

only snag there was no freight on it bar perishables.

I have several of these cuttings, but I will not weary the House with them. I will merely proceed to read another one dated the 31st May, 1956, which has the following heading: "Senator Investigates Increased Plane Landing Charges," and reads as follows:—

Prior to the amalgamation of the two airlines operating in the North-West, planes could, on request, land on a station where a runway had been provided.

The charge for such landing was £10, but it enabled sick people to come to Perth for treatment without having to undergo a long road journey to the nearest scheduled landing place. After the amalgamation, however, the Dove planes which had been used on these runs, were replaced by D.C.3 aircraft, and the charge for making these occasional landings was raised to £30 plus the usual flying charge to Perth.

This very heavy increase in the charge for such emergency landings practically renders the service useless to North-West residents, some of whom approached Senator Seward in an endeavour to have the charge for emergency landings reduced.

The Senator has now received advice from the Minister for Civil Aviation to the effect that its Wednesday service will be diverted in order to meet these emergency calls at the former charge of £10. Apparently the Department or the airlines company expects that all cases of sickness must occur on Wednesday, concluded the Senator.

I think that is proof positive that the people in the North are not satisfied with the services rendered them by M.M.A. I have travelled fairly extensively by planes up there, and I wish to congratulate the pilots and staffs of these planes; they render an invaluable service. I can only conclude that the complaints are made because this particular company is attempting too much with the planes—in some cases old ones—at its disposal. It is quite frequent now, while travelling on these planes, to find that they have engine trouble, and that, of course, delays them for 24 hours or longer. As I have said, I think the company is attempting too much with the planes at its disposal.

Mr. Court: Has there not been some improvement in the Kimberleys by the withdrawal of the older planes and their replacement by Doves?

Mr. RHATIGAN: That has only just recently taken place, and some stations are receiving better services while others are not as well catered for. I do not know quite how it is working out, because it is

only recently that the change has been made, and I think we will have to wait until it has had a sufficient trial.

Mr. Court: I should imagine the Doves would be much more satisfactory than the old Ansons.

Mr. RHATIGAN: I should say so, and I speak from personal experience of the Anson. In fact, I think it is high time that we prohibited Ansons from flying at all. I had an experience of a forced landing in an Anson on one occasion.

I would ask the Government to give consideration to these other matters, although I am aware that loan funds are short. The goods sheds at Derby and Broome require a great deal of work to bring them up to standard; and the conditions under which the staff of the Harbour and Light Department at Derby work are deplorable. That building was erected when Derby was first settled, and it has not been improved since. There is room for vast improvement to that accommodation. Offices for the Harbour and Light Department should have been included in the new building recently erected for the Public Works Department and the State Shipping Service. The addition of another two rooms would have overcome the difficulties being experienced at the goods shed.

It is pleasing to note that another ship will shortly be added to the North-West service. This will relieve the acute passenger transport by State ships up and down the North-West coast. With the proposed opening up of a tourist route in that region, a further two ships would be needed. I believe that one will be put into commission on that route in 1957.

I agree with all that the member for South Perth said yesterday regarding the natives in the Warburton Ranges on the South Australian border. I trust that the Government will look into that matter because the member for South Perth was correct in his remarks.

On motion by Mr. Toms, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.23 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 21st August, 1956.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Address-in-reply, fourth day	240
Speakers on Address—	
Hon. R. C. Mattiske	240
Hon. A. R. Jones	240

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 15th August.

HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [4.38]: In rising for the first time to address this Chamber, I do so with considerable nervous pride. Nervous I must be for obvious reasons, and proud I am to sit here among so able a body of men and take my part in serving this great State of ours. I sincerely thank the electors of the Metropolitan Province for giving me this opportunity to serve and assure them that I will spare no effort to uphold their trust and confidence.

Thrilling though this occasion may be, it is tempered by the sad circumstances necessitating the by-election as a result of which I am here today. I have been particularly impressed with the sincerity of the remarks of various speakers to the Address-in-reply and Supply Bill regarding the work done in this House by the late Hon. Harry Hearn. Up to the present we have missed his jovial personality; and I fear that as the session progresses we will, when discussing the many debates that are listed, miss the wealth of knowledge that he possessed. Already I have some slight knowledge of commerce and industry, and I dedicate myself to a close study of those aspects, so that I may eventually be able to act in some small way as a substitute for the late Mr. Hearn.

I did not have the pleasure of knowing the late Hon. Don Barker, but it is evident that the State has suffered a further severe loss through his passing. From the references made in the House it is clear that he too was held in very high esteem by all. The State can ill afford to lose citizens with particular knowledge. Especially it cannot afford to lose one so conversant with the north-west portion of the State at a time when it is on the threshold of rapid and extensive development. To the relatives of the two late hon. members I offer my sincere sympathy.

When members were speaking on the Supply Bill, and on the Address-in-reply, they congratulated the three newly admitted members. I would like to add my personal congratulations to Hon. George Jeffery and Hon. Graham MacKinnon. I wish them both long and successful parliamentary careers.

In thanking members for the warmth of their welcome, I would like especially to mention how much we appreciate the assistance and friendly advice that we have received to date. Particularly am I pleased with the personal interest that has been taken in us, regardless of political views. I hope that this interest will continue and that members will assist us by correcting our faults so that we may be the better able to serve.

In speaking to the Address-in-reply, there are many matters on which I would like to comment, but at this juncture I feel I have insufficient knowledge to enable me to contribute anything of value to this House. There is, however, one matter to which I would like to draw attention, and that is where His Excellency, towards the end of his Speech, stated—

The Government will assist financially towards the establishment of social centres for the aged.

It is only a brief statement in the Speech, but, in my opinion, a highly important one. The problem of an aging population is not peculiar to this State. Governments throughout the world are faced with it, and are concerned not only with the social but also the economic aspects. Committees have been appointed and considerable research has been carried out, but to date there has been no general solution of the problem. With improvements in medical science, the discovery of new drugs, and a progressive increase in the standard of living throughout the world, there is no doubt that the average span of life has been lengthened.

Mainly because of large-scale selective migration, the population of Australia has not aged as rapidly as it has in most other countries, but the problem is nevertheless pressing. Research in Great Britain regarding the number of men of 65 years of age and over, and women of 60 years of age and over has revealed that in 1911 there were 2,750,000, or 1 in 15; in 1951 there were 6,500,000, or 2 in 15; and it is estimated that in 1977 there will be 9,750,000, or 3 in 15. On the other hand, the number of people in the age group of 20 to 40 is expected to fall by 7 per cent. in the next 10 years.

Experience has shown that in rural areas the aged are usually cared for, while in industrial societies the family groups break down. With the great advances made in industry in Australia since the war, the effect of the aging population has been accentuated. The social problems associated with old age are well known, and I think may be summed up by the old German saying: "One father will readily care for five sons, but five sons will not care for one father." In view of this and the loneliness through a shrinking circle of friends, there is an urgent need for community centres for the aged as envisaged by the Perth City Council.

The drive for £50,000 for the establishment of a centre for the aged is worthy of the highest praise, and deserves every possible assistance; and it is the duty of the Government to contribute substantially to it. The statement of His Excellency to the effect that this will be done is, therefore, most welcome. I would now like to go a little further and deal with some of the economic aspects of an aging population.

The figures I quoted reveal a rapidly decreasing population of breadwinners in Great Britain. To overcome this, we have two alternatives: firstly, to increase the output of the existing breadwinners; and secondly, to increase the proportion of breadwinners. The output of the existing breadwinners can be increased only by lengthening the working hours, or through the introduction of new techniques. As the first alternative is undesirable, we are left with only one—namely, to improve the methods of production.

Since the war, great strides have been made in this direction, particularly with the development of mechanisation in industry to the high level of automation by which term we now know some of the more intricate machines. There is a natural reaction against new ideas, particularly those involving a readjustment of the labour forces. For this reason, automation in certain countries is being viewed with suspicion; but in America it is being hailed as a boon to mankind.

I am of the opinion that automation will be the solution to the economic problems associated with an aging population. As automation is costly to install, and depends largely upon a huge output for its economic use, it cannot be used generally. Therefore we must look to other means to overcome the problem completely. In this regard, we must turn to the second alternative: an increase in the number of breadwinners. At the lower end of the age scale this can be done only by reducing the school-leaving age and thereby impairing the efficiency of the individual during his working life. That is not desirable.

At the other end of the group, however, there is definite scope. Various surveys have revealed that among the breadwinners who have been retired through old age, there is a great number whose chronological age is considerably in excess of their physical age. It is of paramount importance today that the right of the older workers to lead a full and active life and so continue in productive work, if willing and able, be recognised and accepted.

I am fully aware of the numerous difficulties associated with the removal of a compulsory retiring age; but these are not insurmountable. Breadwinners past the retiring age should be encouraged to continue working in suitable jobs, provision being made for a lowering of status and a lowering of salary, if necessary. Collateral with this, it is necessary for existing superannuation schemes and taxation of lump sum payments to be reviewed. At present, 5 per cent. of lump sum payments are taxable, provided the taxpayer ceases work, while the whole is taxable if he continues in employment.

Such continuity of employment, apart from arresting the decline in the number of breadwinners, will reduce the burden

of pension payments and increase the standard of living for all. Furthermore, it will remove the feeling of being thrown on the economic scrap-heap, a feeling at present being suffered by so many healthy Australians. In these remarks I have presupposed a period of full employment and have avoided the many complications to the main argument; but I hope that I have conveyed a clear message to members to give them some food for thought, as I consider this problem is an urgent one, and one requiring their serious consideration.

In conclusion, I wish to thank members for their patient hearing, and to assure them that I will do all in my power to increase my knowledge and experience as rapidly as possible in the hope that I can contribute in a worth-while manner to the important debates in this House. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

Sitting suspended from 4.55 to 5.8 p.m.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.8]: In addressing myself to the debate, I would first like to congratulate those members who have been returned to this House: not only the new members, but also those who retained their seats. For my own part, I would like to thank the electors of the Midland Province for again relying on me to conduct myself in their interests. Together with other members, I am very sorry indeed that, in the short space of time we were away from this Chamber, we lost two of our members.

In the person of the late Mr. Harry Hearn, we had one who contributed much to the debates which determined what went on to the statute book in relation to industrial matters. I feel sure the workers of this State have lost one of the best advocates they had, because Mr. Hearn gave serious thought to all industrial legislation that came before us, and this of course was backed up by the immense knowledge he had gained in industry. I believe that he did his best for the workers when dealing with industrial matters and considering the ability of industry to provide. As I have said, I feel sure that those people are going to miss his sound judgment more than anyone else.

I can only reiterate what has been said in relation to the late Don Barker. He was a very staunch advocate for the people and the district of the North-West. I will personally miss him very much because, whenever I rose to address myself to a Bill, he was one of those who delighted in interjecting and drawing the crabs, as the saying goes. I shall miss those interjections very much.

I suppose the debate on the Address-in-reply is considered one of the most important of the year. I have often wondered how important it is. There are 30

members in this Chamber, each of whom has the right to express himself; and most members take advantage of it. I wonder, however, whether we do any good or not in speaking to this debate. At the present time I am addressing two empty ministerial seats. After all, the Ministers are the people to whom we look to pass on to Cabinet any bright suggestion that we might make when speaking to this debate. Surely when 30 of us get up in turn, something tangible and reasonable must be put forward by at least one of us, which could well be adopted by the Government, whatever its political colour may be.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: They usually do adopt it—five years later!

Hon. A. R. JONES: I have often wondered whether we do not waste the month we spend on the Address-in-reply debate. I cannot recall the Government of the day having adopted anything which I have said—or, for that matter, which any other member has said—when speaking to this debate. Although it is not possible for the Ministers to remember all that has been said by each member, I do hope that they will at least detail one of their officers to go through Hansard and pass on to the Ministers of the respective departments the bright suggestions that may be put forward in this Chamber.

Unless that is done, the thousands of words that we speak on this debate will be of no avail at all. It is true the Government might not consider that all the suggestions made are practical; but on the other hand, there must be some wise ones put forward, and notice should be taken of them. I hope, therefore, that what I have to offer can be of assistance to the Government and the State in general; indeed, I trust it will be of some assistance to Australia as a whole.

I believe that at the present time we are at the crossroads. Economically the position is not sound, although in Australia we have the wherewithal, particularly in relation to soil and climate, to be one of the outstanding nations of the world. It is unfortunate that we are not taking the right steps and pushing on and doing what it should be obvious to all of us ought to be done. We have reached a stage where our primary products are 30 per cent. in excess of those produced in 1939 and 6 per cent. greater this year than last year. But we find that our commodities are becoming harder to quit overseas and that the prices for all of them are dropping and costs are mounting, so that we have priced ourselves out of the markets of the world.

It seems to me that, as a people, we have been very selfish. We have considered our own personal point of view when we have looked at what might be considered the future of Australia. I

would perhaps be right in saying that always we have considered ourselves first and the future of Australia second. That is very wrong; because if Australia has no future, we as individuals have no future either.

It has been the policy of all Governments, irrespective of their colour, and whether they have been Federal or State Governments, to try to give a boost to the secondary industries of the Commonwealth and neglect the primary industries. I suppose it is natural, because all my life I have been associated with primary industries, that I should have a leaning that way. But surely no person, no matter what bias he might have, can see this matter in any other light than the one in which I see it, because this country lends itself most admirably to primary production.

With a population of between 9,000,000 and 10,000,000 people, such as we have, it seems wrong to me that we should neglect the great resources that are available to us with regard to the expansion of primary production in this country, in order to foster some of the secondary industries that are costing the country money. I am not one to say that secondary industries should not be encouraged. But I do say they should be encouraged only to the extent that they can absorb the raw products of the soil.

Articles can be produced in this country by our artisans and craftsmen which are equal to similar articles produced anywhere else in the world; and as our population grows and our needs become correspondingly greater, any industry engaged in the manufacture of commodities that can be produced from our raw products to supply the growing need should be encouraged.

But it is wrong to think that we can compete with the mass production of highly industrialised countries like America, Britain and Germany, and hope to place articles on the market in Australia at a cost equivalent to that in countries engaging in production on a large scale. My mind goes to the production of tractors. During and after the war, the whole world was short of big, industrial machinery, earth-moving equipment, and so on; and I suppose there was a need at that time to encourage the production of such machinery.

But that encouragement continued to the stage when the Commonwealth and States backed industries to the extent of many hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of pounds. Then the highly industrialised countries entered the field again, with the result that the tractors manufactured in Australia were too high-priced to compete with those that were imported. Consequently, to protect the locally manufactured article, tariffs were raised and duties imposed; and, in some cases, bounties were paid, and all this

added to the cost of the machinery or motorcars and motor trucks that came on to the market.

I always maintain that it is wrong to foster industries if ultimately it will cost the purchaser a great deal more than if he secured his goods from outside the Commonwealth. We have reached the stage at which, although primary producers have enjoyed a very good time for four or five years, they now find they are not able to purchase their total requirements because of the falling off in prices for the primary produce they have to sell, and because of the steeply rising costs of the goods they require to purchase.

Many commodities are four and five times the price that they were in 1936, and even twice or three times the cost that they were in 1945 and 1946, and even later. So I implore the Ministers in this House, when discussing problems in Cabinet, to advocate that more thought be given to primary industries than to spending large sums of money for the fostering of secondary industries.

It has been seen in this State, as well as in other States—but more here than in any other State because of the poor country we have in Western Australia as against the better type of country elsewhere, and particularly in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland—that what was previously regarded as very poor land, with soil inadequate for primary production, has gradually come into its own as a result of the cultivation of leguminous plants, chiefly subterranean clover.

Land 20, 30, and 40 miles from Perth, which could be bought and was bought five, six, and seven years ago for 2s. 6d. and 5s. per acre, is now commanding £5 and £6 per acre unimproved, which goes to show what people now think of land that was considered absolutely useless 10 years ago. We have many millions of acres of this type of country; and to my mind it would be better if the Government put money into the development of that land, and even pruned expenditure in other directions to the bone, with a view to improving that type of country and bringing migrants here from other lands, rather than fiddle with secondary industry, which is in a very precarious position and may be so for many years to come.

I do not want to chew over the position of Chamberlain Industries. But we know that several millions of pounds went into that venture. We know that the firm produced fine articles—not only tractors, but also agricultural machinery; and if some five or six years ago it had taken the advice of those who knew, curtailed production of heavy tractors, and undertaken the manufacture of ploughs and scarifiers and seeding equipment, which was then in short supply, possibly it would have been on a more even keel today.

That is one instance of note where several millions of pounds have been sunk into a secondary industry, and we do not know just how that industry will finish. I believe that the only Chamberlain who was left in the concern up to a few months ago has now gone to the Eastern States, so that there is no Chamberlain in it at all.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Is that correct?

The Chief Secretary: Yes.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I do not know whether this enterprise will revert to the State and become another State Implement Works, or whether it will call on the State for further finance to keep it going, because it is still making a loss. Just how we will get out of it all, I do not know. It is up to the Government to make a decision as to what can be done. My recommendation would be to cut our losses and sell out if possible to a firm with some money behind it, and allow it to carry on the project as a private enterprise.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It would appear from what has been in the papers that an attempt will be made to stop them profiteering.

The Chief Secretary: It appears that the clients have been profiteering at the expense of Chamberlain Industries. Mr. Jones knows that quite a lot of industries lose considerable money, but from the wreckage something can be saved. Take the Peel Estate. Millions of pounds were lost—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. R. JONES: I realise that whether it be in primary production or secondary industry, certain losses will be made and people will make mistakes, as in regard to the Peel Estate and Kendenup. Criticism was heaped upon the head of the late Sir James Mitchell in connection with the Peel Estate, but today it is flourishing because the use of subterranean clover has made that possible. We know what that plant can do.

The Chief Secretary: And reorganisation, and so forth.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Our Department of Agriculture and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research have found out many things which are continuing to improve the land. It will not be long before they will produce a clover that will assist us to do a good job in our drier areas, such as those with a 12in. rainfall or lower, and so eliminate the need for fallow, which in my opinion is bad farm husbandry. There is nothing to stop us from going ahead, because we have the know-how in most respects with regard to the way of tackling this country.

So I ask the Ministers here, whenever they meet their colleagues in Cabinet, to place first in their advocacy always the building up of our primary industries, and

to allow the development of secondary industries to be dependent on the growth of primary industries. It is unwise, particularly when large sums are involved, to subsidise secondary industries, or place duties upon goods coming into the country, because ultimately that will act detrimentally to us.

I have briefly mentioned land settlement, and I have been very pleased indeed to read in the last few days that the Government is trying to interest an American firm in the development of a vast area of country in the Esperance district. I know that if that does eventuate, whatever company is concerned will have a strong call on the Government in regard to the provision of water supplies and roads throughout the area, and possibly also rail and port facilities and the like, which could cost the Government many thousands of pounds if it is to co-operate in that way in the development of a large tract of country.

The Chief Secretary: Only thousands of pounds? You mean millions.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I am sorry. I meant to say it would cost millions of pounds. While it is highly desirable that such development should take place, I think we should first pay attention to those people who have already sunk thousands of pounds in their properties, but who are struggling to keep going. Some 12 months ago, the member for Roe, in another place, made representations to the Minister for assistance for a number of people such as I have mentioned, and recently Mr. Ackland and I took a deputation to the Minister for Lands to see whether something could be done for about 50 people who have taken up land on the west side of Moora at Badgingarra.

It seems wrong to me—although we should encourage development in every way—that the Government should decide to spend £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 in the Esperance district while doing nothing for people who have already spent thousands of pounds in other areas and who might well, falling assistance from the Government, become destitute and have to walk off their properties. I therefore ask the Minister again, when considering land settlement, to give the greatest consideration to people on the land who are at present in a precarious position; and who, without assistance from the Government, must ultimately walk off their properties.

Not only would it be a bad thing from that point of view, but also there is the fact that they would be thrown on to the labour market and swell the ranks of the unemployed about whom we hear so much at present. Every man, woman and child who is forced off a property adds to the pool of unemployed; and if, without great cost to the Government, they can be kept on their properties, apart from remaining in their employment they also

create, directly or indirectly, employment for other people. It is therefore most desirable that they be given whatever assistance is necessary.

If these people I have mentioned are helped to remain on the land, their farms will ultimately become a wonderful asset to the State; because the pastures, once fully developed, will probably carry in the vicinity of three sheep to the acre, and members will therefore see that it is well worth persevering with to keep the partly established settlers on the land until their properties are developed and they are self-supporting.

When considering land settlement, it is essential for the Government to make provision for good roads to serve the areas concerned. I think it was in my first year here, when I was very enthusiastic about the possibility of developing this country of ours, that I said that in planning for the opening up of new areas the Government should look into the possibilities of what the land could produce, and what road or rail facilities could be made available there.

While I know it is beyond the resources of any Government at present to build railways in Western Australia, I think good roads should be built to serve any new settlement area before the settlers enter on their holdings; or, at all events, the construction of roads should progress in keeping with the settlement of the area. This is essential because the cost of transport nowadays is terrific. The cost is high enough when the transport is over good roads, but it is beyond the resources of anyone when the roads are in bad condition.

Some of the people I have in mind, out in the Dinner Hill area, are faced with a great problem during the winter in getting from their properties to the place where they pick up their mail or stores. In the summer the position is not so bad, but conditions are difficult enough because of the heavy sand patches which they have to traverse. I repeat that good roads are essential; and I feel sure that, with something like £5,800,000 to spend this year in that direction, it is not beyond the capabilities of the Government to provide good roads where they are necessary.

Before leaving the subject, I wish to bring to bear on the Government whatever pressure I can in an endeavour to get it to adopt the policy of having a lot of this road work done by contract rather than by present methods. I cannot believe that it is impossible to have the work done by contract, as there are in Australia a number of large companies with heavy earth-moving equipment and so on. We read in the Press recently of the work done by Bell Bros. for the Wapet oil people. In that instance Bell Bros. constructed roads in most difficult terrain, did the work very

soundly and thoroughly, and finished it before the time agreed upon. That shows that we have in Western Australia at least one company capable of doing this work well; and I venture to suggest that, if given the opportunity, it could do it at half the cost of the present system of road construction.

If we could offer a contract worth £3,000,000 or thereabouts for the construction of new roads, we could spend the balance of the available funds for maintenance in the usual way through the Main Roads Department, and I do not think that would be unreasonable. If we were to advertise a £3,000,000 road contract, I am certain we would get some very keen tenders from outside Australia also; and instead of having 580 miles of road built—as we did last year—I think we would get about 1,000 miles of road constructed for the same figure.

It seems terrible—without knowing what was spent on maintenance, bridge-building, repairs, gravel roads and so on—that we spent £5,800,000, and from that expenditure got only 580 miles of new roads. There must be some terrific waste going on somewhere. I have discussed the matter with officers of the Main Roads Department, and even the commissioner himself, but without getting anywhere. These men always pose as being the ones who know the conditions and how the roads should be built, and their attitude is that it is impossible to let a large-scale contract to outside contractors. But I will not have that at all. I hope that Ministers in this Chamber, when expressing themselves on these matters, will have the position examined to see whether a large proportion of our road construction work could not be done on a contract basis.

I wish now to turn to the general well-being of the people of the State, and to what I consider are our moral obligations which, I believe, we have been inclined to overlook in the past. I know that I have often been censured for my criticism of Government departments, and particularly the Railway Department. Three years ago I said that the Midland Junction Workshops called for a close examination, as in my opinion they were a disgrace, in that the men there were not working and that the general conduct of the whole of the workshops was undesirable.

At that time I stressed the fact that I was not blaming the men but the executive, who I thought were responsible; but of course, Mr. Webb—now a member of the Federal Parliament—and Mr. Chamberlain, now president of the Australian Labour Party, came back at me and, had I been available—fortunately I was in the Eastern States at the time—I might have been lynched. Actually I was not attempting to disparage the men, but to point out that the system was wrong; and that while the same conditions persisted, we

could not hope for any improvement in some of our Government services, and particularly the Midland Junction Workshops.

At the conclusion, I said that I had no doubt that if I were a workman, and had to work under those conditions, within no time at all I would be as bad as any of them. I still believe that; because if a workman cannot be kept employed, he loses all interest in his job, and any enthusiasm he may have had is lost. I believe that at least half the trouble is caused by the system of selecting men as foremen, departmental managers and executive officers in the Government service. No matter what a man's capabilities might be, his chances of promotion depend on the length of time he has been in the service.

This seems wrong to me, as there might often be some very capable young man who could take over a job and give excellent results; but because some mediocre person has been in the job for a few years longer, the capable man has no chance of securing the promotion. I believe that sort of thing has to go if we are to build this State to what we would want it to be. To do that, we need the most capable officers possible in all our Government departments and the most capable available men in both our primary and secondary industries.

We do not want to see in charge men who are not fitted to take the responsibility; and I think our railways are a disgrace in that regard. In that department we have three commissioners; and, while it was not the present Government which appointed them, I think their appointment was one of the greatest mistakes ever made. We cannot expect to get the best from employees of the Railway Department and secure their co-operation when we know very well that the three commissioners cannot get on together.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: We did not know then how good Mr. Ellis was.

Hon. A. R. JONES: It has been my experience when I have arranged interviews with the commissioners that on no occasion have I seen the three of them together. I have seen two together, but not three. When matters of importance are to be discussed, and when deputations, led by any member, are taken to a department—whether it be the Railways, Fisheries or any other department—all the appointed commissioners of such a department should be present.

However, in every interview that I have arranged with the Railways Commission, I have never seen the three commissioners present at any one time. It is generally known that they do not agree. In the circumstances, in view of the fact that there are so many bosses with no determined plan, how can anyone expect the employees to work efficiently?

I am going to relate to members one instance of railway working. Some two years ago, I asked a question in this House in regard to the lack of facilities in the Piawaning railwaymen's barracks. I understand that for weeks the crews operating trains to that siding had to travel an additional 25 miles to Miling so that they could be housed for the night. I do not know what the total cost would be to effect that service; but it would be a considerable amount, in my opinion. The question that I asked and the answer given, as reported in Hansard, were as follows:—

Railways.

As to Barracks for Train Crews, Piawaning, etc.

Hon. A. R. Jones asked the Chief Secretary:

Is it a fact that owing to lack of facilities in the Piawaning railwaymen's barracks, crews operating trains to that siding have had to run an additional 25 miles to Miling so that they could be housed at night? If such is the case, will he inform the House—

- (a) What circumstances caused this state of affairs;
- (b) if the trains so run set down or pick up any goods between Piawaning and Miling?

The Chief Secretary replied:

Yes.

(a) Owing to heavy traffic on the Wongan Hills line, the equipment was transferred temporarily to Wongan Hills barracks on the 31st October, 1953, to relieve the position at that centre. It was returned on the 2nd February, 1954.

(b) Yes, although the main purpose of the running was brought about by the absence of barracks facilities at Piawaning.

During those three months, goodness knows how much it cost for those four men to travel up and down between Piawaning and Miling in order that they might be accommodated in barracks at Miling, when one takes into consideration the overall cost, which would include the cost of coal, loss of time, etc. I am told that the whole equipment that was needed for these men was merely a matter of four mattresses, four bedsteads, four pillows and four sets of sheets. Therefore, their sleeping requirements could not have been provided more economically if it was purely a question of supplying only this equipment. That is one instance of railway working which is open to criticism.

Another instance that has been brought to my notice was when a door lock became broken. A man reported it and later an inspector was sent out to inspect the job. A carpenter was then despatched to renew or repair the lock and he was followed by another inspector to make sure

that he had done the work properly. As a result, the whole job cost £14; whereas the local carpenter could have done it for 30s.

Another instance was that of the replacement of a stove in the Miling barracks. Two men were sent to renew the stove, and they took two days to do the job. However, before the inspector could inspect the work the stove had started to fall out of position. So another two men, or the same two men, had to go back and fix the stove, and then an inspector had to O.K. it. One can imagine what this loss of time must have cost, apart from the cost of transporting the men and officials backwards and forwards.

It seems to me that it is no use making these criticisms unless the Ministers responsible for these departments are going to take some notice of what is said. I do not know whether anyone was called to book as a result of these locomotives running purely for the purpose of housing the crews, especially when sleeping equipment, even if it were the best "Nights-Ease" mattresses, could have been bought at something under £100. When such matters are pointed out to them, it is up to Ministers to approach their departments to ascertain the whys and wherefores.

I think we would be better off if we reverted to the old system of one commissioner. I can readily understand that each of three commissioners, in taking over a particular branch, would want to build up that branch. At present each commissioner controls his own section, and this leads to the building up of one department against another with all the attendant increases in costs.

Recently I was told that my criticism of the Midland Junction Workshops was not nearly as severe as it could have been. I was informed that very little improvement had been effected, and that at present the men are not able to work to the full because there is not sufficient work available for them. Again I reiterate that I do not blame the men. If there is no work for the employees, they cannot make believe that they are busy. It seems that there is room for a complete overhaul of the railway administration. It could be shaken up considerably with a view to saving costs in the Midland Junction Workshops particularly—and elsewhere. It is generally acknowledged, I believe, that, within limits, the busier a person is the better he feels and the more he gives.

At present the railways are shifting some 43,000 tons of wheat per week. That is a colossal job, and it only goes to show that when the goal is in front of the men, and the equipment is right, they will carry out the work quite satisfactorily. I am hopeful that some good will come out of this big movement of wheat, because we are all inclined to think that the men were not doing their job to the best of their

ability. I would stress again, however, that if the job is kept up to the men, and the men are kept up to the job, they will perform their duties satisfactorily, as is proved by the work they are performing at the moment.

Reference was made by Mr. Bennetts to several instances of wastage which have occurred in the railways. The Minister for Railways would be kept very busy if he had to inquire into every one of the complaints that the hon. member made. Nevertheless, I agree with Mr. Bennetts that costs could be reduced in many avenues of railway administration. If they are not reduced, and there are further rises in wages, freights will have to be increased.

But if rail freights on primary produce and on all those goods that are consigned to the country are increased any further, it will have a crippling effect on industry: not only on the goldmining industry, as pointed out by Goldfields members, but also on all primary industry. We cannot afford to bear any more increases in rail freights. As an alternative, I urge the Government to inquire very thoroughly into the constant wastages that are occurring in the railways.

Whilst discussing such matters, and also the question of meeting our moral obligations to this country, I would like to point out that over the past two or three months the Premier, or one of his Ministers, at every opportunity has stressed the fact that there is unemployment here and has criticised the Commonwealth Government for this state of affairs on the ground that that Government is not making sufficient money available to this State. This criticism does the Commonwealth Government a very grave injustice.

Whilst there might be unemployment—and there still seem to be a great number unemployed in this State—the position has not reached the stage where it has become dangerous. Although I agree that there is a percentage of fairly good men finding it hard to obtain work today, the majority of them would be those who did not render good service over the years and did not consider it their moral obligation to give a good day's work in return for a good day's pay.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: A great number of the unemployed at the moment comprise foreign migrants. They would be people who have been here for only a few months.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. R. JONES: I did say that there were some good men in this State—and, no doubt, women—who are finding it hard to obtain employment today; but, as a result of my experience over the past few years, I will give members some idea of the reason why certain men are finding it

difficult to get work. Mr. Lavery has stated that many of these people are New Australians. There are four people employed on my property, however, and they are all New Australians.

I regret to say that men of my own nationality—Australians, and in particular Western Australians—have been of little use to me over the last few years. It has been found that they would not give us a go even though they were paid high wages. When one cannot rely on an employee to do the right thing, one cannot keep him on. A great many of the people who are finding it difficult to obtain work today are those who have not lived up to their moral obligations to their employers and, in general, to this State.

All of us will have to smarten up our ideas considerably if we are to get ourselves out of our present difficulties. It is of no use an employee adopting the attitude that he must get the highest wage he can for the least possible exertion. Nevertheless, we have those types in our midst, and I do not know how we are going to educate them to another way of thinking unless we pinch their pockets.

I will cite two instances of employees who have not played the game. One instance is that of a married couple who were employed by a share farmer. They were given excellent quarters, which comprised a brick house with a tiled roof and which had a hot water service, electric light, and every convenience. The man was paid £15 a week, plus keep for himself, his wife and his child, and in return he worked on the farm for eight hours a day—that is, if he did work eight hours. His wife had to cook for the share farmers. I consider that that is a good proposition for any married couple. They did not have to pay for any wood, food or anything else. Even the baby's food was paid for among the general provisions supplied for their household.

This fellow wanted some means of transport, so he saved a little money and prevailed upon his employers to advance him an additional sum so that he could buy a car. He came back to Perth and purchased a car. This turned out to be a bundle of trouble. To get something better, he returned to Perth again and purchased another car, which I certainly would have looked at a second time before I bought it. It was a large Citroen. He paid a fabulous price for it, and tied himself to monthly instalments of £18 for a period of two and a half to three years. With the repairs to the car, he got further and further behind in his payments.

He neglected his work and came to Perth again to see if he could do something about the car. He was supposed to have two days in Perth, leaving the farm on the Saturday and returning on Monday; but up to the Monday week, no word had been sent by him to say whether he would or

would not be back. This was at a busy time of the year. His employer sent him a telegram and told him that his job would not remain open for him. As a result, he returned to the farm and complained to this effect: "I have a car. I have to meet the commitments on the car. I have a young baby," and so on. I maintain that he did not give any thought to his employer. Unless employees do that, they cannot expect much consideration.

Here is another illustration. It concerns a single man, who received £2 over the award wage. He lived in comfortable quarters provided by the employer, and his meals were cooked for him. He worked for a little while, until he had saved some money. He then went to the township during week-ends. He was fond of drinking and got to the stage where he was not fit to work on Monday mornings. Then he would return to the township at the first opportunity, maybe on Monday nights, to consume more liquor; and he would not be able to work on the Tuesday, either.

The stage was reached where the employer told him he was finished. He had been employed in the district for three months, but had not saved any money. He went to another district and got a job. He had to ask for an advance before he started. This sort of thing must stop. As I said previously, the people who are now unemployed are in the main such types. Apparently we will always have those types with us.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: Would you say that of the building tradesmen who are unemployed? They form the greatest number of unemployed.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I do not doubt that at all. There are some highway robbers among the building tradesmen, too. I make that statement very knowingly, because during the time when labour and building materials were scarce, the pistol was held at my head. I was told, "If you want a house or a shed built, it will cost you £6 a day and keep for every man on the job." So I say knowingly that there are a few highway robbers amongst them.

Whilst I do not wish to see anyone unemployed if he is willing to work, I also like to see people doing the right thing. It is not only the worker who is not playing the game, but also the person in business, and some of my own friends, the primary producers. They all have to take stock of themselves and ask, "Are we doing the right thing?" We should all be determined to put our country before ourselves; because if we do not make this country what it should be, how can we expect to receive anything good from it?

I did point out twice—12 months ago and two years ago—that, if I might be permitted to borrow the term used by the

late Mr. Hearn, "the honeymoon is over." He said that two years ago. Following that, I gave figures to prove what was happening in the farming community and the farming industry, and what could be expected in 12 months and two years. Anyone can look that up for himself in Hansard and observe that what is happening now was predicted by many of us.

We have reached the stage where we cannot go on producing goods, because production will be carried on at a loss before very long. I have quoted my own figures because they are authentic, and nobody can jolt me if I use them. Up to the time when wheat and wool production was high and prices were satisfactory, primary producers had not been paying high income tax, and provisional tax, and many farmers received assessments from the Taxation Department for £10,000 or more for income tax and provisional tax. Some farmers had to pay £20,000 to £30,000. It was common for the average farmer with 2,000 acres to receive an assessment of £4,000 to £5,000 for income and provisional tax for one year. I know from personal experience that many farmers are receiving refunds today. This will indicate the state of the industry. The profits are not to be found. If profits cannot be found in farming, mining or other businesses producing the wealth of a country, then that country cannot prosper.

Two years ago I said that I believed the only solution was a reduction of wages, together with a reduction in everything else of, say, 10 per cent. I still hold that view. Recently a Premiers' Conference was convened, but agreement could not be reached. I admit readily that wage and salary earners cannot be expected to bear the brunt of any such reduction, and every member of the community will have to accept his share. Whatever happens, we must cut cost of production by at least 10 per cent., so that, whatever we have to sell overseas, we can meet the keen competition which exists today.

I do not mind in what way the Commonwealth or the State Governments tackle the problem. We cannot do as we desire until the costs are cut down by at least 10 per cent. As labour accounts for 90 per cent. of the cost of any article or commodity produced, in the overall situation labour plays a most important part. It does not matter whether an article is manufactured for sale, or a bushel of wheat or a pound of wool is grown, labour in some form or other figures to such an extent that it accounts for at least 90 per cent. of the cost of production.

To bring down costs by 10 per cent., I believe we would have to reduce wages by that amount; and I suggest it could be done progressively. For the first three months the wage earner on a wage of £15 per week could forgo 5s. The wage-payer,

or employer, could forgo the same amount of 5s., the prices of all commodities to remain pegged for the period. Then there could be a reduction of prices accordingly, and then a further wage reduction on the same basis as for the first three months, and so on until a 10 per cent. reduction had been effected. Then the repercussion would be felt and prices would be brought to a lower level. In 12 months the whole thing would balance itself. No one in Australia would be worse off for this; in fact, we would be better off, because we would be able to compete with overseas producers like the Argentine and Canada.

There is no doubt that primary products can be produced cheaper in Australia than in any other part of the world. If we can reduce the cost of production by 10 per cent., which I think is essential, we can look forward to a very rosy future. It is ridiculous for anyone to think that this can be done by reducing wages and by doing nothing at all about anything else. I do know that a State Government can do nothing by itself in this direction. I have raised the argument that it is of no use having price control in this State if goods are to come in from other States where prices and wages are not pegged. I still maintain that.

I cannot see that any good effect can be obtained unless the goods could be controlled from the source of supply to the consumer. That would have to be done on a Commonwealth basis. We have the men here who are sufficiently knowledgeable and experienced in economics to work out a system whereby wages and also prices are tapered gradually, and whereby those who make excess profits bear the burden by way of extra taxation. That could be done quite easily, and I feel it is the only solution. We must get the costs of our commodities down so that the products of Australia—90 per cent. of them being from primary production and mining—can compete with those overseas.

There are two other matters I wish to mention. The first relates to road stop signs. I referred to this the other night when I asked the Minister a question, but as yet he has not given a reply. I consider the stop signs around the city are most unsuitably sited. This benefits only the motor industry because clutch and brake linings wear out quickly and more petrol is used in stopping and starting. Even at the less dangerous intersections it is necessary for the motorist to slow down to a reasonable speed, as was suggested, of 15 miles an hour. I hope that the Minister responsible for locating these signs will make an inspection and have them placed where they are really necessary. If one travelled from one end of the city to the other one would have to stop and start over 10 times.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you not think they are good protection in certain places?

Hon. A. R. JONES: I agree that they are in certain places, but not all over the city. One instance is in Princess-rd. Approaching the school there is a slow-down sign—15 miles an hour—and immediately leaving the school there is a stop sign. That is the sort of confusion that exists. I do not know whether the Minister controls the department or the department controls the Minister. I have a fair indication that he controls the department.

The Chief Secretary: Would you expect the Minister to look at every stop sign in the metropolitan area?

Hon. A. R. JONES: There is one other matter I wish to mention, and perhaps Dr. Hislop can assist me. I have received complaints from old people attending the Royal Perth Hospital, who have had to wait hours for attention and for out-patient treatment. They are kept waiting hour after hour. One old lady had been going to that hospital for 12 months and had been told that an operation was necessary. They messed her around for so long that she went to St. John of God Hospital eventually. She was admitted within five minutes and was operated on. Her eyes are all right today, but the operation cost her £75. She was a pensioner. I wonder whether, in his Address-in-reply speech, Dr. Hislop would tell us of the set-up at Royal Perth Hospital under which such people are kept waiting from time to time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Prior to the tea suspension, I was suggesting that Dr. Hislop might in his Address-in-reply speech give us some information as to how patients are admitted and the treatment they receive at Royal Perth Hospital, and I spoke of one old lady I knew, who, after having been an out-patient for 12 months and having been told an operation was necessary, was unable to obtain treatment.

The main complaint outlined to me is that when people register at the hospital for treatment, there seems to be no continuity of service. One person takes them over, writes their names into a register, and then sends them on to another clerk or nursing aide to have some additional particulars taken. Then they are sent on to a waiting room, which is very far from comfortable and where they have to spend considerable time, and naturally feel that nothing is being done for them.

Anyone they speak to tells them it is somebody else's obligation, and so the buck is passed from one to another. I think a system could be worked out whereby, if a patient is received at the hospital by a clerk, that clerk would see the patient through to his or her destination. Anyway, it would be illuminating to hear something from Dr. Hislop on this subject.

I can never let it be said that in an Address-in-reply speech I omitted to say something about water supplies for the State.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I think you are slipping a little bit.

Hon. A. R. JONES: It is certainly one of our most important needs. I would like to draw the attention of the Ministers in this House to a proposition which I recently put forward to Mr. Ellis, who is in charge of the geologists. I suggested that perhaps one or two men could be made available from the Mines Department to be attached to the Country Water Supply Department. At the time, he said that geologists were not available. But in a recent conversation I had with the Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. Telfer, he told me that geologists were now available, and it would be possible for two men to be attached to the country water supplies section in order to assist in farming areas where it was found difficult to obtain water, and perhaps pick sites on which farmers could bore for water.

I do not think this would be very costly; and I believe that Cabinet, in its wisdom, should see the need to set aside a certain amount of money so that action can be taken by the department. At present it seems to be nobody's baby, and no money is set aside. I put this suggestion to the Minister. In addition, I have written to the Minister for Works and the Minister for Lands in this connection.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They have taken notice of it and have sent men to the North-West.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I think it could be arranged for the officers to go thoroughly through a district and pick sites for a farmer; and where they had success, I think the farmer would be happy to pay part of the expense, and the scheme could be worked economically.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I think they do that now.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Yes; but I would like to see more work done in the agricultural areas. In regard to the comprehensive scheme for the northern area, for which members have been striving for some time, the Government has gone so far as to have surveys made of the Gingin Brook in order to obtain data and see if it is possible to obtain the quantity of water necessary to serve the area proposed. I am also pleased to learn that such work is in hand as gauging the stream, and going further into the source of supply by putting down bores to find out if there is any possibility of a storage place to take sufficient water during the winter flow to make up the supply necessary during the mean flow.

It would be difficult to build a reservoir capable of containing sufficient water, because 6,000,000 gallons per day would be

necessary during the dry months of the year. Where the Moore River rises during the winter, there is quite an appreciable area of country which is salt impregnated, and the river for the greater part of its flow is fairly saline. However, towards the end of summer, when it is fed by springs which apparently originate somewhere south-east of Dandarragan, the water is reasonably fresh. This suggests to me that if engineers could find out whence this water comes, and tap the source before it meets up with the river, an additional supply of potable water would be possible. I suggest that when the Ministers in this Chamber have the opportunity they will press for as much experimental work and exploration work as is possible, in order to determine where water can be found in the Midland Province.

Another subject about which I would like to speak concerns land resumptions and the Land Board. At present, when land is thrown open for selection, applicants are invited to complete a form and give certain statistical data, which is required by the department, to help members of the Land Board to decide which applicant will be granted the land. If more than one applies, the applicants are called to Perth in order to attend a sitting of the Land Board. Applicants sit in a row and are asked questions in turn as to various points which are required by the Land Board.

I did query at one time whether it was right for A. to listen to what B. had to say, and felt that the last person giving his information could be at an advantage by hearing the answers given by previous applicants, and so could tell a better story. I now believe it is quite a good method, and possibly gains the truth more than any other system which might be operated.

For instance, if a person were interviewed on his own by the board, he might feel he could get away with more than if he sat alongside other people from his district who knew his circumstances fairly well. I think it would be of assistance to the Land Board if a ballot could be held in cases where the qualifications of applicants are equal, and suggest that the Land Act could be amended accordingly. At present, the Land Board could be criticised by A. because his qualifications were as good as those of B.

Land resumptions are something which have concerned this House and many people in Western Australia over the last few years, and should be tackled by the responsible departments and Ministers. It has been represented to me that two years have elapsed since the first gazettal, and the people have not received any payment for their land. In some cases there is a disparity between the price a person wishes

to receive, and what the department is prepared to pay. I know of one case where a person lodged a claim for compensation and was told by the department that the claim was insufficient; the department was prepared to pay double the amount. That happened some months ago, yet the man is still waiting for his money.

Something should be done to expedite arrangements when land is taken. It it bad enough to have land resumed; but when it becomes necessary, surely the person who loses the land should receive a just price for it as quickly as possible. Although this does not come within the jurisdiction of either of the Ministers here, I ask them to put it to the Minister who is responsible, to see whether some improvement can be made so that these matters can be adjusted in the shortest space of time.

It is not my intention to speak any longer, except to say that I would like to make mention of criticism I have read in the speeches of some members when speaking on the Address-in-reply in another place. It seems wrong that a member should come into the House and be there not five minutes before criticising what the House Committee has done under your jurisdiction, Mr. President. I feel it is *infra dig* for those members to criticise when they do not know what the House Committee has done; because I believe that in the last few years more has been done than had previously been achieved for a considerable period.

The criticism was directed to improvements to Parliament House; but already plans have been drawn, and the Government has decided that the work will go on as soon as it is possible to find the finance. It is pleasing to know that some of that work is to be put in hand in the near future. I happen to be one of the members of the House Committee, and I suppose for that reason I feel a bit sore about the fact that criticism should come from men who do not know a thing about the set-up.

I say here and now that everything asked to be considered by the committee, has been considered by it; and to my mind a great deal of attention has been paid and is being paid, within the bounds of available finance, to the carrying out of improvements, particularly for the staff who, for 40 or 50 years, have been working under conditions which I think none of us feel they should work under. In defence of that committee, I make this reference in my speech tonight, because I think the criticism is totally unjustified. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 21st August, 1956.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Maralinga testing site, precautions for protection of natives	252
Education, (a) building of high schools	252
(b) additional classrooms at high schools	252
(c) provision of multi-class rooms in lieu of lunch sheds	252
(d) Canning Vale school additions	252
(e) locality, etc., of new high schools	252
Air services, (a) fees paid by companies	253
(b) MacRobertson Miller Co.'s standard of service	253
Comprehensive drainage scheme, expenditure and work for current year	253
Bitumen, local purchases and imports	254
Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., coking of Collie coal and production of billets	254
Wundowie charcoal iron industry, profit on pig iron sales and competitive value	254
Probate duties, amounts collected and granting of relief	254
Local Government Bill, cost of reprinting	254
Dogs, breeding of Alsatians	255
Pine plantations, land purchased, soil type, etc.	255
Water supplies, Wellington Dam-Bunbury reticulation	255
Roads, (a) expenditure in country districts	255
(b) allocations to road boards	256
Tick fever in cattle, mortality on North-West ships, etc.	256
Sale of petrol, Geraldton and Carnarvon prices	256
Naval base, Western Australia's claim	256
State Shipping Service, tender price for "Kooljarra"	256
Railway refreshment rooms, change in conduct	257
Iron ore, Koolyanobbing deposits and quality	257
Narrows bridge, progress of resumptions and cost	257
Main Roads Trust Account, total and use by Government	257
Collie coal, source of supplies and price structure	257
Premiers' Conference, (a) statement regarding proceedings	258
(b) consultation with leaders of trade, commerce and industry	260
(c) Commonwealth and selective price control	261
(d) Government action to relieve situation	261
Native welfare, ministerial investigation of cruelty charges	261
Address-in-reply, seventh day	261
Speakers on Address—	
Mr. Toms	261
The Minister for Works	262
Mr. Heal	272
Mr. Oldfield	279

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