

A number of road boards have not displayed a great deal of energy in dealing with the vermin menace. On the road boards will be found a number of men who themselves are the worst offenders, men who have not taken any action to get rid of rabbits, but who rely upon the efforts of trappers coming in occasionally, knowing that when the trappers have reduced the number of rabbits and it is no longer economic for them to operate there, they will move on. They take no further action until the rabbits breed up again and then use the services of trappers once more. Some of these men are amongst the worst offenders and they occupy key positions on the road boards. To transfer the responsibility from the individual to the road boards would not work, and that is why the Bill does not make any provision for implementing recommendations along those lines.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—BASIC WAGE.

As to Inquiry Into Adequacy and Items for Fixation.

Mr. CROSS (Canning) [5.25]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House and in view of the prevailing discontent due to the present method of arriving at the basic wage, and in order to prevent grave industrial un-

rest in this State, an immediate and complete inquiry should be made into (1) the adequacy of the present wage; (2) the various items taken into consideration in its compilation; and (3) the many items not considered but which affect the cost of living, with a view to arriving at a just and equitable basic wage.

If this State is to make any considerable industrial progress, there must be industrial content amongst the workers. I am quite sure that there exists in Western Australia a very grave undercurrent of industrial unrest on account of two things, namely, the wage-pegging regulations and the inequity of the basic wage. But grave as is the discontent here, it is much greater in the Eastern States, and particularly in the capital cities of Melbourne and Sydney. On a previous occasion I pointed out when speaking on the Estimates that, as a result of the war, there would be a definite change in money values. I am convinced that that change has taken place and the workers feel that they have been tricked; and something must be done to relieve their minds, allay their suspicions, and give them justice.

I am just as certain that price-fixing, particularly in Melbourne and Sydney, has almost gone by the board, because it is right out of control, and the only thing that has remained static is the wage-pegging regulations. The formula on which the basic wage was fixed was drawn up in 1911. At that time it was gravely inadequate and it is more so today. Strange but true, I experienced some difficulty in obtaining details of the various items on which the basic wage is calculated. As a matter of fact, in this State, it is not calculated on a regimen drawn up by officials in this State, but they take as a guide the items laid down in the Commonwealth Labour Report. I asked the Government Statistician to supply a list of the items, and he told me that he had not one but simply took the regimen laid down in the Commonwealth Labour Report. The latest report is that for the year 1944, No. 34, and, incidentally, copies of this report have been available in this State only since the 5th October of this year.

I propose to tell members exactly what the items are and then they will realise the need that exists for making a complete overhaul of and inquiry into the basic wage. I propose to give the articles in-

cluded in the regimen now used for the purpose of indices from which the basic wage is compiled. In Group 1—incidentally when computing the basic wage, notice is taken of retail prices—the items under the heading of "Food and Groceries" are as follows:—

Bread made of white flour, ordinary flour, self-raising flour, tea, white granulated sugar 1A, polished Australian rice, sago, seed tapioca, plum jam, golden syrup, flaked loose oats, seeded raisins, 2-Crown loose currants, dried loose apricots, canned peaches, canned pears, tinned salmon, potatoes (new and old), brown onions, soap, bulk lighting kerosene.

For dairy produce the following items are given:—

Choicest factory butter, ordinary mild cheese, standard new-laid eggs, best middle bacon rashers, condensed milk (sweetened), fresh milk in sealed bottles or not bottled.

For meat, the following items are set out:—

Fresh beef: roast sirloin with bone in, roast prime rib, including the bone, rump steak, chuck stewing steak, sausages; corned beef: silverside, rolled brisket; fresh mutton: leg, forequarter, loin without the flap, loin chops and leg chops.

It will be noticed that lamb is not included at all. For pork, we find taken into account leg, best-end loin and chops. With regard to clothing, I will first give details covering men's attire. They are:—

Readymade worsted (Australian) suit; working trousers, woollen tweed (Australian); readymade, tweed overcoat (Australian), fur felt hat (Australian), fashion shirt with two collars.

The Minister for Lands: Where did they get them? That is what I want!

Mr. CROSS: The list continues:—

Working drill shirt, woollen singlet with short sleeves, athletic singlet made of cotton, full-length woollen underpants, all wool socks, braces, cotton handkerchiefs, winceyette pyjamas, all wool pullovers, box calf shoes for best wear, and box-hide boots for work.

Women's clothing is as follows:—

Readymade tweed costume (Australian), readymade tweed skirt (Australian), fur-felt hat (Australian), straw hat, readymade cotton frocks, readymade art silk frock, cotton brocade brassiere, wool and art silk undervest, art silk undervest, art silk bloomers, art silk princess slip, art silk stockings, hile stockings, fabric gloves, nappa gloves, art silk night-dress, winceyette pyjamas, cotton apron, all-wool cardigan; shoes for best wear, glace kid and for ordinary wear, box-calf.

I could give the list for children but I will not do so. I want members to notice that in

the clothing provided for men, only ready-to-wear suits are mentioned; but everybody knows that for the last 30 to 40 years ready-to-wear factory-made suits have always been inferior to those that are tailor-made, and I venture to suggest that only a small percentage of factory-made suits are used in Western Australia. I want it to be noticed, too, that no definite quality is laid down, and it seems to me that the regimen takes into calculation only the very cheapest quality materials. During the war and since, all the materials used to make men's suits have been single-weft. I have had experience of such a suit. I bought one for which I paid exactly three times the pre-war price, and it was worn out in less than three months.

While I was in Melbourne and Sydney recently, I made some inquiries as to what happened to double-weft material, and I discovered that such material does exist. I wanted to buy some—I had the coupons—because it is not possible to buy a ready-made suit to fit a large man in any State in Australia at present. I was shown by one manufacturer quite a quantity of material. I could have obtained four yards without any coupons at all but costing £20, and there were 6,000 yards in one room. I found that certain mills in the Eastern States are selling double-weft material in New Zealand and other places outside Australia, and no attempt is made to put that material on the market in this country at all. It is, however, comparatively easy in Melbourne and Sydney—particularly Melbourne—to get good material on the black market; in fact, I am quite satisfied that the black market, in Melbourne in particular, is much more extensive than the average man realises. There does not appear to be any shortage in the black market and it is possible to obtain fairly large quantities of material without any coupons.

I am quite certain that even in the shops, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne, there is no possibility of any person coming to the conclusion that price-fixing has been policed anything like as well as it has been in Western Australia and South Australia. I think that we are somewhat lucky, because prices here are considerably lower than in the other capital cities. Commodities for which fixed prices operate are there openly and brazenly priced at different amounts in three or four shops within a hundred yards

of one another. These different prices apply to the same brands of material, and that is one of the causes of the industrial unrest that exists in the Eastern States and of the inadequacy of the basic wage. I want it to be noticed, too, that in regard to women's clothes, ready-made garments are referred to in the regimen. It is true that quite a number of women's hats and dresses are factory-made, and are sold as ready-made. These indices merely provide for cotton goods, which are in short supply, and for artificial silk frocks.

In ordinary times, the majority of women preferred silk goods, and not many bought lisle or artificial silk stockings; they bought silk stockings, which can still be procured in Melbourne, in the black market, if one is prepared to pay the price. Just as the vendors wanted £20 for a suit of double-weft material so they wanted 30s. for a pair of silk stockings. There are some there, because I have seen them. I would again draw attention to the position, because it affects the basic wage. The materials foisted on the buying public within the last six or seven years have been very shoddy. I have given members an experience of my own, and other members have probably had the same experience. We all know that prices are skyrocketing, but prices in this State for men's suitings are far below those in the Eastern States. I inquired in Melbourne and Sydney as to the cost of a new suit. I visited 30 tailors in two cities, and the lowest price I was quoted for tenth-rate material was £16 16s. and that was for a suit that could have been bought here pre-war for £5.

I would like members to notice that many items are not included in this regimen on which the basic wage is compiled. For instance, there is no provision for fruit or vegetables, and everybody knows the price of vegetables. I was in the Melbourne market a fortnight ago last Saturday and took note of some of the prices. They varied widely, for there is no price control. I bought a 4-lb. cabbage for 3s. 4d. Silverbeet was 10d. a bunch and carrots 1s. 4d. a pound. That was in a competitive retail market. I suppose tomatoes would be regarded as a luxury, because they are out of season. However, there was a considerable quantity in the market, and I saw absolute rubbish

priced at 1s. 6d. a pound and the figure went up to 2s. 9d. The same prices obtained in Sydney. That is a sample of what is going on in Melbourne and Sydney. Members know the position here. We have seen cabbage sold in Western Australia plenty of times at 4d., 5d., 7d. and even 10d. a pound, whereas pre-war it was possible to obtain a cabbage weighing a couple of pounds and priced at 2d. Cabbage did not average more than 1d. a pound in those days. There is no mention of that in the basic wage regimen. The only vegetables mentioned are brown onions and potatoes, and for those commodities the same price is charged in every capital city—potatoes 5 lbs. for 6d. and brown onions 3d. a pound.

Large quantities of fish are eaten by the people but there is no mention in this table of either fresh or cooked fish. Everybody knows that before the war in Perth we could buy beautiful cooked schnapper at 3 ozs. for 4d. and mullet at 3d. Today we pay 9d. for 2 ozs. of schnapper and 6d. for 2 ounces of mullet. There is no mention of that in the basic wage regimen, yet thousands of pounds are spent on cooked fish in Perth every month. I notice that in the regimen there is no mention of lamb. Indeed several cuts of meat are left out. Why was no provision made for lamb?

The Minister for Lands: There was no mint sauce, I suppose.

Mr. CROSS: Many people eat lamb but it is dearer than mutton. It is not included in the items that are taken into consideration when fixing the basic wage. Neither is there any mention of ham and cooked meats, although there is a big demand for that class of food in Perth. There are also other kinds of cooked meats, but they are not taken into consideration at all in drawing up the regimen. Nearly everybody eats pickles, condiments and sauces, but no notice is taken of that. Since 1938 the price of those articles has nearly doubled. There is no reference to coffee or cocoa. One would imagine they did not exist. Some small provision is made for medicines, but not for doctor's fees or potential hospital expenses. A small amount is put down and taken into consideration for amusements. I forgot to complete my reading under the heading of miscellaneous. That shows other items which are taken into consideration when compiling the basic wage as well as those

things which are not taken into consideration.

Only an infinitesimal proportion of a double pair of bed blankets is taken into consideration and the same thing applies to a single bed pair. The same thing applies to double bed marcella quilts. How many marcella quilts are sold in Perth? One finds plenty of lamb's wool and eiderdown covers, but one would travel a long way to find a marcella quilt. Some 35 years ago this was a cheap form of artificial silk, but it is unprocurable today. People pay a lot more for that type of thing today than they did then. Little notice is taken of a double bed pair of sheets and of a single bed pair; also of cotton pillow slips, towels, table cloths and a yard of tea-towel. Only a small fraction is taken into account of a cup and saucer (stone china), dinner plate (stone china), a quart jug (earthenware), two-pint brown-ware teapot, 6¼ in. enamel pudding basin, and an 8 oz. tumbler, a 4-pint enamel kettle, a 3-pint enamel saucepan, an 11 inch galvanised bucket, a two-quart galvanised dipper, a millet broom, a 12 inch hair-broom, a 10 inch scrubbing brush, and a polishing mop complete.

Still under the heading of household utensils, we also find stainless table-knife, teaspoon, dessert spoon, table fork, electric light globe (gas-filled) and a full-sized electric iron. In the case of fuel and light, firewood blocks, cooking gas, electric lighting and electric power are taken into consideration. The only other miscellaneous items that are taken into account, are union dues, lodge dues, medicine, newspapers, recreation—only a little of that—smoking, fares and school requisites. Mighty little is allowed for amusements. In the last 30 years there has been a complete change in the class of amusements partaken of by the people of Western Australia, and indeed of countries the world over. Picture shows have become an everyday part of people's lives. I recollect the day when in Perth at the Theatre Royal the dearest seat for a night performance was 6d. and the price of other seats was only 3d., whereas today the dearest seats are 4s. 8d.

The allowance made for amusements is very little and it is time that a change was made there too. Less is allowed in the regimen for amusements than is paid for one

child in these days to provide a weekly visit to a picture show. There is no provision for prepared breakfast foods, and yet everyone eats them. I have taken out some of these items at random to indicate the considerable number that exists and which people must have in order to live. Notwithstanding that, these items are taken no notice of, although there has been a sharp increase in the price of them in the past few years. Take the case of a death in the family! Only a few weeks ago I received a letter from an undertaker saying that in future owing to the increase in the cost of advertisements in "The West Australian" the undertaker would now be charging 10s. 6d. instead of 8s. There is a sharp increase in the cost of advertising. I admit that very little advertising is done by the average family, but there is that increase to be taken into account. No cognisance is taken of it in the fixing of the basic wage, although that is supposed to be fixed on a proper base.

I think I have said enough to indicate that at least in this State there should be a complete overhaul into the adequacy or otherwise of the basic wage that appertains today. I believe that if this is not done, before long the industrial unrest which is overwhelmingly present in the Eastern States and is simmering here will break out in Western Australia. The only remedy for that is to remove the cause of these grave injustices from which workers have been suffering for a long time. I am not going to labour the position, but I urge the Government to take the necessary steps to see that a full and complete inquiry is made into all the items that go to make up the basic wage. I notice in the Labour Report some excuses are offered for not taking various items into account. The report states that this is an injustice and goes on to say—

The "weight" of individual food items has not been adjusted to take account of war-time scarcities and rationing. Foods which are unobtainable temporarily or intermittently are retained in the index at the latest recorded price.

Foods of some importance, such as fresh fish and fruit and vegetables other than potatoes and onions are not included in the regimen because comparable prices for a standard grade cannot be obtained from time to time or place to place, and because of marked seasonal fluctuations in supplies and consumption. The

inclusion of such items therefore would impair the accuracy of the index.

That is all right for an excuse, but in the case of the harassed housewife who has to provide fresh vegetables at the price at which they stand now, when she knows that no consideration is given to that factor when the basic wage is fixed—and the worker also himself knows that—is it any wonder that there is industrial unrest? In the Eastern States I found a grim determination on the part of all classes, not excepting the white collar section of the people, to demand—it seemed to be general—that there should be an increase in the basic wage. Some of the present strikers are demanding an increase of £1 forthwith and that there should be an inquiry afterwards. To avoid industrial unrest here something must be done about this matter. If we desire the peaceful operation of industry and prosperity for all, the best time to have an inquiry is now before industrial strikes appear so that we may give satisfaction to the people and create good feeling as between employer and employee.

On motion by the Minister for Labour, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAILWAYS.

As to Inquiry into Efficiency and Administration.

Mr. SEWARD (Pingelly) [5.55]: I move—

That this House expresses its grave dissatisfaction with the Government Railway affairs in this State for the following reasons:—

- (1) The increasing inability of the railway system to handle freight offering.
- (2) The increasing discontent among the staff.
- (3) The dilatoriness in making improvements.
- (4) The doubt as to efficiency of the administration.

And calls upon the Government to institute a searching public inquiry at which employees can give evidence without prejudice to their positions, and other sections of the community be freely heard with a view to early restoration of a reasonable level of service and efficiency of management.

I purposely have delayed moving any motion regarding railway administration be-

cause we were led to believe that a Bill would be introduced this session providing for a general review concerning the set-up not only of railway administration but of all transport matters within the State. But time is getting on, and we are approaching the closing weeks of the session. Consequently, I fear it will be too late, if the Bill is as important and as progressive as we were led to believe it would be, if it is introduced now for Parliament to give it the consideration to which it is entitled and which I am sure it will receive. In view of the very disturbing condition of our railways it is necessary that some motion should be moved drawing pointed attention to them. As long ago as 1944 the Premier of that day said—

I am not defending the railway administration. I make reasonable allowance for what has happened, but I am not satisfied and neither are the members of the Government, nor do I believe is the majority of members of this House.

The Premier at that time could reasonably have added to the list the general public as being dissatisfied with the condition of our railways two years ago. He went on to say—

I am also of opinion that we have outlived the time when railway administration should be controlled by one man.

That was said by the head of the Government two years ago. What has happened since? Bad as things were then they have gone from bad to worse since. I do not wish to imply that this is by any means an easy problem for the Government. It is indeed a most difficult one, but it is not going to be rendered any easier by its being allowed to continue, as seems to be the case so far as we are on this side of the House can tell. I do not desire to add to the difficulties of the Government, but the general public are being very much inconvenienced. I will endeavour as I go on to prove that some action must be taken. We yet have the Railway Estimates to deal with, but we cannot leave this important matter until then. Those Estimates are dealt with only in the concluding days of the session when there is usually a rush to get the business finished. The matter cannot receive proper consideration at that late hour. The position, as I said, has been going from bad to worse. Consequently, it has to be faced up to in the interests of

the Railway Department and particularly of the producers as well as the employees. I want to say that the railway employees for the most part are a very fine body of men who have done and are doing a particularly fine job considering the extremely adverse circumstances under which they are called upon to work.

Last year, for some reason that I have not been able quite to appreciate, the department introduced a speedier means of transport for the passenger service. Of course, that was quite desirable, but why it should have been introduced last year with the drivers having to use the old antiquated engines, which is admitted by the department, I do not know. I frankly admit that the men have done their best with the engines at their disposal, but they have had to tackle an almost hopeless task. I will give the House two instances to indicate what has been happening and how the position has become worse than ever. Twice lately I have travelled by the train leaving Perth on Friday night en route to Albany. On the trip I have particularly in mind we left Chidlow station to proceed on the journey. Members are probably aware that two engines are attached to the train and at Chidlow one is dropped off, leaving the other to haul the train over the rest of the trip.

After leaving Chidlow there is a slight bend in the line and after proceeding about three quarters of a mile one loses sight of the station. On this occasion 20 minutes after the train had left Chidlow I could still see the lights of the station. The engine tugged and dragged and tore at its couplings in its endeavour to pull the load up the slight incline, and it took nearly three-quarters of an hour before the rise was traversed. All the time when the one engine was straining and grinding at the couplings, we could see the steam from three engines in the railway yards at Chidlow. Surely one of those engines could have been attached to the train to help push it up the incline—but that was not done.

On another occasion I was travelling on the same line but in an opposite direction. I was at Narrogin and proceeding to Pingelly or Perth. There is an up-grade from Narrogin to Cuballing, and after struggling up the hill for some time the train pulled up. It was then cut into two halves, the engine taking the front half into Cuballing

and then returning and hauling up the second half. On the occasion I have in mind, some fellow passengers in the carriage and I were fully aware that from the way the engine was pulling the train when leaving Narrogin it could not do the job required of it. Surely there must be somebody with sufficient knowledge of the capacity of an engine to pull the load required who could take the necessary action to overcome the difficulty by providing an extra engine! If that were done, it would obviate what is happening today when the insides of engines are being pulled out in endeavours to haul loads over the Cuballing bank.

These are just two instances that come to mind and I mention them because I realise that the drivers, who are honest and capable workers, are trying to do an almost impossible task with the engines at their disposal. This sort of thing has been going on for years. The Chidlow incident I referred to occurred in the early part of this year and the happening at Cuballing last year. This sort of thing goes on and on and no-one seems to bother about it, with the result that we have to bring matters before the public in order to secure alterations.

The first question I wish to deal with is the ability of the Railway Department to cope with the traffic that is offering. In 1943—that is three years ago—the then Minister for Railways when replying to the debate on the Railway Estimates stated—

The department as well as the Government realises how serious the position is. Up to date, however, the department has not been able to cope with the freight offering.

In 1942, when the problem of the wheat traffic was brought up for consideration in the House, it was stated that for that year the Railway Department had promised to shift 22,000 tons of wheat a week. That is the undertaking the department gave to the Australian Wheat Board. Later on in the season the department had to admit that it could not deliver the goods and there was a revised estimate of 12,000 tons a week. That further estimate had to be subsequently revised and the weekly haulage was reduced to 8,000 tons. That sort of thing has been going on ever since, with the result that, as members are aware, last year the railways could not shift the wheat and road transport had to be availed of, at very considerable expense, to do the job. It is interesting to note that last year road transport

shifted, in all, 71,410 tons of wheat from the country to the seaboard. That was necessary simply because boats were waiting at the port for the wheat. The Australian Wheat Board required the grain at the port for loading on the ships and the railways could not move the quantity. The result was that road transport had to handle the job at a cost of £119,163.

The Premier: While not differing from your point of view in some respects, that was done because the wheat could be brought down more speedily than normal traffic would permit.

Mr. SEWARD: I realise that. When I was conversing with one of our representatives on the Australian Wheat Board he told me that unless we could get the wheat down to the seaboard and handle it fairly quickly, they could not work the ships. It was because of that that the three big bins were constructed at Bassendean. Obviously there would be no desire to store wheat in the damper air near the sea coast because the weevil pest could be safeguarded against better in the drier country areas. It was only because of the inability of the railways to handle the traffic that the bins had to be erected so that the wheat would be readily available for transference to the ships at the port. Now two of the huge structures have been taken down because they are unnecessary. In the circumstances, however, not only was the extra cost of handling the wheat by road borne by the purchasers, but the revenue involved was lost to the railways, which is a serious matter.

When the Chief Secretary was asked in the Legislative Council a day or two ago whether any arrangements had been made to haul wheat by road this year if necessary, he replied in the negative, although he did say that if circumstances necessitated the course being adopted, arrangements could be made at short notice. Only a few weeks ago the stock owners made a complaint that owing to the inability of the railways to handle the wheat traffic, the grain was being diverted to the mills and supplies of offal were not forthcoming. As I indicated earlier the railways had agreed to transport 22,000 tons a week a few years ago but had to reduce the tonnage so that in the end only 8,000 tons a week were handled. That meant that not sufficient

wheat was forthcoming to keep the mills going and provide offal for the dairy farmers and stock owners, as well as export requirements, which necessitated a minimum of 6,000 tons a week. Even that could not be accomplished and the railways got down to handling 3,000 tons in one week.

I will admit that I have noticed in the Press that the tonnage has been slightly increased and they are now handling 5,000 tons a week. But the effect of all this is that it has thrown people out of work while it also threatens the harvest prospects. We are just approaching the new harvest and as members are aware, the price of wheat the world over is exceedingly high. Naturally, the object of the Wheat Board would be to get our wheat away as quickly as possible in order to take advantage of the prevailing high prices. If the railways can handle only 5,000 tons a week the position will be hopeless, and something will have to be done about it. Apart from the cost of bringing wheat down by road, there is also another important phase and that is the damage the heavy trucks are doing to the bitumen roads. Anyone who has travelled from time to time between York, Beverley and Narrogin will have seen the big holes that the heavy 12-ton lorries are making in the roads. The trucks are simply cutting them to pieces. That is an economic waste that should not be permitted to continue.

So much for the wheat aspect. Let us look at other products that the railways are called upon to handle. I have in mind sheep and lambs in particular. If the railways cannot carry the lambs at the present time, the producers will suffer serious losses, particularly in view of the weather that has prevailed for some little time. The lambs have to be marketed and if their fleeces are full of grass seeds, as they probably will be owing to the exceptionally hot and dry weather, that will mean a serious loss to the producers. Lambs have to be sent to market as and when they are ready. In a sense they can be referred to as a perishable product. They may be ready for the road this week or next week, according as conditions may dictate. In the circumstances the producers cannot possibly tell the railway authorities exactly when they will want trucks. On the 17th October the Railway Department advised agents

that no orders could be accepted for trucking lambs to the freezers before the 4th November. That date has now been altered to the 11th November. That means for a whole month the railways cannot shift the lambs to the freezers.

What is the effect of that? The freezers are in difficulties. If members are not aware of the fact I can tell them that the killing at the freezers is done on the chain system and every man employed there is a cog in the treatment wheel. Those in control of the freezers cannot afford to pay their men off should lambs not come forward for treatment, because they would run the risk of the men securing other employment. If they should let them go, a kilt might come in and the services of the men would be wanted at once. In the circumstances the hands have to be retained in their employment whether there are lambs to be treated or not. All that means added expense in order that the services of the men will be available as required. What I have indicated with regard to lambs is the usual procedure; they cannot be shifted before they are ready.

To give members an instance indicative of the absence of administrative methods in connection with the railways, one agent said that he received an order from a producer a week ago for trucks to take 160 lambs to the freezers. The agent got in touch with the head office at the Railway Department and asked for the necessary trucks. The reply he received was that no trucks were available. The agent accordingly informed the producer who in turn got in touch with the stationmaster at Pinjarra and promptly secured the number of trucks he required. That sort of thing should not be possible. It should not be the job of the stationmaster to provide the trucks. There is certainly something radically wrong when the head office can say that no trucks are available and the station master at Pinjarra can supply all that are required.

There is another matter that is causing grave concern. I refer to what I may describe as the dog-in-the-manger policy of the railways. The department cannot shift lambs by rail and when the Transport Board is approached for a permit in order to bring the lambs down by road, the railways object to the issuing of the desired permit. To use a colloquialism, that

is quite "over the fence." The railways admit that they cannot shift the lambs between now and the 11th November and yet when an application is made to the Transport Board for a permit to enable the lambs to be brought down by road, the department objects! I am glad to say that when the position was put to the Transport Board it was rectified slightly and permits were issued to two carriers at Northam to enable them to bring the lambs down to market, but the licenses were on a weekly basis. The effect of that was that each man had to go back the next week and secure another permit.

The result was that the carriers could not take orders for the transport of lambs. If a producer came to one of them and said he wanted some lambs taken to Perth on the following Thursday, the carrier could not agree to take them because he would not know whether he would be granted the necessary permit and the producer himself could not make arrangements with the freezers to take the lambs for treatment. Further than that, the Transport Board required each man to pay a license fee of 5s. for every trip he made under the license granted to him. That meant that the producer had to pay the extra charge in addition to the cost of cartage, which represented much more than the railway freight. Thus the producer was penalised simply because of the inability of the railways to lift the freight. Allied with this problem is the position at the Midland fat stock market. Sheep, lambs, pigs and cattle are coming forward every week in fairly large numbers. The other night I referred to the large increase in the marketing of sheep and lambs at this particular period of the year.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. SEWARD: Before tea, I was proceeding to give an account of what is happening at the Midland Junction saleyards with respect to the transport of stock to the yards. Owing to the inability of the Railway Department to transport all stock, it has for some time been rationing the number of trucks available to the agents. The number allotted is 210 small trucks, among all the agents, to bring all the sheep, lambs, pigs and cattle down to the Midland

Junction market. The result is that only a ridiculously small number of stock can be brought to the yards. I would venture to say that one agent alone could fill 100 trucks and there are in addition three other agents. Therefore, 210 trucks represent very severe rationing. But even that number has been beyond the capacity of the railways to supply. The number fell in one week to 180; while during the past three weeks only 160 small trucks have been made available. This has only one result.

The owners of fat stock are resorting to road transport. Unfortunately, they have been unable to obtain permits, so it is a matter of travelling all night. The first week about 130 sheep were delivered in this way; but last week the number was 1,500. All these were transported by truck and that has meant an enormous loss of revenue to the Railway Department. Despite the fact that the department cannot haul the stock, it is objecting to the stock-owners obtaining permits to transport the stock by road. The 1,500 sheep to which I referred came from 20 different sidings as far apart as Wongan Hills to below Pingelly. One farmer who applied for a permit was sent a sheaf of forms to fill in. By the time he could have filled them in and obtained the permit, the sale would have gone by. Even had he obtained the permit, he would have incurred the additional expense in bringing the sheep down by road.

One has only to travel by road between York and Perth any day of the week to observe the loads of timber that are being brought down on trucks, each with a tree cut into three or four sections. That represents freight lost to the Railway Department. Last autumn, as is well known to the farming community, there was a hold-up in the oil supply. Perhaps it was due in part to shortage of drums, but the railways could not cope with the demand and so something had to be done to get over the difficulty, and oil was carted by road to the farmers to enable them to carry on. It was not so bad in the Great Southern district; but in the districts further out the season was late in breaking. Farmers could not sow until the season broke, and when it did break they had to work night and day. Oil

was not then available to them. I know that farmers from Hyden had to travel 70 miles to Corrigin to get a drum of oil.

Those difficulties are brought about because of the inability of the Railway Department to handle the freight which is offering to it. This was admitted by the Minister when he replied to the Estimates of 1943. There has been no improvement since; instead, the position has deteriorated and is now much worse than it was. Another result of the failure of the Railway Department to transport wheat is that recently some of the flour mills in the city had to close down for a certain period. They could not get enough wheat to continue their operations. As I said earlier, a few weeks ago the stockowners were unable to obtain feed. In fact, the supplies in Perth and the metropolitan area were so short that the whole of the wheat had to be delivered to the flour mills, with the result that the stockowners vigorously protested. Some of the wheat was then diverted to the stockowners; but we had four flour mills partially closed down and a considerable number of employees thrown out of work. I shall quote from "The West Australian" of the 28th October in which it is stated—

To illustrate the paucity of wheat available, Mr. Moore—

Mr. Moore is the Secretary of the Flour Mill Employees' Association—

—said that one of the firms to which he referred had a quota of 75 tons of wheat weekly. Only ten tons have been received weekly for the past nine weeks. For the period 27th August to 28th October one miller, who had a quota allocated by the Australian Wheat Board of approximately 700 tons, had received only 100 tons.

The present position was most distressing for one miller, a producer of stock and poultry foods. From a small beginning in 1940 he had revealed his belief in the future of the State by manufacturing products which hitherto had largely been imported from the Eastern States. In 1940 he employed five men and recently his employees numbered 80. Thirty men employed by this firm were given a week's notice last Thursday. Similar conditions were prevailing in many other mills. If the men were not given notice they were stood down and lost wages accordingly. In some firms employees had agreed to take holidays during a slack period in the hope that on the completion of this period sufficient wheat would be available to guarantee full employment.

I know the Government will plead deficiency of rollingstock. On the other hand, the

railways union said a few days ago that the Commissioner did not employ enough men. It is rather difficult to ascertain which statement is correct. I have taken out some figures from the report of the Commissioner of Railways dealing with stocks of locomotives, goods vehicles and staff. As regards locomotives, the numbers for the eight years from 1938 to 1946 are as follows:—

1938	..	..	..	..	422
1939	..	..	..	..	429
1940	..	..	..	..	423
1942	..	..	..	..	390
1943	..	..	..	..	392
1944	..	..	..	..	393
1945	..	..	..	..	416
1946	..	..	..	..	424

So we have 424 locomotives in use today as against 422 in 1938; I presume the Garratt engines are included. The numbers of goods vehicles for the same period are as follows:—

1938	..	..	..	..	10,875
1939	..	..	..	..	10,887
1940	..	..	..	..	11,013
1942	..	..	..	..	10,754
1943	..	..	..	..	10,743
1944	..	..	..	..	10,732
1945	..	..	..	..	10,722
1946	..	..	..	..	10,827

There were only 48 more vehicles in 1938, so there has been no shortage in the eight years dealt with. As regards staff numbers the position is as follows:—

1938	..	..	..	..	7,535
1939	..	..	..	..	7,711
1940	..	..	..	..	7,539
1942	..	..	..	..	7,133
1943	..	..	..	..	7,244
1944	..	..	..	..	7,545
1945	..	..	..	..	7,575
1946	..	..	..	..	7,971

Roughly, there are now 400 more men employed than in 1938. So it is difficult to see that there has been any shortage of locomotives—unless the dispute over the Garratt engines has had a bearing on the matter—or any shortage of vehicles in which to load the freight. As I say, the plea of shortage of locomotives and their age has been made, so it behoves us to look at what has happened in that respect. Members have to be guided by the reports of the Commissioner of Railways. I find that in his report for the year 1940 he states—

An analysis of the condition of the 421 main line engines on the 30th June was as follows:—

Good	..	254	} = 81.24% of total.
Fair	..	84	
Bad	..	4	

The Commissioner also stated that the department was building ten new 4-S-2 type Class "S" locomotives. Then there is this enlightening certificate which I find in each of the succeeding reports of the Commissioner. It is given by the Chief Mechanical Engineer—

I hereby certify that the rollingstock, machinery, plant and appliances in use under my control have, during the year ended 30th June, 1940, been maintained in good working order and repair.

There is no indication in the report that the age of the engines operated against their fitness and therefore we are entitled to assume that all the rollingstock was in good order. In 1941, we have practically the same thing. The Commissioner said there were 411 main line locomotives, classified as follows:—

Good	243	} = 81.27% of total.
Fair	86	
Bad	5	

Again no attention was directed to the age of the engines or to any deficiencies in them. The same certificate is again given by the Chief Mechanical Engineer. The Commissioner also said that some little progress had been made with the manufacture of the "S" class engines. In 1942 the Commissioner's report with respect to locomotives was as follows:—

Good	233	} = 84.02% of total.
Fair	92	
Bad	1	

The Commissioner also stated that work had proceeded on the ten "S" class locomotives, but had been delayed. The first of them was expected to undergo steaming trials about the end of October. Again we find the same certificate by the Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer, to the effect that all was well with the rollingstock under his care. It is not until we come to the Commissioner's report for the year 1944 that we find anything wrong with the rollingstock. Paragraph 12, dealing with regeneration of rollingstock, states—

From time to time criticism has been levelled at the department regarding the condition of the rollingstock in service, particularly locomotives and carriages, and this criticism is to some extent justified. The blame for this, however, cannot be laid on the administration, but is largely due to difficulties of finance which have precluded the Government from making available the necessary funds for rehabilitation.

On a number of occasions the administration has drawn the attention of the Government to the necessity for a general programme of rehabilitation of the rollingstock to enable the department to keep up to date, but prior to the war finance was the governing factor, while over the war years, through shortages of manpower and material and the necessity to concentrate every unit of power and accommodation in service, to meet defence and civilian transport needs, it has been impossible to make any substantial contribution to the solution of the problem.

The Commissioner pointed out that the trouble was not due to the oversight, or anything like that, of the department, but rather to the fact that the Government had been unable to make finance available to the Commissioner in order to allow him to undertake the procuring of locomotives sufficient to deal with the position. That being so, I thought I would turn up the Premier's speech when he introduced the Budget that year.

The Premier had this to say—

Reviewing the position generally, it can be said that the result of the year's transactions was very satisfactory indeed. The surplus secured last year was the fourth in succession and constitutes a record in our financial operations since the beginning of Federation.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.] It would also appear to mark the shocking state of the locomotive position, which is another record for the Government of that year. It was pointed out on more than one occasion, from this side of the House, that the Government's surplus for four years—amounting, I think, to about £75,000—had been obtained through neglecting to carry out necessary repair work to keep our essential services in proper functioning order. That is verified by the statement of the Commissioner of Railways that the engine position could not be coped with before the war because finance had not been made available to enable it to be done. If the 1938 report of the Commissioner of Railways is consulted, it will, I think, be found that the belated repairs that we were told existed in 1933—after the depression—had been overtaken and everything was all right in the department. So, this tragic deterioration in engine-power must have taken place since then, and we are told all of a sudden that all the engines are 40 or 50 years old. It is lack of business attention by the railway administration for the engines to have got into that condition.

As the Commissioner stated, the construction of the "S" class engines was commenced in 1941, and the first of them appeared on the track in October, 1943. The war had been going on in that period, but some steps should have been taken and the department should have recognised that it could not have continued as it was. About two months ago I was looking through a copy of the London "Sphere" and I saw a picture of a consignment of engines coming out of an English factory; they had been ordered by and were being shipped to South Africa. That country had not let its engines get into the same condition as ours. A desperate effort was made to overcome the difficulty when the Garratt engines were purchased, but I am afraid the idea has not been a success. A statement has appeared in the Press that a consignment of engines has been secured from the Sudan, or somewhere else, and there is a picture of one being unloaded at Fremantle this morning. Many years ago we purchased a bargain line in electrical machinery. I hope the Minister has better luck than we had then.

One of the troubles in the Railway Department appears to be the discontent amongst the staff. That is evident from recent happenings. A couple of weeks ago the State was notified that we were on the verge of a railway strike. One of the railway unions gave notice that the men were not going to work the Garratt engines. That resulted in a conference between the Premier, the Minister for Railways, the union concerned and the president of the Arbitration Court. The ultimatum was withdrawn but I do not know whether the arrangements arrived at were ever published. Several people have asked me what was the result, but I have been unable to tell them. However, another bombshell has been dropped and a similar ultimatum given to the Government that the men are not going to work the Garratt engines. We in this State can pride ourselves on our industrial workers. They have maintained their production and their position in industry and we have not had any real industrial turmoil here. I cannot conceive that the employees of the Railway Department are doing this thing simply because they want to have a strike; it must be because they have a genuine grievance.

One of the motives impelling me to move this motion is that it is time to have a

public inquiry, at which the employees can give evidence in the secure knowledge that their position in the department will not be prejudiced. Men do not adopt an attitude such as this for fun. They feel they have the right to complain about conditions that have not been rectified by either of the parties concerned. I do not intend to go right through the report on the Garratt engine, as members have it before them and can study its contents, but it would not be right for me to ignore it altogether. There are one or two matters in it that I want to deal with. I felt when I read in the report the department's answer to one of the union's claims that it adequately represented the whole trouble with the Railway Department, and that has been my opinion for some years. The claim to which I refer is—

It is a superheated locomotive but the steam pipes to front and back engines are so long that the steam has lost much of its temperature by the time it reaches the cylinders, therefore it is not as expansive as superheated steam should be, therefore more steam is required to operate the engine, which reflects itself in coal and water consumption.

The answer of the Commissioner of Railways is—

This is merely a statement of opinion and is disagreed with.

That is the whole attitude of the railways. I have always found that any suggestions for improvements coming from quarters outside of Wellington-street are simply ignored. Years ago, employees told me that they had put forward suggestions for the better running of passenger trains, but not the slightest notice was taken of them by the authorities in Wellington-street. If a public inquiry were held, there would be ample evidence to support that statement.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The department has paid hundreds of pounds to employees for suggestions.

Mr. SEWARD: But apparently there are employees and employees.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I mean the staff; the working men.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SEWARD: Let me illustrate what I mean. Some years ago I was talking to a conductor on the Albany train and he had a particularly strenuous time. He had to make up all the sleepers because if he did

not have more than 20, he did not get an assistant. In addition, he had to get out at unattended sidings to change the staff, and he had to issue tickets to people joining the train at unattended sidings. I have seen that man at York in a bath of perspiration. I said to him, "Why do not you get all your side-door coaches at the back of the train so that when you take the staff to the engine you can get into a corridor coach and walk through instead of having to pass by all the side-door coaches; and when you get to the unattended sidings you would have the side-door coaches alongside the platform?" He replied, "I have put that suggestion up to the authorities until I am sick of it. They take no notice." If an employee in Wellington-street makes a suggestion it might be adopted, but not one made by a man out on the track, working the trains.

I want to refer to some aspects of the purchase of the Garratt engines. When the engine power became alarmingly short the department appears to have rushed in and purchased these engines against the opinion of other States. The Royal Commissioner, in his statement, says that Mr. Mills was entirely responsible for their design. I mention that because when I spoke about Garratts people said that those engines were operating in South Africa and elsewhere, but they are not the engines that we are talking about. The ones here are known as the Australian Standard Garratt, for which Mr. Mills is responsible. The engines were being built in Australia, and at page 10 of his report the Royal Commissioner has this to say—

Against the hostile attitude of Queensland and the lukewarm attitude of Tasmania, a Western Australian representative at this conference (Canberra, 1944) declared that the locomotives had given satisfaction in Western Australia and that no difficulties had been experienced there. There is ample evidence that difficulties and objections had been raised in Western Australia and I cannot understand how such a statement could have been made.

At this time the Commissioner of Railways of Western Australia had recommended to the Government the purchase of ten ASG locomotives which were then in service under lease from the Commonwealth, and shortly afterwards he made a recommendation that fifteen additional locomotives should be bought. It is clear that the Chief Mechanical Engineer (Mr. Mills, the designer of the locomotive), and the Chief Traffic Manager of the Western Australian Government Railways (Mr. Evans), had no hesitation in supporting the recommen-

dation. The Commonwealth at that time was asking approximately £18,000 for each locomotive and these two officials thought that by comparison with the S class locomotive, one of the newest and most powerful engines on the State system—which cost £16,000—the ASG locomotive was good buying. Subsequently, it seems, by the use of various arguments, the purchase of the locomotives was arranged at £12,000 each.

In view of the attitude of the other States to this particular engine that is a most extraordinary state of affairs. The Commissioner goes on to state—

From the time of the introduction of these ASG locomotives into the Western Australian railway system difficulties and complaints arose. Much the same complaints had arisen in Queensland and these were known to the Western Australian Railway Administration.

That is a very strong statement made by the Royal Commissioner and it does not reflect very creditably on our State railway authorities. There appear to be two main objections to the engine on the part of the employees, the first of which is its habit of running off the rails. The Royal Commissioner has put the reason for that down to the fact that the front wheels have no flanges on them so that there is nothing to stop them from running off the rails. It was proved that on several occasions the wheels left the rails and the engines ran for a certain distance, and then they jumped on again. In other cases it was found that they were off and the engine was pulled up. At the start of his investigations the Royal Commissioner received copies of the claims of the employees and the answers of the Commissioner. Claim No. 3 submitted by the union is:—

The leading driving wheels are flangeless, making the engine liable to leave the rails.

The department's answer to that is—

The fact that the leading driving wheels are flangeless does not render the engine liable to leave the rails.

That is a direct negative. The Royal Commissioner has this to say—

This is the most important aspect of this inquiry as it concerns the safety of the locomotives. The first main line derailment of an ASG in Western Australia, occurred in April, 1945. In Queensland the first main line derailment occurred in January, 1945. There has been no case of a derailment when an engine was "new." By "new" I mean an engine which is just issued from shops and which has done comparatively little running in traffic.

Further on the Royal Commissioner states—

While the locomotives were under construction at Newport, Victoria, attention was drawn to the matter of the flangeless wheels. The Chairman of the Mechanical Engineers' sub-committee queried the design in this respect and stated that, assuming flangeless wheels were employed, it would be preferable to reconsider the coupled group for increased lateral stability. No effect was given to this suggestion.

Just prior to that he said—

In South Africa, where the South African Railways have had a long and successful experience with Beyer Garratts, and very fast and powerful locomotives of this type are used, leading flangeless coupled wheels have been discarded for over 15 years.

He later stated—

In modern locomotive design the general consensus (and I think the better opinion) is against leading flangeless wheels. There is no need for flangeless leading wheels in the case of the ASG locomotive; on the contrary, it would be an advantage if the locomotive had flanged leaders. The tendency to lateral oscillation would be checked, there would be less wear on curves, and the bogie could more easily perform its work of guiding and stabilising the locomotive in curving.

Accordingly, the Royal Commissioner says—

I find that there is no need for these wheels to be unflanged. I recommend—

That the leading flangeless coupled wheels of all Australian Standard Garratt locomotives in Western Australia be fitted with flanges and that the intermediate flangeless wheels be fitted with thin flanges; that an entirely new design of bogie of the swing-link type with roller bearings be substituted for that at present in use. The form of bogie in use in Western Australia does not find favour on other systems for the reasons I have already given.

That is the finding of the Royal Commissioner regarding flangeless wheels. It would be interesting to know how many of those engines have been fitted with flanges on their wheels since the Commissioner issued his report. I wish to refer to another matter, of which I am reminded by something that occurred in this House a few years ago, and to which the member for Kalgoorlie contributed. The department is emphatic in attributing main line derailments to Western Australian locomotives being driven at excessive speeds round curves. When I read that I remembered the member for Kalgoorlie making a statement, a few years ago, to the effect that he would defy any driver to take a train up certain banks on the

W.A.G.R. unless he exceeded the speed limit going down the preceding bank. The driver has to break the law in order to get his train up the next bank, yet the department says the derailments are caused by excessive speed.

Mr. Styants: There is not a speedometer on any engine here, to let the crew know at what speed they are travelling.

Mr. SEWARD: I am not a technical man, but I recall the statement made by the member for Kalgoorlie. I understand that leaning out of a cab on an engine is prohibited, yet I am told that men cannot work the engines when shunting without doing that. The employee has to break the regulations in order to do his work. The Commissioner has no right to put men in the position of having to break the regulations and imperil their jobs and lives in order to carry out their duties. I will deal next with the steam brake, which is a most important part of these engines. In the questionnaire, the union's contention No. 6 reads—

The reversing gear, upon which a driver often has to depend to stop in an emergency, is unwieldy.

The department's answer is—

There is gross exaggeration in the statement that a driver has often to depend upon the reversing gear to stop an engine. Though the department does not regard the reversing gear as unwieldy, an engine has been fitted with a special reversing screw which requires only half the number of turns. Extension of this modification to other engines has been prevented by the union.

Dealing with that matter, the Commissioner states—

Perhaps no equipment on the ASG has given rise to more dissatisfaction than the steam brake. In locomotive design, the steam brake is quite common and if properly designed and constructed, should be very effective.

On the ASG, the brake is so designed that the vacuum brake of the train can be controlled from the engine and means are provided whereby on the application of the vacuum brake, the steam brake should automatically apply, thus doing away with the necessity of operating two levers. The vacuum brake is operated by using the steam from the engine to clear the air from a pipe going the length of the train, thus creating a vacuum which in turn permits a number of pistons in cylinders on the vehicles to rise in the cylinders owing to the outside atmospheric pressure. By means of rigging, these pistons communicate with brake shoes near the wheels and the brakes may be put on or off according as the vacuum is destroyed or created. Provision is made whereby the vacuum steam ejector, which is the part of the vacuum brake instrument

used to clear the air from the train pipes, can also be used for putting steam into the steam brake pipe in the application of the steam brake.

The union's case is—

The steam brake is unreliable in an emergency owing to condensation in pipes and cylinders.

The Commissioner's reply to this allegation is—

The steam brake is efficient and reliable. Special action is being taken to minimise condensation.

Continuing, the Royal Commissioner says—

It will be seen that this is an equivocal reply. There is a denial with a half-hearted admission. The position is that for twelve months or more, enginemmen have been complaining about the steam brake and the department has consistently reiterated that it is efficient. Enginemmen have been either directly or tacitly blamed for accidents which have resulted when the brake has failed to give an efficient performance. In the evidence of Mr. Hewetson, Chief Footplate Inspector, and of Mr. Thomas, Chief Mechanical Inspector, will be found a reiteration of the view that the brake is and always has been effective. At the same time, Mr. Hewetson admits that there is a tendency to condensation in the brake cylinder which retards its effectiveness. This condensation must be removed before the brake becomes effective. To do this, Mr. Hewetson advocates a few momentary applications of the brake lever in order to clear out the condensation. This, to me, is an expedient which should not have to be used with any instrument which is effective. Emergencies present themselves more or less suddenly, and there is not time in the severest emergency, if such manoeuvres have to be resorted to, to check the speed of the engine sufficiently to avert a serious accident.

Furthermore, the fact that such manoeuvres are necessary is apt to destroy the confidence which enginemmen ought to have in the appliances at their disposal . . .

I think the department's attitude in regard to the steam brake has been irritating and has increased the dissension which existed between the union and itself. This is illustrated in some correspondence concerning collisions between the ASG locomotives and other vehicles in shed driving. The department stated that a very efficient hand brake is fitted and should be used for the unavoidable shed shunting when steam pressure is dropping back. The hand brake would in my opinion be particularly awkward to use in shed shunting and it is a poor way out to suggest the use of the hand brake as a substitute for the inefficient steam brake, which can and should be made to operate efficiently.

Those are two serious matters. The Minister may be able to enlighten us, but I think very little attempt has been made to overcome that trouble. I understand the brake

has to be given 22 revolutions in order to be effective, but I believe that one has now been substituted which would only require 11 revolutions. As to the dilatoriness in effecting improvements, in the early part of the session I asked a question as to whether the Commissioner had received some blueprints or particulars about Diesel cars in use in New Zealand, and if he had, were they suitable for use here? He admitted that he had received the blueprints, but said that the capacity was too small, and that they were not suitable for Western Australia. I sent that reply to the Minister for Railways in New Zealand and received back from him certain photographs of the Diesel cars in New Zealand. Members may examine them if they wish. I also received from him a letter which reads as follows:—

I am in receipt of your letter of 1st August, together with questions to and answers from the Honourable the Minister for Railways. A reply to your letter of 6th July was about to be despatched when your letter dated 1st August was received and clarified the requests which you had previously made.

The New Zealand Government Railways are, at the present time, using three types of rail cars and these are commonly referred to as—

1. Wairarapa.
2. Standard.
3. Vulcan.

The Wairarapa type was designed for service between Wellington and Palmerston North via the Wairarapa. Special interest attaches to this service by reason of the fact that the rail cars running over this route were specially designed and constructed in order to meet the unusual operating difficulties presented in the negotiating of the Rimutaka Incline. The Incline is 2½ miles long on a grade of one in 13, with curves of five chains radius. All steam trains negotiating this particular section are hauled by Fell engines operating on a centre rail. The rail cars, therefore, had to be designed to have a clearance over the centre rail.

In 1936, the department built six Wairarapa rail cars in its workshops near Wellington.

They built those rail cars in Wellington in 1936, yet we imported one, and made some others in 1937.

To meet the special conditions these cars were constructed on the single bogey principle, with a single pair of driving wheels at the rear. These units can accommodate 49 passengers and have a luggage compartment and lavatory at the entrance end. The maximum permissible speed is 55 miles per hour on level sections and 12 miles per hour on the Incline. These cars were originally fitted with petrol-driven engines but after approximately six years' use they were replaced by Diesel engines. The operating cost averages 2s. 4½d. per mile, which includes depreciation and interest.

In 1939 further rail car services were inaugurated with the Standard type. Six of the Standard type were built in the railway workshops and were placed on the Wellington-New Plymouth route, a distance of 251 miles, which is covered in 7½ hours. Much of this country is hilly and tortuous. The second service to be operated was between Wellington and Gisborne, a distance of 331 miles. This journey is accomplished in 9½ hours. Two of the Standard cars are fitted as compos, having 12 first-class and 36 second-class seats, and are authorised to carry a maximum of 60 passengers. The remaining four cars have second-class accommodation only, for 52 passengers. The Standard car is 66ft. long and has two 240 horse power Leyland Diesel engines—one over each two-axle bogey. The car can be driven from either end, the maximum authorised speed is 55 miles per hour but it can attain a speed of 65 miles per hour. A luggage compartment is provided at each end and the car is also fitted with central lavatory.

The operating cost of this type of rail car is approximately 3s. 4d. per mile, including depreciation and interest. Nine rail cars built by the Vulcan Foundry at Newton Le Willows, England, commenced to operate in the South Island in November, 1940. They were placed on the route between Christchurch and Ross, a distance of 183 miles and also between Greymouth and Westport, a distance of 93 miles. These cars are 66¼ft. long and are driven by a 250 h.p. Vulcan-Frichs Diesel engine, fitted on a three-axle bogey at one end. They can be driven from either end. They have seating accommodation for 52 second-class passengers and are provided with a luggage compartment at one end and a central lavatory. The cars are capable of a speed of 75 miles per hour, but are limited to 55 miles per hour in normal service. The operating cost of this car is approximately 2s. 6d. per mile, including depreciation and interest.

Those cars were manufactured in the railway workshops in New Zealand between 1936 and 1939, and yet we have been told that, owing to the success of our Diesels, which I think have a maximum speed of 30 miles an hour, we are going to get some more, though heaven knows when they are coming. I am afraid there is room for an overhaul of our Railway Department, because it can safely be assumed that the people of this State will not patronise the railways when they can get petrol and tyres for their cars. In country districts even now when people wish to come to Perth they inquire whether anyone is going down by car. For these reasons, I submit the motion.

On motion by the Minister for Railways, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th October.

The **PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [8.15]: This small Bill, introduced by the member for Albany, is designed to provide for traffic control on Crown lands or municipal areas to which the traffic laws normally would not apply, and particularly in areas fronting railway stations such as those at Perth and Albany where the traffic rules and regulations usually enforced by the police are not operable. So far as the Traffic Department is concerned, there is no objection to the Bill or to the principle it contains, namely, that members of the Police Force may exercise all the powers and perform all the duties which they are enabled by law to perform on main traffic routes or roads. The Traffic Department supports the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; Mr. Watts in charge of the Bill.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 2—Add a proviso as follows:—

Provided that before any such property is acquired by purchase or otherwise the board shall obtain from the Commissioner of Public Health a certificate in writing that such property is or can be made suitable in his opinion for the purposes of this Act.

Mr. **WATTS**: I ask members not to agree to the amendment for reasons clearly stated by the Minister controlling local government. He said, and I agree with him, that

the amendment seeks to centralise authority and this should not be encouraged. Further, he said, the amendment is a reflection on local authorities, which are local boards of health and have responsible officers to guide them. These boards would be extremely unlikely to make any attempt to acquire premises against the verdict of their responsible officers, more particularly if the premises were unsuitable for the children of their own district and possibly their own children. These powers of local authorities should not be hedged with restrictions that aim at centralisation. We passed the measure after due consideration without a provision of this sort. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of Mr. Watts, Mr. McLarty and Mr. Withers drew up reasons for disagreeing to the Council's amendment.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1946-47.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 24th October. Mr. Mann in the Chair.

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £140,300 (partly considered):

Mr. WATTS (Katanning) [8.29]: When the Minister for Justice introduced these Estimates a few nights ago he mentioned the desirability, I understood, of increasing by legislation the charges being made by the Public Trustee, the reason given being that it was necessary to balance the budget of his department. I have always regarded the Crown Law Department as at least to some extent one that was responsible for providing the public with some service and that, unless the cost of providing the service was extraordinary, the question of balancing the budget in each individual case should not come up too strongly for consideration.

If that argument were applied to all the activities of the Crown Law Depart-

ment, we should find magistrates and judges and others in a somewhat peculiar position, because they would have to draw up their own budgets and estimate the fines and penalties they should impose, after making due allowance for irrecoverable and bad debts, on the basis of what the department was likely to cost in the period of 12 months. Of course, that is not the position at all. The fact is that a reasonable service is expected to be rendered by sections of the department without too close a regard being paid to the question whether the budget is balanced or not.

But the observation of the Minister induced me to examine a little more closely the affairs of the department; and I find that his budget balances most handsomely. From the figures before us under the Department of Justice we find that the expenditure is £142,850 and the revenue £493,800. So he already has a profit of £351,000 all but £50 from the activities of this department. Therefore I resolved at this stage to register my protest against any suggestion that the fees of the Public Trustee should be raised, because I do not think there is any justification for it. It is all very well for the Public Trustee's Department to allege that things are done virtually free of charge.

We know that the department will have to contend with some small cases where the percentage it is allowed will not provide any great sum of money. But it will also have, I have not the slightest doubt, some considerable estates, where the five per cent. on income, I think it is, and 2½ per cent. on corpus will provide a very substantial amount of money, and I believe that an increase cannot be justified in either the large or the small cases simply for the purpose of balancing the budget, when the present position is that there is not more than £1,500 or £2,000 between the outgoings and the incomings of the Public Trustee's Department for the last 12 months. So I rose, from this aspect, to register a protest against any suggestion for an increase in the charges of the Public Trustee's office at this stage, a comparatively early stage in the history of that office.

The other matter I wish to mention is the necessity, which I trust the Minister

will agree is obvious, of making some better provision for the drafting of Bills and amendments for private members. Any criticism I may make of the system does not include the gentlemen who have done the work. I have had experience of three, in the years I have been in this Chamber, who have been appointed or used as private members' draftsmen; and I say without fear of contradiction that they have done their best in the circumstances and are deserving not of censure but of credit. But the point I wish to make is that their position is unsatisfactory. It must be unsatisfactory to them; it certainly is unsatisfactory from my point of view, to private members. These gentlemen have occupied various full-time positions in the Public Service.

The first I knew was Mr. Boylson who, at that time, was Deputy Master of the Supreme Court and subsequently became Master and occupied the position which he holds today. The second was Mr. Shillington, Commissioner of Titles, a very responsible office; and the third is Mr. Turnbull, the present Deputy Master of the Supreme Court, who was appointed to that position a few months ago. It is quite obvious to anyone who goes there to interview the Deputy Master of the Supreme Court, let alone to those who know something about his duties, that the position is a fairly onerous one. It is a full-time job. He is paid a very substantial salary for carrying out the duties of his office and it is quite clear that the only time he can properly give to the drafting of private members' Bills, let alone amendments, is his spare time out of office hours or time devoted to the task during office hours but occasioning his doing work out of office hours in other departments with which he has to deal. The same remark, and perhaps to a greater degree, applied to Mr. Shillington when he was private members' draftsman and Commissioner of Titles. The job of Commissioner and probably Registrar of Titles was, even during the war period, quite a substantial one; and now that the operations of the office can be expected to assume their normal trend it is going to be a much greater job. So that I am not at all surprised that Mr. Shillington has been relieved of the handicaps this position of private members' draftsman must have placed upon him.

My review of the position is this: It is reasonably easy for a private members' draftsman, so constituted and paid some small allowance, to draw such Bills as private members may wish to introduce; because, as a general rule, they are not very great in number or in size. I say as a general rule, because there have been some exceptions to that, particularly in the case of Mr. Boylson. But they are not easily done. These gentlemen are not Parliamentary draftsmen by training and Parliamentary drafting, properly carried out, requires some specialisation. I am prepared to concede that they are able to deal with questions of private members' Bills, but when it comes to assisting private members to draft amendments to Government Bills or to Bills introduced by other private members, I say without hesitation and with a considerable knowledge of the subject, they cannot possibly do it.

If the gentleman who is in charge of the job at present had been asked to draft one quarter of the amendments that have appeared on the notice paper during this session to various Bills both private and Government, he would have been quite unable to attend to his public duties as Deputy Master of the Supreme Court, without wearing himself to death. What is the result? Legal assistance is obtained from outside, in some cases, by private members. Some private members are better qualified than others to attend to these matters themselves and they, I would say in 75 per cent. of cases, prepare their own amendments. Unless the question is very involved and requires considerable thought and some research, they are in a position to do the work themselves. In some cases they even attempt, to the best of their ability, and without taking any responsibility whatever, to give some assistance to other private members who may be in difficulties, and up to a point their assistance is of value. But it has its limitations.

Broadly speaking, I think the position places undue handicaps on private members of all classes which I do not think for one moment the Government and particularly the Minister would, on reflection, desire to continue any longer than is absolutely necessary. I say in all sincerity that it is on the one hand a waste of time for them to endeavour to do things which their training and experience does not qualify them to do;

and on the other hand there is always the risk of one's draftsmanship in such cases not being satisfactory in the net result. But one knows perfectly well that neither time nor opportunity is available to the parliamentary private members' draftsman to tackle the job as it should be tackled.

So the net result is that what I have said takes place does in fact occur, and what I think is required, at least during the session, when Bills are coming forward freely, many involving great detail, is that there should be a legal adviser available within the precincts of the House on the days it is sitting, or if that is not possible that an officer should be available somewhere to tackle these problems. I suggest that to the Minister as being one of the things that it is necessary should be done for the proper working of the legislature of this State and, what is perhaps of more importance, for the greater assurance that legislation will be satisfactorily drawn and not capable of having a earhorse driven through it at some future date. I submit that request to the Minister for his favourable and early consideration.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [8.43]: The only matter to which I desire to draw attention is the Public Trustee's office. That office was formed a few years ago and I think it has served a good purpose. But I consider far too much delay occurs in settling cases in that office. I have advised people to go there, and I have one particular case in mind. The estate was only a small one. It was a cash transaction. I think the only property involved was a small house in town which had to be transferred. The finalisation of that case has taken two years and that appears to me to be too long. I have had similar complaints from various people, and I suggest the Minister might take the matter up and see whether something cannot be done to expedite the business of the office.

The Minister for Justice: Could you give me the name of the person later on?

MR. SEWARD: With pleasure! I visited the office on one occasion and the officer I saw seemed to have an enormous number of files around him which indicated that he had a tremendous amount of work to do. If that is so, perhaps extra staff is required.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna—in reply) [8.44]: I am very pleased with the debate which has taken place on these Estimates. I feel that the department must have been doing its work very well, because it has not been criticised very harshly. The member for Nedlands asked when the department would be in a position to make the rolls available. The hon. member's rolls were posted to him on the 18th October, so he should have received them before he spoke on the subject here.

Hon. N. Keenan: The roll I received was for the Nedlands subdivision of the Commonwealth division of Perth, but that is different from the State electoral roll.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hon. member could use that roll in connection with his election.

Hon. N. Keenan: No, it is not the same as the State roll.

The Premier: Your State roll for Nedlands was available a fortnight ago.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It was available on the 18th October.

Hon. N. Keenan: The roll I received was practically valueless to me.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is anticipated that all the rolls will be available shortly, and there are only half-a-dozen that are not now in the hands of members. With regard to the Public Trust Office, I am aware that there have been some delays, but I thought I made the position clear when I introduced the Estimates. I then pointed out that the office was still in the teething stage, and unfortunately had been staffed at the outset with temporary clerks. Those officers became very efficient and did their jobs well. When civil servants who had been away at the war returned to the State, they were due for their promotion but, of course, had not the necessary experience. That is one reason why much of the work that should have been attended to is still undone. That difficulty is being coped with. The member for Pingelly mentioned an instance in which a delay of two years had taken place. I was surprised to hear that, and I shall make inquiries regarding the matter. On the question of profit, I think it will be agreed that the Public Trust Office should balance its budget. On the

other hand, quite a lot of its work is done for practically nothing.

Hon. N. Keenan: Every single company undertaking that class of business does work for nothing.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I know that private companies have turned down a lot of work that the Public Trustee has been obliged to do, and that applies to the legal profession as well. We should be reasonably fair about this matter and the Public Trustee should not be expected to do work for nothing, especially when that work is undertaken at some expense to the office. With regard to the question of parliamentary draftsmen, the Government has given consideration to that, and is thinking of altering the present system. From inquiries made in the Eastern States, it has been ascertained that every State Parliament has its drafting staff. As I have mentioned, consideration is being given to the matter and I am hopeful that by next session something will have been done along the lines suggested by the Leader of the Opposition.

Item, Chief Electoral Officer, £700.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is peculiar that, by courtesy of the Federal electoral officer, who is not at all bound to extend any excessive consideration to State members, I received a copy of the roll for the Commonwealth subdivision of Nedlands in the Perth division. I have not received the State roll for Nedlands. If the Minister tells me that it has been sent to me, I shall make further inquiries, because it has not reached my hands so far. When I asked the Minister if he could tell the Committee when he expected to supply the rolls, he should have been able to tell me at once, but apparently he could not do so.

The Premier: The rolls have not been sent to everyone. They have been progressively handled.

Hon. N. KEENAN: They have not been sent to the member representing Nedlands.

The Minister for Justice: They were posted to the hon. member on the 18th instant.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Then I will make inquiries as to why they have not reached their destination.

Mr. Rodoreda: At any rate, the Commonwealth subdivisional roll will be sufficient for your purposes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Maybe, but the Federal roll takes in only part of my electorate and the State electoral roll includes probably 3,000 or 4,000 more electors than the Commonwealth roll for the Nedlands subdivision. Dealing now with the magistracy, I asked the Minister to state what magistrates were in receipt of more than is shown in this Vote.

The Premier: They do not come under this Vote.

The Minister for Justice: They are paid by the Treasury.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Can the Minister say how many magistrates there are under the several headings? Take the magistrate at Kalgoorlie. He is also a warden. As such, is he paid anything from the Mines Vote? Perhaps I had better ask the question and give the Minister an opportunity to furnish a detailed reply.

The Minister for Justice: That would be better.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The member for Nedlands has spoken about the rolls available to him, but I can tell him I have not seen the roll for my electorate yet.

Hon. N. Keenan: Perhaps it has been posted to you, too!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: If so, I have not received it. More than that, the Commonwealth Electoral Department has not done me the courtesy of furnishing me with the subdivisional roll. I shall have to make inquiries about that, too.

The PREMIER: I think the member for Nedlands is looking for something to complain about tonight. The facts about the printing of the rolls are that, in order to meet the convenience of members so that they might consider their position, very early this year I arranged for the rolls to be printed sooner than usual. There has been a tremendous amount of work in the Government Printing Office for services other than those of the State Government, and the extra work included the Federal rolls and printing for the Commonwealth. In spite of that, members will have their rolls earlier than usual. To make sure of that, those where changes, according to experi-

ence, are less than in other areas were the electorates whose rolls were dealt with first.

Mr. McLarty: I got mine weeks ago.

The PREMIER: The changes in the hon. member's electorate are much less than occur in electorates such as those of the member for Nedlands and the member for Middle Swan. To give members as up-to-date rolls as possible, those where the changes are most frequent are the last to be printed. That is merely commonsense. The only rolls outstanding today, and which will be available within a week or so, are those affecting Mr. Hawthorn, Middle Swan, Fremantle, North-East Fremantle and South Fremantle. All the other rolls have been printed. If in the case of the member for Nedlands there has been a mistake in despatch and they have elevated him to the Federal sphere, that may be the explanation.

Hon. N. Keenan: No, I received the Federal roll from the Federal authority.

The PREMIER: The State Chief Electoral Officer endeavours, immediately the printing is finished, to send several copies of the rolls to the members concerned.

Hon. N. Keenan: I accept the Premier's assurance.

The PREMIER: The Government has endeavoured this year, seeing that an election is to be held early next year, to provide members with as up-to-date rolls as can be delivered to them.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I have just been informed by the member for Claremont that he received six copies of his rolls, but I received only four copies. In looking through my roll, I find that it contains the names of many people who have died or have left the district. I am wondering how that has happened. Have we made an active canvass to find out who has moved from the district?

Mr. Rodoreda: It is up to candidates to make the canvass.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I can assure the Minister that a great many of those whose names appear on my roll have no right to a vote unless that right is exercised in Heaven today, or—

Mr. Rodoreda: Elsewhere!

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Licensing*, £2,750—agreed to.

Vote—*Medical*, £51,649:

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [8.53]: Since I introduced the Estimates 12 months ago there have been many changes in the world regarding hospitalisation and medicine. The Commonwealth, too, has changed its policy, and, as part of its social service plan, has provided for free or substitute hospital treatment. Last session Parliament passed complementary legislation for the purpose of implementing the scheme. It has been described as a "hospital scheme," but I think it should have been referred to as a "patients' scheme." The hospitals are not to get anything out of it, but the patients will receive the benefits. I mention that because it is assumed by many that the hospitals of this State will derive great benefits from the Commonwealth scheme.

Mr. Read: They will get 6s. a day.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If members will think and reason it out for themselves, they will realise that the 6s. a day really goes to the patients and not to the hospitals. The financial arrangements were fixed on the basic years 1942-43 and 1943-44. The effect has been that there is an allowance of 6s. per bed per patient throughout the whole of Australia. That may be so in theory, but it will not alter the financing of the hospitals of this State. Had the basic amount for Western Australia been arrived at on the years 1943-44 and 1944-45, our collections would have been much higher. Members will readily see that the scheme is really a patient-scheme, and that so far as this State is concerned we are not getting anything out of it. It will not make any difference to our finance for hospitals.

Mr. J. Hegney: But you are sure of the payment.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is so; we are assured of 6s. per patient. On the other hand, it costs the State 17s. 6d. per bed per patient, and the difference must be made up by the taxpayers not only of Western Australia but I suppose of the whole of Australia. An incidental effect favoured us a great deal and that was with respect to the previous year's debts. These were collected and we got a recoup from the Commonwealth of 6s. per patient per bed. In order to arrive at

a basis for all payments to hospitals throughout Australia, which basis from the Commonwealth's standpoint must be uniform throughout the States, the amounts collected by all of the hospitals from public beds were computed and reduced to an average over all the hospitals in each of the States. The amounts varied with the policy of each State and the administration of the departments, as well as the ability of the citizens to pay. The collections were—

	Per bed per day.
Victoria	3s. 2d.
New South Wales	4s.
Queensland	4s.
South Australia	3s. 6d.
Tasmania	3s. 8d.
Western Australia	5s. 9d.

The difference between 6s. and 5s. 9d. is, of course, small. The other States will derive some benefit as regards capital expenditure: they can spend the money, subject to the approval of the Commonwealth. This State, however, will receive less than £5,000 because of its collections. We must give credit to the Health Department for its administration; it achieved the highest collection in the whole of Australia. Our disabilities are very much greater than those of the other States on account of our much larger area. The other States derived direct benefit owing to the simplicity of the calculation and the fixing of the round figure of 6s. The distribution within the State, on the basis of the 1942-43 and 1943-44 figures, has varied throughout. Each hospital does not get 6s.; the amounts vary from 2s. 1d. to 13s. 5d. in accordance with the efficiency of the hospitals in collecting their accounts. The 6s. we get, however, is an average amount.

In regard to private and intermediary beds, the patient receives a credit from the Commonwealth Government and pays the difference between that sum and the amount charged by the hospital. This remark applies to private hospitals, most of which have registered and come within the scheme. To give members an idea of the amount that has been paid by the Commonwealth in this direction, I would point out that during the six months ended the 30th June public hospitals collected £106,960, and private hospitals £31,693. The latter amount was paid to the private hospitals by the State department on account of the Commonwealth. It will be noted that, at least in theory, there should be no change in the financial position

of hospitals; but there is a tendency on the part of some people to demand a public bed. The means test has been abolished, and therefore any person, no matter what his status in life, can demand a public bed for nothing.

Mr. McLarty: Can he get it?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but it is not always possible. That applies not only to Western Australia but to all of the States, because I ascertained the position in the Eastern States for myself. Owing to the abolition of the means test, the public has a free choice; it matters not whether a person be the Governor of a State, or the most humble person in the State, he can demand a free bed.

Mr. Perkins: How do you discriminate between the persons that are admitted into the public hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is a matter for the experts, the doctors. They would decide which persons needed treatment most urgently.

Mr. J. Hegney: It would also depend upon what the doctors decided about the health of the patient.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That might be so. However, that is a matter for the professional man, not for me. As members are aware, the Fremantle, Children's and Royal Perth Hospitals each has an honorary staff. They have had that staff for many years. The doctors have never refused to treat the sick poor; but they do object to treating persons who can afford to pay. Some such persons have taken advantage of the public bed and they expect the honorary doctors to treat them free of charge notwithstanding that they can well afford to pay. I find myself in agreement with the doctors. I do not think it quite fair that the means test should have been abolished, thus enabling these people to take advantage of the free treatment given by the doctors to the sick poor.

Mr. Perkins: Is not that the fault of the Commonwealth Act?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but it is the policy of the Commonwealth Government to abolish the means test, not only in this respect, but in regard to all social benefits in Australia. The B.M.A. objects to the abolition of the means test and I am in accord with its decision. The doctors have continued their services, but

under protest, their reason being that the sick poor should not suffer unnecessarily. I fear it is not possible to reintroduce the means test and therefore we shall have to find some other method of dealing with the matter. It may be that the doctors will be paid for their services, either on a concessional or a full-time basis. If that be so, it will cost the State probably in the neighbourhood of £300,000 or more per annum. That will not be our responsibility. The Commonwealth Government has already said that it will accept the responsibility.

Again, we must bear in mind the fact that the honorary staff also give their services in the training of young doctors. If the honorary system is abolished the young doctors will not get that training. The best of our physicians and surgeons are now instructing the young doctors; while the senior doctors attached to the staffs of large hospitals also train the resident doctors and the younger practising physicians and surgeons, who act as assistants to the seniors. The patients get the benefit of the best medical and surgical skill available in the State under the honorary system. The profession also derives a benefit because of the wider experience which it can obtain. I presume the doctors deal with far more patients in the hospitals than they do in private practice. In my opinion, it would be a retrograde step if the system were to disappear, without something else taking its place to provide the same advantages. During the year, the Hospital Planning Committee, consisting of members of the B.M.A., the Health Department and other gentlemen experienced in hospital matters, has continued its consideration of the best hospital policy for the State. In Western Australia, by far the greater proportion of hospitals average less than ten beds occupied. The particulars are—

Over 300 beds occupied (Royal Perth)	1
Over 200 beds and under 300	1
Over 100 and under 200	3
Over 50 and under 100	2
Over 40 and under 50	2
Over 30 and under 40	2
Over 20 and under 30	6
Over 10 and under 20	22
Over 5 and under 10	25
Under 5 beds	19

It will be seen that 53 per cent. of our hospitals average under 10 beds occupied while 23 per cent. average under 5 beds.

We have in Western Australia 76 per cent. of hospitals with under 10 beds. The number of public hospitals in the various States as compared with the total population is as follows:—

Victoria, one hospital to 24,247 persons. I realise that Victoria is a very small State; its area is only 87,884 square miles. Tasmania has one hospital to every 15,454 persons, and that is a small State of 26,215 square miles. New South Wales has one hospital to every 13,438 persons and that is a State of 310,372 square miles. These States are comparatively small in area, but Queensland, which is larger, has one hospital to every 8,803 persons and it has an area of 670,500 square miles.

Western Australia has one hospital to every 5,603 persons and an area of 975,920 square miles. Members can therefore realise that we are at a great disadvantage, but in spite of that our collections are higher than those of any other State. The only conclusion I can come to is that Mr. Huelin, who was Under Secretary, was very hard, but he made a wonderful job of the finance of our hospitals.

The Minister for Lands: And the people are appreciative of being looked after.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. They get treatment in accordance with the facilities available. During the war there was a great lag and that has to be picked up so as to bring the hospitals back to the fairly good basis that they were on in the time of my predecessor. It is obvious that such a large proportion of small hospitals makes the treatment of the sick extremely expensive. The equipment of small hospitals is expensive, too, because there have to be more beds in a small hospital compared with what there are in a large hospital. If a hospital averages two beds provision has to be made for at least eight beds in case of emergency. On a proportional basis the Royal Perth Hospital would need to be a very large one indeed. The beds and services of a small hospital cannot be compared with those of the larger hospitals. The cost of maintenance rises in inverse ratio to the size of the institution. On the whole anyone comparing our hospitals with those of the other States will have nothing to growl about.

The Hospital Planning Committee has done a good deal of work. Its investiga-

tions were made before I became Minister. The present Minister for Lands inaugurated the inquiries. Not only is the plan suggested by it being carried out in this State, but it will be adopted in all the other States. Hospitals have been chosen for suitable areas. There have been very few complaints and up to date no alterations. In these hospitals there will be modern diagnostic aids, and facilities to carry out major surgery. Treatment, of course, will be as modern as possible. The first recommendation of the planning committee has been accepted by the Government. Regional hospitals are to be placed in strategic positions in accordance with population and the likelihood of expansion. It has been assumed by many people that, with regional hospitals, the smaller ones will be neglected. I assure members and the people of the State that that is not the case. The reason for the larger hospitals is to bring about a more efficient service and to help the smaller hospitals.

Decentralisation is our policy, and by having regional hospitals patients will not have to travel 200 or 300 miles to Perth, but merely a matter of 40 or 50 miles to a regional hospital. These hospitals will be equipped with x-ray and will be able to cope with a wide range of work. They will have pathological, bacteriological and biochemical facilities. If a person enters a regional hospital from a small hospital the doctor at the regional hospital will make a diagnosis and the patient will be treated. As soon as possible he will go back to his proper hospital where the doctor will have a report and know the exact condition of the case that he has to treat.

Mr. Fox: What will be the cost of the x-ray?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It will be nothing unless the patient desires to go into a private or intermediate ward. But if a person desires to have a public bed he can, irrespective of his status, demand it. The medical practitioners in the small hospitals will have increased facilities through having this report and knowing exactly the diagnosis of the case coming from the regional hospital. The places already selected by the Hospital Planning Committee are:—Albany, Bunbury, Collie, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Katanning, Merredin, Manjimup

and Northam. Other towns have been considered.

Mr. McLarty: Are they regional towns?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, they are towns for regional hospitals.

Mr. McLarty: Where are the sub-regionals going?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They have not been definitely decided on.

Mr. McLarty: You do not know, do you?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They will be auxiliary to the present hospitals. Narrogin has not been considered for the purpose of a sub-regional hospital, but in time to come the committee will probably give consideration to bringing it into line with those that have already been recommended, and any such suggestion will be subject to Government approval. The committee does not think at this stage that Narrogin should be made a regional hospital, although it is under consideration. The regional hospitals will play an important part in the hospitalisation of the people of the State. When we were over in Tasmania recently we were told that the authorities there had decided to have regional hospitals. That State comprises a very small area but the authorities there feel that no person should have to travel more than 40 miles for scientific treatment through a regional system. There has been quite a lull in regard to the hospitals of the State generally.

One hospital, above all others, that requires attention is the King Edward Memorial Hospital. I suppose that, only for the intervention of the war, it probably would be up to date today, but as a fact it is overcrowded and the Government is very conscious of the position. Plans to deal with the matter are now being put in hand and we hope to have them very soon. The war has affected the work of the Principal Architect in planning and getting his specifications out. He has been short of staff and his accommodation, until recently, has not been sufficient. We are hopeful of getting our plans and being able to go on with the job at an early date. This will be No. 1 priority as far as our hospitals are concerned. The staff there has practically no accommodation and a new kitchen and other services are very

necessary. Last year 2,200 women entered the King Edward Memorial Hospital, and it is anticipated that this year there will be no less than 2,500. Members will, therefore, realise the seriousness of the position. New wards are desperately needed. We are doing everything humanly possible to get on with the work because we realise that population is very important and we must look after the women in the State.

The programme of work of construction of new hospitals and additional wards is extensive, and its carrying out will depend on the Treasurer who is very sympathetic in this matter and will help, as far as possible, with the money that is necessary. Now nurses' and domestics' quarters are required pretty well everywhere, and the position in the country is very serious. In addition, improvements in plant and facilities are required. Plans are being prepared for the consideration of the Government and we expect them very shortly. The work envisaged will affect most of the hospitals in the State. Few of our institutions considered in the light of modern developments, are adequate for their functions.

Mr. North: Do you know anything about Wooroloo?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. That is among the first to be considered. As a matter of fact the Treasurer mentioned Wooroloo when dealing with the Loan Estimates last night. The programme before us will take some years to complete, but when it is completed I am hopeful that the service in this State will be reasonably adequate. In our hospitals programme every consideration has been given to the people in the country. I have always felt that they have been more or less neglected, but in this instance I can assure members that that is not the case. The country residents do make contributions to their hospitals, and up till quite recently they bore half of the capital cost and maintenance of the rural hospitals.

The Minister for Lands, when Minister for Health, got into touch with Colonel Le Souef and arranged for him to inquire into the planning and development of hospitals in Europe. We were lucky to get him, while at Home on military duties, to make an extensive investigation in Sweden, England, America and Canada. With his customary enthusiasm and thoroughness, he

brought back to us a magnificent report. The Government was astounded at the amount of work that he had done in the limited time available to him. He brought back almost the foundations of a library. When the truck came to my office I wondered what it contained, until I saw the plans, photographs and literature concerning the hospitals that he had inspected. He has the sincere thanks of the Government, and we were lucky to have had his services and to have obtained such a splendid report. I have it here, and after I have dealt with my Estimates I will be pleased to lay it on the Table of the House for the perusal of members.

I will deal now with our nurses, who, considering the circumstances, have done a wonderful job. Though we have been told there are other causes, the real cause of the shortage of nurses lay in the war. The shortage exists not only in Western Australia, but in every State of the Commonwealth and every country in the world. Even in America, not long ago there was a shortage of over 100,000 nurses, and in England a shortage of 50,000. Before 1939 there was a reasonable supply of nurses. The present deficiency arose firstly from the direct loss through a large number of nurses enlisting with the Armed Forces, where they did very creditable work. Secondly, there was a reduction in the number of trainees, caused by competition from the Service auxiliaries. Many girls wanted to do their duty for the country and joined those Services whereas, had it not been for the war, they would have trained as nurses. The third factor was an increased demand for hospital accommodation, which has been felt throughout the world, and which is noticeable in this State.

The high marriage rate since demobilisation has added to the deficiency of female labour owing to the low birthrate during the depression years. The closure of private hospitals and, in the immediate future, the reduction of weekly hours from 48 to 44, have affected the number of nurses required, more being necessary to cope with work previously done in the other four hours per week.

Mr. Watts: We have no hope of getting them.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: At present we have little hope, but every effort

is being made and every avenue has been explored, while encouragement is being given to trainees. There was no opposition to the nurses going to the Arbitration Court, and the Government helped them in every way and is now trying to provide all the amenities to which they are entitled.

Mr. Watts: As far as you can see, how long will it take to catch up the lag?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It will take many years, because in this State we are at a disadvantage in not having the large hospitals that are to be found in other States. In Victoria, there are 24,000 persons to every hospital, whereas 76 per cent. of our hospitals have under 10 beds. That illustrates the difficulty with which we are confronted in the training of nurses.

Hon. N. Keenan: Do the figures show that we are improving the position?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As far as I can learn, the position is improving and we are now getting a considerable number of trainees. The Commissioner of Public Health is considering allowing other hospitals to have trainees, where possible. I refer to hospitals such as those at Collie and other large centres. We are very proud of our nurses and would not like to think they are not going to be as efficient in future as they have been in the past. They should be given a reasonable chance of developing into good nurses.

Mr. Withers: You should treat them better than they have been treated in the past, if you want to keep them.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In some instances, the nurses were themselves to blame. When I was secretary of hospitals at Wiluna and Lawlers, and later chairman of the Norseman Hospital Board for many years, I suggested to the nurses on many occasions that they should form some organisation for their own protection. I pointed out to them that the B.M.A. was a strong organisation and that the legal profession and other members of society had joined together for their own protection. I was told definitely that it was *infra dig* to form any union or organisation for that purpose. That hindered them to some extent. At that time I felt very small to think they had so much dignity that they put their work before their remuneration. They are now using that as a stick with which to

beat the Government and are saying that no consideration has in the past been given to their amenities or their pay. When they went to the Arbitration Court, we assisted them.

Mr. Watts: Would it not have been wiser to have offered them something before that?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There were many Governments before this that did not do much for them. This Government feels that it should do all it can for the nurses and that they should have had better conditions many years ago. It is only recently that they have become alive to their responsibility to themselves. In this world, unless we ask we do not receive.

The Minister for Lands: They had the best conditions in Australia in 1935.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Today they have conditions equal to any in Australia, and better than those in most States of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Withers: That is why our girls who are over East will not come back here.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Three nurses who were here the other day spoke very highly of our conditions and said they were better than those in South Australia.

Mr. Withers: My daughter is working in Melbourne, and I know.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have had a number of nurses that came here from the Eastern States.

Mr. Willmott: Many have left here to go to the Eastern States.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is quite natural, because a nurse can get a job anywhere in the world today. I have a couple of nieces who are nurses, and also another relative who today has left the nursing profession. I do not say it is to her credit, but at present she is managing a hotel in Brisbane by way of a change. It is just the spirit of adventure. If other jobs were not available and there was not a shortage of nurses, they would remain in this State. The effect of all those factors was minimised during the war, because many married nurses continued to work in hospitals, being compelled to do so under the manpower regulations. When the regulations were lifted and the husbands returned from the Services, those nurses left the hospitals and resumed housekeeping. The Min-

ister for Lands can bear me out in that, because as soon as the controls were lifted many nurses went into other avenues of employment.

The Minister for Lands: We cannot even get tailoresses here, so the shortage does not apply only to nurses.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have done something that no other State has done, and have given nurses a disability allowance, which has induced some to come here from the Eastern States. In any hospital where the staff is under 60 per cent. of its normal strength, they get 30s. per week, on top of overtime and their ordinary salaries. Where the staffing is 70 per cent. of normal or less, they get 20s. per week extra, and where it is 80 per cent. or less, they get 10s. per week extra.

Hon. N. Keenan: Mr. Chifley gets most of that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I cannot help that, but I think it was a fine gesture on the part of the Government, which realised that nurses were doing wonderful work. The Government had no objection to their working all the overtime necessary to keep the hospitals going. Had it not been for the disabilities allowance, it is possible that our mental hospitals would today have been in dire straits. Every day nurses are coming back to their profession and some are also coming here from the other States. We found a way of overcoming the National Security Act so that nurses could get to the court and obtain some redress, which they did. I have heard no complaint from them since then, so they must be reasonably satisfied with their increased salaries. From the court they also received a reduction of hours from 48 to 44 per week, and that is something they did not get in the other States of the Commonwealth.

We also pay the district allowance and the country allowance to compensate for lack of comforts and amenities. If a nurse holds more than one certificate and uses it, she also receives extra pay. I feel that the Government has really tried to help the nurses. We have come to an agreement with the assistant nurses and they are now placed on a reasonably sound basis. Before that, their conditions were rather intolerable, but the Government has recognised the disadvantages and we have satisfied that section.

The limitation in training constitutes a serious blow to this State. On account of having so many small hospitals, it is very difficult to obtain the number that will be required. The progress of science and medicine has been so great that we find in many instances that $1\frac{1}{4}$ nurses are needed for every patient, and this makes the problem more difficult. To obtain the requisite number and overtake the lag will occupy much time.

Mr. Watts: Do you mean that, if you had 4,000 patients, you would need 5,000 nurses?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is the position in some hospitals I visited in New South Wales and Victoria.

The Minister for Lands: That is due to the spread of area and small hospitals.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: A trouble arising from having small hospitals for medical and surgical cases is the impossibility of arranging lectures and giving the nurses the requisite practice. However, up to date the list has been reasonably long and we have a waiting list to be drawn upon as soon as we can find means of training the girls. Western Australia proportionately trains a smaller number of nurses than does any other State, for the reasons I have given. The Commissioner of Public Health is devoting special attention to this matter in the hope of improving the proportion of trainees. He is greatly concerned about the existing position. Part of the plan is the registration of the larger public hospitals as full-time training centres. If they can be used for the training of nurses, they will be used. The staff of the new Royal Perth Hospital requires an increase in the number of trainees equal to two to three times the number at present being trained. This represents the needs of the hospital for the first three years. Then there will be a large increase in country requirements. We shall want about 700 nurses in the Royal Perth Hospital when it is in full swing.

The Government has taken a very serious view of the incidence of tuberculosis, and is adopting measures to stamp out this dread disease. The plan of campaign entails heavy expenditure, but we appreciate that lives must be saved if at all possible. If we place a value of £2,000 on each individual, seeing that the death rate from tuberculosis in this

State is about 170 a year, the saving would be about £340,000. This effort to stamp out the disease is well worth while and no pains will be spared where financially possible. In time, we believe tuberculosis can be eliminated. I have been informed by the experts that, in 20 years' time, we can expect the incidence of tuberculosis to be no greater than that of diphtheria, and after that we can expect only sporadic cases. That it can be eradicated has been proved in the Old Country. Tuberculosis is a highly infectious disease, but it is not hereditary and so it can be stamped out.

We consider that everybody should be x-rayed and treated in accordance with the results disclosed. I do not know whether sufficient publicity has been given to this matter or whether the public actually realises the seriousness of the disease. If we could obtain the co-operation of all the people and if they would attend voluntarily to be x-rayed, the task would be much easier. It is necessary to have the fullest co-operation of the public in this direction. We must arrange for the x-ray photography of the staffs of foundries, factories, workshops, offices and retail stores. To this end there should be a mutual understanding, and nothing should be left undone.

Before we reach that stage, however, we shall have to find means for treating patients. After we have located cases, we must ensure that they receive treatment, and contacts must be traced and x-rayed. Every sufferer from tuberculosis has received infection from someone else. Active and infected cases are more numerous than we thought, and the condition of these sufferers is not known to the people with whom they associate. This is a condition that prevails in Australia and one that will have to be coped with. Provision must be made for the immediate hospital treatment of such patients and the Government is giving consideration to this matter.

We must have a suitable hospital. The question of using the Northam hospital for this purpose is receiving consideration. We believe that hospital will have to be taken over by the Government. Regarding tuberculosis, it has been found necessary to have a hospital right in the midst of population for the purpose of treating surgical cases. Consequently, to treat these cases, we shall need another 200-bed ward at the Royal

Perth Hospital. When the disease has been eliminated, that ward may be used for other purposes. From what I have read and been told, I feel confident that, if the disease is attacked systematically, it can be eradicated. By having a ward of this sort right in the city, ready access can be had to surgeons, specialists and consultants. Wooroloo is too far away. The experience in the Eastern States is that there should be a ward in the city so that patients in need of surgical operations may have the best attention from those who have studied tuberculosis. Wooroloo will be required as a convalescent hospital.

It is expected that the cost of the campaign during the first four years will be very heavy. When we reach the treatment stage, we must think of the patient's family, and those persons must be dealt with adequately in a financial sense so that patients will not be worrying about their dependants. General provision for the maintenance of the wife and family is essential. Under the Commonwealth scheme, a man with a wife and one child may now receive £2 15s. a week. For any additional children, of course, child endowment would be paid. I consider that the Commonwealth will have to ensure that these persons are paid the equivalent of the basic wage. If patients do not have contentment of mind and freedom from worry about the financial affairs of the home, their recovery will be retarded.

The Commonwealth has recognised this fact and has made available a sum of £250,000. The State's quota of that amount will be £20,429. This money is to be used for sufferers who are likely to recover and be able to resume their normal lives, but it will not be used for advanced or incurable cases. I cannot emphasise too strongly that most cases of tuberculosis, unless far advanced, can be arrested and the patient rendered non-infectious. As I have said, the disease can be stamped out, and in years to come we shall have to deal only with sporadic cases. This stage, I have been informed, can be reached in 20 years. If that is so, it will be a very fine achievement and something of immense value to Australia. Population is one of our essential needs, and if we can spare our people suffering and save lives, the effort will be worth while. Adequate hospital treatment and pensions are essential.

I have some figures dealing with tuberculosis that should be of interest to members. I do not propose to discuss the disease itself or the preventive measures to be adopted, but the people should be told something about the percentages of human and bovine types of tuberculosis in man. They are—

	Human.	Bovine.
Cervical glands	35	65
Cervical glands (under age of 5 years) ..	15	85
Bones and joints ..	65	35
Pulmonary	97	3
Primary abdominal ..	18	82
Lupus (a chronic T.B. of the skin often affecting the nose) ..	50	50

Those figures are interesting as showing the relative seriousness of the human and bovine types of tuberculosis, especially in children, bovine forming only 3 per cent. as against 97 per cent. human; that is pulmonary. The Wooroloo colony that was started by the Minister for Lands when he was Minister for Health and has done a wonderfully good job. It has achieved all that is expected of it. It is necessary for patients to have prolonged rest and a period of rehabilitation and recuperation. The colony can serve as a buffer between a person who has been cured and his ordinary work. He will not be able to do a strenuous job, but if in the workshops he can do something of a helpful character, it will give him an opportunity to recuperate and probably later on go out to his ordinary occupation. At the colony he is able to work at his own speed. I am told that what has been done by the patients there is very creditable, although it has not shown a profit.

The Minister for Lands: They do not want to, anyway!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No; but the cost of the colony has been considerably reduced through the work that has been done, and the patients have received a small remuneration. Indirectly, through their recuperation, they have been returned a handsome profit. Not long ago I introduced a measure to deal with the shortage of trained nurses. I am pleased to say that Bill passed through both Houses and it will prove very helpful to Wooroloo. I am told it is already bearing fruit there. Attractive rates of salary and the same conditions as are experienced by other nurses will be enjoyed by those nursing tubercular patients.

In the other States attempts have been made to deal with tuberculosis that have fallen short of the desired objective. In those States they have been on somewhat the same basis as have we. On my trip and in the investigations I made, I found that they are making a real effort to deal with the matter.

In Tasmania and South Melbourne as well as in other places, mass radiography is undertaken and is based upon a campaign of persuasion. Employers and employees have mutually agreed upon an examination of the people with whom they work and associate, and the system is operating very well. In South Melbourne we found that in five months the municipal council had examined over 14,000 people for tuberculosis and abnormality. When any discovery was made a report was sent to the doctor of the patient concerned so that he could carry out the necessary treatment to bring the patient back to normal health.

Mr. North: Have we worked on those lines?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We are going to work on the best lines we can and what is done will depend on Dr. Henzell, who is one of the best tuberculosis doctors in Australia. He is very enthusiastic and confident that tuberculosis can be eliminated and that after 20 years, as is the case with diphtheria, we shall only have sporadic instances of this disease. In the Eastern States there are portable x-ray plants that visit large towns. In New South Wales there is a coach which carries a portable plant and a doctor from station to station and all who care to volunteer for the purpose may be x-rayed. I am told that a marvellously good job is being done. By mutual arrangement between employers and employees the latter are photographed and the presence of tuberculosis or any abnormality is recorded and reported to the doctors in the various areas, who deal with the matter to the best of their ability.

In many instances sufferers voluntarily enter upon treatment, but there are others who are fearful that if they are x-rayed and found to be suffering from tuberculosis their families will be handicapped, and that is one of the reasons we should make sure that the dependants of such patients receive adequate financial aid. In South Melbourne and Tasmania it has been found that three persons out of every 1,000 x-rayed have suf-

ered from active tuberculosis. I think the percentage in Western Australia is the same. We have a population of 491,000. If members multiply 491 by three they will have an idea of the cases of tuberculosis which will probably need to be located and treated. While much good is done by these limited methods of attack on the disease, much more is necessary. The deficiency in hospital accommodation and shortage of nursing staff are limiting factors, and they are things that we must deal with. They demand the serious consideration of every person with a sense of responsibility.

With regard to tuberculosis, I have received quite a number of letters and have replied to them all in a sympathetic strain. But I do not want members to think our plans can be carried out in 12 months or even two years. It is going to take time and will require money and facilities that are not easily obtained. We must build hospitals to accommodate patients when we find them. I am a great believer in the statement that what is physically possible is financially possible; but in this instance it is not physically possible to build hospitals because we cannot get the requisite material. I know there are members who will not agree with my statement that what is physically possible is financially possible, but that was proved definitely in both the world wars.

About 200 men are working on the Royal Perth Hospital. The lack of mechanical equipment has restricted progress to a great extent. We have not been able to get steam ducts. As soon as we can get mechanical requirements we are anticipating that we shall proceed very rapidly, and it is expected that at Easter next year the hospital will be completed. Eight years have passed since it was designed, and many changes have taken place throughout Australia and throughout the world.

Mr. W. Hegney: When is it expected to be completed?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: About April; but it depends on the mechanical equipment. The Government is anxious to complete the building so that it can be put into use. Hospital policy has changed, and we find that since the building was designed scientific investigation has demonstrated the necessity for a clinic to deal with tuberculosis cases at the institution, where we can have the most expert treatment and advice

by surgeons, consultants and specialists. The need for more staff is urgent also in view of the reduction of the working week from 48 to 44 hours. On account of the necessity of establishing a tuberculosis clinic for the treatment of tuberculous patients, another 200 nurses will be required. Owing to the patriotism of the Government and of the State in general, we did not do anything to our hospitals, or very little, during the war. We did only what was really necessary. In the other States more was done because they were not really quite as sincere as we were in regard to the prosecution of the war. Because everything was devoted to the war effort in this State, very little was done for other institutions.

The cost of a new nurses' home represents a substantial part of the total cost involved in the administration of hospitals. We have been negotiating with the Perth City Council for the purpose of acquiring a block of land between Wellington-street and Lord-street. It is about 12 or 13 acres in extent. We have to make provision for nurses' quarters, a blood-transfusion service, a nurses' preliminary training school, a medical school, staff recreation centre, parking areas and traffic lines, and in view of those needs it will be necessary to have more land. We are hoping that the Perth City Council will agree to exchange the area I have referred to for another one. The land we require lies between Wellington-street, Lord-street and the railway station. There are a few privately-owned blocks there but they can, I think, be bought. If we can secure this property it will be of help to the hospital and to the City Council. I think the City Council will agree because at present it is using the ground for the purpose of making slabs and storing building material and as horse stables. If we could exchange that land for other property it would lead to the beautification of the city. If the hospital is carefully planned and nicely laid out it will add to the aesthetic beauty of Perth.

There has been a change in the personnel of the Health Department. The former Under Secretary, Mr. F. J. Huelin, rendered excellent service, but on reaching the retiring age had to sever his connection with the department. Mr. W. L. Wilson, the Assistant Under Secretary, also resigned owing to ill-health. The new Under

Secretary, Mr. H. T. Stiffold, is doing a very fine job and that applies also to the Assistant Under Secretary, Mr. J. J. Devereux. The new Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Cook, is very much alive in his position and goes into the country in order to make thorough investigations and to secure personal contacts. That applies also to his officers, who are shaking things up generally. I am a great believer in the officers of my department getting out among the people in the country areas. I regard it as only right that they should see things for themselves and contact the people in the outer areas. Such a procedure gives the public greater confidence in governmental activities and the Minister greater confidence in those with whom he is in contact. Therefore I encourage my officers to get around. That applies also to the Under Secretary for Justice, Mr. H. B. Hayles, who is very happy to get out of the city in order to prosecute his inquiries in other parts of the State.

The Commissioner of Public Health has submitted some very important recommendations in connection with health services among children. His proposals envisage the extension of work in the schools including medical and dental examinations. To this end an additional doctor, an additional dentist and additional dentists and nurses have already been appointed. Unfortunately a dentist has resigned. These appointees are not idle, but we require still more such officers. There is quite a lot of work to be done in the schools regarding health matters, and that applies particularly in the dental sphere. We have a huge State and the distances between places are enormous. In the circumstances it is very difficult and expensive to provide the services that are so essential and make them available on a per capita basis as is done in the Eastern States where the populations are larger and the areas smaller. I am sure that the Commissioner of Public Health is making every effort to cope with the problems that confront us and he makes personal investigations which guide him largely, quite apart from the reports he receives from his officers. The development in the sphere of infant health endeavour includes advice for mothers during the prenatal period, while matters relating to pre-school children are also envisaged.

During the year the Government took over from the Infant Health Association the responsibility for the payment of salaries and the cost of transport of nurses employed in the infant health clinics. During the last recess I had an opportunity to visit several of the Eastern States and saw something of the development of hospitals there and gained some appreciation of their problems. Everywhere I found the staff difficulty acute. I took the trip from an educational point of view and I discovered that conditions similar to those confronting us prevail in the Eastern States. I found big hospitals had been erected only to be vacated and they are now occupied by homeless people. I have one big hospital in mind. It was extraordinary that such a large institution should have been closed, but the Minister for Health told me that the reason was that they could not get the necessary staff. Similar conditions applied in New South Wales and Tasmania. No steps can be taken to remedy the position quickly. Members will appreciate that it takes three years to train a nurse.

With the disbandment of the various women's auxiliary services we thought we would secure more recruits for the nursing profession. We also thought that demobilisation would bring about some relief. I regret that our hopes were not realised. I have received communications from the Eastern States showing that their disappointment was equally as great as ours. As I have already intimated, the regional plan is being adopted in the other States where they are faced with very grave difficulties. At the same time they have certain advantages. On the other side there are a number of wealthy people and that is much more apparent in the East than it is in Western Australia. In Victoria and Tasmania splendid donations have been received for the construction of wards and accommodation for nurses. At the Royal Melbourne Hospital there is a magnificent home for nurses that was erected, at a cost of £400,000, by a private individual at present in business there. Furthermore, enormous bequests have been received by the various institutions. Generally speaking, the people in the Eastern States take an interest in their hospitals to a much greater degree than is apparent in Western Australia.

At Frankston in Victoria there is an orthopaedic hospital for the treatment of infantile paralysis. When I visited it, I found that half the institution had been donated by various people, and over nearly every portal there was an inscription indicating who the donor was. It was an inspiring sight to me as it must have been also to the patients. Unfortunately we have not in Western Australia a similar experience regarding bequests to our hospitals. In fact, I do not know that much at all has been donated by rich people in this State. In South Australia I visited a number of hospitals and I recollect one in particular that made provision for babies under two years of age. The building was very old but well equipped, and splendid work is being carried out there. I was informed that as a result of the work carried out at such institutions, South Australia has the lowest infantile death rate in the world. Members will agree that there is quite a lot we can do in this State with regard to our hospitals and hospitalisation generally. I made inquiries and found that in Sydney it cost £600 to provide quarters and accommodation for each nurse, so it will be seen that making provision for nurses is very expensive, though many people do not realise how much it costs.

A very interesting experiment has been carried out at a place 60 miles from Hobart. In Tasmania, following somewhat along the lines of Queensland, the State-paid medical service is being increased and throughout that State full salaried or part-time doctors are being attached to the hospitals. An interesting innovation is the health centre at Port Cygnet. It is somewhat experimental, but others will be provided in small towns in Tasmania as a result of the experience gained there. Port Cygnet is a district with a population of about 3,000 people. It was concluded that it was impossible, in such a centre, to provide surgical treatment, and all such cases are sent to Hobart, about 60 miles away. The centre is proposed to be concerned with full maternity and infant welfare services, resuscitation and modern transfusion treatment in acute emergencies such as severe wounds and burns, complete diagnosis, positive health measures, housing surveys, regular medical examinations and recording of children and adults in appar-

ently good health, immunisation, sanitation and so on.

The complete diagnosis referred to would be facilitated by x-ray, electro-cardiograph and laboratory equipment, to enable complete blood examinations and analyses to be carried out immediately, without reference elsewhere. There the doctor examines the whole of the population and either treats the cases or sends them elsewhere to be treated. To finance the equipment a minimum donation of 6s. 8d. was sought from every member of the community and it was not long before sufficient money was raised, and the scheme is now in operation. It has worked well. After complete diagnosis it was possible for a doctor to decide whether the curative treatment necessary could be carried out at Port Cygnet or whether the patient should be sent to the fully-equipped hospital at Hobart, or the regional hospital that will be built later at Huonville. There I examined an area school, which was very interesting. It was one of the finest experiments that could be seen in educating the people for the work they want to do. There I heard a lecture on motherhood given by a travelling nurse to about 20 or 25 girls. The lecture would be of great assistance to them. It was very interesting.

During the war transfusion was found to be very important, and was carried out mostly by the Red Cross, but provision will have to be made for transfusion services. In Melbourne, there is a wing of the Royal Melbourne Hospital for that purpose only; for bleeding and transfusion, as well as provision for storing and distributing blood and blood plasma, which can be sent anywhere in cases of emergency. That work is being done in other States also, and in Adelaide special provision has been made for it. While in the Eastern States, I took the opportunity to inspect a number of infant health centres and found that our centres compare favourably with those in other States; as a matter of fact, we lead the way in that direction. The infant health centres in this State are a credit to the association, and to those directly connected with the work. Our mental health services also require consideration. In the past they have not been understood by the public generally.

Progress in psychiatry during the last decade has given a new conception of men-

tal health, and has brought about not only new prospects in the treatment of mental cases but also an expansion of the relationship of psychology and psychiatry to the community generally. The old conception of a mental hospital as an asylum, regarded only as a place of detention and isolation, must be destroyed and a new conception, which regards mental mal-adjustment as a disease to be combated by curative measures, must take its place. To this end, a comprehensive proposal has been submitted by the Inspector-General of Mental Hospitals, Dr. E. J. T. Thompson, for the progressive improvement of the services of mental hygiene for adults and children, and for those of subnormal intelligence.

The proposals for the establishment of out-patient clinics and psychiatric wards in general hospitals have been submitted by the Inspector-General of Mental Hospitals, as it is hoped that it will be possible to take the first step in that direction within a reasonable time. Again I must emphasise that we must give serious consideration to health questions in this State. The Government is fully aware of the position. The leeway and lag have been considerable and will require many years to overtake. No pains will be spared to attain that end. All we ask is the constructive criticism of members and the co-operation of the people generally. Provided we get the co-operation and support we desire, I am satisfied that the existing position can be greatly improved.

The position regarding nurses is serious, but the Commissioner of Public Health is doing everything possible in co-operation with the Nurses' Registration Board, and I believe that if we can train all the girls that will be available under the conditions and amenities now offered, only three or four years, or perhaps a little more, will be required to pick up most of the leeway. I have received quite a number of inquiries from girls wishing to train, and I believe that the people are satisfied that the Government is making every effort to overcome the shortage, which was due, not to any fault of the Government, but in some instances to the fault of the profession itself. However, there is a full realisation of the position, and the profession is willing to co-operate. The nurses have their organisation, and I believe they are ready to assist to meet requirements and put nursing on such a basis that the trouble arising from the

shortage will be a thing of the past. I consider that health is our greatest responsibility and represents our greatest wealth. The motto of the Government is, "A strong mind and a strong body."

Mr. Watts: *Mens sana in corpore sano.*

Hon. N. Keenan: That word does not mean "strong."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It may not mean strong, but it denotes that we want a healthy community and are out to get it. If we are able to realise the ideal of a strong mind in a strong body, what more can be desired? We are out to do our best in this direction and thus help the people of this huge State.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.39 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 31st October, 1946.

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Traffic Act Amendment (No. 1), recom.	1673
Milk. Com.	1675
Marketing of Barley (No. 2), Assembly's message	1681

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

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Introduced by Hon. R. M. Forrest and read a first time.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Read a third time and *passed*.