

or the Commonwealth. Far from our reviewing our own Constitution, I think others might, with advantage, copy it.

The Chief Secretary: I am querying the question of review or rubber stamp.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think that is substantially true.

The Chief Secretary: I have not seen it.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think the Leader of the House has been a member of this Chamber for long enough to realise that from time to time this Chamber has been used as a House of Review. It has been no respecter of government; because legislation coming here, from whatever government has been in power, has been amended to suit the views of members of this House, based on its interpretation of the public reaction to certain Bills.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The popular reaction of this House would be better out of existence.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: When the Constitution was first framed in 1899, the property qualification was £100 equitable estate or a householder qualification of the payment of a rental equal to £25 per annum. In 1911 the qualification was brought down from £100 to £50 for equitable estate and from £25 a year rental to £17 sterling for the householder's qualification. If we take into account the diminishing value of money since that time, it must be admitted that the qualification has become very small indeed and is well within the grasp of anyone who desires to have a vote for the Upper House, whether that person be a husband or wife or the husband and wife, or, in effect, anyone who cares to qualify under these two headings.

But I think one of the principal objections to the proposed amendment now before us is that it is only a comparatively short period between now and election time. If the Bill as presented to us were carried, it would mean a tremendous number of enrolments throughout the State, which would impose a tremendous task on the various organisations and the State Electoral Office, and I do not think the work could be completed in time for the elections.

The main objection we have to the Bill is the breaking down of the primary qualification of being either the owner of property valued at £50 or having a rental interest in a house equal to £17 per annum.

The Chief Secretary: Has not a wife got an interest in the house just the same as a husband?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I would say that the qualifications are so liberal that they are well within the compass of anyone who desires to obtain a vote. For that reason I oppose the Bill.

On motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.33 p.m.*

# Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 1st November, 1955.

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

## ELECTORAL.

### Swearing-in of Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy in the electoral district of Bunbury caused by the death of Mr. Frank Guthrie, showing that George Frederick Roberts has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear-in the hon. member.

Mr. Roberts took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

## QUESTIONS.

### LOAN FUNDS AND REVENUE.

#### Expenditure at Bunbury and Albany.

Mr. HILL asked the Treasurer:

(1) Of the £3,000,000 which he states is to be spent at Bunbury during the current financial year, what amount is from—

(a) Loan funds;

(b) revenue?

(2) Will he give the corresponding figures for Albany?

The TREASURER replied:

	£
(1) Loan funds .....	2,211,600
Revenue funds .....	745,119
Main Roads Board funds .....	21,750
	£
(2) Loan funds .....	204,495
Revenue funds .....	664,927
Main Roads Board funds .....	93,130
War service land settlement funds .....	297,500

### EDUCATION.

#### *Technical School, Derby.*

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Works:

What progress has been made with the establishment of a technical school at Derby?

The MINISTER replied:

Detailed drawings of the new school are now in progress and a suitable site for the school master's house is being sought.

The conversion of the existing school to the technical centre will follow immediately after the construction of the new school.

### CHILDREN.

#### *Imprisonment of Offenders Under 14 Years.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Premier:

(1) Have any, and if so, how many, children under 14 years of age been committed to prisons by children's courts in the last eight years?

(2) What children's courts ordered such imprisonment?

(3) What were the offences concerned?

The PREMIER replied:

No children under 14 years of age were committed to prisons by children's courts in the last eight years.

### RAILWAYS.

#### *(a) Delivery of Diesels and Other Rollingstock.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What number, if any, of diesel electric or diesel railcars are remaining to be delivered by British contractors?

(2) Is any other rollingstock to be imported?

(3) Has the lag in regard to repairs of rollingstock been overtaken?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

(1) Nil.

(2) This is contingent upon the result of tenders and determination of the Government when tenders are received.

(3) No.

#### *(b) Re-laying of Permanent Way, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury Lines.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What progress has been made with the re-laying of the permanent way on the Kalgoorlie and Bunbury lines?

(2) Is any major re-laying programme envisaged to follow on the above relaying?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

(1) Since the 1st July, 1953, 75 miles 57 chains and 74 miles 43 chains respectively.

(2) A programme of not less than 100 miles a year is planned.

#### *(c) Additional Railcar Service and New Sidings.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Can the general public expect an extended railcar service in the metropolitan area?

(2) Has any decision been made in regard to—

(a) additional railcars; or

(b) additional sidings being brought into use?

(3) At what localities will the new sidings be built?

(4) Will he see that no further areas of land are leased out in localities where additional sidings are likely to be built?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

(1) Not until additional railcars are acquired.

(2) (a) Yes. Additional railcars are required and will be purchased when funds are available.

(b) No.

(3) and (4) Answered by No. (2) (b).

### HOUSING.

#### *(a) Financial Assistance to Home Builders.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many home builders have received assistance under the scheme of supplementary financial aid by way of second mortgage or guarantee?

(2) What amount has been provided to date since the inception of the scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 32 cases approved.

(2) £20,678 approved.

*(b) Supply and Placement of  
Pre-cut Homes.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many pre-cut homes have been supplied to the State Housing Commission since the 1st June, by—

- (a) State Saw Mills;
- (b) Bunning Bros;
- (c) Melville Joinery Pty. Ltd.;
- (d) Douglas Jones Pty. Ltd.?

(2) Of the houses supplied as in No. (1), how many have been placed in—

- (a) country districts;
  - (b) the metropolitan area;
- and by whom?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) 149.
- (b) 132.
- (c) 134.
- (d) 110.

	(a)	(b)
	Country	Metro- politan Area
State Saw Mills .....	7	142
Bunning Bros. ....	24	108
Melville Joinery Pty. Ltd. ....	19	115
Douglas Jones Pty. Ltd. ....	39	71
	89	436

**BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT  
AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 27th October.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [4.41]: To the general principles that are proposed in this Bill I have no great objection. Suggestions have been made over a number of years that some of the minor offences that are committed under the Traffic Act should not in every case have to be dealt with by the courts concerned, but that smaller penalties could be imposed by consent, as it were, in something the same way as the Chief Electoral Officer is entitled to impose penalties in cases where electors have failed to carry out their obligations and vote at elections when voting is compulsory.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much private conversation.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Quite obviously, many people are put to considerable inconvenience and much delay when court proceedings are contemplated as a result of some of the minor offences that can take place under the Traffic Act. That inconvenience is sometimes fairly considerable, because not only does it frequently mean a considerable wait after the offence has been committed but finally an appearance before the court, with very often a great delay there, together with the general unpleasantness which, to the average citizen, is entailed in having to appear before a court at all.

So, in principle, there is ample justification for the proposals which are in the measure. But I cannot say I like the idea of the arrangements all being made by regulation. It is true that the Minister has supplied a roneoed copy of the regulations which he thinks are likely to result from the passage of this measure; and, from a perusal of those—what one might call—draft regulations, I can find nothing particularly objectionable in them. But I think a major change in the methods of penalising a section of the public for offences against the Traffic Act should not be so much a subject of regulations, as this proposed law suggests. I believe that the regulations should not prescribe what offences are to be penalised in this new summary way. That should be laid down in the Act itself. Moreover, much of the procedure which is set out in the regulations should have been incorporated in the Bill itself, so that it might become part of the Act.

The reason for my voicing these objections will be obvious to you, Mr. Speaker. If these matters were in the Bill itself, and therefore found their way into the Act, it would be necessary for the Government of the day to bring before Parliament any proposals to amend them, and Parliament would know before they came into operation precisely what it was proposed to do with the offenders in the cases that were dealt with thus by the measure; but under the Act—although I have no doubt of the Minister's bona fides in this instance in regard to the draft regulations, and no doubt that he proposes to put these regulations into operation—the regulations can be amended by the ordinary machinery of the Government and Executive Council, and new regulations could, at any time, be in operation for many months before Parliament could have a look at them. So it is quite possible that at some future time the regulations would be amended in such a way as might not have met with the approval of Parliament had it been given the opportunity to consider them.

While it is true that when Parliament does meet, and within 14 sitting days thereafter, a motion of disallowance can be moved and, if carried, the regulation concerned becomes inoperative from that

time, nevertheless, in the intervening period—which might very easily be a period of many months—the regulation would have been in operation and might, in the opinion of the majority of members of both Houses, have been entirely unsuitable and, to a degree, unjust.

So it is not that I object to the regulations that are proposed by the Government as likely to come into operation if this Bill should pass empowering the Executive Council to make regulations, but that I object to the principle of having such a substantial change in the methods of punishing offenders put on the statute book at all in the manner proposed in the Bill. As I have said—and it is worth while repeating—the offences that could be dealt with under these very summary provisions should have been stipulated in the measure itself, and so should the major portions of the procedure that is developed in the proposed regulations have been part and parcel of the Bill so that it could go into the Act in order that then the whole of the controlling factors in these proposals would have been the subject of legislation passed by this Parliament and not subject to mere alteration by regulation, as is proposed.

I think there is a growing opinion that rather too much government has been attempted by regulation in more recent times. Very frequently, the contents of regulations are little known to members of the public, and only with great difficulty are members of this House and another place able to follow precisely what is the law that is applied to the public in respect of any particular offences by regulations; because, although they are laid upon the Table of the House in great volume, particularly at the beginning of the session, when there have been many months in which they have been accumulating, it is extremely difficult to follow them, and even more difficult to appreciate their effect when—as they do in many cases—they amend voluminous regulations passed many years before and frequently amended, and not consolidated in the meantime.

Thus, I find myself in a quandary in regard to the question. I appreciate the desirability of having some simpler method of dealing with the minor offences that are contemplated by the draft regulations, and perhaps one or two others that might be incorporated in the Bill. I appreciate the desirability of having some simpler method than that which is used under the existing law, of making use of inquiry, summons, sittings of magistrates in the various courts of the State, and so on.

While I appreciate all that, I do not think that a far-reaching change in the procedure, virtually giving to an officer of the Crown Law Department the right to be both prosecutor and magistrate, should be incorporated only in regulations over which Parliament has such little control

and which, as I have said, could be in operation for a long period without Parliament having any control whatever. Be it remembered that under the Interpretation Act, whatever is done between the gazettal of a regulation and the disallowance of it, if it is disallowed, is perfectly valid. Even if Parliament subsequently disapproves of the regulation, that disapproval cannot be made retrospective.

So, in the absence of legislation to specify what should be the offences, what should be the penalties and what should be the methods by which the penalties are to be imposed, we could rightly find ourselves at some future date with regulations entirely different from those we are prepared to accept now as being reasonable enough. Some thoroughly unreasonable and undesirable regulation, dealing with offences which Parliament does not think should be the subject of this legislation, might easily find its way into the "Gazette".

I think, on balance, that, while I am anxious to reduce the inconvenience and delay which must occur through taking court proceedings in regard to these cases, so great is my dislike to the proposals in the Bill—leaving the whole matter to be dealt with entirely by regulation—and feeling as I do that it is impracticable for me to offer amendments to the measure in its present form, which would rectify my objections, I have no option but to vote against the second reading of the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Zoological Gardens Act Amendment.
- 2, Roman Catholic Bunbury Church Property.  
Without amendment.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1955-56.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the 27th October on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

*Vote—Legislative Council, £7,453:*

**MR. BRADY** (Guildford-Midland) [4.55]: I wish to bring before the Government a number of matters affecting my electorate because they are urgent and important, and also because I am receiving correspondence from a number of electors in regard to them. In the first place, as is well known, the Guildford-Midland electorate has a considerable amount of water lying about it in various parts. It is not unusual for people to refer to one area known as Midvale as "Mudvale." In fact, it is not uncommon to hear people refer to Midland Junction itself as "Mudland Junction."

Whilst this is a joke to some people, provided they have not the responsibility which devolves upon the member for the district, it is no joke to me. The member for the district has occasionally to bring these matters before Parliament and the Government on the principle that dripping water will wear away the hardest stone, in the hope that some Minister or departmental officer may say, "After all, there is something in this matter. We should have a look at it." That is why I am speaking on the Estimates this evening. I am hoping that by mentioning a few of these things the Government will have a look at them.

In the first place, Midvale at one time was virtually a swamp, but the Government, in its wisdom, built a considerable number of houses there. At the time there was a big demand for housing at Midland Junction, and the Government took over some very lowlying land, and, as a consequence these houses were built and the present drainage problem began to rear its ugly head.

Mr. Nalder: Did they do it against the advice of the member for the district?

Mr. BRADY: The member's advice was not asked; they simply walked in. This raises another point. It is surprising to learn—the Labour Government was not in office when the houses were built there—how many men in Government offices have but little knowledge of the subject with which they are dealing—in this case, housing—yet they are given the responsibility of picking out sites on which huge sums of money must be spent. I venture the opinion that the officers who, in the early days selected the land in the metropolitan area, had little or no experience of choosing housing areas. I did mention to the present Premier, who was then in opposition, that if I had my way I would sack certain people in the Housing Commission for the way they had picked lowlying land on which to build brick houses. The argument was used that the land was cheap, and the workers could not afford to pay for dear land. Well, they are going to pay for some dear houses because many of the homes, built in the early stages, now have dampness in them.

It is a pity that the Government at the time—it was not a Labour Government—did not call in a few experts and get some proper advice because right alongside the lowlying land to which I am referring there was a crest of high land. I am referring to Ashfield, near Bassendean. What might be termed the pick of the land in that area was not touched at the time, and it is only now—ten years after the Housing Commission built homes in swamps—that this other land is being built on. An interjection was raised as to whether the Government asked my advice. It did not. It had officers who, in my opinion, knew nothing at all about the job but whose duty it was to select the land.

The fact remains that the drainage problem is there now, and I hope that the Government will have some regard to assisting the local road boards to get over the difficulties associated with the drainage, road and many other problems looming up in front of them. If that is not done, I am afraid that there will be a lot of heartburning.

In my opinion, the Railway Department in Midland Junction could ease considerably the drainage difficulties in the Midland and Midvale areas by putting through drains, from north to south, to one or other of the rivers near that area; I refer to the Woodbridge River or creek and the Swan River. Strange as it may seem, Midland Junction is built on a reasonably high area of ground and it has a river on both sides; yet it has drainage problems. I hope that the Public Works Department and the Railway Department will get together with the local governing authority in the Midland Junction area to try to think out some way of draining the district. I believe this drainage problem will continue unless something is done and the problems associated with it will not reflect to the credit of the authority concerned, whether it be the Public Works Department, the Railway Department or the Midland Junction Municipal Council.

I do not think the problem is a major one; I consider it would be simple to overcome if the departments concerned would give some thought to it. The other night I mentioned the Eden Hill area near Bassendean where, for some months, the water has been 5ft. deep in the vicinity of the sanitary depot, which is just near a new housing area of the State Housing Commission. If the engineers of the Public Works Department and the Water Supply Department could get together with the representatives of the local governing bodies this major problem of drainage could be cleared up with a minimum of expense.

Only today I was in conference with the road board secretary at Bassendean and he showed me where, with a minimum of effort, a good deal of land in the Eden Hill district could be drained. Some members may say, "Why does not the Bassendean Road Board drain the area instead of pushing the problem on to the Government?" The position is that the land to which I am referring is in the Swan Road Board district and, so far as I can understand, other than the State Housing Commission homes which are in the Bassendean Road Board area, there is little activity. As a result, the land in the Swan Road Board district carries only a low rate and does not warrant large sums of money being spent on it by the Swan Road Board. The problem is being felt in the Bassendean Road Board district, which is next door.

The water which is lying there is a problem to the people living in the State Housing Commission area as well as to the people who have been living there for some years. It will continue to be a problem, too, unless something is done to ease the position. So I thought, while speaking on the Estimates, I would raise the matter in the hope that the Minister or Ministers concerned would have some regard for it when planning their Estimates next year.

The next item I wish to discuss is sewerage and plumbing and the cost of connecting houses to the sewerage system. Members will recollect that the cost of connecting a house has increased from about £70 to £160, £180 and even £200. Only five years ago I cited the case of a man who had paid £450 for a house at Guildford and it had cost him £350 to have it sewered. At present in my electorate, the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department is putting through a sewerage main and the men are literally engaged in mining work. They are working 10 and 12 feet below the surface of the ground and it is obvious, when one looks at it, that when home owners wish to connect their homes with the sewerage it will be a costly job. When plumbers come to do the work they will have to reopen all the earth works in order to connect up to the main sewer.

Some people in the area asked me to see the engineer in charge to ascertain whether the department would bring pipes from the main up to the surface level so that plumbers could connect up private houses. I was told that it could not be done because it was against the department's policy. The men were working near my home, with a view to linking up the high school, and I asked the foreman whether, in view of the fact that the pipes were down 10 or 12 feet below the level of the ground, earthenware pipes could be connected to the main and brought to the surface so that plumbers could easily connect up to the system when doing their part of the work. Again, I was told that it was not Government policy to do that sort of thing.

In an effort to cut down costs, I think it is about time that the Government did all the sewerage and plumbing work connected with it in the metropolitan area. The idea of installing sewerage mains and allowing the master plumbers to connect up private homes is a costly way of doing the job. As a workers' representative in an industrial electorate, I say that it is about time the Government took over all the plumbing work and while the men are putting in the mains for the sewerage system, they should be followed by Government plumbers who could connect up all the private homes.

In my opinion bad times are coming and the Government, irrespective of its political colour, should consider that aspect in an

effort to cut down costs. To allow men to work 10 or 12 feet below the surface of the ground for three or four months, fill in the earth works and then have the plumbers dig it all out again to connect up private homes to the sewerage system is an economic waste of the highest order. If the Government were to do the plumbing work instead of a householder being asked to pay £160, £170 or £200 to a private plumber, the cost would be as low as £100. So I hope the Government of the day, when considering next year's Estimates, will pay attention to that aspect.

I now wish to deal with the railways. As far as I can see, the diesel railcars are doing a good job with the haulage of goods and passengers to and from the country and in the metropolitan area. These diesel railcars have won the confidence of the public and I would not be surprised to hear this year that the number of people travelling by this means had doubled. But the fact remains that the public are clamouring for more sidings and a quicker service. I believe a number of people who now travel to the metropolitan area by car or bus would patronise the railways if more sidings were built. I recommended the erection of four more sidings in my electorate but I have been told that the railways cannot now cater for the passengers offering, with the existing railcars, and therefore these new sidings cannot be built.

Personally, I think they ought to be built but I heard recently that certain of the land, which I suggested should be used, had been leased. Yet I, as a member for the district, had recommended that these areas be taken over for the erection of new railway sidings. I hope that that sort of thing is not going to continue and if suitable areas are available for a particular purpose and will allow the department to do a better job than it is now doing, the Government will not lease them to people to build timber sidings and the like. I hope the Railways Commission will have some regard for the fact that the people in my district want more railcars and more sidings.

It concerns me to see diesel engines being purchased from overseas. Every few weeks one can see new diesel engines being brought from the ships at Fremantle to the workshops at Midland Junction. When purchased from overseas those engines must be costing the State millions of pounds and, in my opinion, the department should be encouraged to build its own engines in the workshops at Midland Junction. Those shops were originally built for that purpose and to do work for the department. If people in New South Wales can build diesel railcars, we in this State can do the same thing.

At a cinema recently I saw a picture showing 3 ft. 6 in. gauge diesel railcars, which had been built at the Glyde Engineering Works at Sydney, being taken to

the Queensland sugar plantations. If we cannot build our own diesel engines, and the necessary rollingstock, I think we ought to try to have them built in New South Wales, Victoria or South Australia instead of having them built overseas at a cost of millions of pounds. This becomes even more necessary, when, in my opinion, we are entering an economic depression.

While on the subject of railcars, for several months past I have noticed trains running from Midland Junction to Boya siding, which is the other side of Greenmount and about half way to Mundaring. Everybody is aware of the fact that the rail service to Mundaring has been cut out for several years and I think the time is now opportune to run a diesel railcar service to Mundaring, or at least as far as Greenmount. That area was built up because the railways were running a service to it and recently 100 new homes were built at Koongamia, which is next to Greenmount. The passenger service there is not the most desirable and the road bus system, in my opinion, is not adequate. Greenmount siding could cater for the people of the area and for those living at Koongamia.

This morning I was at Koongamia, at about half past 10, and I saw a locomotive, with trucks, backing into Boya siding. It is evident that the line is in a fit condition to carry trains and so I think that the department should be asked to reinstitute a passenger system, using diesel coaches, for that area. To the people at Koongamia in particular, it is most disappointing to have to rely on an infrequent bus service. At the moment there are approximately 70 homes occupied, but they are extremely isolated, being well away from the shopping centre. Further, they are without telephones, a fire station, doctors, stores or amenities of any description. However, if they had the benefit of a railcar service within a quarter of a mile of the housing area, they could travel to the city more expeditiously and thereby would not feel so isolated and forgotten. So I am advocating that the Government inaugurate a diesel railcar service for Mundaring or Greenmount at the earliest opportunity.

I now wish to deal with a Main Roads Department matter, particularly as it affects bridges. Those members who do a fair amount of travelling around the metropolitan area, especially in the outlying suburbs, will notice that all roads, both bitumen and gravel, have deteriorated greatly during the last 12 months. The damage is so great that I doubt whether the local governing authorities will, even within the next 12 months, be able to catch up with the work that has got so far behind. I was wondering whether the Minister for Works, the Minister for Local Government and representatives of the Local Government Association could get together for the purpose of working

out some scheme whereby the equipment belonging to the Main Roads Department could be used by each local authority when such equipment was working in a particular area.

It is not unusual to see this equipment in a district for three or four weeks at a time and unfortunately it is often lying idle for a great portion of that period. If the local authorities and the Main Roads Department could co-operate with each other, I believe the equipment could be used to better advantage than it is at the moment, and I would certainly like to see something done towards achieving that object. The equipment used by the Main Roads Department is very costly and for that reason no local authority can afford to purchase similar plant. However, no doubt the Main Roads Department knows what work it is going to do in a particular area six or eight months before the job is commenced, and therefore it would be quite simple for it to say to any local authority, "If you want to do any maintenance on any of your roads, you can make use of our equipment for a week or a fortnight while we are working in your area." If this were done it would tend to lower the cost of road maintenance to a local authority and would lead to a better economic result in the interests of all concerned.

While on the question of main roads and bridges, I want to point out that in the Stephenson plan it is envisaged—and this is endorsed by the town planning authorities—that at the rear of Bassendean, along Walter-rd., a main road will be constructed running almost due north when it approaches the Swan River at the eastern end of Walter-rd. For some time I have felt—and I think the local authority concerned feels the same way—that Walter-rd. in Bassendean should be linked with Swan-st., in Guildford, which would provide another means of access to Guildford and the northern suburbs beyond.

If this road were built it would mean that anyone travelling from Perth could go right through to Guildford and on to the areas to the north, such as Swan and even to Midland Junction and Upper Swan, without having to pass over the railway line. I believe that a bridge, in the vicinity of Swan-st. and Walter-rd., is needed now because at present the South Guildford bridge and the Bassendean bridge at certain times of the day cannot cope with the volume of traffic and, further, they are unsuitable for the type of traffic that is now passing over them.

Members know that in recent years amendments have been made to the Traffic Act to allow vehicles 8 ft. wide to traverse our roads. However, I would point out that many bridges in the metropolitan area are no more than 16 ft. wide

and when two 8 ft. vehicles wish to cross such a bridge, the people travelling in them are in imminent danger. Even when one 8 ft. wide vehicle passes over such a bridge with a normal width vehicle travelling in the opposite direction there is very little clearance between them. So it behoves the Main Roads Department and other powers that be to take steps to build urgently needed new bridges and to widen the existing ones so that overwidth vehicles can cross them in safety.

Only last week I received the following letter from the Bassendean Road Board:—

Dear Sir,

I am instructed by the above board to forward to you for whatever action you think most desirable a copy of a letter which has been received from Mr. L. Jamieson, of 46 Sixth-av., Bassendean.

Yours faithfully,  
(Sgd.) BERT GALE,  
Secretary-Engineer.

This is the letter forwarded to the board by Mr. Jamieson—

Dear Sirs,

I would like to suggest to the board members that an attempt be made with the authorities concerned to have Walter-rd. connected to Guildford by means of an overhead bridge over the Swan River. This would obviate quite a number of rail crossings as well as divert a lot of heavy traffic north of the town, and alleviate the pressure through our main street. This matter I am sure is a must eventually, and I think it is time that we did something to hasten same along.

The time is fast approaching when the Government will have to give consideration to building a bridge over the Swan River on the north side of Bassendean because of the congestion that now takes place on the Guildford bridge at certain times of the day.

I also want to point out that a bridge is badly wanted in another part of Bassendean, namely, opposite Villiers-st. near Sandy Beach. If this were done, it would shorten the distance for those people who wished to travel over the Great Eastern Highway. Residents of Kalamunda, Forrestfield and Maida Vale, could cross that bridge at a point which is known as the Villiers-st. section—directly opposite the super works—which would shorten the distance to the metropolitan area and would eventually help to ease the traffic on the bridges at South Guildford and Bassendean. So I commend to the Government the building of bridges over the river at those points I have mentioned.

Probably the most important matter I want to deal with on the Estimates is the poverty and distress suffered by many people in the metropolitan area at the moment. It is most evident. Almost weekly my attention has been drawn to extreme cases of distress, particularly among aged people who are being evicted from their homes because the owners want to take possession of them. As a result they cannot afford to pay the high rent being asked for alternative accommodation. Many of these old-age pensioners are paying so much in rent that they have not got enough left to live on adequately.

A number of these people have asked me to assist them by making representations on their behalf. Some have asked me to get cheaper houses for them because they cannot afford to pay high rents out of their pensions, whilst others have suggested to me that the Government should introduce a tax to establish a fund to which everyone could contribute so that an additional amount could be paid to old-age pensioners over and above what is being received by them from the Commonwealth.

So I want to emphasise that the most important matter I am speaking on tonight is the poverty and distress of many old-age pensioners. I therefore hope that members will give some attention to this question. As evidence of the distress that is being experienced by some people in the metropolitan area, I have here a letter which was forwarded to me entirely unsolicited. Those members who have any heart at all will realise that this is not an isolated case by any means. This is the letter I received last week—

Dear Sir,

Will you please excuse the liberty I am taking in writing to you, but I am very worried, and so I thought I would write to you? My position is this: In 1947, after the death of my mother, through no fault of my own, I lost my home. It had to be sold and that left me homeless. For three years after that I had to stay in a convalescent home as I was very ill and could not get accommodation elsewhere. The little money that came to me I had to live on it, pay storage fees on my few bits of furniture that was left to me as I couldn't sell it. It is only mine for my lifetime and at my death has to go to someone else. Because I was a single person the Housing Commission would not give me a permit to build. So that meant I had to live on my capital until it was gone, having that little left to me by will. My invalid pension was cut to the bone. Now I've neither home, money, health or anything else; only a few bits of furniture that were left to me and my invalid pension. I have been knocked around from place to



place for three years. It is very difficult for me to get on. I cannot get cheaper lodgings anywhere. The basic wage goes up and most landlords expect to have the rent increased. At the present time I have to pay £1 11s. 6d. a week for two unfurnished rooms, and I have little left to live on.

Members will be aware that by paying £1 11s. 6d. for rent this woman has a little over £1 to live on because she is an invalid pensioner. This is not an isolated case; there are others in my electorate who are similarly situated. Invalid pensioners cannot pay between £2 10s. and £3 as rental for a house, even if vacant houses were available. There are no houses available to accommodate single persons only, so these pensioners are placed in a very difficult position. They have a desire to continue as individuals but they also want to feel that the roof over their heads is really their own. Because these single people cannot get homes, they are compelled in many cases to live in accommodation little better than stables.

I have a case in mind where the structure used as living accommodation by an individual in Fourth Avenue, Bassendean, is so poor that the stables in Belmont and Rivervale look like little palaces when compared with it. The woman living in that accommodation tried to get a house under the McNess homes scheme but she was unable to. She has to pay 10s. out of her invalid pension for her present accommodation. She is in an unfortunate position. If she approaches the Housing Commission and the McNess Homes Trust she will no doubt receive a reply to this effect, "Why can't you go to an old women's home?"

It is most unreasonable to expect a woman between 45 and 50 years of age to go to an old women's home, particularly when she desires to remain independent. Some of the people I refer to cannot even afford to have a radio. In the first case mentioned by me, the woman has to sit in the darkness and she cannot have the radio on because the landlady will not repair the power-point. She herself cannot afford to have it fixed up. The neighbours of that woman are buying her firewood and all her clothing.

That leads me to this point: One of my electors considers that a tax should be levied on wage-earners to supply the needs of the aged. Three years ago at a meeting of the Midland branch of the A.L.P., of which I am secretary, a suggestion was put forward that all wage-earners should be taxed 1d. in the £ to provide for the extra needs of old-age pensioners. The proposer said that he saw pensioners walking around cash-and-carry shops trying to get the cheapest meats and canned foods available because they could not afford to buy

roasts and other choice cuts from the butchers. Another man's suggestion was put up along these lines—

It was 1943 I wrote John Curtin in connexion with national insurance. Perhaps a bad time on account of war. The reason I wrote him I had listened to a talk by Forde. I think he was Minister for the Army at the time.

He mentioned in his address that some £20,000,000 weekly was paid out in wages. It occurred to me that 2s. in the £ levied on this amount would mean £2,000,000 a week raised to form a fund, and if it could go into a bank and forget it for 10 years it became £1,000,000,000 plus interest. The address was a national broadcast. So conclude the figures represented the Commonwealth.

Now to operate in the State of W.A. There are a lot of things that would have to be studied. The working population is the first thing to know, whether it would have enough to tackle such a proposition; whether there are enough members working to try it on.

Your State Bank and Insurance could handle the measure quite expertly, and as the population grows bigger, if everyone was roped in by an Act there is no reason why such an organisation couldn't supply the wants of the State in loans.

Take a look at the s.p. bookies; the amount contributed by them weekly, a tidy sum at present and later will get bigger.

In connexion with the wages tax, who takes this into their coffers, State or Commonwealth? Would this tax touch the 10 per cent. mark and swell the insurance?

The set out I made on paper when I wrote the Prime Minister of Australia was worked on a basic wage of £5 per week for 40 years. In this time £1,040 is deducted. Insurance doubles itself in that time, so it becomes £2,080 plus interest nearly enough for 10 years of old age at £5 per week. Today the basic is two and a half times as much. Therefore if anything is born, the collections will be that much greater.

It seems to me something should be worked out to see that old age is being better catered for. The existing pensioner has to go ahead as he is. He is not a wage-earner and must get his pension from Commonwealth. But on the other hand, do you not think the States could build up their own social services and be independent of the Commonwealth and give the coming old-ager a better deal?

Of course you understand this is just the outline of my ideas, and when you talk on the subject with some of your friends, perhaps more up to the minute, it may branch out into a most complicated and unworkable affair. I still think though that Parliament possesses patriots of the right type and calibre to do something for the aged and needy and you as the recipient I trust will thrash out the pros and cons.

If anything should come of this, the women will have to come in, as a lot of them are wage-earners, and if married and her husband died, she has to be kept perhaps to the tune of half pension.

The insurance, same as social services, to be wiped by death. There are a lot of things to be sifted in a big stunt such as this if it comes into force, and only insurance experts of the right type are my best bet.

I read that letter so that members can get an idea of the way people are thinking. The person making the suggestion is not an old-age pensioner and he hopes that he will not have to go on the pension. He did save enough money when he was working to make himself independent in his old age, but he now realises that, despite his savings over 40 or 50 years, his funds are fast disappearing. The cost of living has risen in this period three or four-fold and the purchasing value of his savings has been reduced considerably. It may turn out that despite his desire to be independent of the old-age pension, he will have to apply for it. In putting up the suggestion, he was not mindful of his own position; he was merely trying to set up a plan to provide something extra for old-age pensioners.

For my part, I am quite certain that if the Government gives this suggestion consideration, something will be done to alleviate suffering and distress among old-age pensioners, which is so evident in the metropolitan area. I have given two instances of women who are trying to do their best to remain independent and to obtain homes. Their efforts have virtually starved them to death because the invalid or old-age pension is insufficient for their needs. It behoves any Government to help these people.

In what way can they be helped? In many instances they can be helped by the provision of small homes of one or two decently equipped rooms. Even if such accommodation could not be given to pensioners individually, it could be shared. Some of the pensioners could be put into communal groups. Thus they would not have to pay big rentals when they are evicted. Many evictions still take place in the metropolitan area, the average being 10 to 12 a week. Unfortunately many of the evictees are old-age pensioners who have no one to look after their interests.

They have no one to turn to. The Housing Commission is not able to help them in every instance. In some cases they have been asked to pay from £3 10s. to £5 a week as rental for a house.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you think these people should have been assisted before the Subiaco flats were erected?

Mr. BRADY: The Subiaco flats are very essential, but at the same time accommodation should also be provided for old-age pensioners. These two matters go hand in hand. The State Housing Commission, wherever possible, is placing many pensioners into temporary accommodation at Allawah Grove, South Guildford. They have been put into temporary homes built by the previous Government. A fortnight ago I was asked to pay a visit to that settlement. I saw two old-age pensioners, one 68 years of age and the other 75 years of age, living together. They both shook hands with me when I arrived. Their hands were stone cold. Why was that? The reason was that the house was unlined. It has asbestos outer walls and the water poured down the walls. That is the condition under which pensioners are forced to live in Allawah Grove.

I am not casting any blame on the past or the present Government. I am aware that this accommodation was built as a temporary measure. The pensioners in that locality have been forced to live under appalling conditions in the last 12 months. As the parliamentary representative of the district, I felt that I should ventilate their grievances. One of the neighbours of the couple I wanted to assist was so worried about their plight, imagining that one day she might find their corpses, that she finished up in the Royal Perth Hospital. This couple of old-age pensioners are able to carry on and give each other comfort, though they are in difficult circumstances. The homes at Allawah Grove are not suitable for old-age pensioners, and I hope that the Government will not continue this practice.

Of course, I am mainly concerned with invalid pensioners and their accommodation. Most of them are occupying one or two rooms under shocking conditions in both the metropolitan area and the country. Something should be done to assist them to get better accommodation. Because in many cases old-age pensioners have tried to keep a roof over their heads, because they have tried to pay their way and because they have tried to live decently, they now find themselves in an unfortunate position.

I have already said that pensioners are in need of assistance and I have said that sympathetic people are desirous of creating a fund to render that assistance. Whether it be in the form of a tax, or money to be set aside, similar to the McNess Housing Trust, I do not care, so long as something is done for them. For that

reason I felt I should mention this matter. I know there are other speakers to follow me and I do not wish to monopolise too much time.

In conclusion, I wish to compliment the Government on what it has done towards the provision of a medical school. Up to date, it has not sought to gain any special political kudos as a result of its action. Early in the year, I led a deputation to the Premier when the representatives of the B.M.A. asked him to assist this project. The congratulations of the House and of the people generally are due to the Hawke Government for its major effort to ensure the establishment of a medical school in order that residents of the State may be guaranteed decent medical service in the years to come.

Members are aware of the difficulty of getting doctors to undertake practice in the country areas. Mostly they prefer to remain in the metropolitan area because in the country there are no facilities for them to continue their research work. I could speak at considerable length along these lines, but I have no intention of doing so. I simply want to congratulate the Government on the foresight it displayed and the success of the means adopted to raise the £150,000 representing its half of the expenditure and having accepted responsibility for the full cost of maintaining the medical school after it has been established.

The provision of a medical school here will enable our young people who so desire to qualify as doctors—those who otherwise would not have had an opportunity to do so. I was informed that one doctor estimated the cost of having his son educated as a doctor at £3,000 because he had to go out of the State. That is a large sum; spread over six years, it represents an average of £500 a year. With a medical school established here, it might be possible to train young people at a cost of perhaps £100 or £130. Thus, the establishment of a medical school here represents a marvellous achievement. I thank the Government for the excellent job it has done in this connection, and I hope it will long remain in office in order to continue such good work.

**MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [5.47]:** I wish to make a few comments as my contribution to this debate. Being a financial matter, I wish to confine my remarks to the subject of finance. The particular point on which I desire to speak briefly has relation to the Joint Committee on Public Accounts of the Commonwealth Parliament in its report No. 18. This is a financial document that was presented to the Commonwealth Parliament. It makes rather dull reading and appears to be a very thick volume, but its apparent thickness is caused largely by the fact that it is printed on thick paper, and so it is far less formidable than it looks. This is a

document that should be compulsory reading for all members throughout the British Commonwealth of Nations, because it proves that the number of questions which are of importance to all of us should receive the interest of members of Parliament.

It deals with the various methods of presenting to Parliament—in this instance, the Commonwealth Parliament—the financial measures, and the relationship between the debates on those measures which are not part of the Budget but which represent a very important part of a private member's duties, that is, the private member's section of debate. Under the current situation, the debates on the Budget, on each year's Address-in-reply and on the Appropriation Bill, are treated as matters of confidence by the Government, but are debated more on the lines of local requirements than as a close examination of financial affairs.

I think the time has come for us, as parliamentarians—and not as politicians—to get together and examine just how, when and where we can amend the method of the presentation of financial documents to the Chamber, how to ensure that finance itself is debated, and also private members' rights and privileges to say the things necessary to be said respecting their own electorates or the particular interests they represent in relation to their own background. These matters are dealt with to some extent in the 18th report. This however, is only part of the report; the next section, I understand, is likely to be produced almost at any time. Whether it will be produced under the authority of the present Federal Parliament, I am not sure, because the position is somewhat confused by the political situation.

The manner in which we deal with those matters here is traditional, but that is no reason why we should retain the current method. I set out to prepare a paper along much the same lines as this report with the idea of circulating it amongst members, but because of other matters requiring attention, it has not been completed. I have fairly extensive notes, but that is as far as I have got with it.

I have before me a table dealing with the various debates that have taken place over a period of years on the various financial matters. This table shows the manner in which members have made use of their opportunities in the past six years—

Number Conclusion			
Estimates introduced	of speakers	General debate	Estimates passed
28/7/49	31	2/9/49	20/9/49
28/9/50	9	22/11/50	7/12/50
16/10/51	18	21/11/51	14/12/51
28/10/52	21	20/11/52	12/12/52
22/10/53	21	22/12/53	22/12/53
23/9/54	11	11/11/54	9/12/54

# Appropriation Bill

introduced	Speakers	Passed
27/9/49	8	27/9/49
7/12/50	3	27/12/50
14/12/51	1	14/12/51
12/12/52	2	12/12/52
22/12/53	1	22/12/53
9/12/54	3	9/12/54

Thus, on one occasion, the Appropriation Bill was before the House for 20 days, and only three members spoke on it, so it would appear that that opportunity is one which is not used in the current set-up. On Supply, the number of speakers has varied greatly, and more than one Supply Bill has been introduced in each year for a long time. The figures are—

# Supply Bill

Introduced	Speakers	Passed
12/7/49	13	12/7/49
1/8/50	9	1/8/50
12/10/50	2	12/10/50
8/8/51	7	8/8/51
23/10/51	3	23/10/51
5/8/52	9	5/8/52
14/10/52	3	14/10/52
11/8/53	18	11/8/53
29/10/53	10	29/10/53
6/4/54	9	15/4/54
22/6/54	8	24/6/54
21/10/54	16	21/10/54

So, on Supply, members appear to use the opportunity to a fair extent to express their views, but on those occasions the speakers have seldom dealt with any of the broader aspects of finance. The subjects dealt with have nearly all related to electoral matters or to the needs of members' constituents. The Address-in-reply, the other great vehicle for the expression of private members' opinions, is more interesting. There was no Address-in-reply in 1949, and that probably accounted for the larger number of speakers on the Estimates in that year. The figures are—

# Address-in-reply.

Introduced.	Speakers.	Passed.
Nil	Nil	Nil
27/7/50	22	12/9/50
	54 on two amendments.	
2/8/51	33	30/8/51
	13 on two amendments.	
16/10/51	6	16/10/51
31/7/52	31	10/9/52
6/8/53	38	2/9/53
	11 on amendment.	
17/6/54	27	15/7/54

Thus, members can see that the opportunity for private members to express themselves is availed of but, as I said earlier, not on the broader aspects of finance. I think this is a great pity because the control of finance is actually control of government. The most important function of

any Government is to control the finances of the State, and I think I am right in saying that all the speeches I have mentioned, apart from those of the Treasurer in introducing the measures and of the Leader of the Opposition in replying, have revealed very little interest in the financial aspect itself.

Mr. Court: Have you given consideration to any improved method of presentation? I agree that the present form makes it difficult for private members to debate these matters.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have given some consideration to it and have been given stimulus by the 18th report of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts of the Commonwealth Parliament. That report contains a number of comments which I feel would be useful to the Committee and might stimulate us, as a responsible body, to reconsider our methods and order of dealing with these various debates. As an instance, in the Federal House there is what is known as grievance day which is, in effect, private members' day and which gives private members an opportunity of dealing with the various matters to which attention is given in this House during the debates on the Estimates and the Address-in-reply. I think the Federal method is preferable to that which obtains here.

The manner of debating the adjournment of the House in the Federal Parliament is another point which I feel we could examine with profit to ourselves and benefit to the government of the State, as it gives an opportunity to debate those fairly urgent matters which arise on occasions in all electorates. I would like to see the Standing Orders and practices of this House amended to include these two methods of giving private members more opportunity to deal with relevant matters. By following that course we would remove much of the pressure from the Budget and the various financial debates. We would also remove the pressure that exists to put forward purely parochial ideas and thereby encourage members to study the financial aspects of Government with a great deal more care.

I have stated that I believe the control of finance is the principal aspect of government and that view appears to coincide with the belief of the members of this Federal committee. They deal with that aspect at some length in this report. They deal also with the documents that come before the Federal House in the presentation of the Budget, as well as the various supplementary tables and reports. The Federal financial documents are somewhat similar to ours though not entirely the same. There is a resemblance which shows that they stem from the same family but the figures there are a great deal larger and it is consequently possible to hide errors and inaccuracies in departmental pigeon-holes.

Paragraph 4 of the report states—

Other questions that have been raised for the consideration of the committee include—

- (a) the inadequacy both of the information in and the manner of presentation of the various sections of the Estimates and Budget papers, and
- (b) the duplication of information in the various financial documents.

This seems to apply to all Parliaments, including ours, but that is no reason why we should not try to rectify it. Among the documents presented to us in relation to the Budget with which we are now dealing, there is included a big table of returns—the Budget—and portion of the Auditor General's report. It is possible to find, in relation to each department, practically the same information in each of those tables, some of it expressed in a different manner in each and some in the same manner. The same figures keep recurring so often that I cannot help feeling that one way of saving a good deal of money, manpower and time would be to re-organise these accounts so that all the figures relating to a single subject could be found in the one place and would arrive there at the same time.

I do not mind admitting that I have found these financial documents difficult to deal with. This is the fourth Budget which I have had the honour—I would not say the pleasure—of trying to deal with, and after four years of fairly extensive study of the subject, I still find in the documents snags that I cannot find my way around. Considering that I have given a real effort to this study and that my training over the last 25 years has been in figures, I feel that there is either something wrong with my head—as some people think there is—or my training, or that the documents are at fault. I am inclined to think that the real trouble lies in the fact that to understand these documents one would need 25 years' training in dealing with them.

Members of Parliament seldom have 25 years' training in Budget accounting and so it would be very much to our advantage if the accountancy work which is put before us was presented in a more modern manner and one with which the normal businessman is more familiar, so that we might get a reasonable appreciation of the matters that are put before us instead of having simply to guess. In paragraph 20 of its report the committee to which I have referred states that it believes—

that it is essential that revenue and expenditure proposals for the year should be set out in detail rather than a lump sum. Greater care is likely to be taken with detailed than with aggregate votes. Financial measures

are treated as confidence motions and debates tend to air grievances rather than to discuss the principles of finance or the details of estimates.

This applies here, too, and that is largely what I have been saying. In paragraph 23 we find—

The financial controls exercised by the Treasury and the Public Service Board over public funds are not canvassed. It is, nevertheless, disturbing that the investigations of the committee suggest that, at least in some aspects, the supervision has been inadequate.

In this regard I might remind members that we have read in the Press recently of the presentation of the report relating to the Aluminium Commission. There is a beautiful report, I think No. 12, on the growth of the Department of Supply and Development—as I think it is known—and it was owing to that report that the oil drilling equipment, which was later sold, was discovered to be in existence in Australia.

There are a number of matters in the various reports of this committee prior to the 18th and since that one which indicate that there is real substance in the statement that the investigations of the committee suggest that the supervision has been inadequate. I have not the slightest doubt that a similar investigation in this State would find certain snags of like nature, although not necessarily the same ones, and here I am not implying dishonesty but that because of the difficulty of these accounts things are done which members of Parliament should be, but are not, aware of.

Paragraph 24 of the report states—

A continuing interest on the part of Parliament, its committees and members, in the details and the significance of the financial documents submitted is essential if parliamentary control of expenditure is to be effective.

Paragraph 25 states—

Indeed, a regular review of the form and content of the Estimates is essential.

Those two statements I feel require no further comment. Paragraph 45 states—

The estimates of items of expenditure can be classified according to the "nature" of the expenditure or the "purpose" of the expenditure. In the United Kingdom the terms "subjective basis" and "objective basis" are used and its estimates are displayed on these bases.

Our system is objective in outline but some of the details are subjective and perhaps it could be said that the difference between the Budget itself and the Auditor General's report is the difference between those two terms. But it can lead to confusion and so I think that is another point

which we should examine. A comment, which I think will be of great interest to the member for Nedlands, is found in paragraph 58, which states—

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia discussed this matter with the committee and stated—

It is our view that the idea of matching costs against income is a desirable but somewhat theoretical idea in relation to the Government accounts as a whole but we consider it should be applied to all forms of Government business undertakings so that Parliament and the people can know the true results of such operations. This statement is made with the full realisation of the fact that Government policy may remove the profit motive from such enterprise.

The institute's view applies to all our State trading concerns and I am pleased to know that the figures for the State trading concerns this year, when they are available, will be set out more in accordance with that recommendation. I think that the form to be used will be a great improvement and I can only hope that that improvement extends to some of the other accounts which are now shown in the Budget proper but which I feel should be treated as trading accounts. Here I refer, for instance, to the Railway Department, which is treated as a Government department but which I feel would be better set out as a trading account as the figures would be then more easily understood.

The Housing Commission is another instance of a trading matter, and there are several others which I feel should be treated more as trading matters than as purely subjective Government matters. Paragraph 96 of the report states—

Having regard to constitutional principle, public interest, administrative convenience and economy in planning and operating programmes, the committee recommends that estimates of expenditure should be presented to the Parliament before the beginning of the financial year in time to be approved by the Parliament before that date. This would, according to the timetable submitted by the Treasury, mean that they would have to be presented to the Parliament during the first week in May.

That suggestion, if applied in the Federal Parliament, would have important repercussions in this State, and would enable us, as it would require an earlier decision from the Loan Council, also to present our financial figures close to the end of the financial year—either just before or just after. It would put us in the position that is recommended by this committee

in relation to the Federal sphere, so that the Estimates could be approved before the expenditure was made. At the moment we are dealing with a series of estimates, much of the actual money of which has already been spent prior to the allocation of the funds by the authority of this Chamber.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. JOHNSON: As I was saying before the tea suspension, there are some conclusions in this report which I feel could be adopted in this Parliament with value. I would like to refer to the conclusions of the committee. In Section 7 of the report we find the following:—

#### General Conclusions.

(1) (c) It would be an advantage to have the figures of estimated receipts and expenditure in one table, instead of separate tables as at present.

Under administration we find the following:—

(2) (a) The Auditor General, the Treasury and the Public Service Board have a special responsibility to Parliament for ensuring economic expenditure;

(b) Regular reviews of the form and content of the financial document are essential.

The whole of the recommendations in this report are of great interest, and are applicable to a greater or a lesser degree to the accounts of this State.

I would like serious consideration to be given to the setting up of a reports committee to deal with the same subject in a State sphere, and I would recommend to such committee that its first point of duty should be the reading of this report, and part 2 of the report when it issues, as a great portion of the research and findings have actually been carried out. The report is a particularly interesting one and I would have liked to deal with its conclusions and findings in relation to the preparation of the Loan Estimates of the general works programme, which is dealt with as it relates to the Commonwealth attitude respecting this report. The State section of it is perhaps less well known but equally important—perhaps more so—to us here.

For instance, the report recommends an earlier setting out of the expected loan expenditure, and discussions about two months earlier with the Commonwealth Directorate of Works, which must review that expenditure prior to the meeting of the Loan Council at which the loan programme is made final. That, I feel is a matter of great importance and I would like

particularly to emphasise the point that, in the Commonwealth sphere, this is a joint party and a joint house committee. It has been led by Mr. Bland who was previously Professor of Government Procedure in the Melbourne University. He is an expert and an enthusiast in his own right. He has had the services of several very good people who are various members interested in finance. They are also well served by their secretary, Mr. Caffien, who is most enthusiastic on the matter of government finance.

That brings me to the second point—one which I think is possibly more important at this juncture—that is, the relationship between State and Federal finance commitments. I have gone to some trouble for the clarification of my own mind, and I hope for the edification of members generally, to convert the figures available on this matter into more understandable terms. Most of them are available in the returns that come to us with the Budget and can be found there; but some conversion is required. To clarify our thinking in relation to our finances, and particularly our finances in relation to Commonwealth money, it is necessary to adopt a single standard of comparison.

The standard I have adopted, and which I think is the most easily understood and the fairest method, is that of comparing these various figures on a per capita basis; that is, how much various figures represent per head of the Western Australian population each year. Starting with the year 1948-49 as a base—for no particular reason except that it happens to be a base I started from, the figures were there and I did not have the figures for 1947-48—I have converted most of these relevant details into graphs. They illustrate some interesting points which I feel have escaped the attention of a large proportion of those who are concerned with the finance of the State.

There is, for example, income tax. Income tax reimbursement is subject to agreement and not subject to any political pressure apart from the pressure that created the agreement. In 1948-49, the income tax per head of the Western Australian population was £8 8s. 10d. It rose the next year to £10 9s. 5d., and in 1954-55—the last completed year—it reached £17 19s. 5d. per head of the population. That is apparently a doubling of the amount we get under that agreement. However, converting those figures—as I think we are justly entitled to do—by the "C" series index for each of those relative years, we find that that graph which starts at £8 8s. 10d. and rises in its next year to £10 9s. 5d. rises only to the figure of £10 8s. 8d. in the year 1952-53. There has been a falling, at least as fast since that date as it rose, to that period. In 1954-55 it descended to £9 11s. 9d. of the 1948-49 value per head of population.

The special Commonwealth grant which is a figure that lies more within the actual granting ability of the Commonwealth at the time, is a less regular graph because there was in the year 1951-52 a change of thinking in relation to the amount which had risen from £6 15s. 4d. in 1948-49 to £10 1s. 3d. in 1950-51; and which dropped to £8 9s. 8d. in 1951-52. This rose the following year to £12 19s. 2d. and has now descended to £11 6s. 9d. This gives a jagged graph.

The reason for that is the change of thinking in 1951-52 where special considerations were given, and the downward trend in that year is replaced by an upward move in one of the other graphs that balances it. The 1948-49 value of money which was £6 15s. 4d. has descended £6 1s., and there has been, in relation to the special grant given by the Commonwealth, an actual reduction of 6s. 4d. per head of our increased population over the years.

So we are actually getting less real money from the Commonwealth under that particular head; and that is one which is in its hands and not the subject of an agreement. The odds and ends, the other Commonwealth money, which was 19s. 9d. per head of population in the first year and rose to £1 15s. 1d. and descended to £1 8s. 4d. has descended to 15s. 5d. per head of population at 1948-49 values. That covers the odds and ends of the various separate agreements under which we receive money from the Commonwealth. It also includes special grants for floods and famines and so on.

The next set of figures is particularly important because it relates to loan funds. The loan funds per head of population are a very true indication of what the Government of the State is able to achieve by way of development of the State. As we are all aware, our revenue is, in the main, earmarked for continuing ordinary Government services and for expansion of normal Government services as our population grows. But if we have sufficient loan funds, we have the ability to decide which particular piece of development we will commence in any particular period.

In the year 1948-49, loan funds per head of population, were £7 2s. 4d. As we are all aware, they rose very sharply and in the year 1951-52 they reached £27 10s. 2d. per head of population. They have since descended to £20 14s. The value of that amount, adjusted to the 1948-49 figure of £7 2s. 4d., rose to £19 14s. 4d. That was a very considerable and real rise, which was reached in the year 1950-51.

However, the peak of the money values was reached the following year—1951-52—but the real values had descended to £18 2s. 2d. and the real value last year had descended to £11 0s. 11d. per head of the Western Australian population. I am unable to give the figure for the current year, because, although we know its

face value, we will not know the corrected value according to the "C" series index, or the amount per head, until the year is completed.

So all we can do in relation to that point is to estimate that the trend has a great probability of continuing; and, if the current trend of reduction in loan funds per head in real figures is adjusted at the same trend as before, it will descend to about £8 or £9 per head of population in 1948-49 terms.

That means that the Government will have only about £2 per head of population more than it had in 1948-49, when we were suffering a severe recovery from a little disturbance overseas. The figures for all Commonwealth moneys per head rose from £23 6s. 3d. to £57 7s. 5d. in 1953. However, the real terms rose only to £38 12s. 1d. in 1951 and have now descended in total to £27 9s. 1d.

The point which I wish to make, and to which most of those figures were leading, is that the fairest, most honest, and easily understandable method of dealing with this problem—that of the funds which come to us after collection by the Commonwealth—is in the amount per head of population; and it should, I think, for purposes of comparison, be translated into value at a stable figure per head of population in each of the years.

So I have prepared a graph for the two items which the Commonwealth Government has in its own control—that is, those items which are not subject to legal agreement and legislative act, but which are controlled by the Commonwealth Treasurer, possibly subject to agreement and recommendation. That is, the special grant which is recommended by the Grants Commission whose recommendation the Commonwealth Government has always taken up to date; and the amount of loan funds. Loan funds are subject to the agreement of the Loan Council; whereas, as every member is aware, the Commonwealth Government has a dominating influence and has carried its own way against the combined wishes of the Treasurers of all States.

I have prepared a graph because I find that graphs are easier to follow than figures presented. That graph—which, as members can see, I have roughed out—is reasonably accurate to within  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. by measurement. That is the thickness of the line I have had to use to make it clear. There is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. below the paper. I could not get a piece of paper long enough to put the rest on, but it does not destroy the accuracy of the graph.

Hon. D. Brand: You could get butchers' white paper; there is plenty of that.

Mr. JOHNSON: I want to make it clear that I am not trying to take political advantage of this business. This is not a party matter, but a Western Australian argument we have with the Commonwealth and members on all sides of the Chamber should be aware of the situation. The green in the first column represents the figures for the Commonwealth special grant, plus the Commonwealth loan per head of Western Australian population in the year 1948-49. Members will see the way it rises over the years to the top point of the aluminium paint till in 1952-53 it reaches £38 per head of population which the Commonwealth let us have of its own free will and accord.

But it will be noted that that figure has been descending each year since 1952-53, and the amount per head of population this year will certainly be lower because our population has risen and the amounts have fallen in total. The green figure shows the larger amounts corrected by the "C" series index for each of the years; and I might say that those figures are not of my own working out, but are quite official. Anybody who wishes to check them can get them from the same source.

From £13 17s. 8d. in 1948-49, the highest amount to which it rose was £27 15s. 3d. per head in 1950-51. It has fallen since quite steadily until for the last completed year it reached £17 1s. 11d. per head. As I have already forecast—and I am afraid, reasonably accurately—the gross amount per head will be reduced in the next year when it is completed; and the index is still tending to move upwards, and the probability is that it will be higher at the end of the year than at the beginning, and that the real value of the money will be down to about what it was in 1948-49.

I think it is a very great pity that when the fall in real terms began in 1950-51, we did not begin a real outcry. I feel that possibly we were unaware—because we were getting more money in figures—that we were getting less real funds. The fall has been steady. We have been going down the hill, and it has become progressively more difficult for Governments each year to do anything in the nature of development. The cost of running the country does not vary very greatly per head of population. There are even figures on that available in our own tables.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It would not be logical that as our population increased there should be the same amount per head of population each year because of the ratio of population and size.

Mr. JOHNSON: I think it is reasonably accurate to assume that the cost per head of the majority of the services that a Government supplies remains somewhat stable. The cost of education and the Police Force, etc., is fairly stable in real



cost per head, no matter how the population moves. If the population goes up, as we expect it to, it will continue fairly stable.

The return in our own tables to which I referred is No. 9; and it shows that, in 1950-51, the first in the current tables, interest took 12.8 per cent., and in the last completed year—1954-55—it was 42.2 per cent. Sinking fund, which took 3.3 per cent., is now down to 2.8 per cent. The biggest change is in regard to salaries and wages, which started at 44.1 per cent. and has risen to 45.8 per cent. The other important change is in respect of "all other," the respective figures being 16.5 and 17.1.

I want to make it clear that this is a point on which I feel we should all agree as Western Australians: All Governments over these last years had been having less money to spend in real terms; and it looks as though the next Government will have even less in real terms, and it will become less possible for a State Government to do anything effective for the State. Whether we shall become mendicants to the Commonwealth is another matter; but it is more and more evident that a new financial agreement—and possibly a new outlook on Commonwealth-State relations—is required fairly urgently, because the Commonwealth is absorbing us by the very slow and not very obvious method of starving us financially. No one can blame any State Government for not doing much when it has less each year with which to do it. But a Government can be blamed by all Western Australians, no matter what their political colour, if it allows itself to be starved to death without kicking up a big fuss.

I hope all members on both sides will take this point strongly to heart and act not like opposite sides of the Chamber—as they do on occasions on political matters—but like Western Australians, and see whether they cannot do something to make Western Australia more financially independent and more capable of fulfilling her own destiny.

Mr. Court: Where do you suggest the extra money should come from?

Mr. JOHNSON: From the Commonwealth.

Mr. Court: Where is it going to get the funds?

Mr. JOHNSON: The Commonwealth has got the money. I am appealing to members to act like Western Australians and not party politicians.

Mr. Court: That is what we are doing. We are trying to get you to tell us where the extra money will come from.

Mr. JOHNSON: I read in "The West Australian," a paper which is not very strongly inclined to the particular brand of

thinking I favour, that the Commonwealth had a slight surplus of money to the extent of some hundreds of millions of pounds. The largest amount we have had is £23,500,000. If the Commonwealth could spare us £10,000,000, £15,000,000 or even £20,000,000 out of its surplus, it would not die of starvation. The Commonwealth could cut its expenditure, if necessary; but it is not necessary, because it has a huge surplus.

The Commonwealth has a surplus and we are in trouble, and, furthermore, under the Constitution as it was agreed to by our founding forefathers in 1901, Commonwealth surpluses were required to be transmitted to the States. However, Commonwealth Governments of all colours have always found ways of disguising their surpluses to avoid that implication of the Constitution. No Government of any State has taken action against the Commonwealth for breaching the Constitution. I doubt whether such action would succeed because of the aid of lawyers and accountants. The Commonwealth would have the best that money could buy, and we would be in difficulty trying to get the Constitution applied. However, the Commonwealth Government has the money to spare, but is disguising it. It is unable to spend all its own allocations. It has never spent its full defence budget for one thing. The amount it could not spend on defence would make an enormous difference to Western Australia.

Mr. Court: If you were the Prime Minister, would you use that surplus?

Mr. JOHNSON: I would have to look at matters from a Commonwealth point of view, but at the moment I am speaking as a Western Australian. My whole argument is that we are Western Australians and unless we cry when we are kicked, which is what is happening to us, we are not doing our duty as Western Australians. Let me say that some of the other States do not take it sitting down. Let us have some admiration for those who have the courage to buck the Commonwealth. If I were the Commonwealth Treasurer, I am not sure that I would go around throwing money here and there, and I certainly would not give it away unless I was asked for it. We should ask for money, and we should make it clear that we are, in polite terms, being done over.

Mr. McCulloch: We are being got at.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr. Court: As a man of experience in banking, are you not somewhat concerned at the demand for Government spending in Australia, generally—States and Commonwealth?

Mr. JOHNSON: I am very much concerned about it, because there is a tendency to reduce Government spending in real

terms, and that is something we cannot afford to have. We must increase our spending capacity, otherwise we will slide downhill. I am not afraid of inflation, but of deflation. The forward-looking policy must be to give more money to those who can usefully spend it in the interests of the State. It may be necessary to reduce inflationary spending on luxuries and the over-capitalisation of some industries, etc.

There is a need for greater spending in certain directions. We have to think not just of detailed interests but of our State to see that the State is in a position to produce in the future the standard of living to which our children are entitled; which we know we cannot get in our lifetime, but which we can plan to achieve in our children's lifetime, so that they can then plan for their children to have a still better standard. This requires considerable planning and it means that we should take stock of the position. It also requires that we should look at some of the unhealthy inflationary spots in our economy. There have been comments—I am not the only one who has made them—of the danger that hire-purchase has become in our economy.

Ian Potter & Co., stock and share brokers of Melbourne—probably the largest stock brokers in Australia—ran, in their May-June bulletin, a special article entitled "The Scope for Hire Purchase." They had quite a lot of hard things to say about the hire purchase situation. Strange as it may seem, J. B. Were & Son, in their "Monthly Market Letter" for the month of May, 1955, had a long article headed "Are Less Favourable Times Ahead?", and they had this to say—

Considered commentaries issued by great trading banks and leaders in trade, industry and finance all carry the same cautionary note emphasising the need for business houses and private individuals to set their houses in order.

Later we find this—

The coming months will see a gradually intensified constriction of credit. "Rydge's", the businessman's reference magazine, in August, 1955, referred to hire purchase companies and yields of 8 per cent. or more; and, let me say, a yield of 8 per cent. is the yield on the purchase price of the investment and not on its face value.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member's time has expired.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [8.5]: I have listened with interest to the remarks on finance and loan moneys made by the member for Leederville and I agree wholeheartedly with what he said. We find that today we have less money per head of population than we had in 1952-53. This is

proved by the hon. member's graph; and the money that we are allowed is not going as far as it did in those times. The member for Nedlands, by way of interjection, mentioned that the loan moneys or the Government funds were being spent too extravagantly, or that too much in the way of Government money was being spent. I do not agree with that.

In a young State like this, which we hope will progress, we must have loan money and plenty of it. In my electorate a lot of money has been spent this year on the renovating of Government buildings that had been neglected in the past. I understand that money has come from revenue and that the money for new works must come from loan funds. I do not suppose that the electorate I have the honour to represent is different from any other electorate inasmuch as the State is progressing and the population in the towns and country is increasing, and more country is being opened up by farmers. The requirements of the hospitals and schools are growing every year and the demand for water supplies is increasing.

Where the Opposition thinks the money is to come from to give the people these amenities that are necessary is beyond my comprehension, judging by the interjection from the member for Nedlands. More schoolrooms and also a junior high school are needed in the Northampton district. These requirements are imperative in my opinion and in the opinion of the people who live there. Northampton itself is in need of a domestic water supply, and a domestic system could be established there quite cheaply because of the lay-out of the source of supply. There would be no need for any pumping, but even so, we find that no money is available from loan funds at the present time for such a project.

Then we come to the hospitalisation for the district by means of a regional hospital. The Minister has been sympathetic in that regard and is making investigations to see whether it is financially possible to have the preliminary work done for the levelling and the laying of foundations for a regional hospital which, it is estimated, will cost £1,000,000. Will the member for Nedlands say that a regional hospital is not necessary in a district like Geraldton; and that £1,000,000 of loan funds would be unwisely spent on it? We also in our new area—in the Dampier-st. area, commonly known as the barley patch—have need for a new primary school. The site has been levelled, and levels have been taken, ready to put the foundations in. If this school is built, it will relieve the congestion in the other main schools in the town. But, I understand there is no money available for this project at present.

I come now to homes. We all know what has happened as far as the Commonwealth-State housing agreement is

concerned, and what has happened recently in connection with the war service homes scheme. I suppose I am not the only one who carries letters from the War Service Homes Commission to clients who have had their applications turned down. The reason given by the Federal Government is that no funds are available for the building of homes under this scheme. The commission has even gone so far as to order that contracts that have been let be not proceeded with. These instructions have come from Canberra.

If members think that is fair, I certainly do not. One class of people who should be assisted to have their own homes is the ex-servicemen. In today's Press we see that the R.S.L. is calling a conference to deal with the question of the recent reductions in the amount being made available by the Commonwealth Treasurer to supply homes for these people. As the member for Leederville said, it is time this matter was treated in a State-wide manner and not on a political basis. We should try to come together and make some arrangement so that we can get suitable loan funds for the various projects that are necessary in this State.

The services required in my district are not ones that have been imagined by some organisation, but are absolutely necessary. The same argument applies to the improvement of the harbour at Geraldton. We have a neat little harbour there, but it is lacking because of certain fundamental difficulties. Because of a shortage of loan funds, the necessary works cannot be carried out. A considerable amount of money has been spent on repairs to public buildings, which were long overdue, and I am sure the citizens of Geraldton and Northampton, where those repairs have been carried out, are grateful for them.

Loan funds could also be used to provide extra berths at the fishing jetty at Geraldton. Our fishing industry is important not only to the port of Geraldton but to the State generally. Things have come to a pretty poor pass when an industry that is prepared to help itself and those engaged in it are prepared to go out in the rough weather in order to make a living and to help the State, cannot have provided for it the proper facilities for the slipping of boats and the doing of necessary repairs. The people in the fishing industry, like the tomato growers, have, to my knowledge, pulled their weight at all times in connection with doing whatever is necessary to help themselves and having investigations made into better marketing systems and improving their methods of marketing, and so on. They have always been willing to help themselves.

Our water supply, in the last two years, has been built up considerably, but some of us are concerned because we feel that with the cutting down of loan funds we

will not get the extra large amounts that are required to provide the necessary water supplies to keep the town going during the summer months. We have had a special committee to deal with the proposal for a regional supply from Gingin and Wongan Hills to Northampton and including Geraldton. In this regard a large scheme has been put forward. The Minister and the department have given it favourable consideration, and in regard to it I would like to say there is nothing in the way of party politics.

Members of all parties are on the committee and are working, with the end in view of having a regional supply for that area. I understand that the scheme will cost in the vicinity of £15,000,000 which will have to come from loan funds because no State as young as ours could do it out of revenue. We were hoping that before a regional water supply scheme came into operation, we would have abattoirs and freezing works established in Geraldton. Anyone who knows anything about freezing works is aware that a large amount of water is required to conduct them. It is hoped that in the near future we shall have some information from the department concerned which will throw a little light on the subject.

The same position applies to shipping improvements along the coast. For some time there has been an agitation to improve our State Shipping Service, and the Minister has advised that a new boat, the "Koojarra," will be placed on the run early next year. We are all looking forward to that time because it will help to improve the shipping service along our North-West coast. Geraldton will benefit from the improvement that will take place.

There is another matter I would like to discuss and this concerns hospitalisation and the treatment extended to widows whose husbands were killed on active service. As I understand it, in the metropolitan area any of these widows can obtain treatment at the Hollywood hospital. But in places like Geraldton they have to go to a private or Government hospital and pay their own expenses. The Federal department advises that if these women come to Perth they can obtain free treatment at Hollywood. But let me put this to members: If one of these women becomes suddenly ill and requires an operation, the onus is on the doctor to decide whether the patient should be sent to Hollywood or not.

If she is sent to Hollywood, she obtains free hospitalisation but if she is sent to any other hospital she is forced to pay her own expenses, and if she has only her pension, she could find the position difficult. So I think something should be done by the Commonwealth department. Perhaps our own department might be able to do something to ensure that free hospitalisation is given in country districts, either at a Government institution or at one of

the private hospitals. These women should not be expected to come to the metropolitan area to obtain free treatment.

I would now like to mention the treatment meted out to producers of lead in this State. Some three or four years ago, the Government started a plant at Northampton for the treatment of lead and copper ores. This plant has rendered good service and has certainly kept the industry going in the Northampton and Ajana districts. But many of the small companies have been almost killed at birth by the taxation methods adopted by the Commonwealth Government. In spite of repeated overtures to that Government, nothing has been done, and the taxation burden has not been lifted.

Our goldmining industry receives exemptions in certain matters—fuel oil is an example—but the leadmining industry gets nothing at all. After all, a mine is only a hole in the ground, whether lead, copper, gold or anything else is mined. Therefore, I think representations should be made to the Federal Government to assist the leadmining industry in this State. The largest field is at Northampton but there are also mines in the North-West, Ashburton and Gascoyne districts. It would help considerably the development of the industry, the employment of labour and our overseas funds, if the Federal Government could only see its way clear to give these people some concession in the way of taxation deductions on materials used.

There will be a lot of other matters concerning individual items on the Estimates which I shall discuss at the appropriate time; but I thought I would like to bring these few matters before Ministers and members generally to try to impress upon them how I stand, so far as loan moneys are concerned, in an effort to advance this State and to help it to gain further prosperity and a larger population.

**MR. HILL (Albany) [8.20]:** I listened with interest to the member for Leederville and also to the member for Geraldton; but I could hardly follow the member for Leederville. He seems to think we should chase the Commonwealth for more money; but I would like to point out that Commonwealth and State Governments have only one source from which they can raise funds, and that is from the people themselves. It is of no use chasing the Commonwealth to ask it to give our own money back to us.

In my Address-in-reply speech, I said—

We were told, during the course of His Excellency's Speech, that the economic condition of the State continues to be sound. I emphatically disagree with that statement and say that the State is far from being in a sound position and that we are not progressing in a healthy way. I would

say that this State could be compared to a person suffering from cancer and on the way to bankruptcy.

The Premier interjected, "Goodness, things are crook!" I want to thank the Premier because he has kept his promise; he has provided a financial statement with the Budget, and when one goes through the statement one realises that the State is steadily but rapidly going towards bankruptcy.

I should like to give members a few figures because they will give them food for thought. Our debt per head has grown from £196 4s. 7d. in 1950 to £270 8s. 3d. in 1955, an increase of £74 per head in five years. Return No. 8 tells us that our revenue expenditure has increased from £27,996,834, or £49 per head in 1950-51 to £46,203,889, or £71 4s. 5d. per head in 1954-55, an increase of £22 4s. 5d. in five years; a percentage increase of 49 per cent. in our State expenditure in five years.

**Mr. Bovell:** What about the increase in population?

**Mr. HILL:** I will deal with that later. These figures are not dealing with increase in population but with the increase in expenditure per head. During the last 12 months, our population has increased by 2.7 per cent. but our expenditure has increased by 7.9 per cent.

For the year ended the 30th June, 1950, our public debt was £109,550,142, and the deficit on our Loan Estimates was £5,365,000. For the year ended the 30th June, 1955, the public debt was £177,881,000, and the deficit was £8,754,464, or an increase of £68,331,207 in five years, and an increase in the deficiency of our loan assets of £3,368,712. There are a lot of causes for this state of affairs and I am afraid that some of them are due to the fact that the people of the State are inclined to sell their votes to the highest bidder.

I have here a cutting from "The West Australian" of last week. It states—

#### Kalgoorlie Pre-selection.

Poor Mr. Evans of Kalgoorlie. After a brief moment of fame as the selected Labour candidate for his home town, he has been banished to the political wilderness for three years for "flagrant breaches of the constitution". He has been deposed in favour of Mr. Styants, the sitting member, having confessed to the commission of four "offences" during the conduct of the pre-selection campaign. Among other things, Mr. Evans so far forgot himself as to give a bottle of beer to a prospective voter and a parcel of gifts to another.

The Minister for Lands: You would never do that!

Mr. HILL: It continues—

Labour's bitterest opponent would be forced to admit that the party's standards are exacting. But people not accustomed to the rules of Labour pre-selection ballots may be wondering what passed through Mr. Evans's mind when he read Mr. Hawke's Bunbury policy speech. For the Premier has assured Bunbury that this year the Government will spend nearly £3,000,000 in its midst.

The Treasurer: What! On Bunbury?

Mr. HILL: It goes on—

There are, of course, more ways than one of wooing voters as all politicians, including Sir Ross McLarty, are aware.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What paper is that?

Mr. HILL: The Perth paper; the local newspaper, which is misleadingly entitled "The West Australian". I said in my Address-in-reply speech that there are two organisations that do not like Albany; one is the Labour Party of Australia and the other is "The West Australian" newspaper.

Mr. Moir: We hope the member for Bunbury will tell us all about it.

Mr. HILL: All members know that I am keen about ports. Some members have said that we should chase the Commonwealth and ask it for more money.

Mr. Lawrence: Do you mean Houghton's, Penfold's or some other kind of port?

Mr. HILL: I do not mean port wine. I have with me the eighth report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, 1941, and at paragraph 178 appears the following:—

Harbours—The expenditure out of loan funds on outer harbours in Western Australia is large and it does not appear to us that a sufficient attempt is made to get an adequate return from the users of the districts served. If the traffic will not stand the cost, there is no reason for expenditure on harbours unless it is essential for the industry of the district, in which case the industry should be charged through a special rate. This policy has been tried in other parts of Australia, and insistence upon it has on occasions led the people of a district to decide that the expenditure on a harbour was not really necessary for their interests. A multiplication of harbours is uneconomic. It is true that in Western Australia the port of Fremantle returns a large profit, but this does not make up for the losses on the other ports. In any case, the profit of Fremantle is no excuse for an unscientific and unco-ordinated policy of harbour development.

Mr. Norton: Which are the ports they were talking about?

Mr. HILL: I will give some more figures if the hon. member will only sit quiet. If he wants to do something else, he ought to read the report himself.

Hon. L. Thorn: Give it to him; let them have it!

Mr. HILL: The report goes on—

A large expenditure has been made on the Bunbury harbour, which is only about a hundred miles from Perth, and it is doubtful whether it has succeeded in overcoming the disadvantages of the port.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The new member is looking at you.

Mr. HILL: That is a report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission and I met the members of that commission on many occasions.

The Treasurer: Bad luck for them!

Mr. HILL: Dr. Wood and I were very good friends. I notice the Minister for Lands looking at me. He and I were members of the Royal Commission to inquire into matters concerning the outports of this State.

The Minister for Lands: I have not been allowed to forget it, either.

Mr. HILL: I wish I had kept a copy of what the Minister said when we were considering the evidence. I handed a copy of that report to the late Professor Wood, and also the presidential report of the Institute of Transport in Great Britain by Sir David Owens, one of the leading harbour authorities in the world and the general manager of the Port of London Authority. His address was on the subject of port costs. This is what one of the leading economists in Australia said to me—

Dear Mr. Hill,

I found all the documents most interesting, informative, helpful in every way. Sir David Owen's paper is sound and very applicable to Australian conditions. I have marked it for reference when I get back to Melbourne.

Unfortunately I find little evidence that people in W.A., or indeed in any other State in Australia, are prepared to give proper and sound study to the port problem. It has a bearing as you so well know upon the costs of our products overseas, and upon the cost of overseas products here. The natural harbour, the possibility of easy drainage of exports to the ports and the great advantages of quick "turn round" of ships are all being neglected.

All good wishes in your fight for Albany.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd.) G. L. Wood.

Dr. Wood, unfortunately, is not with us today, but I value those remarks and I pass them on for the earnest consideration of members.

Mr. Oldfield: Have you a harbour down at Albany?

Mr. HILL: Yes, and the hon. member will hear more about it in a few minutes. I will now cite an example of where an unco-ordinated and unsound policy on harbour development has led us. In 1949-50 the Fremantle Harbour Trust's earnings were £461,981, showing a surplus of £322,005. Under the heading of "Other" the net earnings were £37,697 showing a surplus of £5,007. In the same year the Bunbury Harbour Board showed a deficiency of £26,679 and under the heading of "Other" a deficiency of £11,900.

Let us compare those figures with some that appeared in the last financial statement issued by the Premier, which are as follows:—

Harbour and Rivers	....	
Total surplus	....	£189,504

I want to stress the fact that that great revenue producing concern, the Fremantle Harbour Trust, which in 1949-50 made a surplus of £337,000, last year made a deficit of £15,000.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: But you know why.

Mr. HILL: Yes, Kwinana was probably one of the causes, but that harbour has been in existence for only about six months. The losses by the Fremantle Harbour Trust will be considerably increased next year and they will continue to increase. I will now quote the figures relating to the Bunbury Harbour Board. They are as follows:—

	1949-50
	£
Net earnings	.... Nil
Other	.... 368
Deficiency	.... 26,679
Other	.... 11,900

Now let us compare those with the figures that appear in the financial return issued by the Treasurer this year which shows a deficit on working of £35,976 and on other workings £3,795. With interest, the Bunbury Harbour Board showed a deficit of £93,001 and on other workings a deficit of £8,595, or a total deficit of over £100,000.

The Treasurer: In one year?

Mr. HILL: Yes, last year.

The Treasurer: Can you give us the names of the members of the Bunbury Harbour Board?

Mr. HILL: I blame the Premier. Now I will refer to Albany. We did not have a harbour board in 1949-50 and the returns are by no means complete, but they show a deficiency on working of £339. The jetty was under the control of the Railway Department and there is no record of its financial returns.

Mr. Oldfield: There is a loss on that, which you have not accounted for.

Mr. HILL: I do not think so. I will now make a comparison between the returns of the Albany Harbour Board and those which appear in the financial statement issued by the Treasurer this year. The Albany Harbour Board showed a surplus on working of £5,726. I hope the Treasurer is listening because the actual surplus was £17,000 and I think it had a credit balance of £2,000. The deficiency made by the Albany Harbour Board is shown at £62,000 but that is because in this statement the interest is charged on the new work which is not earning any revenue. I wonder what the work which is being done at Albany at present will be earning in a few years' time? That work includes the reclamation of 80 acres in a perfectly sheltered harbour.

Mr. Oldfield: Do those figures include the cost of dredging at Albany?

Mr. HILL: Yes, they include everything. Incidentally, if this work had been done by contract, the cost would have been less. I wonder what the Albany Harbour works will be worth in 10 years' time? It is necessary to resume eight acres at Fremantle at a cost of £175,000 and two acres have just been resumed at Geraldton at a cost of £35,000. So if we value the 80 acres reclaimed at Albany at £10,000 an acre, that gives a total value of £800,000 on that reclaimed land. The Albany harbour is one that will show a steady increase of profit in its figures, but I am afraid other ports will show substantial deficits.

The time is overdue for the establishment of a proper authority to watch expenditure and provide the State with a scientific and co-ordinated policy on harbour development. I will now make this statement to show how politicians set out to buy votes. This is common in all democratic countries. In South Australia this tendency got so bad that that State had to form a public works standing committee and no large expenditure is ever submitted for the approval of Parliament until that committee submits its report.

Another cause of our trouble in Western Australia is the disproportionate growth of population in the metropolitan area. This reference was taken from the Stephenson report at page 41. It states that the present percentage of population in the metropolitan area is 61.5 per cent. which is likely to increase to 76 per cent. when the regional population is 1,000,000, or over 80 per cent. when the population reaches 1,400,000. It also states that the present trend indicates that 1,000,000 persons will be living in the region by 1985 and at that date 305,000 will be living in the rest of the State. How is the State going to progress under those conditions? The prosperity of the State does not depend on the population living around the

Swan River. It depends on the wool, wheat, fruit, gold and timber, and all the commodities that we export which are not produced along the banks of the Swan River.

Mr. Lawrence: What about the worker?

Mr. HILL: The worker is necessary, but what is he going to do in the metropolitan area? Is he going to take in his neighbour's washing in order to exist? What are we going to do with industry? We cannot compete with other countries.

Mr. Ackland: We could.

Mr. HILL: I doubt it. All politicians love to talk about decentralisation. This disproportionate growth of the population in the metropolitan area is to be compared to a cancer. Leading scientists in the world are very anxious to find a cure for cancer and we must seek the cause of this disproportionate growth of population in the metropolitan area. My opinion is that the cause is due to the revolution in transport. When I was a boy we had sailing ships on the sea and bullock wagons on the land. In those days it was considered that rail haulage was ten times cheaper than road haulage and sea haulage was ten times cheaper than rail charges, but today road transport is carrying goods from one side of the Commonwealth to the other.

The increasing size of ships has brought about a demand for fewer ports and all over the world the little ports are going to the wall. As a result, all experts agree that the most suitable ports should be selected. All political wirepulling should cease and the selected ports developed to suit modern needs. We build roads to suit modern transport and therefore we must adopt a modern port policy to suit the needs of modern ships. The late Lord Forrest advocated that the State should be divided into three provinces with the centres at Geraldton, Fremantle and Albany. He was also a great advocate for Albany as a naval base. Shortly after the war a ship came into Albany to load apples. I met the captain, who was a very fine gentleman. He served as a commander on Admiral Fraser's staff. He said, "I arrived on Wednesday and the visibility was nil. I picked up Breaksea Island and Seal Rock, but I did not know where I would pick up the pilot. All of a sudden the weather cleared and I saw what was here. My word, you must have a pretty rotten lot of politicians to let this place be neglected the way it is!"

I have carefully studied the position right through and there is no doubt that the rotten politicians have prevented Albany from being the leading naval base in Australia. In 1910 I was company sergeant major in the militia at Albany when Lord Kitchener inspected that port.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Who brought the mail boats from Albany to Fremantle?

Mr. HILL: Sir John Forrest, and I do not blame him for that. I blame the Albany people for hooting Sir John Forrest at the time. It was inevitable that the mail boats should come to Fremantle, but I blame the Labour Government who are responsible for the fact that Albany has been the most neglected port in the British Empire, and that is according to the Sydney "Bulletin". When Lord Kitchener visited Albany I was in charge of the battery and we were firing 6-pounders. Our quartermaster-sergeant was on the range-finder and Lord Forrest said to him, "You have been neglected here, but there is a change coming."

Unfortunately the change was in the swing of the political pendulum. We had a Labour Government in office in the Commonwealth sphere and a year later a similar type of Government in the State sphere. As soon as the change of government took place in Western Australia the people of Fremantle took Senator Pearce, one of the Labour Ministers, to Cockburn Sound. They asked him, "What about this for a naval base?" He said, "I am only a layman; this is a question for an expert." Admiral Henderson was the expert who was called here to give advice and when he arrived at Colombo he was informed of all the details of Cockburn Sound. When he landed in Western Australia he was told by "The West Australian" that he had to put the naval base at Cockburn Sound.

Admiral Henderson was met at Fremantle by the District Naval Officer, Chief Gunner Mutton and Admiral Cresswell, first member of the Naval Board. Chief Gunner Mutton said to Admiral Cresswell, "Shall I go down to Albany?" The Admiral said, "No. This is to be the place right here." When Admiral Henderson was in Albany he sent a telegram saying it was unnecessary to inspect Cockburn Sound, and that Albany was a suitable naval base, but we had a Fremantle senator at the time and Cockburn Sound was chosen as the naval base. Three years later there was a change of Government and Sir John Forrest became a Minister. The first thing the Government did was to stop work at Cockburn Sound. It brought out an eminent British Admiralty engineer to report on Cockburn Sound.

Before his report could be acted upon, a change of Government took place and again the work of Cockburn Sound was pushed on. In 1918 I joined the Albany Chamber of Commerce. I tried to stop the work at the Henderson naval base. Two of the members of that chamber interviewed Senator Pearce but he simply spoke from the back of his neck. Subsequently he went to England and did not come back until after 1919.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: After he ratted.

Mr. HILL: After he saw the errors of his ways. Incidentally, he has not been near Cockburn Sound since. In those days

Senator Pearce had a home in Albany. He was a great friend of my father. On one occasion my father arranged for me to take Senator Pearce on a trip up the Kalgan River but he warned me beforehand not to say anything about the Henderson naval base. As he was my guest I refrained from doing so. There is not the slightest doubt that the British Admiralty taught Senator Pearce the elements of naval strategy because in 1920 the Henderson naval base was abandoned.

Some people have asked me, "How did you manage to get in Parliament?" I said, "I started writing letters to the 'Albany Advertiser.' People asked me to stand in Parliament and here I am." I have here a copy of the first letter I sent to that newspaper. It reads—

#### Naval Defence.

As the question of harbour improvements at Albany is likely to take such an important place in the forthcoming inter-district conference the following will be of interest:—

The naval defence of Australia is divided principally into two sections: (1) The Battle Fleet (capital ships, etc.); (2) the protection of our trade routes and to a lesser extent our coast (cruisers, destroyers, sea-planes, etc.). We may take it that the Imperial Conference decided that it is impossible for Australia to provide a sufficient battle fleet and that this fleet must be provided by the whole of the Empire. The number of capital ships for the Empire was fixed at Washington and the writer is of the opinion that when Australia has the necessary dock and facilities for the repair and maintenance of capital ships the Admiralty will hand one or more over to the Commonwealth who will run and maintain them. There are several reasons against the battle fleet being based at Singapore in peace time, and we may safely assume that Australia's quota will be based in Australia until mobilisation.

Albany is the most suitable for the peace base of Australia's quota because—

- (a) It is nearer Singapore than any other available harbour (except Port Darwin);
- (b) of its natural advantages;
- (c) if necessary, it could be used as a rendezvous of the battle on mobilisation.

The probabilities are that an enemy will not strike at our northern coasts where they could do no damage but at our trade routes which converge off Albany. It was for this reason that the Admiralty based H.M.S. "Diamond" and H.M.S. "Opal" here during the Russian war, and they intended to make Albany the preliminary base for

the H.M.A.S. "Australia" in 1914. As the German-China squadron won a German naval victory (they ran away) the "Australia" chased them while the H.M.S. "Minotaur" came to Albany. The "Sydney" was coaled here for her fight with the "Emden" and when it was necessary to take extra precautions in 1918, the most powerful British ship then in Australian waters was sent to Albany.

For 98 years the Admiralty has persistently used Albany in preference to any other Western Australian port. We must also remember that in the event of war the naval position off Albany may correspond to that off South America before the battle of Falkland Islands. Albany could at nominal cost be made an impregnable harbour of refuge.

One can best describe the natural advantages of Albany by saying that there is a Gibraltar, a Scapa Flow and a Port Arthur all together. When the war broke out the total amount spent on the Albany harbour was under £90,000. Yet had it been necessary every British ship outside of European waters could have been accommodated in Princess Royal Harbour. The rest of the British fleet could have anchored in King George's Sound. In 1908 Princess Royal Harbour had anchored in it seven battleships, one cruiser, two supply ships and six colliers (the jetties were not used). In 1914 upwards of 40 large ships and their escorts used Albany as their rendezvous. At Fremantle the Government abandoned the attempt to construct a dock after the expenditure of £230,000. After years of work and the expenditure of £1,000,000 the Commonwealth abandoned the Henderson base as the estimated cost of completing the base was £18,500,000.

It might interest members to know that a copy of that letter was sent to the Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce. He wrote a very complimentary letter in reply. I did not know it at the time, but when this was written, the Australian Government had a confidential communication from the Imperial Defence Council advocating what I proposed in my letter. I must admit that when I wrote it I did not think that our High Command and the U.S.A. High Command would have been such idiots as to ignore the lessons of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5.

On one occasion I met the general officer in command in Western Australia and we had a discussion. He said that in 1926 the Imperial Defence Council wanted to develop Albany as a base and wanted to mount guns at several spots, a 9.2-inch battery on Stony Hill, a 6-inch battery on Mistaken Island, and another 6-inch battery on Ledge Point, with possibly



another 6-inch battery on the west of the harbour. He said, "I do not know what happened and why Albany was pushed out." There was a change of Government and a Labour Government came into office.

Mr. Oldfield: If all the ships were concentrated in one harbour, a single bomb these days could destroy them all.

Mr. HILL: That could happen anywhere else.

Mr. Oldfield: Would it not be better to disperse them with some at Geraldton, some at Fremantle and some elsewhere?

Mr. HILL: That was the mistake made by the Allies in 1941. Had Albany been used as the port of rendezvous, the Prince of Wales and the Repulse, together with other ships, would not have been sent to the bottom. They could have anchored at Albany until there was a complete battle fleet available. Had that been done, the history of the war might have been different.

The Treasurer: You mean we might have lost it?

Mr. HILL: It might interest the Treasurer to hear my last remark made to John Curtin. A site was being selected for a graving dock and the Minister for Defence was to travel by air to Albany. He had to abandon the trip because the airfield was waterlogged and I had to come up here to discuss the matter with him. While we were talking, Senator Collett came in and the Minister for Defence said, "Henderson Naval Base!" and laughed. He put a pencil mark around a reference to Cockburn Sound. I said, "I can tell you a lot about this matter. It is the dirtiest political trick that has been played in Australia". In front of Musgroves I met Mr. Curtin and I told him what had transpired. He laughed. I said, "If you push for Cockburn Sound, I will give you all the opposition I can."

I shall not forget the grim days after Singapore fell, when all that stood between us and Japan was a handful of submarines in Albany. All motor craft in Albany were anchored below my fruitshed and my son was put in charge with orders to destroy them if the need arose. The naval officer who inspected them spoke to me. I said, "A naval base could have been built here." He replied, "Never mind what could have been. It should have been built here. It would have been worth millions to us today". He told me that the question was under consideration to transfer all naval activities from Fremantle to Albany.

Later, I found out that Captain Collins, Naval Officer in charge of Western Australia at the time, wanted to do that, but John Curtin would not allow him. I was advised confidentially that Albany was meant to be the naval port of Western Australia. In order to do that, dredging and reclamation had to be carried out and

the Melbourne Harbour Trust was to undertake that work. John Curtin came over and met the Premier, Mr. Willcock. We do not know what took place, but we know that instead of going on with Albany, the development of Cockburn Sound was undertaken.

The papers told us that the British Fleet was to be put in command of the Indian Ocean and the United States fleet was to look after the Pacific. The main Australian offensive was to be based on Western Australia. Admiral Fraser came and inspected Cockburn Sound. He said, "You think I am going to use that place. One ship sunk at the entrance and that would be the finish." At one time it was proposed to close Fremantle as a commercial port, but they found it was not a good proposition.

It is not generally known that Earl Mountbatten was flown to Australia. An officer on the staff told me that he said, "You have a place called Albany." He was flown there and taken to the top of Mt. Clarence. He looked around and said, "There is a naval base made for you." The whole of Australia's part in the war would have been altered, and instead of our troops doing mopping-up operations after the Americans in the Pacific, they would have been better used. I wonder how many lives might have been saved if Albany harbour had been developed in 1910?

Mr. Norton: What would happen if a ship was sunk at the entrance to Albany harbour?

Mr. HILL: That harbour is much bigger than Fremantle. When the war danger was greatest in Western Australia ships cleared out of Fremantle and came to Albany. If the guns had been mounted on Mistaken Island and Ledge Point as proposed in 1926, no ship would have been able to get to the entrance of Princess Royal Harbour but would have been blasted out of existence. I am speaking as one with 12 years' experience as a garrison artilleryman. Mr. Curtin died, but after the war Mr. Baron-Hay took us to the Robbs Jetty meat-works. I am sorry the Minister for Railways is not here. A telephone call came for him during the visit and he did not hear what transpired.

I was talking to some senior State officers. As we looked over Cockburn Sound and saw the two banks, I said, "Curtin's big blunder. I think this killed Curtin." One of the men said, "I do not think you are far wrong. Mr. Curtin had a lot of opposition in the Eastern States and here." That is the reason why there is no naval base in Western Australia. While Albany has a great natural advantage, it cannot be developed because "The West Australian" and the Australian Labour Party are pulling against us. I agree that Cockburn Sound is an excellent refuge for submarines but as a naval base it is unsuitable.

Dealing with Albany, when Col. Tyde-man prepared plans for Albany I saw him at his office where he had the files. He said, "Why was not this scheme carried out in 1911? It would have been just the thing for Albany." I said, "There was an election in 1911 and the people of Albany helped to put a Labour Government in office." Three years later we were forced to accept the deep water jetty. He said, "What a tragedy!" The difference between the Thompson scheme in 1911 and the Tyde-man scheme now under construction is that the wharf in the Thompson scheme commenced further east. In 1924 the Mitchell Government came into office.

The Minister for Education: In 1924 there was a Labour Government.

Mr. HILL: In that year the people of Albany elected my predecessor, Mr. Arthur Wansbrough, and he helped the Labour Party to take office. What did that Government do? It built the railway from Denmark to Nornalup and from Pemberton to Northcliffe, but it left the centre out. Parliament passed the Cranbrook—Boyup-Brook and the Manjimup—Mt. Barker lines, but the Government did not construct them.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And it built the Norseman-Esperance line.

Mr. HILL: I am not speaking of that. The same Government passed the Albany Harbour Board Act, but it was not proclaimed until the McLarty-Watts Government took office. From 1924 until the McLarty-Watts Government took office, only £175 was spent on the Albany harbour. Albany's disadvantage is that it has no back-loading. When the matter of super works was in the balance, Mr. Willcock arranged for the works to go to Bunbury. He overlooked the fact that 90 per cent. of the trucks at Albany went away empty and that trucks had to be sent to Bunbury from the metropolitan area. I would not be at all surprised, if only the facts could be obtained, to learn that the fact of putting the super works at Picton instead of Albany had cost the State over £2,000,000.

Mr. Bovell: What about the back loading of coal?

Mr. HILL: It is necessary to send trucks from the metropolitan area to the South-West. No empty trucks were available there whereas we at Albany had a number.

Mr. Bovell: You were talking about the super works.

Mr. HILL: Yes, there was too much back loading from the South West to the metropolitan area. That was where the blunder was made. Then when bulkhandling was introduced, the Government provided £75,000 for the installation at Bunbury and would not spend £12,000 at Albany or allow the company to put in the facilities. Consequently Albany was closed down in

favour of Bunbury. When the McLarty-Watts Government was in office and I put forward a suggestion for C.B.H. to finance the facilities at Albany, the present Minister for Agriculture moved an amendment which would have prevented Albany from getting bulkhandling facilities.

In 1945 I waited on him with a deputation for a reclamation scheme at Albany. The plans were prepared in February, 1946, but they were not produced to the Albany people until the following October, and then they were produced in support of Labour in the election campaign. It took him eight months to produce the plans, and it took me eight seconds to condemn them. I condemned them because they provided for 18 acres of reclamation. The bulk handling facilities occupy 11 acres and all told we have about 80 acres.

I should like to draw attention to another part of the Stephenson report. It says—

The prospects of handling three times as much tonnage in general cargo within 50 years raises many problems and although an increase in the number of berths, within the inner harbour, may afford the ship to shore facilities for the short term future, some major expansion and improvements in the region as a whole may be considered at this stage . . .

Present percentage of population in the metropolitan area is 61.5 per cent. and is likely to increase to 76 per cent. when the regional population is 1,000,000, or over 80 per cent. when the population reaches 1,400,000.

Present trend indicates that 1,000,000 persons will be living in the region by 1985 and at that date 305,000 will live in the rest of the State.

That is Professor Stephenson's report on the Fremantle harbour. I know of no country where nature has provided a harbour such as Albany has with easy grades to it and where the fullest use is not being made of it. In my speech on the Address-in-reply, I referred to the fact that a railway expert wanted to make Albany the port it should be. All the area between Narrogin and Merredin could be more economically served by the railways if the traffic were handled at Albany than at any other port, and the cheapest way to relieve the congestion at Fremantle is to make the fullest possible use of the Albany harbour. At Fremantle it is exceedingly difficult to provide additional accommodation; at Albany the space is available and it is only a matter of providing extensions.

I should like to make a few remarks about the port of Bunbury. Bunbury has three advantages that Albany has not, and I am not decrying Albany by mentioning them. Bunbury has coal, water and proximity to a large population. I congratulate the Bunbury people on getting their power station. I think the Government has done the right thing in that respect, but it

should go further. I can safely say that power and water can be provided at Bunbury and Collie more cheaply than in any other part of the State. It is the duty of the Government to do everything possible to encourage industry to be established at Bunbury and Collie in preference to the metropolitan area. We ought to make use of the natural advantages at hand. We at Albany have a natural harbour, but nature has given Bunbury coal, water and proximity to a large population.

When I first entered this Chamber people regarded the land in the vicinity of Albany as being of no use. Just after I was elected, I met Dr. Teakle in St. George's Terrace and asked him what about visiting Albany. He said, "What is the good of going there? Your land is no good. Anyhow, I shall come down." Twelve months later he was all enthusiasm for that land; the use of copper sulphate and manganese had given remarkable results. Albany has a great future as an agricultural centre. I recall that a friend of mine in this House at the time, the present Mayor of Bunbury stated on one occasion, "Albany is an oasis in the middle of a desert." He came down to Albany, and I was standing alongside him when he said, "You have as good land here as we have in the South-West".

Here is another chance for Albany, Bunbury and Busselton, and I should like the member for Bunbury to pass on my congratulations to the municipal council on its efforts to encourage the tourist industry. It will be worth a large sum of money to that town.

A couple of years ago at Albany the golf club collected £600 in green fees. I think I can safely say that for every shilling of that money spent on golf, the people spent £1 in other ways. From golf they have put into circulation a total of £12,000. Bunbury is only a few hours' travel away from Perth and could attract a valuable tourist trade.

The Minister for Lands: You are putting sugar on the pill now.

Mr. HILL: I do not believe in wasting money anywhere.

The Treasurer: Would the hon. member give us the trade figures last year for Bunbury and Albany respectively?

Mr. HILL: I cannot give them exactly, but Albany harbour has shown a surplus of £17,000.

The Treasurer: What is the tonnage?

Mr. HILL: I shall tell the Treasurer something that he cannot tell me. How much has the State lost through that trade going through Bunbury instead of Albany?

The Treasurer: I asked you the tonnage for the two ports.

Mr. HILL: I am not certain, but I think it was 250,000 tons for Bunbury and 120,000 for Albany. But where did that trade

come from? There was the timber from right down south. If the Labour Government a few years ago had completed the railway between Northcliffe and Nornalup, that timber would have gone to Albany over a 1 in 60 grade, whereas it was forced to go to Bunbury over a 1 in 40 grade. The wheat trade was forced to go through Bunbury because the Labour Government closed Albany as a wheat port.

The Treasurer: Why did not your Government complete that railway?

Mr. HILL: Because it did not have the money, but it provided more finance for Albany than that port had ever received from the Labour Government. The Treasurer would not listen to me when I suggested subsidising super works at Albany.

The Treasurer: We are always listening to you.

Mr. HILL: But the trouble is the Treasurer does not take any notice. It would be much better if he did. Now he has asked me for the trade figures for the two ports, but what have we got for the £800,000 spent at Bunbury?

The Treasurer: A mighty fine place.

Mr. HILL: An amount of £109,000 was spent on the estuary there and what did Mr. Guthrie say about that work? He described it as a tragic blunder. An amount of £500,000 was spent in an effort to prevent the silting of the harbour and what is the position? The year before last, £48,000 had to be spent on dredging.

Mr. Oldfield: The member for Bunbury is making notes of your remarks.

Mr. HILL: He is welcome to do so. Let me tell him something else. Within 10 years Bunbury will cease to exist as a port. Here is the report of the Royal Commission on the development of the outports. The chairman of the commission was Mr. H. H. Styants and amongst the members were Mr. E. K. Hoar and myself. What had they to say?

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

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

abeyance for further consideration as the development of the district war-rants.

That recommendation was signed by two members of the present Government, but in spite of it, the Government is going ahead with the expenditure of £500,000 on the construction of two berths at Bunbury.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot claim that Albany has been neglected.

Mr. HILL: It was neglected until the McLarty-Watts Government took office.

The Minister for Lands: That is plain rubbish.

Mr. HILL: Does the Minister mean to say that the expenditure of £175 in 24 years does not show neglect? Does the Minister say that?

The Minister for Lands: Albany developed as a port when the time was ripe.

Mr. HILL: It is easy to spend money on a port but if the shipping people will not use it, the money is wasted.

The Minister for Lands: It has become an obsession with you.

Mr. HILL: The Minister is not game to get up and say what he said during the sittings of the select committee. Now it is my word against his. He suggested that we should recommend wiping out Bunbury as a port.

The Minister for Lands: Do not be silly.

The Minister for Education: When was that report issued?

Mr. HILL: In 1946.

The Minister for Education: That is nearly 10 years ago.

Mr. HILL: How much money has been spent there since—

The Minister for Lands: Why not keep to the truth? You are drawing on your imagination.

Mr. HILL: I was not prepared to accept the Dumas scheme to prevent silting at Bunbury—

The Minister for Lands: That does not prove that I favoured wiping out Bunbury as a port. That is too absurd, even from you.

Mr. HILL: I challenge the member for Bunbury to get up and justify the maintenance of a port which failed by £40,000 last year to meet working expenses.

The Minister for Lands: Give him a chance.

Mr. HILL: The Minister is trying to lead me on. The Treasurer smiles, but he has never had the guts to get up in this House and try to justify the expenditure on Bunbury.

The Treasurer: It justifies itself.

Mr. HILL: Does it? Tell me one trade which is going through Bunbury and which could not be more economically put through Fremantle or Albany.

The Treasurer: All of them.

Mr. HILL: What did the Treasurer say last year when I asked him could he justify the expenditure on Bunbury? He said, "Does the Country Party intend to endorse a candidate for Bunbury?" Why does he not admit straight out that he is only spending money at Bunbury in order to catch votes? He is not game to stand up and try to prove that anything in these reports, in the Financial Statement or in the Auditor General's report is incorrect. Why does he not carry out the suggestion I made some years ago—and which was made by the Commonwealth Grants Commission—and tell the people who use the port of Bunbury that they must pay for it? What would happen then?

The Treasurer: The same as would happen to Albany.

Mr. HILL: They would not use it. The superphosphate works at Albany is a saving to the railways and to the State of about £200,000 per year. Deny that if you can, Mr. Treasurer! The hon. member tries to make a joke of it. Is it a joke to spend £500,000 in an attempt to stop silting at Bunbury and now the university has constructed a machine in an endeavour to find out some way of preventing the silting? The Treasurer is a great man in this Chamber, but old Dame Nature is a greater man than he—

The Minister for Lands: You are mixing your sexes.

Mr. HILL: The Treasurer is not game to put up a notice alongside the estuary at Bunbury saying that the blocking of the estuary which has caused the trouble was started by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, as Minister for Works. The work cost £109,000, and it was condemned—

The Treasurer: Who condemned it?

Mr. HILL: The member for Bunbury will, if he speaks. Can the Treasurer tell us what he is going to do to improve the port finances of the State?

The Treasurer: We will hear the member for Bunbury.

Mr. HILL: I am anxious to hear him because I hope he will have more pluck than the Treasurer and try to justify that expenditure. I will have a chance to reply to him when speaking to the Loan Estimates. None of the Ministers of this Government has ever attempted to reply to my remarks about Bunbury. They all know that the money is being spent at Bunbury not because the port is necessary but because they are all chasing the Bunbury votes.

The Treasurer: We think the port is necessary.

Mr. HILL: What for?

The Treasurer: Trade.

Mr. HILL: What trade?

The Treasurer: Timber.

Mr. HILL: I am glad the Treasurer has brought that up. When Mr. Kessell was Conservator of Forests he said the time was rapidly approaching when we would need the area now shipping timber through Bunbury for our local requirements and that we would have to go further south for our export timber. What is the Forests Department doing today? It is preparing plans to open up the timber between Northcliffe and Nornalup and a road is being constructed to ship that timber through Albany.

When that is accomplished, timber from the nearer areas will come to the metropolitan area for local requirements and the export timber will go through Albany. If the Minister for Forests were present he could confirm that statement. I want to see every part of the State come into its own and I do not advocate the establishment of a power station at Albany. I stand behind any attempt to bring prosperity to the State but I am opposed to money being spent where it will not bring in a sufficient return.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [9.20]: I have listened attentively to speakers to this debate and would like members now to turn their minds from Albany to the Murchison. I desire to point out what I think might be done to help us through the difficult time that seems to be approaching. According to all reports, Western Australia is in a very sorry financial position, and wool which is, and for a long while past has been, one of our main exports has fallen in price although it is still showing a small margin of profit.

It seems that wheat is now more or less a noxious weed and the wheat-growing industry is in a sad plight. That industry requires assistance because we are obliged to store the wheat until such time as we can export it. If we are to face up to our responsibilities, we must have finance with which to carry on, and I believe that all possible assistance should be given by the Commonwealth Government to help the State continue its progressive programme, including assistance to the goldmining industry.

Mr. Bovell: The Commonwealth Government is showing great interest in the goldmining industry.

Mr. O'BRIEN: A report issued by the Chamber of Mines states—

The Federal Government during its present session granted assistance to certain mines in the industry, in the form of a subsidy. While this has been welcome to those mines which have been operating near the economic margin and will undoubtedly be of assistance to them, it is felt that it is not what is really needed by the industry. So long as the gold price is fixed, and at the moment there seems little likelihood of this being altered, large tonnages of low-grade

ore are being left behind in the mines and will never be recovered. This is obviously not in the best interests of the country from an economic point of view. The only thing which could make it possible under existing economic conditions to extract such low-grade ore is a straight subsidy per ounce on gold produced, failing an increase in the price of gold, which would be the ideal remedy.

What is the subsidy? On the 18th November, 1954, the Commonwealth Government proclaimed an Act, No. 79 of 1954, to provide for assistance to the goldmining industry. Under that Act the subsidy payable to large producers is three-quarters of the cost of production in excess of £13 10s. per oz. with a maximum subsidy of £2 per oz. Small producers, producing less than 500 fine oz. of gold per year, are to be paid 30s. per oz. on total production. However, should the producer receive more than £15 12s. 6d. per oz. for gold produced, the amount of subsidy is to be reduced accordingly. The subsidy would generally be payable on gold produced in each of the financial years 1954-55 and 1955-56, but where the producer's accounting year differs from the financial year, the Treasurer may adopt the producer's accounting year if he considers this is necessary for the purposes of administration.

There are numerous other provisions in the Act dealing with matters such as to whom the subsidy is payable, restrictions on payments, and reduction of subsidy where profits exceed 10 per cent. per annum on the capital used in production, ascertaining of cost of production, recovery rates to be maintained, books of account to be kept, and so on. Copies of the Act have been circulated, together with the forms to be completed when applying for the subsidy. That is all of great assistance to the goldmining industry, but it is not sufficient to attract money from overseas to this State.

This year we will show a loss on our gold production. According to the Mines Department report for 1954, the Big Bell mine crushed 405,684 tons of ore for 59,985 oz. of gold, and that will mean a loss to the State. If we do not do something to build up production we will indeed be in a sad plight. I repeat that wool is carrying us at present and the number of sheep has increased from 13,087,108 on the 31st March, 1954, to 13,411,282 at the end of March, 1955.

I repeat that something should be done to assist the goldmining industry. I would suggest that instead of us pumping water uphill to Geraldton from Gingin Springs, the Minister give some assistance and have investigations made towards unwatering some of the mines I could mention. I instanced the Gnows Nest gold mine, which is about 18 miles south-east of Yalgoo. It has an unlimited quantity

of really good drinking water which could be run down to Geraldton in pipes and along the Midland railway line. There is also another mine at a place called Mugga King which is on Barnon Station further south towards Morawa. That is a goldmine which a small syndicate was obliged to abandon because of the heavy water supply present. The water is of excellent quality and in unlimited supply.

Mr. Court: What do you mean by unlimited supply?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I mean that it was not possible to dewater it with the pump they had on the job 20 years ago, together with a five-ton skip which was used to bale out the water. That is why they were obliged to abandon this mine.

Mr. Court: Roughly, how many gallons a day could be pumped off by an efficient pump?

Mr. O'BRIEN: Many million gallons. I am sure the pumps today could cope with the water. Instead of this good water supply being wasted, it could be used for human consumption and for irrigation. If those mines were dewatered, it would be a great advantage to syndicates and small companies, particularly if a subsidy were made available to them, because this would help to reduce their costs and enable them to work the mines at present lying idle. The matter is worthy of consideration. We have heard of Cue, Wiluna and other places that have unlimited supplies of water. At present, they have acres flourishing under irrigation. Instead of criticising the Government, I would like to congratulate it on the introduction of the new diesels. I admit those diesels were ordered by a previous Government—

Mr. Bovell: The McLarty-Watts Government.

Mr. O'BRIEN: —but they were put into operation by the present Government. They have had their teething troubles and are now recognised by the general public as a big asset to the State. The Government is to be congratulated for speeding up passenger services and also for increasing the haulage capacity of the railways. It is surprising what great tonnages these diesels can haul. When the Treasurer was introducing the Estimates recently, he mentioned that the relaying of the railways would cost a colossal amount. The different sections in which these diesels have been introduced have required a lot of resleepering and strengthening to enable them to step up their speed and do an efficient job. Accordingly, I congratulate the Railway Department and the Government on their efforts. As I previously remarked when dealing with the goldmining industry, the progressive drilling scheme that is to be introduced will be of great assistance to the industry and I am sure it will be successful. Of course, it cannot be expected that

every drill hole that is put down will give a handsome return, but it is a step in the right direction.

I would now like to touch on education and point out that right through the Murchison we have gained quite a lot that is of great benefit to the people of the outback. Extra classrooms have been badly needed for a considerable time and these have now been made available. It is surprising to read the latest report on the true position of the school population in the State. In 1946, the population of schoolchildren was in the vicinity of 57,178, and for the year 1954 it was 89,254, an increase of about 32,000 children over a period of eight years. The expenditure is colossal.

If we wish to survive, we must populate and if we populate we must expect an increased expenditure. In 1951, the expenditure was £2,750,000, and in 1954-55 it was £5,205,850 which is a lot of money. The Federal Government will be more or less restricted because of the reduced price of wool. We all know that wool has carried Australia since 1951. Because of this restriction, the taxation receipts from that source will be greatly decreased, and we must face the true position.

There are quite a number of matters on which one could speak, but I would like to mention particularly the question of school buses. In 1953, the cost per bus per mile was 2s. 1d., and 1954 it was 2s. 1½d. The cost of transport services for the year ended the 30th June amounted to £794,400. This was a big improvement on the previous year's expenditure by £160,000 odd. The expenditure in 1953 was £630,500. That all goes to show the large expenditure that is involved. I know of schools that have received consideration from the Government.

At a place about 35 miles north of Meekatharra, the Seventh Day Adventists are doing an excellent job. I congratulate them on their efforts and the progress they have made, and I am grateful to the Minister and the Education Department for the assistance that has been rendered to the native people at that centre. There is another at Mt. Margaret, near Morgans.

I would now like to touch on the question of hospitals. Recently, we had the opportunity and privilege of visiting Meekatharra and witnessing the opening of a beautiful regional hospital. It is badly required for treating people living in outlying districts. Owners of many stations situated 200 or 300 miles out require medical treatment for their families or employees and it is only fair that a regional hospital should be available to cater for people in such remote areas. That covers all I have to say.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 9.41 p.m.*