

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 14th July, 1954.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Drilling at Rough Range.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I desire to make an explanation with regard to the bits that have been placed on the Table of the House. I would advise members that these bits have been in use at Rough Range during part of the period of operations there, and I think that at this stage a few particulars with respect to them would be of interest.

The larger one cost approximately £550; and the smaller one, in the vicinity of £450. The former was down for half a shift before being withdrawn, and the second one showed so much deterioration when lifted after 30 minutes' use that it could no longer be employed. In nine months of operation the company has utilised £100,000 worth of this type of bit in sinking under 10,000 ft. That represents a sum of approximately £350 to £400 a day in drill bits alone, and from that fact members can gauge the very high cost of drills used in exploring oil possibilities in that area. The amount of £100,000 that has been spent in nine months is colossal, and, with the ground becoming harder, it is growing increasingly expensive to continue operations with this type of drill.

Something that I thought should be capable of remedy but which apparently is not, is the reconditioning of the drill bits. It appears that that is not possible. It would seem that there is some form of patent which makes it impossible to salvage a drill once the cutting edge has been worn. The core that is in front of the two bits on the Table was taken from a depth of 3,640 ft., or just a few feet below the original oil strike, which occurred at 3,605 ft. to 3,622 ft. It is the intention to place on the Table tomorrow another piece of core formation which will give some indication of the zone that has been passed through during the 6,000 ft. of sinking that has not produced anything in the way of oil. That core will give some idea of the hardness of the rock formation that has been dealt with.

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

(a) *As to Promotion of Trade Class Instructors.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Education:

Further to my question of the 7th July—

(1) Does proposed regulation 205C under the Education Act make special provisions for one position only?

- (2) Will this position be advertised?
- (3) How many persons at present employed by the Technical Education Branch have the necessary qualifications to be considered for this position?
- (4) As the holiday provisions of this position differ so strongly from those of other instructors, will he state—
 - (a) the weekly hours of instruction given;
 - (b) the weekly hours of clerical, storeman and similar duties?
- (5) Should not this position be more properly classified under the Public Service regulations?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) It is not considered necessary to do so.
- (3) It is not known.
- (4) (a) Nil.
(b) Public Service hours.
- (5) No.

(b) As to Use of Busselton Aerodrome Site.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Concerning the closing down of the Commonwealth aerodrome at Busselton, will he give consideration to the site as being suitable for establishing an agricultural research station, or alternatively, of having it subdivided, so as to provide several dairy farms for soldier settlers, the area being 80 to 90 acres?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

The aerodrome at Busselton is suitable neither for an agricultural research station site, nor for subdivision into dairy farms.

(c) As to Withdrawal of Women Teachers' Increments.

Mr. HUTCHINSON asked the Premier: Does he agree with the Deputy Premier that the reason for his action in withdrawing women teachers' long service increments is, as the Deputy Premier says, first-class, when 142 out of 167 of the teachers penalised for not applying for promotional positions were unable to do so because of their positions or their already higher grade?

The PREMIER replied:

The Deputy Premier gave the House a clear and full statement in connection with the subject matter of this question. As the hon. member knows, the matter is now the subject of an appeal to the appropriate tribunal.

(d) As to Armadale High School.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Education:

When is it expected that work will commence on the new high school at Armadale?

The MINISTER replied:

The department hopes to be in a position to commence the erection of the new high school at Armadale during this financial year.

(e) As to Staff Changes, Mingenew.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has he read a report in the "Daily News" recently, stating that at Mingenew there had been as many as ten changes in 18 months in the teaching staff at the school?

(2) Is this statement correct?

(3) Is he aware of many complaints that frequent changes of teachers are taking place in a number of other country centres?

(4) Does he consider that such frequent changes are a disadvantage to the children?

(5) Will he take steps to minimise changes of teachers as much as possible?

(6) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) No. Only two such complaints have been received this year from country centres.

(4) Yes.

(5) Every effort is made to minimise changes in school staffing, and those that occur are caused by factors beyond departmental control, such as marriage, military service, long service leave and sickness.

(6) Answered by No. (1).

(f) As to Away-from-home Allowances Regulations.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Were the living-away-from-home allowances for teachers now dealt with by regulation 47 (b) previously the subject of a regulation or regulations?

(2) If so, what were the numbers of the relevant regulations and when were they gazetted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No, by ministerial direction.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(g) As to Appeal Board Decisions Regarding Teachers.

Mr. BOVELL (for Mr. Hutchinson and without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the apparent conflict of attitude between the present Minister for Education (who said that in future, Public Service Appeal Board decisions regarding teachers will be observed by his Government) and the Minister for Works (who insists that he was correct in reversing an Appeal Board decision which had granted long service increments to women teachers), what is the attitude of the Government to the matter on which the two Ministers are at variance in their public utterances?

The PREMIER replied:

There is no conflict as the attitude of the Minister for Works is directly related to a past decision of the board and that of the present Minister for Education to future decisions of the board. I would be pleased if the member for Vasse would convey to the member for Cottesloe my view that questions of this kind now have only a nuisance value.

METROPOLITAN BEACHES.

As to Establishment of Control Board.

Mr. LAPHAM asked the Premier:

Has any further consideration been given to the establishment of a metropolitan beaches board to control and improve the various beaches which cause considerable financial drain on the local authority's administration?

The PREMIER replied:

No further consideration has been given to this suggestion.

TRAFFIC.

As to Covering Horseshoe Bridge Tramlines.

Mr. HEAL asked the Minister for Transport:

Because of the danger to traffic—particularly cycles and motorcycles—would he consider arranging for the covering of tramlines on the Horseshoe Bridge?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Transport) replied:

It is not considered necessary to cover the tramrails as it is anticipated they will be removed within the near future.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Use of Diesel Locomotives.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Why have the new diesel locomotives been confined to the haulage of goods trains only?

(2) How many of these locomotives are at present out of traffic?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

(1) It is not correct to say that these locomotives have been confined to haulage of goods trains as tests have also been made with passenger trains. More will be required before a regular passenger service can be introduced.

(2) Two.

(b) As to Warning Lights, Chapple-st. Crossing, Kalgoorlie.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that a motorcar and steam locomotive collided on the Chapple-st., Kalgoorlie, railway crossing on the 8th July?

(2) When is it proposed to erect flashing light signals on this crossing?

(3) As the then Minister for Railways advised on the 30th August, 1951, when I requested that lights be installed on this crossing, that attention would be given to the matter when the necessary material became available, has such material not yet come to hand?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Crossing Protection Committee listed this crossing on the third programme under the recommended priority list. It is anticipated that it will take twelve months to complete the crossings still outstanding on the second programme.

(3) Material has been ordered for the third programme.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Surveys for New Reservoirs.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Have either the Yarragin Rock or the Marshall Rock areas been surveyed with a view to constructing reservoirs thereon?

(2) If so, will he lay on the Table of the House the files dealing with the reports of the engineers who made the investigation?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Both rock areas have been surveyed.

(2) The hon. member can peruse the files in the Minister's office if he so desires.

(b) As to Electrification of Pumping Stations.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Have tenders been received for the electrification of the pumping stations at Cunderdin and Kellerberrin?

(2) If so—

- (a) Who were the successful tenderers;
- (b) On what date was the contract for the delivery of the equipment signed?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) Harland Engineering (Aust.) Ltd. for both stations; (b) the company was advised of the acceptance of the tender on the 20th October, 1953.

(c) *As to Roleystone Scheme.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) When will further work be done on the Roleystone water scheme?

(2) How much money has been allocated this financial year for this purpose?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Water Supplies) replied:

(1) Further progress with this work is dependent upon the allocation of loan moneys for water supply, sewerage and drainage works for the current year.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(d) *As to Information from South Africa.*

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

As during my time as Minister for Works there was some communication between the department and the Government of South Africa in respect to certain progress made with investigations of underground water supplies, will he authorise the member for Vasse—who is representing this State at the Empire Parliamentary Association Conference—while in South Africa to confer with the Minister or the appropriate authorities as to the progress made? Will he also authorise the hon. member to obtain any information that would be helpful to the department in this State?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes.

HOSPITALS.

As to Additions at Boddington.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it proposed to make finance available this financial year for additions to the Boddington hospital?

(2) If not, what are the Health Department's future intentions in regard to this hospital?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No, sufficient funds are not available.

(2) The intention is to prepare a master plan for the hospital, portions of which can be erected from time to time. The first construction should be a new mid-wifery unit as soon as funds permit.

ROADS.

(a) *As to Rehabilitation of Guildford-rd.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In view of the additional finance to be made available to the Main Roads Department, is he prepared to provide extra funds for the rehabilitation of Guildford-rd.?

(2) Does he agree that this road is daily becoming more important as a main artery into the city, and therefore should be given a high priority on the metropolitan main roads programme?

(3) If not, why not?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) The rehabilitation of Guildford-rd. is to be financed from the Main Roads Department's share of metropolitan traffic fees.

(2) Yes.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(b) *As to Gazettal of Guildford-rd. as a Main Thoroughfare.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Does he agree that owing to the ever-increasing volume of traffic using Guildford-rd. as a main thoroughfare the time has arrived when this road should be gazetted as a major road?

(2) If so, will he undertake to have this done?

(3) If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) The system of giving way to traffic on the right, as applicable to other main thoroughfares in this State, and to all roads in other States, is considered adequate for Guildford-rd.

(c) *As to the Widening of Albany Highway.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What further money will be spent on the widening of the Albany Highway to Armadale?

(2) When is it expected that this work will be put into operation?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) £12,250 has been allocated.

(2) About November next.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.*(a) As to Underground Cables to Leederville.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it a fact that underground power cables are being laid from the East Perth power house via Bulwer-st., to the Bourke-st., Leederville, substation to serve both residential and industrial areas in the northern and western suburbs?

(2) If so, was an accurate survey of the route made prior to the commencement of the work?

(3) Were the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department, and the Telephone Branch of the P.M.G. Department consulted as to the position of their mains and cables?

(4) In view of the closeness of these oil-filled power cables to existing water mains, does he not agree that there would be a danger of the water main becoming electrified in the event of a burst main washing the foundations from under the cable, and thus causing a break in the cable through sagging, and allowing the oil to escape?

(5) What was the cost—

(a) per foot of cable;

(b) of laying of cable?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes.

(4) No. There is no danger of the water main being electrified.

(5) (a) £2 10s.

(b) All the cable is not yet laid, but the estimated cost of laying the cable is £6,500.

(b) As to Transmission Lines, Mundaring to Northam.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the total cost of providing the high tension transmission lines from Mundaring to Northam?

(2) How many houses is it proposed to connect with this scheme?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) £120,000.

(2) 2,600. In addition to houses there are connected two large flour mills, saw-mills, brickworks, railway workshops, slipper factory, radio station, quarry, large hospitals, a number of large commercial consumers, engineering works, ice works and sewerage pumps.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.*As to Appeal Boards.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Labour:

What boards set up are able to hear appeals of Governmental and semi-Governmental employees and officers?

The MINISTER replied:

I am not sure upon what aspect of appeals the hon. member desires information so I have made out a comprehensive reply as follows:—

(1) Appeals in regard to promotions: Government Employees Appeal Board.

(2) Appeals against classifications: Public Service Appeal Board. Railways Classification Board.

(3) Appeals against punishment:

A board appointed under the Lunacy Act.

Railway Appeal Board.

Tramways and Ferries Appeal Board.

A board appointed under the fire brigades regulations.

PETROL SUPPLIES.*(a) As to One-brand Filling Stations.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Premier:

Will he inform the House of the Government's attitude to the oil companies' marketing policy of supplying only one-brand filling stations, and their refusal to supply their products to any service-station proprietor handling a competitor's lines even when not bound by contract?

The PREMIER replied:

The Government will shortly be giving consideration to the question of introducing legislation.

(b) As to Government's Attitude Regarding New Stations.

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Premier:

Will he inform the House of the Government's attitude towards—

(1) The demolition of dwellings to provide sites for the erection of new petrol filling stations?

(2) The obvious disregard of sound town-planning principles in many instances of the erection of petrol filling stations?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) The Government will shortly be giving consideration to the question of introducing legislation.

NORTH-WEST PORTS.*As to Clearance of Cargo.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister representing the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Is all cargo from Carnarvon and other North-West ports being cleared regularly—

- (a) if offering for State ships; and
- (b) if offering for Blue Funnel and other overseas ships?

(2) If not, what cargo is involved and what plan is there for having the cargo shipped?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

(1) (a) No.

(b) The agents advise "Yes".

(2) Whale products, asbestos fibres and copper ores. Since this Government took office continuous endeavours have been made to supplement the State shipping fleet.

Difficulty is found in obtaining a vessel suitably constructed and fitted to meet requirements peculiar to the North-West coastal trade. One new ship is under construction at Newcastle. Had the previous Government ordered the Denny & Bros. ship, which it had specially designed for the North-West, present disabilities would not exist.

STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.*As to Industrial Agreement with Seamen's Union, etc.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) For how many years has the Government of Western Australia (or the State Shipping Service) had an industrial agreement with the Seamen's Union and registered at the Arbitration Court of Western Australia for the working of the State ships?

(2) Has the Government (or the State Shipping Service) retired from such agreement?

(3) If so—

(a) when; and,

(b) for what reasons?

(4) Does not the retirement from the agreement weaken the ability of the State Arbitration Court to intervene of its own motion in a dispute such as the recent Carnarvon waterside dispute?

(5) What is the Government's intention in respect of regulating working conditions of seamen on State ships in the future?

(6) Is there a current industrial dispute in respect of the working at North-West ports related to—

(a) State ships;

(b) Blue Funnel or other non-State ships?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Eighteen years.

(2) Yes.

(3) (a) October, 1953.

(b) It was considered advisable to place all seamen on a common basis.

(4) It is considered this is a matter for the court to determine.

(5) Agreement has been reached between the parties to apply the Federal award until the State Shipping Service is made a respondent to the Federal award.

(6) (a) and (b). Ships as they call are being loaded and unloaded.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Provision of Office Accommodation, etc.*

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Will the catching up of supply over demand in regard to houses in 18 months (as he anticipates) release sufficient labour and materials to enable much of the acute need for office accommodation to be largely overcome?

(2) Will accommodation for the Civil Service in a modern building then receive consideration?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) When the housing position has been eased there should be available more labour and materials for other building projects, although it appears that a housing programme of considerable proportions will be necessary for a long time in order to meet the growing demands of the State. Meanwhile it is interesting to note that in respect of buildings other than dwellings, those erected in 1953 were three times the value of those erected in 1951.

(2) The Treasurer will no doubt bear the matter in mind.

(b) *As to Loan Funds for Subiaco Flats.*

Mr. WILD asked the Treasurer:

(1) How much loan money was spent on the Subiaco flats project up to the 30th June, 1954?

(2) What amount has been allocated for this project in the financial year 1954-55?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) £44,738.

(2) £300,000.

OVERSEAS TRADE.

(a) As to Japanese Competition.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

Last evening the Minister for Lands interjected during the speech of the member for Roe, and my question relates to that interjection. The member for Roe said—

Apparently the member for Guildford-Midland has no objection to seeing our primary producers of foodstuffs in Australia competing with Japanese labour producing foodstuffs and selling in markets where that Japanese labour has actual freight advantages against Australian competitors.

The Minister for Lands interjected—

In what branch of foodstuffs would that apply?

Can the Premier give us any indication of what foodstuffs are at present suffering from competition with Japanese foodstuffs selling in foreign markets?

The PREMIER replied:

I will consult with my colleague, the Minister for Lands, in connection with this question.

(b) As to Apple Sales, Singapore.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

Will he make a note to investigate the position of the sale of apples in Singapore this year?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS.

(a) As to Postponement.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

As Question No. 1 on the notice paper was not intended to have any nuisance value, and as the Minister for Local Government is still in the State, is there any reason for the continual postponement of what are simple questions?

The PREMIER replied:

I have no knowledge of this question but I will make a personal inquiry to ascertain the cause of the delay.

(b) As to Making Information Available.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

Further to the two questions I asked without notice, will he undertake to make the advice he receives available to the House?

The PREMIER replied:
Certainly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. ANDREW (Victoria Park) [4.55]: Members will have noticed that during the last few days the weather has broken and throughout the State we have received some beneficial rains. Despite this, country members tell me that in certain districts they could do with much more.

Mr. Nalder: It has been very patchy.

Mr. ANDREW: I mention the weather because if one kept to such subjects as that, one would not draw any contentious interjections. But we in this House must discuss those matters upon which we differ and we should be prepared to face up to any such discussion. I wish, firstly, to deal with remarks made by the member for Roe last night with regard to Wundowie. He said that the new members—and we are getting older members every day, by the way—

Hon. L. Thorn: That does not take much effort to work out.

Mr. ANDREW: — do not know much about Wundowie. He may be right; but on a number of subjects some of the older members do not know very much and many of them could learn a good deal more of what is happening in Western Australia.

The Premier: The member for Roe's knowledge of Wundowie is extremely limited, too.

Mr. ANDREW: I do know that Wundowie is a wonderful place and I visited it only a few weeks ago. I understand that it is the only place in the world where the whole process is carried out; the workers prepare the charcoal, extract the acids and wood alcohol, and smelt the iron and steel. An officer at Wundowie informed me that the works are now paying their way and are contributing a certain sum to the interest payments. It is not a great deal, but they are paying something. The member for Roe mentioned Wundowie so that he could give a fillip to private enterprise.

It seems that members of the Opposition are always ready and anxious to give a fillip and a boost to private enterprise. The hon. member said that members on this side did not give private enterprise the credit it deserved for certain of its virtues. I interjected and said that we realise that private enterprise has some virtues; but the trouble is that many people, and particularly those who support private enterprise, do not see the whole picture. They see only one portion of it and make an assessment of the whole on the portion that they see. I could use the illustration of a huge revolving circle. A man standing and looking at the right-hand portion of that circle says it is travelling from south to north; the man standing and looking from the top says, "No. It

is travelling from east to west." The person standing on the left-hand side says, "No; it is travelling from north to south," and the person on the bottom replies, "It is travelling from west to east."

Each of those people is correct inasmuch as from the portion that he sees, that is exactly what is happening. My friend from Roe is like the person on the right; he sees what private enterprise can do in certain directions; and I must admit, that in some instances private enterprise does a good job. For example, it does a good job in the sphere of production. But, as I say, there are many other angles. There is the angle looking from east to west, which we might call wars and depressions. There is the angle from north to south, and we might call that want amidst plenty. The other one is material values above human values. I suggest that we have to get the whole of the facts to enable us to arrive at a true assessment of the position, and we must be prepared to accept those facts and analyse them. We may then come to a conclusion in respect of which we shall have more chance of being correct.

A number of statements have been made in this House by way of interjection and by way of direct assertion which, to my mind, indicate that the Opposition considers that we Labour members are, firstly, controlled by people outside the Chamber; and, secondly, are insincere. I remember during the 1953 session a member from the other side called across that we were puppets. I refer to the member for Cottesloe. The member for South Perth made a statement, when F. E. Chamberlain, general secretary of the A.L.P., was sitting in the Speaker's gallery, and some mention was made of him, "Oh, yes; your big boss is here."

A week ago, when the Minister for Housing said something to the Leader of the Opposition about disciplining his members in another place, the Leader of the Opposition said, "I have not the power of Harry Webb." It is apparent that they cannot decide among themselves who is the boss. But I do not know why aspersions are cast, unless it is because the Opposition members themselves feel guilty and are trying to throw off that complex in this manner. Their remarks, however, are very wide of the target. We certainly are a party and we have what I consider an objective that will make for a better way of life; we believe so, anyway.

When we agree among ourselves upon certain courses, like any other body, we adopt that particular course. But no individual, be he Joe Chamberlain, Harry Webb or anybody else, has any more power in the Labour movement than any member in this House or any other member of the movement for that matter. We have a constitution, a copy of which I have with me. It is fair and square and above-board, and I believe would make very good

reading. It might also serve to disabuse the minds of some of our friends over the way.

I think it is a most democratic constitution because every position to which one aspires in the movement is a position to which one must be elected. There are no direct appointments at all. I do not think there is a more democratic institution in Australia than the A.L.P. In passing, let me say that it is the only political party in Australia that can rule under its own power. The last anti-Labour Government, the McLarty-Watts Government, was a coalition Government of two parties. I was returning officer during the last State executive ballot, which was held just before Christmas. I saw Mr. Chamberlain's name down as standing for a certain ballot. He is the man who members of the Opposition say controls Labour members in this House. But he did not win that ballot. If he controls us, why could not he win it?

Mr. Hearman: He has more power.

Mr. ANDREW: He has no more power than I have. He may have a little more influence, but he has no more power than any of the members of the Labour movement. If one wants a position, one has to win it and be elected to it; one must be supported to win it. Mr. Webb's name was also there as standing for a ballot, but he did not win that particular ballot. Accordingly, it is just pure boloney for the Opposition to continue saying the things they do with a view to trying to discredit the Labour movement. I spoke to one of my colleagues and asked, "Why do they say these things? They must know they are not correct." He replied, "They get to the point where they have repeated their statements so often that they come to believe them themselves."

Mr. Hearman: Like some of your members.

Mr. ANDREW: The hon. member is trying to sidetrack me. I am referring to the statements made about certain happenings here, and that is what I am concerned with at the moment. It is repeatedly said in this House that we are doing things for political purposes and that we are insincere. Even in relation to rents and tenancies, we are given no credit for having any humane feelings at all. As a member of the Labour Parliamentary Party who was present at Caucus meetings, I would say that aspect was not considered at all. The only angle that was considered was what could be done for these unfortunate people who needed our help in connection with tenancies.

Mr. Manning: You will get on.

Mr. ANDREW: That interjection is not worth answering. We can only assert our sincerity, because we do believe that certain things should be done.

Mr. Hearman: What are you going to do about it this time?

Mr. ANDREW: We will tell the hon. member. In his speech from the Opposition benches, the member for Dale on several occasions, when dealing with the question of rents and tenancies, repeated that the legislation was brought down purely and simply for political purposes. Other members said the same thing, and the member for Nedlands made a few remarks at the beginning of his speech about our pulling rabbits out of a bag. I do not know what he was talking about, but the only inference that could be drawn was that we were trying to put over some tricks.

Let us see how sincerely the Opposition has behaved in the short time we new members have been in Parliament. One of the first Bills introduced here was the Firearms and Guns Act Amendment Bill. There was great opposition by the member for Mt. Lawley to the clauses in that particular Bill, and he took up a great deal of the time of this Chamber in opposing its provisions.

Yet, that Bill was prepared under the auspices of the member for Mt. Lawley when he was Minister for Police. His Government did not have time to introduce it in Parliament and the legislation was put off. In spite of that, he opposed it because by that time he had become a member of the Opposition. I suggest that that does not show a great deal of sincerity. He was supported by other members of his party. Further, I would like to quote what the Leader of the Opposition said when speaking to the debate on the Firearms and Guns Act Amendment Bill, in relation to the annual fee. This is what he had to say—

The Minister said that he intended to increase the annual fee from 1s. to 2s. 6d., and by that action he will get a considerable amount of revenue. As the member for Stirling pointed out, no great hardship or extra work will be inflicted on the Police Department. When a man purchases a rifle, he knows it must be licensed and he takes it to the department. So I suggest to the Minister that he does not make this measure a taxing one because it was never intended as such.

I have not got it with me, but there is a file that can be produced which shows, in relation to that Bill, that when it was before a Cabinet meeting during the time of the McLarty-Watts Government, it carried the signature of the Leader of the Opposition endorsing an annual fee of 5s. But now, because he is in Opposition, he objects to a fee of 2s. 6d. Where is his sincerity?

Mr. Hearman: How did you get access to the file?

Mr. ANDREW: I have seen the file and I know it is there.

Mr. Hearman: I do not think you should have.

Mr. ANDREW: I want to speak now of the opposition to the arbitration Bill when it came before this House. The members of the Opposition opposed the action of the present Government making it arbitrary for the judge in the Arbitration Court to grant automatic rises. We wanted to put in the word "shall" instead of the word "may." The case put up by the Opposition was that in this period of inflation we have to make some effort to stop the rising spiral of costs, and accordingly they reckoned that they were justified in opposing this measure. I feel that they may have had something of a case if they were dinkum and sincere in what they said. Though the basic wage rises had been given, quarterly, after prices had risen, it was rather a backhanded way of stopping inflation. The Opposition felt that workers should make that sacrifice to get a stable economy.

Next I would like to touch on the Bill dealing with workers' compensation. The exact words of the member for Mt. Lawley when discussing the measure were, "Industry cannot afford to pay increased compensation," which was simply on all fours to what was suggested before, taking into consideration money values. It is quite possible that members opposite might have been genuine again, but there came another measure, the Bill for the continuance of price control. They forgot all about inflation and everything else, and started to attack price control. In another place that Bill was defeated.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you think that price control is the answer to inflation?

Mr. ANDREW: Opposition members considered leaving the workers on a pegged wage to stop inflation.

Hon. D. Brand: We did not consider anything of the sort. The court decided that.

Mr. ANDREW: By looking at "Hansard", the hon. member could see that I am correct. Referring to inflation, the Opposition said that the Government should make a contribution by pegging the basic wage at the existing level. That was why it was brought in—

Hon. D. Brand: It was brought in by agreeing with the Federal and State Arbitration Courts, which we also did when they awarded a £1 prosperity loading.

Mr. ANDREW: The Opposition made a song and dance about inflation when it was a matter of taking something away from the workers.

Hon. D. Brand: Don't talk rot!

Mr. ANDREW: For the majority of the people I represent, the Opposition brought about the pegging of the basic wage.

Hon. D. Brand: We represent the workers, too.

The Minister for Housing: Then you misrepresent the workers.

Hon. D. Brand: Don't you worry! We represent the workers too. We represent all sections of the community.

The Minister for Education: Why then are you not on this side of the House?

Mr. ANDREW: If anything would cause the basic wage to rise it would be higher rents. The Opposition forgot all about inflation when that Bill came up, so a case can be fully proved that the Opposition in refusing the Bill for price control, was being insincere. Getting away from contentious subjects, I would like to remind the member for Greenough that he helped in impressing these matters on my mind because in the first speech he made in the 1953 session, he said he hoped that the new members would not be biased politically. I made some passing remarks in reply to that statement and would have forgotten about it except for what happened subsequently.

Last year I asked the Minister for Works whether he was considering any other form of traffic control at the end of the Causeway, such as the clover leaf system, and the reply was in the negative. He said that he believed the circus system of traffic control at the end of the Causeway would be sufficient. According to a census taken twelve months from that time, there was an increase of 37 per cent in the traffic using the Causeway. If the increase continues at such a rate neither the Causeway nor the circus will be able to cope with the traffic. The member for South Perth and others spoke about the construction of a bridge, and pointed out that the general consensus of opinion was that another bridge would ultimately have to be built. The main place at which it was considered another bridge should be constructed is at the Narrows. That is a very convenient spot.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: Why not a tunnel?

Mr. ANDREW: Do not ask me that, because it is a matter for the engineers. I am speaking of a bridge because it might be suitable.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: It would spoil the river.

Mr. ANDREW: A tunnel may, or may not, be suitable. What the member for Subiaco suggests is a good idea if it can be done. I would regretfully support the building of a bridge at the Narrows because in the Swan we have one of the most beautiful rivers in Australia.

Mr. Bovell: The engineers have built a wonderful tunnel under the Mersey between Liverpool and Birkenhead. I suppose the engineers here can cope with the problem of a tunnel under the Swan?

Mr. ANDREW: We should all get together to see what can be done about a tunnel. I would certainly regretfully support the building of a bridge at the Narrows. I know that another bridge across the Swan is necessary, but one at the Narrows would spoil the beauty of the river. There are a number of difficulties—

The Minister for Housing: A well-designed bridge at the Narrows would improve the appearance of the river.

Mr. ANDREW: I do not think so. No bridge improves a river. Furthermore, a bridge at that spot would become an obstruction. A great number of pleasure craft ply through the Narrows. The Minister must remember that the reaches of the river passing Victoria Park to Maylands will in future be beautified to a great extent, and pleasure craft from these suburbs will pass through the Narrows. So I am not so keen to see a bridge at that site.

Regarding the Causeway, the circus was built as a method of traffic control, one which had not been used in Western Australia previously. Yet to my knowledge no information was given to people as to the use of that circus. It was not until a few months afterwards that the authorities gave instructions regarding the use of the laneways on the Causeway. I travel over the bridge several times a day. While quite a number of motorists use the circus in what I consider the correct manner, quite a number do not. What they do is to make four crossings; they go straight across the line of traffic around the circus, they hit close to the inside of the circus, and then they shoot off in the direction of the road in which they are heading.

They are cutting off people travelling behind or alongside, and when they are proceeding, say, towards Albany Highway, Canning Highway or the Belmont district, they cut into the corner there and anyone following behind expecting to find room to carry on, is cut off. In my opinion, people should travel on the circus as far as possible in a circular direction and not as straight as possible. I have seen many drivers doing the former, and the traffic flows much more freely; but when motorists attempt to cut corners, often a hold-up results. I consider that instructions should be given to people as to the best way to use the circus.

There is another matter on which I would like to speak regarding the Causeway. I refer to the instruction given to bicycle riders that they must travel on the outside lane and must not ride two abreast. Cyclists ride two abreast with impunity and when a car attempts to pass them it is pushed over to the second lane. That is a very dangerous practice and there should be more supervision by the Traffic Department to stop cyclists from riding two abreast. In fairness, I would say that most cyclists ride single file but quite a number do ride two abreast and this constitutes a danger.

On the question of traffic, there is another matter I would mention, and that is in regard to the double lines on the four-lane highways. It is a traffic offence to cross over the double lines. Yet in certain places these double lines go on for quite a few miles. There is a double line from Rivervale crossing to the Belmont Road Board office, near the turn-off to the race-course. Quite a few motorists hug that double line and a driver following behind and wanting to pass cannot do so except by crossing over the double line. The driver ahead may be doing 20 miles, not being the slightest bit interested in those behind him, nor moving over to allow others to pass.

Ultimately the driver behind becomes impatient, pulls over the double line and is seen by a constable and charged before the traffic court for committing an offence. But the person who caused that driver to commit the offence is not penalised. Not a word is said to him. I would suggest that the Minister for Police, who handles traffic control, passes on a hint in this direction and that the traffic police should be just as strict on the offenders who hug the centre line of a four-lane highway, because they are the real offenders in that they force the others following behind to cross the double line.

Albany Highway, Victoria Park, like many other highways, is becoming rather congested. Since being elected as representative of Victoria Park, I have battled with the Perth City Council in an endeavour to set the building alignment further back. Like the Government and other bodies, the Perth City Council has not at present the finance with which to widen the highway, but it could at least take steps that are absolutely imperative now and which will become more imperative as time goes on. Victoria Park is an extremely busy centre. People from many of the suburbs go to Victoria Park to do their shopping; they come from South Perth, Como, Belmont and other surrounding districts.

There is terrific congestion. On a Friday or Saturday morning it is very hard for a car to travel along the highway, even if going straight through. In my early days as a parliamentarian, I approached the Minister for Works to find out what could be done in this regard. He told me it was a matter for local government. I did approach the local government authorities but my efforts were of no avail. The excuses advanced by the Perth City Council is that the Stephenson town-planning scheme will shortly be placed before Parliament and the authorities, including most likely the council itself, would fall in line with the proposals submitted.

Whatever provision of this sort may be made in the Stephenson plan, I doubt whether it could be put into operation for

many years. I am afraid it will be like other schemes—put off and off owing to lack of finance. Plans for the outer areas might possibly be applied, but it is hardly likely that that will occur in the built-up areas. I am wondering whether the Government could do something in co-operation with the local authorities because Albany Highway is not the only one that needs attention. The member for Maylands has spoken of Guildford-rd., which is also a busy highway, and there are others, and I think a general scheme should be put into operation instead of waiting for a plan which may not be adopted for many years.

If provision were made for widening Albany Highway by setting back all new buildings for a distance of 12ft., the traffic problem would be eased considerably; there would be better provision for parking, and residents would be spared the need for travelling to Perth and adding to the congestion of the city area. I hope that the Government will bring the Stephenson plan, when presented, into operation, but meanwhile it is important that something of a provisional nature be done in the direction I have indicated.

Victoria Park is an area that has been built up for years and it lacks some of the amenities provided by the local authority such as are found in other districts like Wembley. I do not intend to deal with that aspect, but I wish to refer to the matter of sewerage. There are areas in outer Victoria Park where the sewerage connections have been installed following some of the housing projects, and yet in other parts which had been built up for years, it is impossible to get the benefit of the scheme because the mains have not been laid. I commend this matter to the Minister's consideration. It is unfair that a new part should get the advantage of the system straight away while other parts have been waiting for years and cannot get it.

I asked a question in the House about the provision of bus shelters. This is a matter affecting the people of Victoria Park and also the residents of most other suburbs and possibly people in centres outside of Perth. I was pleased to have the Minister's statement that he and the Premier were conferring with the local authorities with a view to seeing what could be done towards providing these much-needed shelters. It is imperative that something should be done. When wet and boisterous weather prevails, many people, while waiting for buses, get wet and have a most uncomfortable time, and when they reach home, they have to change their clothes. I consider that the Government should step in and endeavour to get the local authorities to recognise their responsibility in the matter. I am keen on getting a shelter provided at the other end of the Causeway. I have seen

people get so wet there in the morning that they had to return home and change before going to work.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is that of drainage in the south-eastern suburbs. A number of instances have come under my notice of residents whose properties have been affected through water lying about after heavy weather. I understand that some years ago a comprehensive drainage scheme was drawn up for that area, but that the funds were not available to carry out the work. An officer of the department told me that he was drawing up a rating plan.

We have to face up to the fact that the eastern suburbs must have a comprehensive drainage scheme. The Minister for Housing has told us that it is very difficult to get areas for the building of homes and we know that homes have been built in districts quite a distance from Perth. If the area I have in mind were drained, quite a large number of blocks could be made available for housing. Lack of drainage is the only thing that is deterring people from making their homes there. Some have built homes, but when other people have applied for permits, they have been told that they would not be granted because the land was too low-lying. The matter is a very serious one and should receive the serious consideration of the Government. I support the motion.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.38]: In view of the vast industrial expansion now taking place in this State—and I commend the previous Government as well as the present Government for fostering secondary industries—we must of necessity still rely upon primary production for the national wealth. We should not overlook the fact that at this stage it is necessary to foster the primary industries.

With the expansion of secondary industries, there is a tendency for young people to leave the agricultural areas and engage in secondary occupations. For this reason, a special inducement should be offered to them to continue in primary production, but instead of offering them this inducement, many of them are being denied an opportunity to secure land close to the holdings of their parents. I think every member will agree that the best farmers will come from those children who have been born and reared in rural districts. In the dairying areas particularly, young men on reaching the age of 17 or 18 desire to select land in close proximity to the holdings of their parents.

My experience has been that whilst applications have been made for Crown land, difficulties have arisen over the release of the desired blocks. I appreciate the necessity for protecting the forestry interests of the State, but I believe that a co-ordinated plan should be devised which, while recognising the need for the maintenance and preservation of State

forests, would also take into account the necessity for the development of primary production.

As I have stated on a number of occasions, young men have applied to me for assistance to secure land near their parents' holdings so that they might engage in primary production. They desired to avail themselves of the lifelong experience of their parents and have readily available the use of machinery and equipment, which it would be impossible for them to provide for themselves owing to their limited means. Usually, lengthy negotiations ensue between the Forests Department, the Land Settlement Branch and the Department of Lands and Surveys.

The Conservator of Forests and his staff have been particularly sympathetic and in many instances quite helpful in making land available, but it is the delay of which I complain. Sometimes upwards of two years elapse before land applied for is made available for selection, and during that time the young applicant has probably drifted from the rural areas and accepted a job in the metropolitan area or some other centre in secondary industry. Thus his services in the primary industries have been lost to the State, though previously he was keen to remain on the land.

I shall not imply that no difficulties of this sort were encountered during the regime of the McLarty-Watts Government, which I supported, but I did in the party room and on the floor of the House suggest that an advisory panel consisting of the Under Secretary of Lands, the Conservator of Forests and the Director of Agriculture should be appointed in order that a policy might be evolved so that land could be made available without undue delay, especially for young men who had been reared in the country and who desired to take up blocks close to the holdings of their parents.

Unfortunately the McLarty-Watts Government was defeated in 1953, just at the time when negotiations had been completed to form the advisory panel which, in my opinion, would have meant a great deal to the further development of our rural districts. Although the advisory panel had never operated, the present Government saw fit to disband it and now we are back to where we started from.

The Minister for Housing: There is now an advisory panel which is much more representative.

Mr. BOVELL: I have never been able to secure any service from the advisory panel. I would like to know how it operates and how members of Parliament can get some satisfaction from it. On every occasion—during the term of the present Government and that of its predecessor—it has been necessary for me to visit the Lands Department, the Forests Department, the Department of Agriculture and the Land Settlement Board and I have worn a path from one place to another. Admittedly I

have, in recent months, written to the executive officers of these departments and I repeat that I have always received sympathetic consideration.

It is the delay in making the land available, of which I complain and, in my opinion, the inter-departmental machinery is not working as harmoniously as it should. I urge the Government to ensure that young people, born and reared in rural districts, are given the opportunity of selecting land close to the holdings of their families, in order that they may have the benefit of the experience of their parents and utilise their parents' machinery because it is too costly for young people to purchase for themselves at this time.

To illustrate my point, there is a farmer at Margaret River who has a family of six. He has fully developed his 160 acres and has made application, over the past three years, for an additional 50 or 60 acres, but the reply of the Forests Department has been that if the land were made available it might hinder access to State forest reserves and that therefore alienation of the land in question cannot be allowed. Another instance exists at Karridale where a farmer has a lad now over 16 years of age and wants to obtain for that boy land in close proximity to his own property. He has made application but, while the former forestry officer in the district said the timber had been cut out on the land applied for, the department now maintains that there is marketable timber on it and that it will be some time before the timber can be removed.

I hope the Government will give consideration to making this advisory panel speed up the release of land so that agriculture, especially in the dairying districts of the State, may be expanded. If we are to provide food for the increased population which will automatically arise from our industrial expansion, we must extend our primary industries.

The Minister for Housing: Of course, that committee might easily decide that the land should be retained as State forest or as a water catchment area and that it should not be made available for selection.

Mr. BOVELL: That may be so, but it is no use having isolated areas of State forest and isolated settlements. There should be some comprehensive plan under which the forests and farming areas could be kept separate. As an example, I would quote the districts of Rosa Brook and Rosa Glen, original group settlement areas planned by the Mitchell Government in 1919. There one has to travel through forest land for upwards of 14 miles from the main road before coming to a settlement. Would it not be better to alienate land for agriculture adjacent to the main highways rather than tie up these isolated areas and thus prevent agricultural expansion?

The Minister for Housing: It is possible that these isolated settlements should never have been allowed to develop.

Mr. BOVELL: Had they not been allowed to develop I believe this State would have become bankrupt many years ago. Primary production is the basis of our national prosperity.

The Minister for Housing: Do you know that in the Murray Road Board district, for instance, only about 50 per cent. of the land held has been developed and used?

Mr. BOVELL: That is another matter which we can discuss at some other time. I am speaking of the utilisation of Crown lands and the difficulties and delays that occur when one endeavours to have land released for selection. Again I ask the Government to use its advisory panel to speed up this process and to announce a plan. If, as the Minister says by interjection, there are certain areas which the Forests Department will not give up, let it be gazetted that these areas will not be released for primary production and then people in agricultural districts will know where they stand.

The Minister for Housing: Action is under way to deal with half a million acres that have been left unattended for many years.

Mr. BOVELL: That may be so. I am in full agreement with the policy of consolidation of schools in country areas, but in that process difficulties arise. One of the main needs of isolated communities in this regard is the retention on the present sites of the school buildings that have for many years been used not only as school rooms but as polling booths at election time and as church meeting places, as well as for meetings of the Farmers' Union, the local parents and citizens' association or any other body or organisation.

It is the policy of the Government to remove these one-roomed buildings to larger centres in order to save expense, but in view of the fact that most of them have been erected for upwards of 30 years, it would suit these communities much better, if the school rooms could be retained where they are for use as social centres. In answer to my question in the previous session of Parliament the then Minister for Education said it was anticipated that the new school at Margaret River would be available for use in November, 1954, and that is a case in point.

At Metricup the local hall committee has directed correspondence to the Premier and I have directed correspondence, and have made representations, to the former Minister in regard to the Osmington school. The Bramley Parents & Citizens' Association has requested that the building there be retained and it will be seen that funds could be saved in that way, because when shifted the value of

such a building would not be much. They are constructed of either weatherboard or asbestos sheeting, with iron roofs, and after 25 or 30 years in a heavy rainfall area the iron and other materials, when moved, are of very little commercial value. I wish to emphasise to the Government the need for retaining these buildings in isolated districts for use by the communities concerned, especially where representations are made to the Government by the local authority concerned.

Another matter that I wish to refer to is one upon which I have asked a number of questions during the life of this Parliament, namely, the need for a redistribution of seats and of Legislative Assembly electoral boundaries. Section 12 of the Electoral Districts Act of 1947 says—

(1) The State may from time to time be wholly or partially redivided into electoral districts and electoral provinces by commissioners appointed under this Section in manner hereinafter provided whenever directed by the Governor by proclamation.

(2) Such proclamation shall be issued—

(a) on a resolution being passed by the Legislative Assembly in that behalf; or

(b) if in the report by the Chief Electoral Officer to the Minister to whom the administration of the Electoral Act, 1907-1940, is for the time being committed, as to the state of the rolls made up for any triennial election it appears that the enrolment in not less than five electoral districts falls short of or exceeds by 20 per centum the quota as ascertained for such districts under this Act.

Mr. Yates: How many electorates are out of adjustment now?

Mr. BOVELL: I would not like to say, because I have not the recent figures of the Chief Electoral Officer for the Assembly districts, but I know that after the last general election in 1953 there was a sufficient number of seats out of balance to enable a redistribution to take place. No member of this House personally desires a redistribution, as we all know our electors and they know us, and I believe we all feel we are fitted to represent them; but the Government is not immune from the law and, as the law stands, a redistribution of Assembly seats should have taken place after the last triennial election in February, 1953.

The Minister for Housing: The trouble is that in the intervening period they could get hopelessly out of balance again.

Mr. BOVELL: That is so, but I am dealing with the law of the State and wish to emphasise the fact that the Government is not immune from the law. On the 19th August, 1953, I asked this question of the Premier, which appears at page 182, Volume I of the 1953 "Hansard"—

(1) Has the Chief Electoral Officer reported to the Minister concerned that from the state of the rolls made up for the triennial election held on the 14th February, 1953, not less than five electoral districts fall short of, or exceed by 20 per cent., the quota as ascertained for such districts, provided for in the Electoral Districts Act of 1947?

(2) If so, what action has been taken by the Government to comply with the provisions of the Electoral Districts Act, 1947?

And the Premier replied—

(1) Yes.

(2) This matter is receiving consideration.

Hon. D. Brand: It is a long time back, is it not?

Mr. BOVELL: On the 12th December, 1953, I asked a further question of the Premier, as follows:—

(1) With reference to my question on the 19th August, 1953, concerning action by the Chief Electoral Officer and the Government necessary to comply with the provisions of the Electoral Districts Act, 1947, and in view of the replies given by him that the matter was receiving consideration, will he inform the House what action has been taken by the Government?

(3) Will he also state when the commissioners appointed under the State Act will release details of proposed readjustments of Legislative Assembly electoral boundaries?

The Premier replied—

(1) The Government has not yet been able to give this matter full consideration.

(2) No information is available at the present time.

In the interim I have asked other questions on the same subject, but in the special session held in April of this year I again asked a question of the Premier, which reads as follows:—

With reference to my question of the 19th August, 1953, and the 2nd December, 1953, concerning action by the Chief Electoral Officer and the Government necessary to comply with the provisions of the Electoral Districts Act, 1947, and in view of the replies given by him that the matter was receiving consideration, will he inform the House what action has

been taken by the Government? Will he also state when the commissioners appointed under the said Act will release details of proposed readjustment of Legislative Assembly electoral boundaries?

The Premier replied—

No action has been taken up to date.

Immediately following that I asked another question, without notice, of the Premier, as follows:—

In view of that reply, will he give the House an assurance that action will be taken soon to comply with the existing law?

The Premier replied—

I will undertake to have the matter investigated and advise the hon. member by letter.

I am not going to complain that the Premier has not advised me by letter because he did not say when he would communicate with me. The member for South Perth, during yesterday's sitting, asked a question concerning this matter, but we do not seem to have made very much progress. Personally, I am not keen about a redistribution of seats, but the Government has two alternatives; one is to submit a Bill to the House to amend the existing law and the other is to abide by the law at present in force.

The Premier: I quite agree.

Mr. BOVELL: On matters concerning this Parliament, I would like to say that for once the Premier and the Prime Minister, by their statements, seem to be in agreement on one subject, namely, the extension of the life of Parliaments to five years. Possibly, the Premier will recall that, when he was Leader of the Opposition and we were discussing electoral matters, he suggested that the then Government might be better employed considering a Bill to increase the life of not that Parliament or, in this case, the present Parliament, but all future Parliaments.

The Prime Minister recently made a statement on the need to increase the life of an elected Parliament. The member for Claremont referred to this matter in his speech on the Address-in-reply, and I want to support his remarks, namely, that it is necessary to have legislation introduced along those lines. Whilst the Government has not the constitutional majority required, if it introduces a Bill to increase the life of Parliament as from the date of the next general election and does not introduce any other matter, I will support that Bill and assist to make up the constitutional majority. That is, a Bill in relation to increasing the life of the State Parliament to four or five years, but not this present Parliament.

The Premier: Can the hon. member give a similar assurance on behalf of Mr. Watson?

Mr. BOVELL: He is quite capable of giving such an assurance himself, but I can say I will support a Bill to increase the life of the Legislative Assembly of this State after the next general election.

The Minister for Housing: What will you do with the life of the Council?

Mr. BOVELL: From my observations, the Legislative Council is quite capable of looking after its own destiny.

The Minister for Education: How many years do you suggest should be the life of a Parliament?

Mr. BOVELL: Four or five years. I have already said that; but not this Parliament. Let us look to the future and, provided this Parliament runs its normal course and the Senate runs its normal course and the Legislative Council runs its normal course—

The Minister for Health: Abnormal! It never stops.

Mr. BOVELL: —within three months of the first half of 1956 there will be a State general election, a Legislative Council biennial election, a Senate election and, for good measure, the State road board elections. They will all be held in that short period of time. I think the people have had enough of so many elections. It is time we increased the life of Parliaments to conform with the procedure that operates in the Mother of Parliaments in Great Britain and also in the Parliament of our Sister Dominion, New Zealand.

Mr. Yates: It would save a lot of unnecessary expense.

Mr. BOVELL: It would and, as the member for Claremont has said, the money saved could be used to provide proper and adequate accommodation for members and staff in this building. I believe that this Parliament House is a disgrace to the State of Western Australia. We have expanded our State mainly on the basis of primary production and we are now further expanding along secondary production lines. As a result, we can look forward to a great increase in the population of this State. It is time we had an impressive edifice here which would show the people, not only of Western Australia but also the whole world, that we are proud of our parliamentary system and that we are entitled to the respect that any properly-constituted Parliament should enjoy. However, unless we show that pride and dignity in ourselves, we cannot expect it from others.

The Minister for Housing: There would be a considerable amount of space provided if you helped us to get rid of the Legislative Council.

Mr. BOVELL: My views and those held by the Minister for Housing very seldom coincide and this occasion is no exception.

The Minister for Housing: It makes me happy.

Mr. BOVELL: I believe the Legislative Council has, in the past, and long before this Assembly was created, done a good job and is still doing a good job in giving sterling service in the interests of the people of this State.

The Minister for Education: I think the Minister for Housing would like to see a House of Lords in lieu.

Mr. BOVELL: And the Minister would be the first one to get there if he could. I want to impress upon the Premier that he should give consideration to introducing a Bill to increase the life of future Parliaments up to a period of five years to save the State unnecessary expense. Of course, we might have a good Government, and we might have a bad Government during that period.

The Premier: That last point is the one.

Mr. BOVELL: That is where the Legislative Council comes in; it would soon get rid of it if it were a bad Government.

Mr. Yates: Have we had any bad Governments in Western Australia?

The Premier: It is all a question of degree.

Mr. Yates: I am serious. Have we?

The Premier: Not really.

Mr. BOVELL: I would say that previous Governments have been fairly stable. As far as I can recollect, too, every Government has run its normal course since 1917 or 1919, when Sir James Mitchell became Premier of Western Australia. Since then we have had the late Mr. Collier, Mr. Willcock, Mr. Wise, Sir Ross McLarty and the present Premier. I will not exclude the present Government from my comments. I do not think we have really had a bad Government among any of those that have been in office in the past. However, members opposite are not going to use that as evidence against me. I do not mind if they do because their Government is not a bad Government, even although it is not a good one. In 1933 the Mitchell-Latham Government put the State before any political considerations and that has been the spirit that has prevailed always in this Parliament of Western Australia.

The Minister for Health: Governments would have been dissolved if we could have gone out on a double dissolution.

Mr. BOVELL: What? The Mitchell-Latham Government?

The Minister for Health: No, any Government.

Mr. BOVELL: That may be so, but the fact remains that no Government has gone out under its specified time. With the experience of the past behind us, I think there would be no danger in experimenting with the passing of a Bill to extend the life of the next and future Parliaments to a four-year period at least.

[Mr. Moir took the Chair.]

MR. LAPHAM (North Perth) [6.13]: I desire to make good use of the time allotted me in this Address-in-reply debate to deal with the traffic problems of the State. I suggest to the Government that it should appoint a select committee to inquire into all aspects of traffic in Western Australia, particularly in the metropolitan area, with a view to altering the traffic regulations and amending the Act itself. I consider I am quite competent to speak on this subject because I have been a driver of motor vehicles for 30 years.

For a great deal of that time I earned my living as a commercial driver and as an omnibus driver. I promised myself and the people of this State that if ever I became a member of Parliament, I would do my best to rectify the absurdities which exist and are tied up with the present traffic problem. This problem has been with us for many years. There is an appalling accident rate; there are many problems that should be overcome in our city streets; there is a lack of parking facilities and there is an absolute maze of traffic regulations, many of which only serve to harass and confuse the motorists.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. LAPHAM: For many years the conditions I have referred to have been apparent and the numerous associated problems have been dealt with by different organisations, in one way or another. Unfortunately, however, we still have tragic accidents on our roads. Consequently, I think it is time an approach to this subject was made with a completely open mind, to the end that, if we find any measure has not come up to expectations, it should be immediately repealed.

Organisations and individuals have endeavoured to arrive at a solution of our traffic problems, and I am appreciative of their endeavours as, I think, is every member. Although I may appear to be critical in my remarks, I would like to make it clear that my criticism is not levelled at any individual or organisation but mainly at the decisions reached by them. To accomplish any improvement in traffic affairs, it is necessary to examine the basic faults; and, to my mind, the paramount fault is that over the years traffic has been treated as something of a minor character.

Originally, traffic control was vested in the hands of executors who had scant knowledge of their subject, apart from the

statistical aspect; and each authority, in turn, introduced measures without a full realisation of their effect, until today the Traffic Act is composed of innumerable amendments superimposed upon a mass of regulations, to such an extent that the reprinting of the Traffic Act and regulations have proved such a colossal job that the authorities have shelved the task for many years. The result is that the Act and regulations have not been obtainable for a considerable period. I think it is very doubtful whether there is a lawyer in this city who has a complete knowledge of them; and I sometimes wonder whether even the Traffic Department is not somewhat hazy about certain of the provisions. Yet the motorist is expected to conform to them.

Little wonder, then, that when the average motorist sights a traffic patrolman in his rear-vision mirror, he goes all of a dither, or, to put it in the words of Kirwan Ward, gives himself a quick brain wash and goes through the mental cockpit drill. Speed limit? Hand signals? Remember to stop at that last corner? Tail light on? Did I blow my horn at the last intersection? Did I cross at 15 miles per hour? And so on. I suggest to members that if they were followed by a patrolman, they could be picked up quite simply within half a mile. As a matter of fact, if we conformed to the regulation and blew our horns at every intersection, the city and suburban areas would be an absolute nightmare. Yet the Act and regulations provide for that to be done.

However, I am not suggesting that lack of a printed Traffic Act and regulations is what causes motorists so much concern, but the fact that the Act and regulations contain so many "do's" and "don'ts" that today the average motorist is confused. He is never sure whether he has breached the law or conformed to it. I therefore think it is high time the Act and regulations were reviewed with a view to reducing the restrictive provisions and allowing motorists to act on their own initiative by having more responsibility thrown on them.

Over the years there has been a tendency to make the motorist regulation-conscious. There seems to be a regulation for every trivial circumstance. That is entirely wrong; it is a retrograde step. Motorists should have impressed on them that they should not be involved in accidents; that should be the whole basis of these measures. I remember that, when I was driving an omnibus for a living, I and others were told, "You are not to have an accident. Whether you are in the right or the wrong, you have complete control of your vehicle. Don't offer as an excuse after an accident the fact that the other man did not give a signal, or did this, or did not do that. You have your vehicle

to control, and it is up to you." Of course, we followed that policy and consequently omnibus accidents were rare in those days.

However, there has grown up the idea that if one conforms to the regulations one is in the right. Unfortunately, some people have been right—dead right. Too many have relied on what the other fellow was going to do and have not relied on themselves, and that is the cause of the trouble. We are pandering to the incompetent person, to the inattentive driver, at all times.

Hon. D. Brand: He is the biggest problem.

Mr. LAPHAM: Yes. Yet we include provisions in our Act and regulations that pander to the inattentive. The regulations and the whole Act should be altered, having in mind that courtesy is the principle that should be followed, and that motorists must be made attentive.

Traffic has increased enormously over the last few years but our road policy has not kept up with it. Of course, I realise it is a matter of finance. I do not mean that we have more holes in our roads than previously—or fewer. But there was a specific width for a road and that has not been altered. Today, the Scarborough Beach-rd., for instance, carries a heavy volume of traffic, including omnibuses of exceptional length; and when there are two lanes of traffic, there is not room to pass such buses. It is necessary to wait until the oncoming traffic has cleared before one can move around the side of a bus. That means that the traffic on the road proceeds in jerks, and it all follows the bus. When the bus stops, everything else stops. This is irritating, and it creates a certain amount of rashness in some drivers. They become sick and tired of following buses, and say, "We will have a go." Sometimes, having a go works out all right, and sometimes it does not; and that is how trouble develops.

The two-lane roads create another problem. In accordance with our traffic regulations, when a motorist wishes to turn from a main road into a street on the right, he has to pull to the white line in the middle of the road, and give a hand signal. But he must not turn in face of oncoming traffic. This means that there are occasions—and many occasions on the Scarborough Beach-rd.—when a car is stationary in the middle of the road and all the following traffic is piled up at the back of it. That is a most discourteous regulation.

The solution is simple. What a motorist should do is to pull into the kerb and allow following traffic to go past, waiting until the road is clear before turning into the side street. In that case, the only person inconvenienced would be himself. I make the suggestion that the regulation be altered to compel a motorist in those circumstances to pull into the kerb before turning to the right.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They can pull to the centre of the road; that is equally effectual.

Mr. LAPHAM: No, because the road is immediately blocked. When a motorist pulls over to the centre of a road with two lanes of traffic, and stops, he is blocking faster traffic, because that traffic travels into the centre. Thus, such a motorist is creating another road hazard. It is a stationary vehicle amid fast traffic.

Hon. A. F. Watts: He has to stop somewhere.

Mr. LAPHAM: Put him on the kerb where he belongs, and he is only inconveniencing himself and not other road users.

The Minister for Health: When he pulls to the centre, cars can pass him on the left.

Mr. LAPHAM: Unfortunately that cannot be done in most of our streets. It is only within the last few months that the motorist has been allowed to pass to the left of a vehicle that is stationary in the middle of the road. Prior to that, a person passing to the left of such a vehicle committed a traffic offence. Many members will disagree with me when I say that stop signals are superfluous, but I say they are absolutely useless in an emergency, and anyone with experience will admit it because with the modern car the window is invariably up, especially in this weather, and when an emergency arises the driver has not time to lower the window to give a stop signal. He puts the brakes on and stops as quickly as he can.

The only times I ever find hand signals are given is when cars are in a traffic jam and move along for ten yards or so at a time. I object to giving traffic signals on those occasions. Most patrolmen are courteous and sensible, but one came up and abused me when I was in a traffic jam once, because I had moved ten yards and had not given any traffic signal. It is absurd to have to give signals in those circumstances. There is this to be considered, also, that if the following cars realise that there will be no stop signals from those in front, they will become more attentive. They will rely on themselves, and we will not be pandering to the following cars.

The Minister for Health: I agree with that.

Mr. Ackland: You will have many people in Royal Perth Hospital very quickly by doing that.

Mr. LAPHAM: No. When people give signals we do not know whether they are waving to friends or pointing out birds.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: If you try to pass a vehicle on the left, you get into trouble.

Mr. LAPHAM: Yes. The signal given was probably a courtesy signal to go forward. If the driver tries to pass on the

right, he possibly finds it is a signal to turn to the right. Our hand signals are given in a very lackadaisical fashion.

The Premier: I have heard that the only thing you can be certain about when a driver gives a hand signal is that the window is open.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: On many trucks they do not have a window, but a curious thing that sticks up.

Mr. LAPHAM: A regulation that exists today prevents motorists from resting their elbow on the window or door of the car whilst driving. To stop that practice is entirely wrong because it has a purpose. It is one that is adopted by most commercial men, such as taxi-drivers, and they do it for a reason, namely, so that they can give a signal quickly and cleanly. Their arms can move immediately to give the signal which can be plainly seen. If the arm is away from the door the driver can give only half a signal. Whoever introduced this regulation introduced it, I feel, because someone had got an arm taken off in a traffic accident, and the introduction was made without a realisation of the reason for drivers resting their arms on the door.

If we get experienced men to study the question of why certain practices have been adopted in traffic, we might possibly get somewhere. Over the years we have had a number of experts endeavouring to lay down regulations and say that this shall be done and that shall not be done, but I say now, with a full knowledge of what I am saying, that our experts are completely inexpert. Whilst I appreciate their endeavours to stop a lot of the traffic dangers on our roads, I consider they are incapable of doing so because they just have not the necessary knowledge that can be gained only by experience.

Should any hon. member be ill, he calls a doctor. He does not go for a carpenter. I suggest that if members want something done with regard to traffic, they should seek out men who have earned their livelihood by service in traffic most of their lives; and I do not mean men who occupy executive positions with omnibus companies. A man who has been the accountant of an omnibus company for 20 years would not have a knowledge of traffic, and neither would the manager.

Mr. Owen: You would not say that all taxi-drivers were expert drivers, would you?

Mr. LAPHAM: No, but many of them are and they have gained experience over the years. They, and others who have had practical experience, are the ones with knowledge that we should seek when we want to frame our regulations.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What do you think of the by-pass at Victoria Park which is joined to a short road that is not a by-pass road to another? That is a trap.

Mr. LAPHAM: Yes. There are quite a lot of traps. Our city is full of them. I want to discuss the signal given when changing from one traffic lane to another. We see this quite often in Stirling Highway. A car on the inside lane eases out to go into the outside lane because a vehicle is parked on the inside lane. The driver sometimes gives a signal one way and sometimes another. Some do not give a signal at all. I am in the last category. I think it is absurd. When a motorist is changing from an inside lane to an outside lane because of a vehicle stopped in front, a driver at the back should know what he is going to do, because he cannot go through the car that is stationary.

Mr. Brady: He might not see the stationary car if he is watching you.

Mr. LAPHAM: He should not do that. He should be watching everything. That is exceptionally bad driving.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: How can you tell he is not going to turn to the right? You might try to pass to the left and then he turns back, and you are in trouble.

The Premier: I think the best driver drives a lot on his rear vision mirror.

Mr. LAPHAM: Yes, and the Premier will agree with me that if the driver does that, there is no need for him to have his hand darting in and out like a lizard's tongue all the time. Another signal that is absolutely ridiculous is the one by which the right hand is extended when the motorist is pulling out from the kerb. The Act lays down that the driver must do that and also that he must see that no traffic is coming when he pulls out.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Some pull out and extend their hands afterwards.

Mr. LAPHAM: Yes, and some put their hands out and then pull away from the kerb automatically because they think they are immune if trouble occurs. The responsibility should be placed on the motorist not to pull out in front of approaching traffic. All he has to do is to turn his head to see that the road is clear, and not to pull out until it is clear. By extending his arm he is likely to be prevented from turning around to look back because his arm comes up against the door jamb of the car so that he finds extreme difficulty in turning. That applies, perhaps, more particularly to people getting on in years.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you not think the intention of providing that the hand should be extended is a good one, nevertheless?

Mr. LAPHAM: No. There is no need for it. Why put the hand out at all? The responsibility should be on the motorist not to pull out from the kerb in the face of traffic. Gentlemen, I might run up against a little criticism in my next point, and that is in connection with giving way to traffic on the right.

The Premier: I think you should address everyone present!

Mr. LAPHAM: The only good I can find about the rule of giving way to traffic on the right is that it helps the magistrate to secure a conviction. Other than that, it has no value at all.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You cannot look both ways.

Mr. LAPHAM: The motorist can look both ways if he slows down a little. We have introduced a principle here that I have objected to for many years. The giving way to traffic on the right has had the effect of inducing the motorist, when crossing an intersection, to look only one way. He looks to the right to see that everything is clear and then immediately shoots through with the result that he frequently acts discourteously, and if another motorist, getting to the intersection at the same time makes a mistake there is an accident; and it is only human that we all make mistakes at times.

If we placed the responsibility on the motorist not to have an accident and ensured that he looked both ways, we would be doing something that was good. I will give an instance of the absurdity of giving way to the traffic on the right. The other night on the corner of Beaufort and Newcastle-sts., four cars reached the corner at the same time. It was most peculiar. The drivers all looked at one another, and suddenly two made up their minds to go together. They did not get to the point of a collision but stopped a foot or two from each other. They finished up by waving each other on and ultimately got away.

This shows that when four vehicles get to an intersection at the one time, they cannot conform to this regulation of giving way to traffic on the right. When we consider the position at intersections we have to remember the disabilities that are associated with intersections. At one point the disability might be bad whilst at another there might be no disability. A motorist going up a hill and approaching an intersection suffers a greater disability in comparison with the driver who is on the crest of the hill because the latter has a far better view. Consequently a regulation which lays down that the motorist shall give way to the traffic on the right presupposes that everything is equal.

Not every motorist approaching an intersection has the same view. The view can be upset by quite a number of things such as children playing on the footpath. The average motorist, when seeing children, moves a little nearer to the centre of the road. A motorist's view can also be impeded by a car parked too close to a corner and so on. When we get to the stage of saying, "Thou shalt not have an accident," especially at intersections, we shall have accomplished something. To

lay down hard and fast rules and say that we must give way to traffic on the right or the left, or do something else, is utterly foolish and proves to me how inexperienced are our experts.

I would like to deal with the question of car headlights. The regulation lays down that the high beam shall not be higher than 3ft. at a distance of 75ft. from the car. No regulation, as regards the lower beam, is laid down but there seems to be an understanding—I am not too sure that it is a regulation—that the lower beam shall be used around the city and suburbs. I consider that that is one of the reasons why there are so many pedestrian accidents on our highways today. Many motorists travelling along our highways—Stirling Highway for example—drive at a speed of 40 miles an hour. I know because I do it myself.

But let us assume that a driver is travelling at 35 miles an hour. His car would cover approximately 52ft. or 53ft. in a second. If he is using the lower beam, with a range of 60ft., by the time he sees a pedestrian crossing the road he is within 60ft. of that person. The driver's foot is on the accelerator and he must remove his foot and apply it to the brake. It is generally recognised that a man's reflexes must be in good working order if he is to carry out that action in a split second. In that fraction of time—about a second—he has travelled 52ft. closer to the pedestrian and, as a result, there is a possibility of an accident. He is on top of the pedestrian before he has really applied his brakes.

That is why I think it wrong that motorists should be forced to drive with the lower beam. Personally I have no difficulty in driving at night when oncoming cars are using the high beam, so long as the high beam conforms to the regulation. By adopting the present procedure we are pandering to the incompetent. The high beam gives the motorist a good view and he has ample time in which to apply his brakes if the need arises. The trouble is that when people learn to drive at night, the first thing they do is to gaze at the approaching headlights. That in itself shows that they are not concentrating on their job because the correct procedure is to peer a little further ahead than the lights will show with the object of trying to pick out what is on the road. The mere fact that something is on the road does not worry a motorist who learns to drive in that way. So, in my opinion, we should use the high beam at night and teach the incompetent.

Hon. L. Thorn: What about the cars with one light? Instead of dimming they put out one light.

Mr. LAPHAM: I do not like that idea. It is going to the absolute extreme. I would compromise and say that instead of having a headlight beam which is 3 ft.

high at 75ft., we should have an adjustment between the lower and the higher beam for city driving. The lower beam does not give the driver sufficient time to pick out an object in front of him.

Hon. L. Thorn: The trouble with putting out one light is that the motorist thinks he is approaching a motorbike.

Mr. LAPHAM: Yes; I do not like the idea at all. I have heard drivers—and one would think they were competent—say that they have found it difficult to pick out cyclists who are riding without a light. As a driver, of many years standing, I have never found it difficult because I am looking ahead into the darkness trying to concentrate and see what is in front of me. In the case of a cyclist who is riding without a light, one usually sees something glint or something that reflects and consequently one receives a warning. But with pedestrians, it is difficult unless one sees the flapping of his trousers or some other part of his wearing apparel. Usually it is most difficult, particularly on a wet night, but with a cyclist there is not much trouble if one is concentrating.

Mr. Jamieson: What about an oncoming vehicle with glaring headlights?

Mr. LAPHAM: The motorist must learn to drive against them. A motorist can reach the stage where he can read the number plate of an oncoming car with glaring headlights. I do it every night.

The Premier: Do you wear glasses?

Mr. LAPHAM: No, I have no difficulty whatever.

The Premier: Then you soon will.

Mr. LAPHAM: I shall now deal with pedestrians. I have come to the conclusion that the average pedestrian does not realise the disabilities motorists suffer; he has no idea of the impaired vision. After all, a pedestrian walking along the road has an idea that the motorist has normal vision and, as a result, if he wants to cross the road, he walks half-way across and waits for the motorist to drive by. After the car has passed, the pedestrian continues on his way. But if something happens and the motorist swerves suddenly, the pedestrian is not with us any more. Of course the pedestrian does not realise that in many cases a motorist cannot see him and until such time as we educate our pedestrians and advise them of that fact, we will not be overcoming the problem.

After listening to the member for South Perth last night, I have an idea that the Government will be approached for a further loan to the National Safety Council. I hope that the council will use some of the money in making a full-sized film which will be screened at all city theatres and will give pedestrians an idea of what it is like sitting in the driving seat of a motor-vehicle. If such a film were made, pedestrians could be shown the disabilities

suffered by a motorist in normal and in wet weather. In this way pedestrians would become educated.

There is also the problem of crosswalks. During the day a motorist can easily see a crosswalk, but at night it is absolutely impossible unless he knows the district. Pedestrians have a habit of taking for granted the fact that they have the right of way on crosswalks. As a result, they consider that they are immune to danger. But such is not the case because if a motorist does not know that he is approaching a crosswalk, he sails across and consequently there could be trouble. I suggest that we introduce a system of lighting for our crosswalks—something similar to the lights used at Gloucester Park, to indicate a photo finish, would be quite suitable. The intensity of the light and the type used could be decided upon and it would give motorists an idea that they were approaching a crosswalk. A similar system could be used to warn a motorist that he was approaching a dangerous intersection. At such places red lights should be suspended above the intersection as a warning to motorists to be cautious.

The Minister for Housing: Have you seen the cats' eyes let into the road near Armadale?

Mr. LAPHAM: They are a very good idea.

The Minister for Housing: I think they are the answer.

Mr. LAPHAM: I would like to pay a tribute to the R.A.C. for the good work it has done throughout the State in erecting signs on the sides of our country roads. When one is approaching a bad corner it is nice to see the cats' eyes winking as a warning. The R.A.C. has used this type of warning for sharp bends, "S" bends and other motoring hazards and has done a remarkably good job. I think we should also review the question of highways. Over the years an idea has grown up that because someone approaches the Minister, the Government or the Traffic Department, such and such a road is gazetted as a highway.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We are the laughing stock of Australia.

Mr. LAPHAM: I do not know about that, but these highways get me worried at times. I did not know that Carrington-st., Inglewood, was a main highway, and I sailed across an intersection. I found out afterwards that I had crossed a highway, and, of course, I should have stopped before crossing. There is nothing to indicate that it is a highway; the road carries little traffic—I believe one omnibus per hour. Shepperton-rd. is another case in point. That should not be gazetted as a highway; but apparently it has been done to appease someone. Before a highway is gazetted there should be ample indication that it warrants the term, and

drivers should be warned, either by cats' eyes or some other signs that they are approaching a main highway. Where heavy traffic is in evidence, there is no great need for signs, but they should be provided along all main highways. The present method of gazettement of a highway is absolutely absurd and neither Carrington-st. nor Shepperton-rd., in my opinion, should be classified in that category.

Children are also a worry to motorists. I have heard parents repeatedly say to their children, "Hurry across the street, or a motorcar will run over you." Immediately the child becomes excited and runs across the road. That is dangerous and parents, without realising what they are doing, are exposing their youngsters to a grave danger. If a child were to walk across the street—never mind how slowly—he would be quite safe. The mere fact that he runs across a road does not mean that he is safe; he is going too quickly for the motorist to act. Most pedestrian accidents are caused through confusion. The pedestrian on seeing the car approaching, tries to run the other way and the motorist, seeing the pedestrian crossing the road, tries to turn his car; and, as a result, there is confusion which usually ends in an accident. So I think it is high time that children were taught never to run across a roadway; they should always walk.

For some years now the Traffic Department has sent an instructor to schools to instruct children in road safety. To a point that is quite good, but, of course the instructor must carry out the instructions laid down under the Traffic Act and regulations. That is bad because today a number of our children ride bicycles. I have instructed my children to forget the instructions they have received at school and I have instructed them myself. The children are told at school that they must give stop signals. Usually a youngster is too small for the cycle he is riding and he has difficulty when he has both hands on the handle bars. But according to the instructor, the child must take one hand off the handle bar and give the signal. As soon as he takes one hand off the handle he wobbles all over the road. Surely a child on a cycle moves slowly enough for a motorist to know what he proposes to do without his having to give signals.

When children want to turn to the right they are instructed to move into the centre of the road and then turn. They find themselves right in the middle of the road where there is fast-moving traffic and they are waiting to turn. This creates a dreadful hazard. I feel that they should do what most adult cyclists do; that is, alight near the kerb and walk across; I always do that myself.

I have considered the question of children on omnibuses for some time, and I am very perturbed about it. Some parents

and citizens' associations have written to the authorities concerning kiddies on omnibuses. For many years the idea has grown up that as children do not pay much for their fares they are not of much importance on the omnibus, and they are more often than not told to stand up, irrespective of the disability they might suffer. When they board buses in the morning nobody gives way to them. On Scarborough Beach-rd. I have seen children clinging to the door of the bus while on their way to school.

I think this is entirely wrong and it is something that should be stopped. The least we can do is to protect the children. When a parent sends her child in an omnibus, the conductor of the bus should see that the child is right inside before he starts. From the point of safety I would prefer to see the children seated. Usually it is considered essential for children to stand and give their seats to adults. But children get tired a lot quicker than adults; I would rather stand myself and give my seat to a child. While standing in the aisle they have nothing to hang on to and they are usually holding their school cases in their hands which puts them at a far greater disadvantage than an adult who might be standing.

The question of visibility on our highways is another matter I shall mention briefly, because I feel to some extent our roadways are creating difficulties in that we have allowed so many signs—flashing signs and all sorts of illuminations—to be erected on the sides of the roads. From end to end along Stirling Highway, there is a succession of neon lights in varying colours. I guarantee that everybody who has driven down Stirling Highway in a car has seen them all, which only goes to prove that those continually flashing signs are distracting to the motorist, because if he were concentrating on his job he would not see them. Apart from that, we have permitted lights to be erected more from the point of view of ornamentation than of utility. I refer mainly to the Causeway. Never have I seen a stretch of road so badly lighted. It is full of shadows and I would not cross the Causeway at night for £100.

Mr. May: Who is responsible for that?

Mr. LAPHAM: I do not know, but the illuminations there are most confusing. I think it is dreadful that something that has been completed so recently should have such poor lighting.

Another matter we must take into account very seriously is that of drunken driving. In answer to a question, I think the Premier indicated the other night that convictions for drunken driving had increased over the last 12 months. As everybody in this Chamber knows, the penalties for drunken driving are much higher than they were formerly. Yet we find that the convictions for drunken driving have

increased. It indicates to me that whilst the average motorist knows the penalty he will suffer for drunken driving, he still gets himself into difficulty somehow, gets drunk and, in consequence, finds himself in trouble. That in itself is worthy of an inquiry.

The Premier: There are more patrol officers these days.

Mr. LAPHAM: That may be the reason; but there is a lot of drunken driving on the road. I often wonder whether a reduction in the alcoholic content would not solve the problem. On our country roads there seems to be an idea that the faster one can get from one point to another, the more expert one is in driving. I think that is entirely wrong. There should be an absolute speed limit of 50 miles an hour on country roads. If anyone travels above that speed, he should be stopped. To my mind, 50 miles an hour is quite fast enough. Today we find that there are a number of what are called roll-overs, where cars travelling at such excessive speeds are unable to be controlled and over they go. What the Traffic Department does about it, I do not know, because the reason must be difficult to trace. The effect of roll-overs, however, means more expense to insurance companies, with the result that the cautious motorist has to pay a lot more for his comprehensive policy than he normally would.

The last problem with which I wish to deal is parking in our city streets. I know we are all interested in the parking problem because there never seems to be space available. I think the matter calls for a complete inquiry. Today parking is a nightmare. One goes round the city block looking for somewhere to park and, of course, one is not able to find a spot. Another aspect is that at one time a pointsman might permit a motorist to turn right, but the next time he will refuse to permit the right-hand turn, but will send the motorist right through which, of course, upsets any arrangements he might have had to park his vehicle.

While double parking is considered a breach of the regulations we find vehicles double-parked in Murray-st. from the William-st. end to Forrest Place and beyond. From 9.30 in the morning to 5 p.m. we find double parking in Hay-st. from Milligan-st. onwards. It is, of course, a fact that drivers of commercial vehicles that have to deliver goods to stores have no alternative but to double-park.

Should they happen to be double-parking a policeman, who might be suffering from an attack of liver, comes up and tackles the driver. The latter gets a little hot under the collar and feels that the policeman should know the difficulty there is in finding parking space. A heated argument ensues between the driver and the policeman. This sort of thing should be avoided. There should be a complete

inquiry into facilities for parking and I would recommend to the Government that it appoint a select committee to go into the whole problem.

Mr. Brady: Do you think there should be one authority for the lot?

Mr. LAPHAM: I think that might be a very good idea. It is my personal opinion; I do not want to be dogmatic about it because there are so many problems connected with parking on which I feel a select committee may be able to reach a decision, and provide a beneficial solution.

HON. DAME FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [8.26]: I did not want to speak tonight, but, after hearing the inspired speeches made by a few members, I thought I would also like to participate in the debate. In many instances I quite agree with the last speaker; I think he made a very interesting speech. The funny part is that everything he has said we have done wrong, I have been doing for the last 30 years—and I am still here. I think it was my instructor who told me in the first place that when I drove a car, I should always consider that the driver in the other car was a fool. I have always done so and consequently have not had an accident.

Mr. Owen: Very good advice.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I was also intrigued with the speech made by the member for Victoria Park, who said such eulogistic things about members of the Labour Party on that side of the House. But, as he did not say anything about members on this side of the House, I will try to say a little about both. I really wanted to speak about something which is very much in front of the public today, namely, the great drift of the citizens generally and the politicians in particular towards communism.

We have all known for ages past that communism has been a subject that was almost hidden; people have not cared to talk about it. But today we find it blatantly preached from the platform, in Parliament, sometimes in universities and on occasions even from pulpits. The Petrov case is a very old one. It is taking up a lot of news space, but it is a very old case.

Many years ago and, before I was in Parliament, I remember going to the Trades Hall to listen to a speech made by a man named Miles—I am not sure about this, but I believe that was his name. He was considered to be some sort of great man in the Labour Party. What intrigued me about his speech was that he said very dramatically—and I have remembered it all these years, "I could put my hand on 200 people today in key positions and I could paralyse the economy of Australia."

That has stayed in my mind all these years. I believe that man could have done it, and I believe it could be done today. I propose to read a few extracts. A few days

ago a conference was held in the East and even at that gathering it was said that members of Parliament were not free—I am sorry the member for Victoria Park is not present—to act or vote as they thought fit.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Rubbish!

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I have not got a dust-bin to put it in! I shall read what was said—

Conference instructed that Government must not make decisions on this—

That was dealing with hours of liquor to be sold in the Eastern States.

—or any other matter off their own bat. It must submit any legislative proposals for approval or otherwise to the Council of Trade Unions.

This makes it quite clear that the A.L.P. formulated Government policy, the elected parliamentary representatives being no more than the instruments to give effect to the will of the conference. Is it still rubbish?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Yes, it is still rubbish.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Wait until I have finished. We have heard a lot about the abolition of the Legislative Council. The member for Victoria Park did not mention this, but he showed the policy. I believe it has been the policy of the Labour Party for many years to get rid of the Legislative Council. It is contained in the Labour Party pledge.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is rubbish all the same.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: The Labour Party did not intend to carry it out.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The Liberals have done this in New Zealand.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: A few years ago, some time after I became a member of this House, I met a member of another place who had just won a seat from a Liberal candidate in the inland district. He was very jubilant. I said, "How do you do? You are happy here?" He said, "Very happy to be here." I said, "I suppose now you will try to do what you have promised, that is make a point of getting rid of the Legislative Council." He said, "Not on your life. I am here to stay and I am going to sit tight." And he is still sitting tight.

I want to read a few words which were uttered in the Labour Conference the other day—

Old-fashioned trade unionists who think that the Labour Party platform should be a genuine statement of Labour's political objectives were rebuffed again at the annual conference

of the A.L.P. A motion for the abolition of the New South Wales Legislative Council was defeated by a majority of 107 votes after a certain debate. Those who advocated the abolition of the Council as an undemocratic institution whose continued existence was contrary to the party's platform, overlooked a salient point. This was pointed out by a speaker who said that when the policy was formulated there were only one or two Labour representatives. Today Labour had control and would have control for the next 18 years.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Three cheers for Labour.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: He declared that the abolitionists were living in the past.

Mr. Brand: Who said that?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: The Labour speaker at the conference. That gets me to the point that what the Labour Party puts down on its platform is not genuine at all. The party is supposed to abide by what the Labour Council decides, not by what the parliamentary members themselves want.

The next point I wish to make is that we have almost reached the Russian stage of our political life, but we have not quite done that. We know now that the States of Australia are the greatest landlords in Australia, and the day will come, of course, when they will be complete landlords, and one will have to obtain permits to live in these houses. The Minister for Housing told us the other day that he was going to reduce some of the rents of the imported houses, and any reduction he is going to make will have to be borne by the over-burdened taxpayers of the State, that is, the difference between what the tenant was paying and the actual cost of the house.

I do not know why he said such a thing, because in many of those houses, if one cares to inquire, the tenants have a greater income than some of the people living in privately owned houses. If the Minister had been in earnest about housing, he would have sold hundreds or thousands of cheap houses to people, instead of erecting places like the Subiaco flats. I cannot help saying a word or two about this. When I asked some question yesterday regarding the Subiaco flats, I did not get the truthful answer that I expected.

The Minister for Housing: I take the strongest exception to anybody, but perhaps most of all to the member for Subiaco, saying that I gave an untruthful answer to a question. I ask for an unqualified withdrawal. If the hon. member were of another sex, a different treatment would be given to her.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: I ask the member for Subiaco to withdraw the statement.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: In deference to you, Mr. Acting Speaker, I withdraw that part of the statement. To continue my remarks, although I withdraw the statement about the answer not being truthful, I should say that perhaps the Minister did not understand the question. I am sure if the Minister did not know then, he knows now. I am telling him that the tenants of four houses near those flats have been approached and asked if they will sell their houses. The price did not matter very much. This was to allow the houses to be demolished so that garages could be erected on the site. If the Minister thinks that is a wise and economic plan, I cannot understand his logic.

Getting back to the Labour Party again, I wish to point out that on many occasions lately people have said that we depend on a swinging vote. In Canberra the other day this was said in conference by Mr. D. Rawson, political historian, when addressing the Science Congress. He stated—

Members of the Federal Parliamentary Labour Party were not interfered with except in exceptional cases by the Federal Labour Executive. Further, the Labour Executive or machine was likely to have greater control over Labour politicians in future. The tendency today was to reduce the independence of politicians and increase the power of the executive.

Later on he said that the Liberal and Country Party members were not interfered with by any executive.

The Premier: Even the member for Mt. Lawley cannot suppress a grin on hearing that.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Mr. Henry Meyer, of the University of Sydney, has this to say—

The Australian swinging vote sets the limits within which the Australian political parties had to adjust themselves.

Here I wish to say that I do not think there will be a swinging vote in the very near future. I believe that within 10 or 15 years we will become an absolutely communist country. I want to refer again to this Labour conference relating to an attack on the Arbitration Court. We all remember in the early days of the movement, Labour members and others believed in the Arbitration Court. They thought it was a very good idea where employer and employee could get fair treatment, but the other day this was reported—

Melbourne.—The unions make moves on arbitration. Revision of the Arbitration Act and a move to boycott the Arbitration Court will be considered by representatives of 96 unions from all States.

The Arbitration Court will fade out unless controlled by unions and that will be a serious matter.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you want arbitration for the landlords also?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I shall speak about that when we get on to housing. We have another example of control by unionists. A little while ago Brown, secretary of the Railways Union, was defeated. A great number of unionists wished him to be reinstated in the railways in some position or other, so they had a conference and demanded that Mr. Neill, the new secretary, should support the former secretary, Mr. Brown, who is a communist, in his efforts to secure employment in the Victorian railways. The men insisted that Mr. Neill lead a deputation to the railway commissioners.

When he refused, they hurled insults at him, calling him a "rubber-stamp" and "stooge of the commissioners," and counted him out. The police were then called in, and eventually this was what the secretary said on the matter of Brown's employment, "That is solely between Brown and the railway commissioners. I will not take any part in the proceedings." Thereafter the men shouted, "Don't you be too cocky. We are going to force you into supporting Brown. You are nothing but a rat." I am sure that my prediction will come true, and Brown will be reinstated.

Mr. Heal: Has he been reinstated yet?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Now I come to what the member for Collie said last night regarding the Griffin mine or the mines that have been closed down. I want members to realise that many people hold shares in the mines and the shareholders should dictate. They should be able to choose their own executive and decide when a mine should be closed. The member for Collie told us that the workers in the mines knew more about it than the executive. When men or women invest in shares in the mines, they have a right to expect their elected executive to exercise control. Very often the people who invest money in the mines have smaller incomes than the workers in the mines receive.

Mr. May: Then you do not know some of the executive.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I do know.

The Premier: Would it interest the member to know that the State is much more interested financially in the Griffin coal mines than the rest of the shareholders?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I expected that interjection. I was about to say that the State had lent money to the industry, and it may interest the Premier to know that the loan is being repaid with interest.

The Minister for Mines: How long did it take to pay it back?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I suppose every member gets a copy of the "Industrial and Mining Review," and will have read an article on this subject. Here is one paragraph—

Except as a bid to control the coal-fields, the union's action has no sense. If it was undertaken with the view of dictating to the companies how they are to mine coal, it is time that the union realised that the mines are being developed by private capital which has had few dividends. The fact that the State has lent the companies money for new plant does not alter the position. The companies are making regular repayments of the loan, with interest.

The Premier: Is the hon. member still referring to the Griffin company?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: The hon. member mentioned the coalmines and seemed to know more about the position than the executives do.

Mr. May: I did not mention the Griffin mine.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I am referring to the Collie coalmines.

Mr. May: I did not mention the Griffin company.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Well, whatever it was. Labour has a mighty control in this State, and it has been obtained through unions, boards and subtle legislation, and by bribing people by telling them that such-and-such things would be done if they voted for certain people. I am not saying who those people are. These promises are made and people believe them, and so the candidate concerned is returned. Years ago, one could join a union or a board if one wished, but today the organisation rules. One must join or be victimised.

The other day I read in the newspaper that the Federated Clerks' Union would prosecute six employers in New South Wales who were alleged to have failed to have their employees become members of unions. Why are employers to be held responsible for compelling employees to join a union? If a man wishes to give up his soul to the unions, he should do so without implicating his employers. Nowadays, if one does not join a union one is victimised. The union member must find funds to pay union officials to pay the spy to see that workers go slow, and must attend union meetings. Here is something that members opposite ought to know. Even the politician is to be drilled. This is a Press statement—

A move designed to stop Labour political candidates "stacking" branches with pledged followers to ensure their

pre-selection was made by the conference. From the 1st January next voting at pre-selection ballots in N.S.W. will be restricted to members who have attended at least 25 per cent. of their branch meetings during the 12 months before election nominations are called.

The new rules are not expected to be popular with some politicians, who will have to work harder to ensure support.

It has been no secret that some politicians have paid membership fees regularly for groups of supporters in return for their votes at election time.

Generally, these members have taken little interest in the party's affairs and have not attended meetings regularly.

Thus, it will be seen that even members are to be victimised.

The Premier: Is the hon. member quoting from the "Liberal News"?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I shall come to that later. The unionist has no freedom and the politician will have no freedom. Boards more or less have the same effect. A man may not sow or reap as he wishes although the land he seeds and the labour may be his. A man may not keep fowls and sell eggs without permission; neither may he give them away to the next-door neighbour who may be ill and need them without running the risk of being prosecuted.

The Premier: Blame the Country Party for that.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I suppose members are aware that, if they take a car to the country and open a stupid little show, they are able to get 10 or 20 dozen eggs at about a quarter of the price charged by Perth shops.

Mr. May: You are certainly giving us ideas.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes; black marketing is rife. I do not want members to misunderstand me. I do not deny the right of groups of men and women to organise, but I do deny the right of any board or union to demand membership or restrict the freedom of a man desirous of earning an honest living. These bodies get hold of men through fear, and fear will always eliminate courage.

I had a mild but disgusting example in my district at the last election. It was a case of "Vote—or else!" All the booths but one were manned by a Labour observer and dictator. In a Labour centre of hard-working people, the man was dressed according to the style of some of the people in that district—no coat, open shirt, no collar, turned up sleeves and no hat—and was perspiring as much as is possible on a hot day. In what might be termed a

marginal area, he wore a sedate suit—an expensive one—collar and tie, and on one occasion an Eden hat.

He spoke to the people who were giving out Liberal Party cards, "You are Mr. Blank. You work at so-and-so. Why are you supporting a Liberal candidate?" The man who was questioned asked, "Why not? What has that to do with you?" The reply was, "You will find out. You will be without a job soon, so be careful. I have your name." At another booth, he met the manager of a firm and said, "How do you do, Mr. Blank. I see that you are supporting the Liberal candidate." The reply was, "Yes. What is wrong with that?" The man said, "I just want to warn you that you will be without workers in the near future. You employ so many, so you had better be careful or you will find it difficult to get men."

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Where did this happen?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: At Subiaco. To a person entering the polling booth, the man, pointing to the person, said in a loud voice, "Remember that your job depends upon a Labour vote. If you do not vote Labour, you will lose your job."

Let me now quote from a beautiful little paper that came into my possession. It was widely distributed before the election and shows the brotherly love of a firm handshake between Sharkey and perhaps Chamberlain—a Labour hand. This is entitled, "New Road," and says—

Living Standards Leap Ahead Under Socialism.

Socialism for Australia would not be a blind experiment. The Soviet Union has pioneered the way. Before socialism, Russia was the most backward country in Europe . . .

Soviet society is now passing from the first stage of socialism to the society of abundance in which the guiding rule will be "From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs."—Communism.

When I first came to Western Australia, I attended a meeting of women dealing with socialism. Being a newcomer, the president asked me to explain what I thought was the meaning of the word "socialism." Having read about the subject, I said, "Give according to your ability and take according to your needs." Up jumped a woman at the back of the hall—later she became one of the Labour presidents—and she said, "I've heard them district visitors before. When you have a baby in your arms and nothing in your stomach," she says, "trust in the Lord." What the paper omitted to mention when eulogising the Russian system was that there are millions of people still in the labour camps of Russia giving slave labour in return for just enough food to exist upon.

In conclusion, I wish to say that I have no wish to criticise any member personally. Amongst members opposite are some very good men whom I admire, especially the Premier, but I wish to warn them all that they are going the wrong way. As we are told about doing the wrong thing when driving a motorcar, so I tell members opposite that they are steering the wrong course, and that is why they sit on that side of the House steering towards communism. This is because their thinking is all wrong.

I wish they would endeavour to appreciate the point of view that I have expressed. They are digging, through ignorance, a bed of misery and fear, not only for themselves but also for future generations. They must reap as they sow. We know that children are not getting a fair deal. We know that they are not being properly educated. They are not being educated to respect home life, married life, their parents, or old age. Over the air there is being broadcast an invitation to children to criticise their home life. It is disgraceful that such a session should be allowed. Then we find books dealing with crime and sex being given to teenagers—books that are most degrading.

Never in all our existence has so much money been spent on drink, gambling, accidents and divorce. Never have the people enjoyed so many luxuries as they have in their homes today. Why are we at the cross-roads regarding housing? Because the people with their increased wages have been buying luxuries to put into their homes with never a thought of buying the home first. Never have we had so little home life as today, and that is why we are in the condition in which we find ourselves with divorce and crime, even crime by children. It is terrible to think that children have been so brought up that they can commit such crimes. Never have our institutions been so full, and never have we had so many handicapped, crippled and unwanted children as we have today. Never before have we required in our community a united Christian band of legislators as badly as we need them today.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [9.11]: In this evening's issue of the "Daily News" I noticed an article on the reliability trial which is at present being held. It stated that the motorists, travelling through the Meekatharra district, were able, owing to the dry condition of the ground, to travel at from 90 to 100 miles an hour, but I would rather have seen those cars badly bogged, because in that district the pastoralists are experiencing a very severe drought.

Over the radio yesterday evening there came an announcement from the chairman of the Pastoralists' Association stating that the assistance offered by the present Government of this State was six months too

late to be of any benefit to pastoralists in that area. Approximately 2½ months ago I received a request from the local road board officials to ask if immediate assistance could be obtained from the Government for the pastoralists affected in the Meekatharra and Cue districts. Consideration was given to that request by the Minister for Lands and Agriculture and an extract from "The West Australian" of the 19th May, 1954, reads as follows:—

The State Government yesterday made a decision to assist pastoralists in the Meekatharra area who have been hit by drought conditions. The Minister for Lands and Agriculture, Mr. Hoar, said that the Cabinet had approved of the payment of one-way rail freight on stock sent from the affected stations to other areas. This meant that the Government would provide 50 per cent. of the cost of transport to cover freight charges for the return journey. The Government would also pay half the cost of rail freight on fodder to pastoral properties in the drought-stricken areas near Meekatharra. When pastoralists showed by confidential financial returns that they were unable to finance the purchase of fodder they would be granted a loan repayable over five years and carrying ordinary bank interest, to enable them to purchase feed. Mr. Hoar said that the assistance mentioned had been agreed to after very careful consideration by Cabinet of a report from officers of the Lands Department and the Department of Agriculture.

The assistance granted by the present Government is, in my opinion very liberal, although we know that the pastoralists in the Meekatharra and Cue areas are still suffering from a severe drought. I have received from the chairman of the Pastoralists' Association in that area information of a meeting held at Meekatharra on the 12th June last, when the following resolution was passed:—

(a) Transport of stock: That permanent clauses be embodied in the railway regulations of the State that livestock be transported free of cost to agistment and that free transport be available for the same number of stock to be returned when country is suitable for restocking. This clause to also cover all stock removed to and from agistment by road transport.

(b) Transport of fodder: That all fodder be transported free of cost. Such fodder to include that used for the feeding of livestock prior to their being sent away to agistment or alternatively used when owners decide to feed on their respective properties.

(c) Taxation consideration: That the whole proceeds from forced sales of livestock be exempt from income

tax. That such proceeds be placed in escrow until such time as the country is suitable for restocking and that it then be made available for purchasing the required new livestock, provided, however, that in the event of any portion of the proceeds being used for any other purpose than restocking then such portion to be included as income for the year in which it is received from escrow.

(d) Scope of Application: That the provisions as provided for in (a), (b) and (c) above, be applicable to any affected district in the pastoral areas of the State.

(Note.) It is intended that the necessary finance to implement the scheme be arranged between the Federal and the State Governments.

I might mention that an approach has been made by the Federal member for Kalgoorlie, Hon. H. V. Johnson, M.H.R. and also, I understand, through certain senators. An approach has also been made to the State Government, which has promised to co-operate in every possible way and also to support, before the Federal Government, the proposals on behalf of the pastoralists in the drought-stricken areas. To prove the case I will give a summary of the sheep shorn and the taxation paid to the Federal Government in this regard.

The figures I will give show the number of sheep shorn on a cross-section of ten stations, together with the amount of taxation paid by each property for a period of ten years from the 1st July, 1943, to the 30th June, 1953. The facts are as follows:—

Property No.	Sheep Shorn.	Tax Paid.	No tax paid in years
1	60,839	£10,943 18s.	1944-45
2	69,371	£39,771	1944
3	95,970	£41,338 17s.	1944-45-46-47
4	31,984	£2,671 3s.	1944-45-46-47
5	46,721	£22,850 13s.
6	107,176	£31,062 6s.
7	79,800	£36,275	1944-45-46-47
8	21,479	£13,294 18s.	Operating over last six years only
9	13,188	£4,560	do.
10	13,156	£5,570 11s.	Operating over last five years only
Total	539,634	£208,398 6s.	

Note.—The largest station in the district is not included but the list does include three of the smallest.

Mr. Court: From where was that information obtained?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I collected it at Meekatharra.

Mr. Court: Was it given you by the station-owners concerned?

Mr. O'BRIEN: Yes, it came through the Pastoralists' Association and is accurate in every respect.

The Minister for Health: Is that for a period of five years?

Mr. O'BRIEN: No, for the ten years from 1943 to 1953. That report has also been forwarded to the Prime Minister of Australia and has been presented by the Hon. H. V. Johnson, M.H.R. This drought has continued for a number of years. The 1950 season was very dry and the stations missed the summer rains. The winter rains in that area do grow some herbage and with later winter rains it does not die off, but the summer rains are the most important right through the Murchison from Yalgoo north. If rain is not received in January, February or March—the months when the grass grows very quickly—the pastoralists consider they have lost their season.

Back in 1951 the McLarty-Watts Government and the then Minister for Lands and Agriculture—the present member for Toodyay—granted certain concessions. The first was the free return of stock sent from drought areas for agistment in order to prevent their loss owing to the effects of drought and fire, providing full freight had been paid on the consignment of such stock when sent from the station or farm for agistment.

Secondly, there was provided a 25 per cent. rebate of freight on stock railed to pastoral areas for restocking purposes, not being stock returning from agistment. Thirdly, there was a 25 per cent. rebate on fodder, etc., forwarded for the relief of starving stock in drought-affected areas. The fourth concession was that if the claimant's balance-sheet disclosed financial hardship, there was a total rebate. Those concessions, made by the previous Government, amounted to only half of what the present Government has already granted.

The pastoral area is suffering a severe drought, and the people there also claim that, due to the shortage of feed, the kangaroo has become a pest. It has been suggested that it should be exterminated by poisoning. I strongly oppose any such method of killing the kangaroo because in those regions kangaroo meat is the principal food for the natives. A kangaroo is shown on every penny minted, and I see no reason why poison should be used to exterminate it. Its skin produces revenue for the State and if that animal existed in America, its flesh would be sold as tinned "tootha"—as the natives call it—or tinned meat.

To the Minister for Agriculture and the officers of his department, I suggest that if they desire to assist the pastoralists to overcome this problem, they could make available through the Vermin Board or the local road board 303 bullets at a reduced cost. The reason why the kangaroo is over-running some of these properties is that 'roo shooters are unable to afford to pay the high cost of ammunition in order to keep them down. As a result, these men have ceased to continue their operations. Only last week I received a letter from two first-class kangaroo

shooters who asked me to try to obtain for them 303 bullets at £3 15s. a case. I understand that they are issued to rifle clubs at £2 15s. a case. Those men are obliged to pay £4 2 a case at present and, as a result it is not economical for them to make a living shooting kangaroos.

The kangaroo is of great value in many respects and it would be entirely wrong if it were exterminated by poisoning. I wish to emphasise that I strongly oppose such a suggestion. At the moment kangaroo skins can be sold at 6s. 10d. per lb. Natives also prefer kangaroo meat to any other. In fact, I have eaten it myself on many occasions. It has been said that it makes the natives tall and skinny, but what does that matter? The meat is quite good and the skin is marketable and, above all, the kangaroo never hops backwards. He is the emblem of "Advance Australia Fair."

I am particularly concerned about the goldmining industry. Since the Prime Minister promised a maximum of 30s. as a subsidy on gold to assist the marginal mines, there has been a remarkable silence. No further report of that subsidy has been heard. Therefore, because I have in my electorate several marginal mines that are eligible for such assistance, especially if costs continue to increase as they have been doing, I am extremely concerned about the position. Throughout the Murchison there are many small syndicate mines around Nannine, Meekatharra and other places, that have received financial assistance from the present Government which is sympathetic towards the goldmining industry. I feel sure that if the Commonwealth Government plays its part, the State Government will assist the goldmining industry to its utmost.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [9.22]: I would like to take this opportunity to make a few comments and express a few opinions. Firstly, I will deal with the policy of the Transport Board as it affects the Railway Department. That policy is to ensure that all traffic that can be handled by the railways should go by rail regardless of the fact that such means of transport may not be the most economical or the most satisfactory to handle some classes of traffic. That is the aspect in which I am most interested.

To my mind the most suitable traffic that should be carried by the railways is that which entails heavy hauls over long distances, with as few stops as possible. Short hauls and the carriage of perishable goods and passengers need a far more flexible and modern type of transport system than the Railway Department is able to provide. It is in this field that the railway road service has proved its worth.

Passenger buses, by virtue of the fact that they can pick up and set down passengers at road corners and farm gates, have become very popular. The courtesy and spirit shown by the personnel running

that service have also helped. Although the Railway Department has now made some changes in the Perth-Bunbury road service and has replaced some of the buses with diesel railcars, and although in most of the main towns the new service will be popular—

Mr. Nalder: Are they new diesels?

Mr. MANNING: I do not think so. Nevertheless, I am sorry the department has seen fit to make this change. I have been told that the Perth-Bunbury service showed a profit of nearly £9,000 for the last financial year. That is really a remarkable performance in the history of the railways. For the year ended the 30th June, 1954, the railway road service on this route has shown a loss of approximately £500, but this is offset by the carriage of privileged travellers to the value of over £3,000. I hope the Minister and the officers of his department are not condemning this service for the reason that it has failed to show a profit, because I think members will agree that £3,000 worth of privileged passengers carried, is a severe handicap to any service.

To my mind, the department's main concern is the placing of these diesel rail cars, whether they can be run at a profit or not, because it is my view that the passenger potential is very limited at present. If the road buses have failed to make a profit, it is fair to assume that the diesel railcars will be run at a greater loss. In previous years the profit the road buses have earned has, I think, been due to the excellent patronage offering, principally because in those years, the Government has been carrying out major constructional works in the South-West, such as irrigation and so on, and there has been a steady flow of passengers, particularly at the week-ends.

In this morning's Press I notice that the general president of the Farmers' Union had some harsh things to say about the Railway Department and its employees, with particular reference to the spirit shown in their work. The point I want to make is that this harsh opinion could not be fairly applied to the railway road service. I have travelled on that service on many occasions and in my experience I have not at any time had cause to complain, nor have I heard any complaints from others. It is my experience also, that the service is well organised and efficiently run. The spirit in evidence among the employees is excellent and they are extremely keen to carry out a good job.

I also wish to refer to the road transport of stock. The Minister for Railways has expressed the view that at least 60 per cent. of the stock now carted by road could well be transported by rail. I think he is influenced in this opinion by the fact that he has many cattle trucks lying idle. I sincerely hope that the existing

policy of permitting stock to be carted by road will continue. I trust the Minister will not direct that all stock shall be transported by rail. If he does, it will put us back to the same position as we were in before, whereby stock was carried under tragic conditions.

Today much of the stock that has to be carried is far too valuable to be transported by rail. This is a subject regarding which I have had considerable experience. I have seen cattle entrained at country sidings for forwarding to the Midland Junction markets and at that time they were fat and sleek, but when they reached the Midland Junction saleyard, after being shunted, bumped, bruised and pushed hither and thither by the railways, they were in a condition that brought a return far below that which could have been received for them if they had still retained their original condition.

Mr. Heal: How long would they take to get to the saleyards?

Mr. MANNING: If they were trucked at, say, either York or Northam, they would leave on a Tuesday, reach Midland Junction on Wednesday and be killed on Thursday or Friday. If the stock come by road from those centres—and a tremendous lot come by road from places like Waroona, Pinjarra, Baker's Hill, Northam and York—they are mustered on the morning of the sale, loaded on to the road trucks, sold the same day, and possibly killed the next. It will readily be seen that there would be no comparison in the condition of the meat when it reaches the householder in that way, as against when it is transported by rail. The system of rail transport of dairy cattle is certainly outmoded and does not compare at all favourably with road transport.

I have bought stock at a sale at Dardanup—heifers described as forward in calf—and had them trucked to Harvey. They have been in the truck for two days and arrived in a very serious condition. Generally, their value was less than half of what I paid. That is not an exaggeration, and it could happen again. With dairy cattle the price they are today, I would say, as I have said before, that we cannot afford to transport them by rail. Dairy cattle and milking cows transported by a buyer from a sale to his farm immediately after the sale, are back in a dairy within a few hours of being taken from one. If they are to be transported by rail, they have to be sent the day before the sale, sold the next day, and go to their destination the following day. In some instances they are, in those circumstances, of no further use.

Another point I want to touch on is the transport of vegetables. The Transport Board's policy in this regard is a poor old policy when one comes to look at it. I have seen vegetables such as lettuce and silverbeet arrive at Harvey after having

come from the Perth markets, and they have been unrecognisable as the vegetables purchased in the city—particularly the silverbeet.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Are you going to close the railways down?

Mr. MANNING: The point I am trying to make is that there is traffic forced to go by rail that could be more economically and suitably carted by road transport. I am trying to indicate what type of commodity is best transported by road. It includes dairy cattle, beef cattle, and certain kinds of vegetables. Pumpkins and heavy types of vegetables can be sent all right by rail, but vegetables that are perishable and easily damaged have their value reduced by the mere handling. If such vegetables could be transported by utility, they would reach their destination and be sold over the counter in good condition, and it is only fair that that should be done.

I want now to refer to schools, and particularly those at mill centres. I have a number of such places in my electorate, and the schools and school quarters there were erected by the timber company many years ago. Most of them are in a very dilapidated condition and badly need maintenance work to be done upon them. The question arises as to who should do the work—the timber company which owns the buildings, or the Public Works Department on behalf of the Education Department. At times the company and the department have failed to agree on this matter, and nothing has been done. In some instances, the matter is ironed out by the company agreeing to look after the quarters and the Public Works Department, under the direction of the Education Department, agreeing to look after the school.

However, I think the time has come when the buildings should be taken over and completely administered by the departments I have mentioned. They are the ones which, in the ordinary course of events, attend to this type of work. The Public Works Department should be responsible for all school buildings and quarters; and if it could see its way clear to take over completely the existing buildings at mill centres and, where necessary, erect new ones to replace the old ones, it would be a good step forward.

On motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.37 p.m.