

in a position to ask the Government, indeed to implore the Government, to spend more money than is being expended at the present time, in the manner other members and I have advocated. I am very reluctant to say that I cannot support a Bill to improve the lot of the native but the proposals embodied in this Bill will not be of benefit to them.

On motion by Hon. H. L. Roche, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 11th November, 1952.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### PETROL.

*As to Price at North-West Centres.*

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Attorney General:

(1) What is the retail price in shillings and pence per gallon of petrol at the following centres:—

Carnarvon;  
Onslow;  
Roebourne;  
Port Hedland;  
Meekatharra?

(2) What differential covering freight and charges can be added to above prices for retail sale at the following centres:—

Wittenoom;  
Marble Bar;  
Nullagine?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) The price at which petrol could be sold has always been fixed at the cost of petrol to the reseller, plus the money margin which was in operation on the 20th September, 1948. The actual price in shillings and pence has not been fixed.

Schedules fixing the price in all towns in Western Australia are in course of preparation, and these should be completed at an early date.

(2) Calculation of inland freights is included in the investigation mentioned.

#### TRAFFIC.

(a) *As to Road Patrols and Accidents.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Police:

(1) How many traffic police are employed on the Great Eastern Highway?

(2) Has there been an increase or decrease of patrols in the last three years?

(3) How many traffic accidents have taken place between the Causeway and the Midland Junction Town Hall in the past 12 months?

(4) How many accidents have—

(a) had fatal results;

(b) resulted in physical injuries?

(5) Is it intended to increase the number of traffic patrols in the next 12 months?

The MINISTER replied:

Assuming that this question refers to that portion of the Great Eastern Highway which is in the metropolitan traffic area—

(1) One.

(2) There has been an increase.

(3) and (4) The records maintained of traffic accidents do not localise information, and the information requested is, therefore, not available.

(5) Traffic patrols in the area mentioned and other areas will be increased commensurably with the number of personnel and machines which can be made available for the purpose.

(b) *As to Authorising Use of "Trafficators."*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Local Government:

(1) In view of the answers given to questions asked by me on the 9th September and the 6th November, will he give consideration to amending the regulations to permit the use of "trafficators" in lieu of the arm signal when about to turn, at least during the hours of darkness?

(2) Is he aware that "trafficators" are permitted in lieu of arm signals in certain of the Eastern States, and throughout the rest of the world?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A report will be obtained from the traffic authorities as to the practicability of permitting the use of "trafficators" in lieu of the arm signal when about to turn.

(2) I am not aware.

#### TRAM AND BUS SERVICES.

*As to Increased Fares to Workers on Saturdays.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

In reply to a question of mine on the 29th October, as to increased fares to workers on Saturdays, he stated: "It is not considered inequitable that persons desiring to travel at week-ends—mainly pleasure-seekers and other non-business travellers—should be asked to pay the cost of that transport":—

(1) Does this outlook prevail in all Australian States?

(2) Have transport authorities in New South Wales increased revenue at week-ends by decreasing fares below week-day rates?

(3) Does he assume that the return of workers to their homes on Saturdays is pleasure-seeking?

(4) Will he approach the Arbitration Court to load wages for Saturday work to ensure that this impost is borne by employers requiring work done on Saturdays?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Week-end surcharges are in operation in other States of the Commonwealth.

(2) As far as is known, the decrease of week-end fares below week-day rates has not been introduced. If it has, no information is yet to hand regarding same, or its effect on revenue.

(3) No; hence the use of the word "mainly" in reply to the earlier question referred to.

(4) It is not considered the province of the Minister for Transport to make such an approach; nor would a special approach to the Court be deemed justified to increase wages by one penny per week, or, in a few instances, two pence per week. In any case, many Saturday workers are not affected by the surcharge at present.

#### TRANSPORT.

*As to Press Announcement of Zoning.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has he read the statement on the front page of "The West Australian" newspaper, dated the 5th November, 1952, under the heading, "Bus Zoning Scheme may begin soon"?

(2) Can he inform the House whether this statement is substantially correct?

(3) Will he inform the House under whose authority the statement was released?

(4) Seeing that neither the name of the Minister for Transport, nor that of the chairman of the Transport Board, was associated with the statement, can he explain how such a leakage of information from departmental files has taken place?

(5) In view of the importance of the information disclosed in the statement does he not think that such a statement should have been issued under the authority of the Minister?

(6) Will he tell the House who Mr. E. L. Baker is (who was said to be acting as adviser to the Government)?

(7) Is he a civil servant?

(8) Is he an expert in transport problems?

(9) What experience has he had and where was it gained?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The statement is substantially correct.

(3) No official sanction was given to the statement.

(4) The source of the information received by the Press cannot be ascertained.

(5) Yes. An authoritative statement on the matter will be made at the appropriate time.

(6) Mr. E. L. Baker is a well-known insurance assessor of Perth.

(7) No.

(8) He is regarded as an expert in the valuation of transport undertakings.

(9) Mr. Baker has an established business in Perth. He has been engaged in insurance assessment work concerning motor vehicles for over 30 years and has specialised in the operation of omnibuses.

**BETTING.***As to Suppression of Illegal Machines.*

Mr. TOTTERDELL asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Is the operation of gambling machines, including those known as fruit and poker machines, illegal in Western Australia?

(2) If so, will the Government undertake that the law will be observed and that the operation of such machines will be suppressed and remain suppressed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) The operation of machines which may be used for gambling, including those known as fruit and poker machines, is illegal in Western Australia when they are, in fact, used for playing or betting at any unlawful game, or at any game of chance or pretended game of chance in any public place, or when they are used for playing any unlawful game or gaming on licensed premises, or when they are used for gaming in a common gaming house.

Action is taken in respect of detected breaches of the gaming laws.

**LAND SETTLEMENT.***As to Applications, Broome Area.*

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Has any advance been made with the applications of Messrs. Jones, Stanley and Lawrence for land in the Broome area?

(2) As a matter of urgency, will he give this matter his personal attention?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. The surveyor has inspected the area and is now completing his report.

(2) Yes.

**CEMENT MANUFACTURE.***As to Location of New Works and Possible Dust Nuisance.*

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Will he indicate where the proposed new cement works are to be built, and when building operations may commence?

(2) Will a similar dust nuisance such as prevails in the Rivervale and surrounding districts, due to the Swan Cement Company's operations, prevail in the area selected for the new works?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Approximately two miles south-east from Robb's Jetty. It is not possible at this stage to indicate accurately when building operations may commence.

(2) The Co-ordinator of Works and Industrial Development, Mr. R. J. Dumas, reports that while in England he inspected the Rugby Cement Company's two works near Rugby, and also the company's works at Rochester, and especially investigated the amount of dust nuisance which these works may have caused to surrounding dwellings. Buildings within 200 yards of the works were carefully examined, and there appeared to be no more dust than would be normal if the works were not in existence. Flowers were growing in the gardens and appeared to be quite free from dust. He does not anticipate that any dust nuisance will eventuate.

**DROUGHT IN KIMBERLEYS.***As to Requesting Commonwealth Assistance.*

Mr. HOAR (without notice) asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Is he aware that large areas in the Kimberleys are seriously affected by drought and that great losses in stock must occur, the effects of which can be serious within the next few years?

(2) Is he aware that the Commonwealth Government provides sums of money for drought relief on application by State Governments and has already stated that sympathetic consideration would be given to an application in this instance?

(3) Has he applied for such assistance; if not, why not?

(4) If so, with what result?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes, I am aware that the Kimberleys are having a bad season—perhaps the worst in their history, but other than a request from the Hon. C. W. D. Barker, I have not received any application for help. I wrote to Mr. Barker telling him that if he could give me particular cases where he considered help would be required, consideration would be given to the request, but that before I could make application to the Commonwealth Government, I would have to be given specific cases. The State steamships do carry fodder at, I think, half cost where it is consigned for drought relief purposes.

**IRON-ORE.***As to Quantity Available to State.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Premier:

As he has made a public statement that 500,000 tons of iron ore will be available to the State under the legislation now before Parliament, will he show how he arrived at that total?

The PREMIER replied:

That is based on the 200,000 tons per annum from Koolan Island, and the 70,000,000 tons at Koolyanobbing.

**HOUSING CONTRACTS.**

*As to Appointment of Royal Commissioner.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Premier:

When does he intend to appoint the Royal Commissioner to inquire into the activities of Snowden and Willson?

The PREMIER replied:

I hope to do so within the next few days.

**STATE TRADING CONCERNS.**

*(a) As to Disposal.*

Mr. CORNELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the example set by the Commonwealth Government and to implement Liberal policy, is it the intention of the State Government to give consideration to disposal of the State hotels and other Government trading concerns?

The PREMIER replied:

It is not intended to sell the State hotels or any other Government trading concern.

*(b) As to Liberal Party Policy.*

Mr. CORNELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is the continuation of the State trading concerns by the State Government in accordance with Liberal Party policy?

The PREMIER replied:

As the hon. member knows, the State trading concerns have been going for many years and, as I have told him, it is not the intention of the Government to dispose of any of them at the present time.

Mr. Cornell: Will you insert an advertisement in the "Lost and Found" column of "The West Australian" with a view to ascertaining the whereabouts of Liberal policy?

The PREMIER: I suggest to the hon. member that he find himself a place in Wirth's Circus, where his question would be more appropriate.

**ASSENT TO BILLS.**

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Police Act Amendment.
- 2, Child Welfare Act Amendment.
- 3, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.
- 4, Land Agents Act Amendment.

**BILL—UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS.**

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).**

Report of Committee adopted.

**BILL—BROKEN HILL PROPRIETARY STEEL INDUSTRY AGREEMENT.**

*Consideration of Committee's Report.*

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT** (Hon. A. F. Watts-Stirling) [4.43]: I move—

That the report be adopted.

**HON. A. R. G. HAWKE** (Northam) [4.44]: I oppose this motion. On Monday of last week I sent from Leonora post office a telegram to the Premier expressing my anxiety to have the Committee stage of this Bill held over until it would be possible for me to be present in the House. The Premier replied to the effect that he could not give such an undertaking but that progress in connection with the Bill would be determined by events. I believe that the real reply of the Premier to my telegram was to be found in the very late sittings which he forced upon the House on Tuesday night and Thursday night of last week.

That action on the part of the Premier was his real reply to my request and indicated his overwhelming desire to push the Bill through with all possible speed. I suppose one reason was that he did not want the people of the Murchison to be in a position to have any voice in this House with regard to the Bill. So far as has been possible, I have glanced through the debates on the Bill that took place in this House last week and in the time available to me I searched in vain to find any real justification put forward by the Premier, the Minister for Industrial Development or any of their supporters as to why the Bill and the agreement contained in it should be approved. When previously speaking to the debate on this measure I said that there might have been some justification for the Government cancelling the existing leases of Cockatoo Island and extending them—by way of new leases—for 71 years from this year.

It will be remembered that when introducing the measure the Minister told the House that most of the existing leases in respect of Cockatoo Island were due to expire in 10 or 11 years from now. I said that if the company, in return for having the Cockatoo Island leases extended for 60 years, established a steel rolling mill in this State it would still be holding the thick end of the stick as far as the bargain was concerned; in other words, that it would be returning to Western Australia, by establishing the proposed rolling mill, nowhere near the value which the State would be giving it by making the company a gift, as it were, of all the iron-ore at Cockatoo Island. Reading through the speeches made in this House last week by the Premier and the Minister for Industrial Development I learned of the manner in which they tried to skate around this proposition. In effect, they told the House that the com-

pany had spent considerable sums of money on Cockatoo Island by way of capital investment; that it had carried out iron-ore "getting" operations there and consequently was entitled to expect from the State, or any Government in charge of the State from time to time, a continual renewal of the leases which it holds at present.

It is true that, in the ordinary course of events, under the administration of the Mining Act, companies which bona fide continue with operations on the leases which they hold are entitled to a renewal of their leases from time to time. However, there is no binding legal obligation upon the State or upon the Government to extend the currency of the leases. The Government has the right at any time to take action in regard to them. I do not suggest that any drastic action should have been taken against B.H.P. now or in ten years time in regard to those leases. In the ordinary course of events they should certainly be extended in ten or eleven years time for a further twenty-one years. At the time they were coming up for renewal, a Government which was awake to its opportunities could then have made requests to the B.H.P. to do something practical for Western Australia in return for any proposed extension of the leases.

In other words, in ten or eleven years time when representatives of B.H.P. made an approach to the Mines Department or to the Government of that day for an extension of the leases for a further twenty-one years, the Government would have been thoroughly justified in saying to the company, "You have already profited very greatly by virtue of holding these leases for several years and by having been entitled, as you have done, to take away considerable quantities of iron-ore. We think that before your company receives a renewal of these leases for a further twenty-one years it should give serious and favourable consideration to the question of establishing an industry in Western Australia even if it be only a mill to roll steel manufactured by your company in New South Wales."

The Premier: When did you say the Government should have said that?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: When the existing leases were becoming due for renewal, say, in 1960, which would be two or three years before the leases were due for renewal. The Government should have further said to the company, "The granting of these leases for a further twenty-one years from, say, 1962, will give to your company very great quantities of iron-ore. We think it is only a fair proposition that your company, in return for the very great advantages which the renewal of the leases will confer, should establish an industry in Western Australia; either an integrated iron and steel industry or a steel rolling mill."

There would have been all the justification in the world for that approach and there would have been no justification for representatives of B.H.P. refusing to agree to do something of a practical nature in this State by way of establishing an industry. Now, the approach by this Government, Mr. Speaker, as you know only too well, was not along these lines. The present Government said to the company, "Not only will we grant you new leases before the due time, but we will give you undisputed legal control of Cockatoo Island for ever. In other words, we will give to your company every ton of iron-ore at Cockatoo Island which your company in the years of the future is able to take away from the island."

As I said in a previous debate, the giving to B.H.P. of approximately 40,000,000 tons of iron-ore at Cockatoo Island is a great gift to the company; a gift of tremendous value. I read carefully the speech of the member for Gascoyne on the Bill. When I discussed in my second reading speech the value of this iron-ore per ton to B.H.P. I was extremely conservative and placed the value at a net figure of 10s. a ton. The point made on that by the member for Gascoyne was, in my opinion, a very telling one. He compared the possible value of each ton of iron-ore to its weight in each ton of pig-iron or steel and thereby, with a fair amount of logic, claimed that the value of each ton of iron-ore to the company was very much greater than my conservative estimate of 10s. a ton. But if we leave the figure at the paltry sum of 10s. a ton, that represents in money a very large amount; it would represent £20,000,000.

Would it have been too much at this stage, or, if this agreement had not come to pass in ten years time when the Cockatoo Island leases were approaching the stage when they were due for renewal, to have asked the company in return for that gift to establish a steel rolling mill in this State? Would not the company have been receiving marvellous value in return for the estimated £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 it will cost the company to establish a steel rolling mill in Western Australia? These representatives of B.H.P. are hard-headed business men. They know every trick in the game of trade, industry and commerce, and I am convinced they would have agreed to a proposition of that kind whether it had been put up to them at this stage in return for an agreement that would give them leases in perpetuity covering all the iron-ore at Cockatoo Island or whether it had been put up to them, in the ordinary course of events, in approximately ten years time.

They would have agreed, and in return for giving B.H.P. lifelong legal control of Cockatoo Island and all the iron-ore thereon, Western Australia would, without much argument in my opinion, have re-

ceived a steel rolling mill. Under this agreement the Government also proposes to give B.H.P. undisputed legal control of the iron-ore deposits on Koolan Island for ever. In return for that gift to the company, Western Australia is to receive nothing substantial to which the agreement would legally entitle this State to obtain as a result of the operation of the agreement. In future, Western Australia will have no legal claim whatever over B.H.P. except in relation to the proposed establishment of the steel rolling mill, to which I have already referred.

Neither the State nor any Government of the State in the future will be able to say to B.H.P., "We demand under the law, in the terms of the agreement, that your company establish in our State an integrated iron and steel industry." If any such Government were to make an approach on that ground to B.H.P. in anything from 10 to 40 years time, the representatives of the company, if so inclined, could snap their fingers at the Government and say, as they would be thoroughly justified in saying legally, "The agreement we signed with the McLarty Government in 1952 bound us in no way to establish an iron and steel industry in your State."

Therefore we are giving away to B.H.P. huge iron-ore deposits at Koolan Island without having any legal claim on the company in future relating to the possible establishment in our State of an integrated iron and steel industry. All the legal advantages will rest in the hands of B.H.P. The agreement proposes that, within one month after the passing of this measure, the Cockatoo, Koolan and Irvine Islands leases will become the property of B.H.P., and will remain its property for ever. The first period during which the agreement will entitle the company to hold the leases is 50 years and after that it provides for successive periods of 21 years. Thus the Government, through the terms of the agreement, is to give the Koolan Island ore deposits away completely and in every legal sense, in return for nothing at all in respect of which we would have any legal claim that could be substantiated.

There is no reason why Parliament, even though the Government is desperately anxious to do it, should give the Koolan Island ore deposits to B.H.P. without getting some obligation of an enforceable legal character put on the shoulders of the company which would, in a reasonable period of years, compel that company to establish an iron and steel industry in Western Australia. If the answer to that is that circumstances might prevent B.H.P. from being in a physical position to establish such an industry in Western Australia because of inability to produce suitable coke from Collie coal, then the convincing retort to such a contention would be that the State would hold the Koolan Island leases

in the name of Western Australia until such time as B.H.P. or some other company in the future was capable, physically and financially, of establishing an iron and steel industry in this State.

Why should Parliament put itself in an untenable position, and the State as well, by giving B.H.P. at this time the iron-ore deposits of Koolan Island forever, and allowing the company to remain in the legal position of not being bound to do anything for this State beyond making some investigations regarding the production of suitable coke from Collie coal? During the progress of the debate last week, the Premier or the Minister for Industrial Development made a song about B.H.P. having three experts overseas making inquiries regarding the possibility of producing coke from Collie coal. Did they mean that those experts were carrying out those investigations abroad on that matter alone? Of course not.

The Minister for Industrial Development: How do you know?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would say that the management of B.H.P. is much more wide awake than that, and that their experts would have been sent abroad to deal with many other problems as well.

The Premier: The company always has its experts abroad.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Of course! As the Premier suggests in agreement with my point of view, those officials of the company have not gone abroad especially to look into this one particular problem. They may be looking into it in relation to a number of other problems they are investigating for their company. Even so, if those officials are abroad on that special mission of inquiring into the possibility of coking Collie coal, Western Australia's position under the agreement in relation to the proposed establishment of an iron and steel industry here is no further advanced legally, and the State is not given one scrap of additional claim on the company in connection with the establishment of such an industry here at any time in the future.

Why is the Government giving Koolan Island away to the company? That question has never been answered up to the present time. There was no necessity to give the island away. It is true that both the Premier and the Minister for Industrial Development advanced the unconvincing argument that B.H.P. is a very important company in the Commonwealth, that it operates vital industries in Australia and has expended huge sums of capital investment within the Commonwealth, including substantial expenditure at Cockatoo Island. Surely those arguments furnish no reason why the Government should give Cockatoo Island to the company, or why it should give Koolan and Irvine Islands away as well.

Surely the gift of Cockatoo Island alone would have amply rewarded the company for anything it would do for Western Australia and leave a great deal over by way of reward for what the company has done in other parts of the Commonwealth? Why should we, as a Parliament, be called upon, under the terms of the agreement, to give away the huge quantity of rich iron-ore on Koolan Island without the company being legally bound to establish an iron and steel industry here within some future period, whatever it might be? Why did not the Government bind the company within the terms of the agreement to establish the industry here within 10 or 12 years time? What is the answer to that?

Mr. J. Hegney: The Government wants to give the ore away.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There is no answer whatever forthcoming to the query. We have not been told that the representatives of the company would not have been prepared to guarantee in a legal sense the establishment of an iron and steel industry in this State at any time in the future. The excuse the company would have put forward for its refusal would possibly be that it was not satisfied that suitable coke could be produced from Collie coal, and no other method of an economical character was available for smelting iron-ore in this State.

If that had been the attitude of the representatives of the company, the right thing for the Government to have done would have been to say, "Very well, we will make no provision in the present agreement in respect of the iron-ore deposits at Koolan Island. We will hold the leases in the name of the State and guarantee to hold them for a period of, say, 10 years, which should be a long enough period to enable your company to find out conclusively whether suitable coke is capable of being produced from Collie coal, or, alternatively, whether a suitable method other than the coking of Collie coal, can be found by your company to enable it to smelt iron-ore in Western Australia and to establish an iron and steel industry here upon that particular basis."

That would have been the right approach—a statesmanlike approach. It would have been the approach of a Government awake to its responsibilities and determined to do its best for Western Australia. After all is said and done, the Government is supposed to be governing Western Australia and passing laws and carrying out acts of an administrative nature in the interests of the people of this State—not in the interests of B.H.P. The agreement is hopelessly overloaded in favour of B.H.P. One can understand the great anxiety of the company to get all the iron-ore not only at Cockatoo Island but also at Koolan Island.

The other day I quoted from a letter received from the Government Geologist, Mr. Ellis, in which he stated that the known quantity of iron-ore at Koolan Island is 91,000,000 tons with a probability of there being another 95,000,000 tons. Say the total quantity economically recoverable is only 90,000,000 tons, this at a value of 10s. per ton net would represent a gift to the company of £45,000,000.

Why at this stage give this huge deposit of iron-ore at Koolan Island to the company for nothing? If it is not prepared to enter into a binding agreement to establish an iron and steel industry in this State but desires more time to investigate the possibility of producing coke from Collie coal, we could fairly and generously offer to continue to reserve the Koolan Island leases for 10 years, guaranteeing to make them available to nobody else. If at the end of 10 years the company could offer a detailed proposal to establish an industry and enter into a legally binding agreement, we could undertake to hand the Koolan Island leases over for any term. I would be prepared to support a proposal of that sort, but I am not prepared to hand over to the company all the iron-ore deposits at Koolan Island when the company is not legally bound to do anything of a practical nature for the State.

Yesterday I came into possession of a publication known as "R.T.B. Quarterly" which formerly appeared under the name of "Management Bulletin." It is issued by a big iron and steel firm in Great Britain known as Richard Thomas & Baldwins (Australia) Proprietary Ltd. In the September issue, the first article is headed "The Steel Industry in Australia" and was written by Major W. E. Fraser, E.D., A.C.I.S., a director and secretary of the company's branch operating in Australia. The article traces the history of the iron and steel industry in Australia from the beginning, before there was a B.H.P. and when other companies were struggling to establish first an iron industry and later a steel industry in Australia.

One part of the article under the heading "Long-Range Planning" deals in some detail with what B.H.P. proposes to do, not in Western Australia but in New South Wales; it proposes to expand very greatly the production of pig-iron and steel. When one reads this portion of the article, one can understand even more significantly why B.H.P. has been so desperately anxious in recent times to obtain control of the iron-ore not only on Cockatoo Island but also on Koolan Island and Irvine Island. One portion of the article says—

The first objective of this two-point plan is to expand to its maximum the steel-making capacity of the existing plant.

At Port Kembla! Not at Kwinana, Collie, or Bunbury!

By 1945 the annual capacity of this Port Kembla plant was 750,000 tons of ingots. The second major objective is to install a modern hot strip mill, which will be the first section of a plant capable of supplying, inter alia, the tinplate needs of Australia.

This project is possibly one of the largest individual industrial developments ever undertaken in Australia. Much of the equipment for this plant has been ordered and some work has been done on the site. The expansion of the existing works is expected to increase Port Kembla's steel production to approximately 1,375,000 tons per annum. The site for this new hot strip mill has been selected in an undeveloped area near to the existing works and adjacent to a proposed inner harbour, which the N.S.W. Government is planning to construct.

At present the steel plant at Port Kembla is capable of producing 900,000 tons per annum. Twenty-four new by-product coke ovens, which would make a total of 144 ovens, a third blast furnace of 1,500 tons per day capacity, together with two new 240-ton open hearth furnaces are at present being constructed and are well on the way to completion. This will enable an annual steel production of 1,375,000 tons to be achieved.

Another portion of the article reads—

Ore-handling facilities at the Port Kembla harbour are being expanded to cope with the ore requirements of the blast furnaces, whilst railway and road transport systems are now being extended. All of this work is being pushed on with the utmost speed.

Thus from this publication we obtain additional evidence of the great anxiety of B.H.P. to obtain complete and unchallengeable control of all the iron-ore upon which it can lay its hands. We can also understand more clearly—if clearer understanding were needed—the reason why B.H.P. has been able to prevail upon the Government of this State to give away for all time the leases at Koolan Island as well as at Cockatoo Island. In return for the extension of the Cockatoo Island leases, B.H.P. is to give us a steel rolling mill. In return for giving the company the Koolan Island leases, we are to get nothing that would be enforceable at law. So I say that the Government—to describe its action generously—has made a grievous mistake in undertaking to give the Koolan Island leases to the company.

The only possible justification the Government would have had for including the Koolan Island leases as a gift to B.H.P. would have been a provision equally bind-

ing upon the company to establish an iron and steel industry in this State. The Premier and the Minister for Industrial Development have told the House that the future interests of this State have been well protected by the fact that, after 10 years, there will be available the iron-ore deposits of Koolyanobbing, which could be used by some other company that was willing and capable of establishing an iron and steel industry here.

Let us consider that point. Suppose the member for West Perth, the Minister for Lands and the member for Roe were representatives of British or American iron and steel manufacturers, commissioned by their directors to examine the prospects of establishing a branch of the industry in Western Australia. After having discussed the matter with Ministers and with officers of the Mines Department, does anyone believe that those representatives would be likely to recommend their principals to establish an industry here when it would be in such a vulnerable position in relation to the over-powering competition that could be brought to bear by B.H.P.?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member's time allowance has elapsed.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [5.30]: This afternoon I asked the Premier a question without notice—would he show how he arrived at the figure of 500,000 tons which he had stated publicly was the amount of iron-ore available to this State under the agreement.

The Minister for Industrial Development: For 233 years.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: The Premier's statement, and I heard it myself, was that 500,000 tons would be available annually.

The Minister for Industrial Development: For 233 years.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: Annually.

The Minister for Industrial Development: It would provide that quantity for 233 years.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: The fact is that it will not.

The Minister for Industrial Development: That is not so, as I will prove to you in a few minutes.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: I shall be interested to hear the proof. The Premier's answer was that his statement was based on 20,000 tons at Koolan Island and 70,000,000 tons at Koolyanobbing, whereas the Bill provides that the most we can get from Koolyanobbing is 50,000 tons a year.

The Minister for Industrial Development: You are quite wrong there, but you persist in it. If you enter into an agreement with someone to open an industry with Koolyanobbing ore, you can



have the whole lot, but until that is done the State can draw 50,000 tons for its own purposes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is similar to the statement that if we had a frying pan and some fat we would fry some fish if we had some fish.

The Minister for Industrial Development: No, it is quite different.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What are the chances to induce anyone to establish an integrated industry within ten years in order that this 70,000,000 tons of ore shall be available from Koolyanobbing? Not one in ten million!

The Minister for Industrial Development: I do not agree with you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: As a matter of fact, the statement made by the Premier was misleading. I venture to say that not one person in a thousand, who heard it, would assume the position to be that from now on there would not be available to this State, every year if the agreement is passed, 500,000 tons of ore.

The Minister for Industrial Development: It is so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course, it is not so. The Bill provides that there shall be a maximum of 50,000 tons a year from Koolyanobbing.

The Minister for Industrial Development: You are on the wrong track.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am not, and the Premier knows I am not. One had only to observe his discomfiture when the question was asked to know whether I was on the wrong track or not, because he did not have a clue as to where he got his 500,000 tons. The Bill provides that the Minister may remove from Mining Reserve No. 1258H, at any time and from time to time during the period, an amount of ore not exceeding 50,000 tons in any one year. Then we may buy from B.H.P. 200,000 tons from Koolan Island. This makes a total of 250,000 tons.

I will be interested to hear how the Minister will make that up 500,000 tons a year in the first ten years, because the impression given last Thursday night was that we need not worry because under the agreement there was immediately available to the State 500,000 tons of iron-ore a year. I cannot read this into the Bill at all, and I shall be interested to follow the Minister when he attempts to show that it is so provided, because it was never stated here previously that 500,000 tons per annum would be available.

The Minister for Industrial Development: If you look at "Hansard" you will find I said that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then I shall withdraw what I have just said, that it was never stated here before. All I can say

is that I listened very carefully to the debate. I was not here the whole time, but I never heard anyone claim that 500,000 tons would be available each year.

Mr. Kelly: That does not put it into the Bill, though.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course not! I heard the figure of 250,000 tons mentioned—50,000 tons from Koolyanobbing and 200,000 tons from Koolan—but at no time did I hear anyone claim that 500,000 tons would be available; and I cannot see how it will be available under the Bill. It could be, of course, after the first ten years.

The Minister for Industrial Development: No, even before that, if you make an agreement.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Here we are again with the frying pan and the fat.

The Minister for Industrial Development: Not at all.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What are the chances of making an agreement with anybody to establish an integrated iron and steel industry in Western Australia within the next ten years, in view of this agreement?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Does the Minister suggest that Clause 4 can override Clause 3 of the Bill?

The Minister for Industrial Development: It is not suggested that it overrides it; it is complementary to it.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: But Clause 3, in specific terms, lays down that for a period of ten years not more than 50,000 tons shall be taken in each year.

The Minister for Industrial Development: Does it not commence by stating that it is subject to the provisions of the next succeeding section?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Yes, but that is only in connection with declaring the reserves to be open for mining, etc. That does not deal with the 50,000 tons maximum. I think we had better put the Bill back into Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Melbourne.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I fail to see how the Minister's conclusion can be arrived at under the Bill. I understand it to mean that there will be a maximum of 50,000 tons a year from Koolyanobbing and not more than 200,000 tons from Koolan, which we would have to buy from the B.H.P. So, if we bought 200,000 tons of iron-ore from B.H.P. at its price—

The Premier: No, not at its price.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: At whose price, then?

The Premier: At a price to be fixed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: By whom?

The Premier: By arbitration, if necessary.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is not worth anything.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Drive!

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Hooley!

The Premier: That word has been much used lately.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Arbitration is not worth anything, because the company is allowed to define what it regards as reasonable depreciation, provide reasonable reserves and make a reasonable profit, and then charge accordingly. So there would not be much room for the State to get the ore at the State's price. It is clear it would be at a price which would satisfy the B.H.P., and which would not be a price that would encourage anyone else to establish an industry. So the possibility which the Minister envisages of being able to enter into an agreement with someone to establish an industry in order that we may override Clause 3 of the Bill is remote indeed—so remote as to be completely out of sight. I think therefore, that the Premier's statement last night was very misleading to the general public, and it ought to be corrected because it could give an entirely wrong impression. Of course, it was calculated to convey the impression that there was no room for argument because there were tremendous quantities of ore available to the State Government, if they were needed, and so although the B.H.P. was being given Cockatoo Island and Koolan Island for ever, there was nothing to worry about because there would be 500,000 tons of iron-ore available every year. I repeat, I cannot read the Bill that way and it was very obvious this afternoon that the Premier was not sure of his ground either, because he had not a clue as to how the total was arrived at. He finished by saying it was based on 200,000 tons at Koolan Island and 70,000,000 tons at Koolyanobbing.

The Premier: Two hundred thousand tons per annum at Koolan Island.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And 70,000,000 tons per annum at Koolyanobbing?

The Premier: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Premier's statement is based on 200,000 tons at Koolan Island.

The Premier: Per annum.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There is no "per annum" in this.

The Premier: It is intended; you know that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: All right, it is to be 200,000 tons per annum from Koolan Island and 70,000,000 tons per annum from Koolyanobbing.

The Premier: You know it is not meant to be 70,000,000 tons per annum. It is no use being absurd about it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Well, why was the Premier absurd?

The Premier: I was not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: This is the Premier's statement.

The Premier: You are your usual self tonight.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I have in front of me the "Hansard" report of the question and answer.

The Premier: It is not intended to convey that it is 70,000,000 tons per annum from Koolyanobbing.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I suggest to the Premier that he say what he intends to convey.

The Premier: I do not think anyone who listened to me would think so, either.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was clear that the Premier was in a complete fog.

The Premier: You have said that half-a-dozen times; you have convinced yourself of that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: One cannot repeat the truth too often.

The Minister for Industrial Development: You can in this House.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not know, because it takes a long time to make it sink into the heads of some people.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Especially those in another place, with marble domes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Surely the Premier is not now suggesting that we ought to be supplied with a glossary so that we can interpret the statements he makes in the House. This is his answer, word for word, "Based on 200,000 tons at Koolan Island and 70,000,000 tons at Koolyanobbing." So we can come to whatever conclusion we like. Is that the position we are to accept? Of course, I do not blame the Premier. I could not arrive at the figure of 500,000 tons, and neither could anyone else at this stage. I suppose the figure was supplied to the Premier and he just made the statement without satisfying himself that it was factual and, on being confronted with it this afternoon, he had to rely on the Deputy Premier. In the circumstances, that gentleman could not get it over properly, and the result was this answer of the Premier's which, of course, is foolish.

The Premier: You have had your explanation. It is foolish to imagine anyone would think of 70,000,000 tons of ore coming from Koolyanobbing per annum.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Well, what is the amount per annum? Will the Premier correct it now?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Minister for Lands is trying to give him the figure.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course, it is perfectly obvious that if the Premier could answer he would. The figure has not been arrived at yet. No wonder the Premier was obliged to state the figure of 70,000,000 tons, but it has no relation at all to the question. He might as well have given the total quantity of ore at Cockatoo. In order that we can have a proper appreciation of the stand of the Government and of the points of objection of the Opposition, we should have the facts stated in connection with what is intended under the legislation, and what the legislation provides, and not what some people think it provides. We are entitled to know just what it does provide and what the situation of the State will be under the agreement. So far as I can see, the agreement will mean the end for all time of our opportunity to get a fully integrated iron and steel works in Western Australia.

By giving away our bargaining power, as we are doing under this Bill, we have to rely upon the decision of B.H.P., when it suits it and if it ever does, to establish such a works in Western Australia. It will be under no legal obligation to do so and if it decides against such an establishment the firm will in no way be jeopardised and the agreement will not be upset. That is a cautious provision put in by somebody who contemplated that the company may never carry out that for which power is being provided under the agreement. That being so, we should hesitate before we agree to this proposition.

Any proposal which sets a limit of time would have been a fair one. It would perhaps have ensured that at some time or other we could look forward with some degree of confidence to the establishment of an industry in Western Australia. That is the big thing which the preamble of the Bill says is desired and we ought to be working towards that end, but this Bill does scarcely anything towards that end; on the contrary, it makes it extremely unlikely that it will ever be achieved at all. While we had control of large iron resources which would be needed by ironmasters we would be in a position to do some bargaining but having given away control for all time, what have we left to induce anybody to establish an industry? Nothing at all. So instead of this being a boon and a blessing it is quite the opposite. No amount of camouflage will cover up the true position and I think we ought to go to the limit to prevent this legislation becoming law.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [5.48]: I have not expressed myself during the earlier stages of the debate on this measure but this evening it is my intention to deal shortly with only two aspects of it. I do so because I feel that in view of the importance of the measure there is an obligation upon every member, at least at some stage, to express himself so that his

constituents and the people of Western Australia can gain some idea of his views. My reason for saying that is that I honestly believe that at some time in the future this will be recognised as a cardinal blunder.

The Minister for Industrial Development: Time alone will tell us that.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, but the point about it is that at whatever stage it occurs there will be that realisation—

The Minister for Industrial Development: Or the reverse.

Mr. GRAHAM: —by Parliament or the public generally and it will be too late to do anything about it. There have been mistakes in the past and to mention a few there was the 40-cycle electric power in Western Australia, instead of the normal 50-cycle, the narrow-gauge railway system, the erection of our central hospital and its confined site with one of the busiest thoroughfares running through the middle. But at least at some time in the future it will be possible for a Government to take stock of the situation and do something in the way of effecting an improvement. But when this document is passed by both Houses of Parliament the position is for ever beyond recovery.

This will grant a portion of Western Australia to a private concern for eternity. The physical effect of this will be that a portion of Western Australia will be excised from the State. There is a definite undertaking in this agreement that any laws of the future will not apply to that part of Western Australia or to the company in certain of its activities. How in the name of all that is reasonable any responsible government could agree to such a proposition, I know not. It has been suggested to me, perhaps a little unkindly, that because of the kudos accruing to the Minister for Works in connection with the establishment of the oil industry at Kwinana, the Minister who holds the portfolio of Minister for Industrial Development felt it was necessary to do something important in the economic and industrial life of this State.

Therefore, at all costs there should be something of a reasonable proposition during his term of office brought into being in this State, and there we have it; the State of Western Australia is sacrificed with the introduction of this Bill and agreement. The Government does not feel particularly happy about the agreement. I have heard the Premier speak in this Chamber and I heard him speak over a national station last evening. I have been struck by his desire to remove himself from the matter of the rolling mill to be established at Kwinana and he gave terrific emphasis to the £4,000,000 plant that will be established there. Let us be realistic about this. I was astounded that such tommyrot as the

Premier spoke the other evening should be given such space in the morning Press. The Premier endeavoured to make us believe that a new era would be introduced into Western Australia; that there would be an opportunity for the young people of this State as professional and technical men and as skilled artisans to be employed in this new industry at Kwinana.

We know from subsequent admissions that this industry will employ a lesser number of persons than are employed by the State Housing Commission. Therefore we have some idea of the impact and effect that the employment provided at Kwinana by this industry will have in reality. A mere nothing! But apparently it is possible for the Premier, at least for the time being, to get away with these far-fetched stories to the extent that I believe many people in Western Australia are honestly of the opinion that when this Bill is passed B.H.P. will set up an integrated iron and steel industry in this State. Of course if the Government is doing it utmost to foster that misconception. But anyone who has analysed this document realises and appreciates the full significance of it.

To be perfectly frank, had anyone suggested to me a few short weeks ago that there would have been a Government in Western Australia at any time in its history, with the temerity to put forward a document such as this, I would have refused to believe it. To my mind it is just as fantastic, in a totally different way, as offering King's Park to some selected organisation or agents to dispose of. That is a valuable heritage for the recreation and leisure of the people, and on our northern coast there is a valuable heritage worth some hundreds of millions of pounds which is to be given to a private concern in return for a tinpot show at Kwinana, employing less people than the State Housing Commission.

I find it almost impossible to speak temperately with regard to a thing of this character. I am aware that many members have spoken on the Bill and on practically every phase connected with it. Therefore I am surprised that to some extent the Government has not retracted the Bill with a view to endeavouring to get some sort of bargain or reasonable deal for Western Australia. I do not know what the set-up is, but when the Premier made his contribution to the second reading debate—and this is an opinion shared by members from all political parties—he was never more uncomfortable and never before have his remarks been so disjointed. Yet notwithstanding the stupid, ridiculous stories he told for the consumption of the public, which depends upon the daily newspapers, they were given more prominence than the Melbourne Cup and 101 other matters which are followed closely by nearly every citizen in the community.

I am not trying to compare the relative importance of those two events, but the same evening we heard from a member who knows more, in a practical sense, than all the members on both sides of the Chamber put together, plus the staff of "The West Australian," and I refer to the member for Gascoyne, and only a few words of his speech were reported. They were suddenly cut off by a reported interjection of the Premier which said, "Rubbish." So I ask myself what sort of an alignment is this with this most powerful industrial organisation that the Commonwealth of Australia has ever seen.

Mr. Bovell: A pity we did not have more of their calibre.

Mr. GRAHAM: Nobody is criticising the company on that score. I cannot see any reason why this Government, which after all is only a temporary phase in Western Australia's history, should for all time give away part of my State and, in return, receive an insignificant nothing from that same company.

Mr. Bovell: Rubbish!

Mr. GRAHAM: That is all we are getting.

Mr. Bovell: From you.

Mr. GRAHAM: Those cheeky gibes by the member for Vasse are getting very common indeed. He has been selected as the Government Whip which, from previous experience, we know leads to the member occupying that office being offered a portfolio. I suggest the hon. member comports himself with a little more dignity as would befit that office which is shortly, I suppose, to be offered to him.

Mr. Bovell: You will become the next Liberal Premier of Western Australia.

Mr. GRAHAM: The member for Vasse has a few short months in which to attain that office, because after that he will have to wait a long time before he gets it. I venture to suggest that if the public was aware of the real nature of what is contained in the document, then it would be an extremely long time before the conservative forces of this State again got on to the Treasury benches. What is the significance of this powerful industrial corporation getting this glittering prize of hundreds of millions of pounds—because that is what it is worth—of its getting all sorts of concessions and privileges and establishing in return in Western Australia a rolling mill of the most insignificant proportions which I have already outlined? I cannot understand the attitude of "The West Australian" building up the Premier's speech—it was mostly read—when he delivered to us a whole lot of piffle—that is all it was—on matters that bore no resemblance to the true facts.

The Premier suggested that the industry would employ 300 people, and said he regarded this as introducing a new era and providing unbounded opportunities for the youth of this State. Fancy that sort of stuff coming from anybody in such a prominent position as is the Premier; fancy its getting the prominence it did in "The West Australian"! Because the forces of privilege and reaction are in the majority in the Legislative Council, the determination of this measure when it reaches that Chamber is a foregone conclusion. If the Government had some regard for the interests of this State and its people—particularly with regard to the future—then surely at this late stage it should introduce or make arrangements for there to be a clause determining that the State could again acquire possession of those valuable islands to the north after a period of say 100 years or even 200 years, at the same time providing proper safeguards for the company.

This Bill and the agreement are so final. I am not aware of any other decisions made by Governments, or any enactments for that matter, that cannot in the course of time be altered, varied or repealed. But in this case it is being taken away entirely from the people and their representatives. To be perfectly frank, I dislike intensely the modern trend both in the Federal sphere and now, unfortunately, in this State, under which the power to govern by succeeding Governments is taken from them. If I may be permitted to make a brief allusion to this matter, we find in the Federal sphere a plan in the Commonwealth Government, by agreement, to bind succeeding Parliaments for certain periods of years. Here in Western Australia, of course, we have gone to the extreme, beyond which it is impossible to proceed, by binding this State of Western Australia for all time.

Is it not conceivable that in the course of time it would become apparent that there had been some mistake made in this agreement; some omission that is rendering a severe injustice to the State; something apart from all that has already been mentioned? Notwithstanding this, it is impossible for the State to do anything about it. In other words, so far as those several islands in the north are concerned, and in the matter of the B.H.P., and the establishment and conduct of this small tinpot industry at Kwinana, it is beyond the control of the Government, the Parliament and the people of Western Australia for all time. I daresay that when an agreement was entered into between the Government of the day and the Perth City Council concerning the sale of electricity and power at a certain price, there were keen intellects at that time which explored all possible eventualities, and that both sides felt that a reasonable agreement had been arrived at.

Notwithstanding that fact, it was subsequently found in a comparatively short period of years that there was something radically wrong with that agreement, one which, incidentally, had a limited period of time to operate. But in this case it is for eternity. It should be perfectly obvious that the Opposition is second to none in its anxiety and desire to see that Western Australia gets the best possible bargain in the industrial as in any other field. The Opposition is more anxious than the Government in the matter of an iron and steel industry because, were we the Government at the present moment, we would use these valuable resources to trade and bargain with this company. There is no question that the company needs the iron-ore and that it wants to obtain it. But under this proposal it becomes utterly impossible for a Government to do anything in the way of an iron and steel industry—that is a complete unit—unless B.H.P. itself wants to do something in the matter.

Whichever way we look at it, for thousands of years, until the deposits have been worked out, B.H.P. commands those islands and has certain rights and privileges over and above the law of this State; over and above anything that any succeeding Government can do. I repeat that the Opposition is as anxious as the Government that there should be a fully integrated iron and steel industry in Western Australia. Surely it should be possible for the Government to negotiate with the company to allow for some revision or some alteration to be made under certain given circumstances. Is that asking for anything unreasonable? Is it asking the Minister in charge of the Bill to do anything that is absurd and wrong? Surely among the management of B.H.P. there are men who can appreciate the validity of what we are submitting.

We are not in any way criticising the firm to prevent its exploiting certain resources in the interests of this company; we are merely asking that this pernicious document be placed on a more business-like footing. For me to proceed further would be to recapitulate what has already been said by many speakers during the course of the debate on the Bill. If there were any way whatsoever in which the Government could be prevailed upon to reconsider its attitude, we should endeavour to find it. I only wish there could be sufficient members not bound by party ties to express a purely token vote in this House. We should have two representatives of the Government and two representatives of the Opposition discuss the point at issue; after all there is only one vital point that separates the Government and the Opposition.

These representatives should forget face-saving and party political platforms and all the rest of it and should get down and discuss the business from the point of

view of the interests of the State, and work out mutually and on a friendly basis something that will be acceptable to the whole of Parliament. I say this seriously and earnestly. Having been here for over nine years, I know that a private member on the Government side is under a moral obligation to support the Government. I feel certain there are a number of the rank and file supporters of the Government who have grave doubts of the wisdom of this Bill and of the agreement in its present form, but loyalty to the Government makes them vote with it.

In all seriousness I submit to the Minister for Industrial Development that he gives some credence to the earnestness with which we plead; some consideration to the viewpoints that have been expressed; and I ask him if he would not concede just one degree that there is some validity in the objections taken by this side of the House. Would not the Minister endeavour to do something, no matter how unorthodox, to provide an opportunity of getting around the difficulty and the mistake—we believe there has been a mistake—and prevent them from being perpetuated for all time?

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

**MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [7.30]:** As the representative of one of the largest of the metropolitan electorates, I feel I should not allow this occasion to pass without expressing what I think would be the opinion of the great majority of the electors in my district concerning the motion. I think I should express their strong opposition because, under this Bill, there is no doubt that the iron-ore deposits that are bound up with this agreement will be handed over to a private company for all time. This Assembly is not justified in doing that.

I am at a loss to understand the policy of the parties on the opposite side of the House. At various times I have heard members opposite express opposition to monopolies, cartels and the like. They have also voiced hostility to the socialisation of the country's assets. While in this instance, they might be trying to prevent some future Government from socialising these particular assets, they are creating a monopoly, which is the antithesis of what they have expounded over the years. So they are not consistent in supporting this proposition.

It would appear that the Government has set out deliberately to tie up the iron-ore deposits of this country for all time and to prevent future Governments from undertaking negotiations in connection with them. Parliament is not justified in agreeing to that. Members have no mandate from the people to take this action, and what is being done is not in the best interests of generations unborn, who will be denied the right to any say as to the disposal of these deposits.

It has been said that a certain tonnage would be available for some other organisation if it sought to establish a steel industry here. The possibility is, however, that even the steel rolling mill which this company has to set up will not be able to function for the full twelve months of any year. It will be able to supply all the needs of the State in a shorter period, and then will have to close down. What chance would there be for another company to establish itself here under those conditions?

The B.H.P. has all the rights, and any other company from overseas which sought to become established here would find itself shut out by the terms of the leases. After the lapse of 50 years, the B.H.P. can renew its leases for a further 21 years and can go on doing that. Some clause should have been included to provide for a reappraisal at the end of a period of time of the amount to be contributed by the B.H.P. to the State, having regard to the conditions then existing. But that has not been done, and the Bill is one of the worst that has ever been brought before this Parliament.

It is provided that workers' homes shall be erected under the State Housing Act in connection with the works to be established by the company. The remarkable thing is that people in the metropolitan area who seek the benefits of that Act cannot obtain them, yet funds are to be made available for the erection of these homes in South Fremantle. Quite a number of people in my electorate have been desperate for help to obtain homes of their own but have been denied assistance under the State Housing Act. This company has ample resources to build homes itself without funds having to be made available under our Housing Act, especially at a time when the country is passing through a lean period financially. I protest against the proposal to erect these homes under the State Housing Act, in view of the fact that other workers who have sought assistance have been denied it.

Members opposite have pointed out the great merits of the company. We are not critical of that organisation which, with the assistance of workers and through having been able to obtain a market for its products, has established a thriving steel industry and built up a first-rate concern. That, however, is no justification for our handing over to it these State assets for all time. Many other industries have established themselves here, but the Government of the day has not gone out of its way to help them to the extent that the present Government proposes to assist the B.H.P., at the same time binding future Governments to do likewise. It is my bounden duty, on behalf of my electorate, to express strong opposition.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT** (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling—in reply) [7.40]: I listened with attention to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, which were substantially a repetition of much of what he said on the second reading. First of all I would like to deal with his argument about the leases of Cockatoo Island being sufficient inducement to this company. In the course of one of the speeches I have made on this measure, I said that the ordinary Mining Act procedure would renew these leases for from 39 to 81 years, depending on the time they were first issued. It would appear that the Leader of the Opposition did not seriously dissent from that explanation of the position of the Mines Department. He simply alleged, which is a fact, that it would be in the power of the department to refuse. But as we all know perfectly well, the B.H.P. would have been entitled to expect, in view of all past practice, when the circumstances of development are such as in this case, that the leases would be renewed for the period stated.

I would like to refer to another aspect of this matter in regard to the attitude of the Mines Department. I answered a question by the Leader of the Opposition and told him that the Under Secretary for Mines was taken into consultation. I might have said, if at the time I had remembered it, that he was brought to the Cabinet meeting which discussed this matter and then and there expressed his opinions as being favourable, as they are now, to this arrangement.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Which arrangement?

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** The arrangement in the Bill.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The whole agreement?

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** The whole agreement.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Good.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** Moreover, I have had the opportunity, as I said in answer to the question, of discussing the matter with him myself since then. The hon. gentleman also said, which is true enough in a sense, that under this agreement the Government would have no legal claim over the Koolan Island leases as such. He omitted to remember, or to point out, that the Government will have a claim, so soon as it expresses a wish to exercise it, for 200,000 tons of iron-ore per annum from these leases to make use of in the State as it thinks fit.

Mr. Hoar: Which it has to buy.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** Might I suggest that it would be considerably cheaper to buy iron-ore on the cost plus 5 per cent. basis

set out in the agreement—which is a type of agreement which has been satisfactory in regard to another similar measure passed five or six years ago in regard to price—than for the Government to have to develop Koolan Island, to expend very substantial sums of money, probably running into millions of pounds, for the necessary loading and mining facilities, residential amenities, and other things, to say nothing of transport.

It would be very much cheaper in those circumstances to accept 200,000 tons of iron-ore than to have to expend the necessary capital on developing the island. And pro rata per ton, I have no doubt that the cost of extraction of 200,000 tons, due to the capital expenditure being much the same in regard to a far greater capacity for extraction and loading, would make the cost of the iron-ore considerably dearer to the Government than it would be with the very large capacity which the company in question has for the extraction, loading and general handling of that ore. There is available 200,000 tons of ore for every year in which the Government cares to ask for it, after having first given 12 months' notice. There are, in the Koolyanobbing iron-ore leases, approximately 70,000,000 tons of ore, and it has been alleged that nothing could be done with it for 10 years, except as regards 50,000 tons per annum. Clause 4 of the Bill says—

The Minister acting for and on behalf of the State may, within the period mentioned in Section three of this Act, enter into an agreement with a person for the construction and establishment in the State by that person of an iron-ore smelting and steel-making plant having a rated capacity of not less than 100,000 tons of pig-iron per year.

The period mentioned is 10 years. To continue—

The Minister so acting may, by the same or any subsequent agreement during the period and upon such terms and conditions as the Minister and the person referred to in subsection (1) of this section may from time to time agree, contract and arrange for the development and working of the iron and coal deposits within the reserves.

No agreement under subsection (1) of this section shall be executed by the Minister unless the person referred to in that subsection enters into a bond with and acknowledges himself bound to the State in the penal sum of one hundred thousand pounds to be paid to the State at the Treasury in Perth conditioned on the commencement and completion of the construction of the plant as referred to in subsection (4) of this section.

It goes on to provide that if the iron and steel-smelting and steel-making plant so contracted for is constructed within the

time mentioned in the Bill the bond shall become void. I have already indicated that Clauses 3 and 4 of the Bill confer no rights whatever on B.H.P. or any other company.

Mr. May: Then why are they in the Bill?

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** For the purpose of ensuring, as I indicated to the hon. member in answer to the same interjection a week ago, that the Koolyanobbing ore deposits, plus the 200,000 tons from Koolan Island per annum under the contract, would be available to enable the State to contract with any individual or company for the creation in Western Australia of an integrated iron and steel-making plant of a capacity of not less than 100,000 tons per annum, and the reason for the £100,000 bond was to prevent—as I have previously indicated—persons coming forward—mere men of straw or company promoters who wanted to hawk these things about the country as has been done in the past—with little or no prospect of ever bringing such a project to fruition, because a man or company who wants to set up an integrated iron and steel plant in this State of as small a capacity as 100,000 tons per annum will be obligated, in the course of the six or seven years that it would require to erect the plant, to find approximately £10,000,000, and unless he could first find £100,000 it would not be worth the while of the Government negotiating with him.

Mr. May: The State would not be forced to give him the lease.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** Not unless he agreed to set up the industry and put up the bond accordingly.

Mr. May: The State owns the ore.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** Yes, and will retain it until such an agreement is made, executed and completed. The Premier was twitted in some degree with regard to the 500,000 tons of iron-ore for 233 years. If we take the 70,000,000 tons available at Koolyanobbing and estimate its use at 300,000 tons a year it will be found that 70,000,000 divided by 300,000 gives as a result 233 and therefore there is available from Koolyanobbing, under these clauses, 300,000 tons of iron-ore a year for 233 years. Add to that the 200,000 tons of ore which the company is obligated—upon the requirement of the State being made known to it—to deliver to the State per annum and one finds that there would be 500,000 tons of iron-ore available per year as long as there were any iron-ore resources left in these leases.

Mr. Kelly: You are a figure magician.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** I am not. If there is 70,000,000 tons available over 233 years it

is obvious that one can take 300,000 tons a year away for that period before exhausting the supply.

Mr. Kelly: The Premier said 500,000 tons—

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** It is from the time they start to extract ore.

Mr. W. Hegney: How many million tons of ore will this leave the company for the next 200 years?

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** I am not concerned about that. I have already said, and I repeat, that the requirements of this company for the service of Australia at present are between  $3\frac{1}{2}$  and 4 million tons of ore per annum, and heaven knows we have imported into this State 750,000 tons of steel products at £90 per ton, because we could not acquire steel in Australia at the local price of one-quarter or one-third as much. Obviously it is desirable that Australia's resources should be utilised in Australia when there is somebody with the capacity and the ability to utilise them, and somebody who is prepared to offer the product to us at about one-quarter of what it costs to import it from overseas, and so I leave that aspect of the matter.

Let us look for a moment at this plant with a total capacity of 100,000 tons per annum and see, having said it would cost about £10,000,000 and probably a lot more, whether it would comply with Western Australia's full requirements. At present we would be unlikely to use 50,000 tons of such products in a year. On the figures I mentioned just now there could be produced—as it takes about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons of iron-ore to produce a ton of steel—provided this bona fide organisation is prepared to come forward, put up the bond and undertake the development, 350,000 tons of steel a year, which is about seven times our present-day requirements and a quantity unlikely, therefore, to be required by this State for a long time to come.

I would suggest that anyone who wants to start in Western Australia a Government enterprise of this nature has either to develop a system of coking Collie coal and then think carefully about the finance or, if that should fail—I mean the development of the Collie coal, which I am inclined to think will not fail—look a great deal further if he is to start it off in a big way with charcoal-iron, because on the advice that we have received in this regard from the technologists of Brasserts of New York, they could not recommend the commencement of an industry based on charcoal-iron, for reasons that were given to some degree by the Premier in remarks he made last week. They indicated that the cost per ton of pig-iron would almost certainly be considerably greater if based on charcoal, than if based on coal.



They also indicated that no-one has yet succeeded in developing a satisfactory charcoal-iron furnace of a capacity greater than 200 tons a day, and so the maximum output would be 65,000 or 70,000 tons per annum, which would be an uneconomical proposition in the face of any large competition and almost certainly result in the product being dearer than it would otherwise have been. In any event, whichever of those things one undertook—if one did undertake them, and here we come across a conflict of political ideologies as much as anything else—one must find money. If one has to find anything from £10,000,000 to £15,000,000, to do the job, as in the estimation of the same technologists and experts one would have to, one would be put in a difficult position in view of the vast spending requirements of the State on the things that are far more essential and which it is obviously the duty and function of the State to provide.

I refer here to hospitals, water supplies, schools, railway improvements and so on, to which the State is heavily and indefinitely committed, and which in view of the increase of population will become more urgent and involve a heavier financial strain. Anyone who wants for one moment to consider undertaking a transaction of that nature, based on charcoal-iron, is facing financial disaster and heavy financial problems which I do not think could ever be warranted.

If it chanced that there is at any time within a period of 10 years a Government which is determined to do that and which can see its way clear to do it, and if there has in the meantime been no agreement with any other concern to establish such an integrated iron and steel industry in this State under the provisions of these clauses, there is nothing whatever to prevent the Parliament of the day, at the wish of that Government, repealing those clauses and, in consequence, the reservation of the Koolyanobbing leases and the power of the Minister to make an agreement for their development subject to there being such an iron and steel industry in contemplation and under bond.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is not so easy as that; you forget the Legislative Council.

The **MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**: No, it has passed the laws in the past when there is a good case. In any event, suppose the hon. member is right, I am not concerning myself in that. It is a question for Parliament and it has the power, if it will exercise it, to repeal this clause and if it does so, as I have said before, it will be for the Government of the day to decide about integrated iron and steel industries of not less than 100,000 tons based on the ore at Koolan Island, plus the ore at Koolyanob-

bing. Parliament can argue the matter and nobody can deny that the proper place to do so is Parliament so long as there is a Parliament in existence in this State.

So it seems, without any shadow of a doubt, that the real foundation of the objection to this measure actually does not exist. What inclination would there be for this company to take any action at all merely on being told, as has been suggested, that it could have a renewal of the Cockatoo Island leases which it will get anyhow under normal Mining Act procedure? Obviously if it is going to spend large sums of money—as it is—in this State it would have been quite hopeless to take up the proposition suggested by the Leader of the Opposition and put it to the company in the form that he did. So I hope the House will pass the motion that is before the Chair.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	....	....	....	....	23
Noes	....	....	....	....	19
Majority for					4

#### Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Read
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Yates
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Nalder	

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. May
Mr. Butcher	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Needham
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Lawrence	

(Teller.)

#### Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Styants
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Coverley
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Nulsen

Question thus passed; report of Committee adopted.

### BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1. Criminal Code Amendment.
2. Warehousemen's Liens.  
Without amendment.

### BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

#### Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

*Second Reading.*

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—Mt. Lawley) [8.7] in moving the second reading said: The Bill proposes to make some amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act. The first, to which I wish to refer, will provide protection for the worker going to and from his place of employment.

Mr. Lawrence: Give us a guarantee that it will be passed in another place.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The Bill provides that a worker shall be deemed to have suffered a personal injury by accident arising out of or in the course of his employment where he suffers an injury without his own default or wilful act on any of the daily or periodic journeys referred to in paragraph (b) of proposed new Subsection (1a) set out in this clause. This is provided the injury is not received during or after a substantial interruption of, or substantial deviation from, the journey, made for a reason unconnected with the workers' employment or unconnected with his attendance at the trade, technical or other school, as the case may be; or during or after any other break in the journey, which the Workers' Compensation Board, having regard to all the circumstances, deems not to have been reasonably incidental to any such journey. The following are the daily or other periodic journeys referred to in the clause with which I am dealing:—

- (i) between the workers' place of abode and place of employment;
- (ii) between the worker's place of abode or place of employment and any trade, technical or other training school, which he is required by the terms of his employment to attend.

Somewhat similar provisions to that which I have just described are now operating in the Workers' Compensation Acts in other States of Australia. The second amendment provides that after the commencement of this measure, if it becomes an Act, the Premium Rates Committee shall not vary the premium to be charged for insurance in respect of insurable risks under the provisions of the Act in respect to silicosis, pneumoconiosis or miner's phthisis unless on the recommendation of a duly qualified actuary made to the committee as the result of actuarial investigation made by him or unless with the approval of the Minister. As members know, the State Insurance Office is the only insurer of industrial risks of this nature and a large sum of money is involved. Of course, the Government has the responsibility of ensuring that all claims for which the State Insurance Office is responsible must be met.

I think it will be appreciated that no Government could possibly permit of the State Insurance Office repudiating claims of this nature owing to lack of funds. So the Government feels that it has a direct responsibility for such claims, and that no alteration should be made which would affect the funds to be provided to meet claims of this nature unless upon the recommendation of a skilled actuary, or, if such cannot be or is not obtained, with the concurrence of the Government. It is an extremely difficult matter to assess the contingent liabilities which are likely to arise under this clause, because they may occur a considerable time after the worker has left the industry in which he was employed.

If for any reason a large number of men who are now insured should leave the industry in which they are engaged and others are not employed in their place, the income arising from that industry for insurance may considerably diminish while the liabilities may increase. So it is thought that no alteration in this respect should be made except on expert advice or with the approval of the Minister. As members know, since the last amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act was passed, the basic wage has increased. When the last measure was passed this House decided that the weekly rate a worker would receive for compensation would be about 78 per cent. of the basic wage. It has been a principle of all workers' compensation legislation throughout the Commonwealth that the weekly payment should be slightly lower than the basic wage.

Mr. Styants: That is not correct. The payments were over the basic wage when your Government took over or in 1948. We had a £6 benefit on a £5 basic wage.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** That may or may not be correct.

Mr. Styants: It is correct.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** What is correct is that the Australian average has always provided that the weekly payment shall be slightly lower than the basic wage. What is provided under this legislation is compensation and the amount is not an alternative to the weekly wage. It has been decided to increase the weekly amount.

Mr. Needham: Why not make it up to the basic wage?

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** For the reason I have given.

Mr. Needham: The reason was not very convincing.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The amount provided is compensation; it is not remuneration and is not an alternative to the basic wage. It is to assist the worker who is injured in industry. Let members not forget that the worker is the man who pays compensation, collectively speak-

ing, because outgoings are a charge on industry. One has to be fair to all people engaged in industry. If we take 78 per cent. of the present basic wage, we find it amounts to slightly over £9. Rather than increase the weekly allowance for all those persons entitled to claim compensation to the amount I mentioned, it was thought proper to make a distinction between those whose need was greater than that of others. In other words, it was considered that the man who had others wholly dependent upon him should receive greater compensation than those without dependants.

Mr. W. Hegney: You said just now that the amount payable was not an alternative.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not, and I think members will agree that, whatever the amount is, the man who has a family dependent upon him should be entitled to receive more than a single man.

Mr. Lawrence: You should apply that principle to the basic wage.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This has nothing to do with the basic wage.

Mr. Needham: It has a whole lot to do with it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am dealing with compensation payable to assist the man who has been injured in the course of his employment.

Mr. Needham: A man must live when he is sick as well as when he is well.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The married man is entitled to the greater compensation and needs more assistance than the man who has only himself to look after. For that reason, a distinction has been made in the increases specified. It is felt that a single man will be sufficiently protected, having in view all the charges that are placed upon industry at the present moment, with compensation amounting to £8 a week, while the ratio payment to the married man should be increased.

Mr. Needham: Some single men have dependants as well as married men.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If a single man has dependants, he will get the increased amount. It will all be a question of dependants. The man who has persons wholly dependent upon him should, however, receive more than £9 per week, which would be the proportionate increase, and consequently the amount he will receive has been fixed at £10 a week. I think members will agree with the principle indicated, whatever they may say regarding the amounts that have been set out. It is a fit and proper principle that those with the greater need for assistance should receive more than the single man.

Mr. W. Hegney: You are not giving away as much as you did to B.H.P.!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The third amendment proposed in the Bill is to provide for an increased allowance in respect of hospital charges. Those charges have risen, and therefore it is proposed to make the maximum amount payable in respect of hospital charges a sum of £150, and that payable for medical expenses £100. Previously, the maximum amount allowable for medical and hospital expenses was £200. I suggest that the total amount now provided is the highest payable in Australia. The other amendments in the Bill are minor ones to correct small mistakes last year. They are more appropriate for discussion in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. W. Hegney, debate adjourned. z

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1952-53.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the 30th October on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

*Vote—Legislative Council, £5,702:*

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [8.25]: The higher figures quoted throughout the Estimates reflect the increased cost of almost all items required at present, and we, as private citizens, know that in our own home budgets we have to provide against the higher prices that have very greatly increased compared with those that obtained in previous years. The spiral of inflation has been in progress for some years, but I feel it has been checked to some degree by the steps taken by the Commonwealth Government. Quite a lot of criticism has been indulged in regarding the measures adopted in Federal circles, and certainly the steps taken have been by no means popular. At the same time, they have done a lot of good in impressing upon practically everyone the need to endeavour to live within income.

It is an elementary fact that our imports must be paid for by our exports. The price of wool in particular rose some two years ago to a particularly high level and built up our overseas credits to a very high point. I believe it was that factor that influenced many people and organisations to indulge in an orgy of spending. They bought much from overseas and paid any price that was demanded to obtain what they required. Very often they paid for what they did not need, and certainly much was bought that could have been done without. The restrictions placed upon purchasing by people in general had great influence in bringing home to them the fact that what was bought had to be paid for in the not distant future. The method adopted in Federal circles slowed up de-

velopment and had an adverse effect in some directions. Generally speaking, however, it worked for the good of the country.

There is still great need to export from Australia the greatest quantities of goods we can in order again to build up credits against the time when we may need them, and also to provide foodstuffs for countries overseas that are in urgent need of supplies that we can export to them. Australian exports mainly comprise primary products, and our wool, wheat and other suchlike commodities are, generally speaking, the largest sources of national income from overseas. All Governments are appreciative of the fact that we must do all we can to build up our industries. The Federal authorities, in endeavouring to assist by fostering research methods, are doing quite a lot, but we cannot expect results immediately.

To build up our exports should be the first concern of every Government. This evening I would like to deal in some measure with the export of fruit. In that respect, the main fruit export consists of apples, while citrus, pears and stone fruit contribute to a considerable degree. Prior to the war, we had built up a big trade overseas, mainly with the United Kingdom and Scandinavian and European ports. As members realise, for four or five years during the war period exports ceased, and it was then that the Federal Government came to the assistance of the applegrowers. The Apple and Pear Marketing Board, although severely criticised from various angles, did a lot towards keeping the industry going. The export of apples has been resumed since the war terminated, and Western Australia, in spite of the fact that two bad seasons were experienced, one due to heavy hailstorms and the other to a plague of thrip, both of which considerably reduced crops, recorded export figures that were quite considerable.

Last week I read that the extent of the losses suffered by United Kingdom importers of apples had amounted to £1,500,000. I cannot say whether that sum was correct, but most of it came from those who had imported Tasmanian apples, though there were considerable losses on some of the Western Australian fruit. Those losses had to be borne by the importers in England and could have serious repercussions on the trade generally, because it will take time to restore confidence in the Australian apple trade.

It is well to give some thought to the causes leading up to the losses thus suffered. Speaking generally, the apple export industry is very well organised indeed. It covers the several exporting States of Australia. Early in the season arrangements are made for the requisite refrigeration cargo ships to call at the main ports and their itinerary is fixed in such a way that they may deliver the fruit in

orderly batches so that the market will not be flooded. The export season usually extends from February to May and into June, but this year, owing to the shipping hold-up, it continued until July, and that was the main cause of the severe losses that were suffered. The shipping programme, which had been so carefully arranged, went haywire because the overtime ban insisted upon by the waterside workers caused port congestion and delayed the turn-round of ships, and at that time there was a rush to get goods in before the import restrictions were imposed. This aggravated the position.

Mr. Lawrence: Have you read the latest report on the turn-round of shipping?

Mr. OWEN: In some instances there was delay on account of reorganisation at the ports.

Mr. Lawrence: Where?

Mr. OWEN: In Tasmania and, I believe, also in South Australia. These causes combined resulted in delays to the shipping programme and even early in the season, the programme had slipped back to the extent of something like 200,000 cases, while about halfway through the season, there was a delay representing something like three-quarters of a Million cases. In consequence of those delays, fruit which should have left Australian shores by June had to be carried over until the end of July and Australian apples were reaching London as late as August, at which time they had to compete with the locally grown fresh fruit. When shipments are delayed in this way, we cannot expect the fruit to arrive in first class condition and in addition, as I have stated, the late arrival of the fruit brought it into competition with locally-grown fresh fruits, including a particularly heavy crop of strawberries. The values realised were very low and caused severe loss to the importers.

To give an instance of the delays experienced, the time from the commencement of loading of apples into the ships until the final discharge in an English port was 94 days. Apples when stored for three months must be expected to suffer in condition, but another factor was that the refrigerated holds of the ships had to be opened at more than one port of call in Australia. Thus it will be seen that shipping delays had a very detrimental effect upon the quality of the fruit. As regards Western Australia, although some losses were sustained, growers of export fruit did not suffer greatly, but quite heavy losses occurred in the local cool stores.

During the postwar period, there has been quite a change in the nature of the apple exports from Western Australia. In the early thirties as now, the greater part of our export fruit went to the United Kingdom and Scandinavian ports. These were the early season varieties, such as Jonathan, Cleopatra and Dunn's Seedling, and a

comparatively small quantity of Granny Smiths. As we had a larger quantity of the early varieties, the export programme was better distributed and a considerable quantity was exported in March and April. Because Granny Smith has proved so popular and is more easily grown, there has been a big changeover in varieties. Just before the outbreak of war in 1939, we had our record apple season. In that year Western Australia exported 1½ million bushels of apples and the demand for the Granny Smith variety was then on the increase.

During the war period, varieties like Dunn's Seedling were not popular on the local market, and many trees were grafted so that by the end of the war there was a great preponderance of Granny Smiths, and this necessitated a change in the export programme because fruit of early varieties available in March and early April was much less in quantity. As Granny Smith increased in quantity so greatly, it meant that the larger part of the export took place in April and May. In view of the delays experienced each year since the war, it has become an increasingly difficult problem to organise the shipping to get our apples to their destination in time to avoid competition with the local fruit.

Last season the total quantity of apples exported from this State was in the region of 600,000 bushels, of which about 340,000 bushels were Granny Smiths exported in April, May and June. Last season was one of comparatively light crops due to a plague of thrip, but the coming season gives promise of a very heavy crop. I believe that it will approach the record year of 1939, and so we can expect to have a shipping programme of something over 1,000,000 cases. I assure members that it will be a big problem to organise the shipping programme for this quantity in addition to providing for the storage of fruit for local consumption.

A number of points need to be carefully watched and, if attention be given to these matters, the industry will benefit. One of the problems that has assumed serious proportions over the years, both during the war and since, has been that of obtaining sufficient cases to meet the demands for the local market and for export. Although on paper at least the situation seems to be much easier, we got through last season fairly satisfactorily mainly owing to the fact that the export programme was restricted on account of the lighter crop. A small reserve of cases has been built up, but the situation is not as happy as it might appear because of the heavy crop that is expected. I hope that the Minister for Forests and other Ministers will do their best to ensure that the supply of cases is built up to a substantial quantity.

One step in this direction has been the provision at Pemberton for the slicing of case timber in preference to sawing. The process of sawing the timber into thin boards about 5/16ths of an inch in thickness entails a large percentage of loss as sawdust, whereas, by the use of the slicing machine, the recovery of cases is very much higher. I understand that it is as high as 80 per cent. There have been complaints that some boards are not 100 per cent. I have seen them, and admittedly some are not 100 per cent., because they have been sliced obliquely across the grain but I feel that quite as large a proportion of the sliced boards is fit for making into export cases, as of the sawn boards. No doubt the process, which is a fairly new one here, will improve and the difficulties in arranging the machine and the steaming of the timber preparatory to its being sliced, will be overcome. I feel that the packing of export apples, and those for the local market—possibly in the region of 2,000,000 cases all told—will put a big strain on the fruit industry next year.

Another matter which has occasioned the growers considerable worry is the problem of transporting the fruit from the orchard to the port. We have made representations to the authorities—particularly the railways—to provide sufficient ventilated vans to bring the fruit, much of it from cool stores in the apple-growing areas, to the cool stores in the ports. Much of the fruit is transported in the hotter months of the year, so members will realise the urgent need for suitably ventilated vans so that the fruit will not get overheated during transit. In past years it has been not uncommon to see open trucks loaded high and packed tightly with cases of export fruit, and tightly sheeted down with black or dark coloured tarpaulins, and spending days on the journey from the growing areas.

In some instances the fruit has been held up in the railway yards before being put on board ship or into metropolitan cool stores. Members can appreciate that overheating does quite a lot to cause fruit to break down within a comparatively short time. I feel sure it has been a big influence in a lot of our fruit being rejected ex-coolstore, before having a chance to be sent overseas. So I would like the Minister for Railways to give particular attention to the provision of sufficient ventilated vans to transport the crop from the apple-growing districts to the metropolitan area and to the ports.

Another problem which has been severe both during the war and since, is the need for labour in the apple-growing areas. The industry is a seasonal one, lasting only for a few months, and many of the operations are of a rather skilled nature, particularly those of packing and handling the fruit.

Even the picking needs someone who should at least have commonsense, if not experience, because the keeping qualities of the fruit can be seriously upset by bad picking and handling prior to reaching the shed. Once it has reached the packing shed it should be handled carefully. Although labour is perhaps not quite the problem it was a year or two ago, I feel the industry will need a lot more recruits before we can look forward, without worry, to handling such a big crop in a comparatively few months. There is also need for the better organising of the cool stores in the metropolitan area—particularly if the shipping programme is interrupted or delayed.

If shipping works to order, much of the fruit goes straight from the packing shed alongside the ship, and is loaded immediately, but if there is any delay in the shipping arrangements, the fruit must be put into cool store so that its keeping qualities will not be impaired. If there is not adequate cool storage provision, it rapidly deteriorates. I know that in the post-war years, because of delays in shipping, it has been necessary in many instances to have recourse to what we call open storage through having to await shipping. Several times fruit has had to be stored in the wool stores at Fremantle. Some of the adverse reports received about our fruit from oversea markets could have been caused by open or improper storage. The Government could also use its influence in regard to the Rottnest queue where ships are awaiting berths in the harbour.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We do not get many Rottnest queues these days.

Mr. OWEN: We have had them, and we know that the queues do occur. Those who are responsible for arranging the berths should give some priority to ships which are awaiting refrigerated cargoes. Not only would that allow of perishable cargoes being lifted, comparatively quickly, but it would also relieve the congestion which occurs in the cool stores. Although I am speaking with particular regard for the fruit trade, there is no doubt that other perishable cargoes and commodities which need cool storage would benefit if this were done. Unless perishable commodities are in first-class order when they are submitted for shipment, there is a big chance they will be rejected by the commerce inspectors, even though they may be passed as being apparently quite suitable for export.

The condition of the goods as a result of hold-ups would be reflected in the quality when they reached the oversea market. Not only will delays jeopardise future shipments of perishable cargoes but they will involve growers in considerable wastage and loss. Wastage of foodstuffs has occurred in the past. The fruit industry here is well organised and it can do,

and is doing, quite a lot for itself, but I do ask that the Government authorities should assist in the ways I have mentioned, and do their best to see that the export of our primary products, particularly those of a perishable nature, is not held up in any way.

**MR. BRADY** (Guildford-Midland) [8.55]: I wish first to deal with the matter of a high school for Midland Junction. I have mentioned this every year since I have been a member in the hope that the department might do something about building a high school in the district. Even before the war—some 10 or 12 years ago—a high school was promised, but it has not yet been built. In the meantime, the technical school has proved to be totally inadequate because of the various trades that are taught and the number of students wishing to attend. The electorate is in a serious position in regard to educational facilities. I have already said that we have five public halls, all being used as schools. That, in itself, conveys that we are in a desperate position, but to be fair to the department I must say that two new schools are being built, and they will relieve the position a little so far as the primary and infant schools are concerned. However, with respect to the high school and the technical school, the district is in as serious a position as it has ever been. I hope the Minister will do something in this connection.

Another matter I have raised with the Attorney General, by correspondence—and I have not got very far—is that of appointing a police magistrate in the Guildford-Midland electorate. I have mentioned before that the district warrants such an appointment, for many reasons. First of all, the municipal council itself raised the matter and it came to the conclusion that the importance of the district, the numerous cases being held there—traffic cases, inquests and so on—warranted the appointment of a magistrate. It is felt that many traffic cases that are at present heard in Perth should be dealt with in Midland because that is the proper locality for them to be heard in.

It has been brought to my notice that inquests have been delayed for periods up to six months because of there being no magistrate available. This to a large extent prejudices one side or another in regard to the evidence to be submitted. I believe that invariably the people who are on the defensive get the advantage of long delays. A man who feels he might be had up on a criminal charge, involving negligence in a traffic accident, endeavours to get all his evidence in order by seeing that his witnesses are well primed in regard to the evidence to be submitted before the coroner's inquest. But the people representing the deceased party, or the law and

order section, do not do this, so that valuable evidence is lost. It would seem that sometimes guilty people are able to get off without penalties because of a coroner's inquest being delayed through the shortage of magistrates in the district. The local municipal council would, therefore, like to see a police magistrate appointed.

As member for the Guildford-Midland electorate, railway matters concern me a good deal, and a considerable amount of work is going out of the workshops and is being sent to private firms around the metropolitan area. That work could be done in the workshops and I doubt whether it is being done any cheaper by these private firms because we have all read their balance sheets which show considerable profits. In my opinion, if the work had been done in the workshops, a good deal of that money would be saved for the State and the apprentices in the workshops would be given greater opportunity for a variety of work. As a consequence, the department, instead of showing big losses, would be going a long way towards overcoming those losses and would have some prospects of paying its way.

When the Premier introduced the Estimates, he said that despite the metal trades strike a profit of £16,000 had been made on certain railway activities. Had the railways been able to operate normally this year, instead of having to contend with the unfortunate metal trades strike, they would have shown up in a more favourable light. The passenger traffic was coming back to the railways. That traffic had fallen off from 1945 to 1951, but was beginning to return and that would have meant many hundreds of thousands of pounds in fares. As about £18,500,000 has been written down in our railway accounts, one of the prime objectives should be to get as much in the way of fares and freights as possible and as much work as can be done in our workshops. That would give the Government more revenue and would go a long way towards assisting our railway finances.

Instead of building up the profits of private bus companies, we should do our best to divert the money to our railways. In the last issue of "The Swan Express," a newspaper which circulates in my electorate, there is an item which shows that last year the Beam Transport Company made a loss but this year it made a profit. That is a result of the metal trades strike and I am worried about the fact that that profit will probably continue because people are not being encouraged to use our railways and the Saturday afternoon and Sunday services have been eliminated. That is proving a costly experiment for the people in my electorate. Where a person used to be able to travel to Perth for 2s. or 2s. 6d. return he now has to pay approximately 3s. 4d. If

one travels over the shorter distances there is a large percentage increase over railway fares.

A member of my family made two journeys to Guildford over the week-end and the first journey was a distance of two miles from the Guildford railway crossing to Second-avenue, West Midland. The cost, on the Beam bus, was 9d. each way. The following night, the same member of my family made another journey of about one and a half miles at a cost of 7d. each way, so that members will see the travelling costs of people in my electorate are enormous, particularly over the week-end. In actual fact, the week-end costs have gone up by 300 per cent. to 400 per cent. and the normal fares between Perth and Midland Junction have gone up 100 per cent. That happens five days a week and, over a period of twelve months, costs a working man or woman a considerable sum of money. It cost this member of my family 1s. 6d. to go four miles and 1s. 2d. to go three miles; that is a total of 2s. 9d. for a distance of seven miles. The whole thing is ridiculous and is out of all proportion.

Last Sunday I saw men taking their families to the beaches and if a man wishes to take his wife and two children to the beach on a Sunday it costs him £1 0s. 3d. to go from Midland to South Fremantle. That family has to get off the bus at the Supreme Court Gardens and catch another bus to go to Fremantle and then a tram from Fremantle to South Fremantle. On the return journey the same number of transfers are necessary. So the sooner the Minister representing the Minister for Railways does something about re-establishing the Sunday services, or at least starting a railway bus service to take people to the beaches, the sooner the people in my district will be satisfied.

There are one or two important matters that now require consideration and the first concerns superannuation. The Premier mentioned that there has been an increase of about £30,000 in the superannuation payments this year, but he did not say anything about the superannuated railway men. The Premier knows as well as I do that the Commonwealth Government recently increased old-age pensions and social service benefits, in some cases by 100 per cent. The Premier also knows that in the last twelve months the basic wage has risen by approximately £1. So it does not take us long to realise that these people receiving superannuation payments of £2 to £3 a week have virtually fallen back by approximately one-third in the past twelve months—that is in their actual income. So I hope the Premier can see his way clear to try to give these people some relief. I know that the Government is faced with a difficulty because of the low rate of interest being paid on superannuation investments. I understand that many hundreds of thousands of

pounds from the fund have been invested at about 2 per cent. but in this State rates of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and 5 per cent. are being paid.

Mr. Kelly: Mr. Chairman, it is not fair that a member should have to address the Chamber when so few members are present.

The Premier: Are you making a speech?

The CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. member drawing my attention to the state of the Committee?

Mr. Kelly: Yes. It is not fair that a member should have to address the Chamber when very few members are present.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. BRADY: I was discussing the question of superannuation and I hope the Premier will be able to give some relief to these superannuated ex-employees of the Government. An increase of 50 per cent. would not be too much having regard to all the circumstances. I recognise that last year the Premier was gracious enough to make a gratuitous payment to the people who come under the 1871 Act. No doubt many of these people have passed on and others will pass on in the future and consequently less money will be required from the Treasury. Perhaps that money, plus money received from higher interest rates from investments, would make it possible for the Treasurer to consider increasing superannuation payments. Many of the people now receiving superannuation benefits blazed the trails in Western Australia.

The next question concerns the traffic problem. This evening I asked the Minister for Police a question in regard to the number of patrolmen on the Great Eastern Highway between the Causeway and Midland Junction. I asked, firstly—

How many traffic police are employed on the Great Eastern Highway?

The answer I received was "One." The next question was—

Has there been an increase or decrease of patrols in the last three years?

The answer was "There has been an increase." So that if "one" represents an increase, during the last three years no patrolmen were employed on the Great Eastern Highway. I then asked—

(3) How many traffic accidents have taken place between the Causeway and the Midland Junction Town Hall in the past twelve months?

(4) How many accidents have had—

(a) Fatal results;

(b) Resulted in physical injuries?

The answer I got to that was—

(3) and (4) The records maintained of traffic accidents do not localise information and the information requested is, therefore, not available.

My next question was—

Is it intended to increase the number of traffic patrols in the next twelve months?

The answer was—

Traffic patrols in the area mentioned and other areas will be increased commensurately with the number of personnel and machines which can be made available for the purpose.

My point in asking those questions was that in the last three or four weeks two young teenage girls, within a few hundred yards of each other, were knocked down, one when alighting from a bus and the other when riding a bicycle. In addition, there have been scores of accidents along the Great Eastern Highway within the last twelve months and some of them have resulted in fatal injuries. I am sorry to say, too, that one of the accidents involved two traffic policemen who were having a race on their motorcycles. It is getting dangerous for children to cross the street or go on the roads in the vicinity of the Great Eastern Highway, particularly in South Guildford, where the road approaches the traffic bridge. I hope that the Minister for Police will do something to get more patrolmen working in that area.

In Midland Junction, on a Friday afternoon and a Saturday morning, it is almost impossible to cross the street without being skittled by a motorcar or a motorcycle. There is a terrific amount of traffic and a lot of people go to Midland Junction to do their shopping and cars are parked on both sides of the streets. Country cars are also coming and going through the town and consequently it is dangerous for pedestrians to walk on the streets. So I hope that the Minister and the Department will see their way clear to give us more protection, particularly for the aged and young people. The average adult is reasonably agile and can get across the street rapidly but elderly persons stand on the edge of the footpaths in fear of their lives until some other people realise their difficulties and help them to get across.

Children on the other hand do not realise the dangers involved and they will invariably run across the street on the spur of the moment and we then hear of a fatal accident. A young teenage girl was killed right opposite the Midland Junction town hall. Not only did the family have the sorrow of losing this young life, but it also had to meet the expenses of the funeral and everything that went with it. I do not want to see that state of affairs continue and I hope the Minister for Police will see that we are afforded more traffic police in that area.



Finally I would like to touch on the very considerable costs that are now being built up in the various departments in regard to sewerage in particular. Last week I investigated a complaint from a man who had the sewerage connected to his house because the authorities insisted that he must have it laid on. The work was done by a contractor and the man received a bill for £391. This man paid only £850 for the house.

Mr. J. Hegney: How far is he from the main?

Mr. BRADY: A distance of 87ft. I had a look at the price; the contractor charged £212 for labour. I understand he is supposed to have gone down to a depth of 14ft. and to a width of 2ft. 6in. But £212 for labour and a total of £391 is exorbitant.

The Premier: Is this to connect his place with the sewerage?

Mr. BRADY: Just a normal connection except that it might have been claimed that the 14ft. was outside the normal depth.

Mr. J. Hegney: Is it in sandy country?

Mr. BRADY: No, in clay country. The fact remains that he received a bill for £391. I went down to the department and was informed and shown that the cost for labour alone was £212. I hope the Minister in charge of the department concerned will have inquiries made. In the meantime I have seen estimates of expenditure for another municipality outside the metropolitan area and for digging 120ft. with a 6ft. depth the cost is to be £15.

The Premier: If you can give me privately this man's name I will certainly have investigations made.

Mr. BRADY: I am very pleased to have that assurance from the Premier and I will not labour the point. I have with me the bill he received, because he asked me to investigate the matter as he was worried stiff at the amount he is up for. I have been down to the department, and have been told that the man will have to pay it because that was the price the contractor charged the department. The point I want to inquire about is whether the Government cannot go into the matter of doing these installations itself, because if these private contractors are going to charge these large sums of money it will mean that these people will be in debt for the next 25 to 30 years. However, I am pleased to have an assurance from the Premier that he will have the matter looked into and I will certainly make available to him all the details I have in connection with it.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [9.20]: I was very disappointed in the Estimates as introduced this year by the Premier. I was disappointed to find that many of our most important departments were to

be subjected to reduced estimates. There is no doubt in my mind that the reduction in spending power given to the Government in recent months has produced not only panic but pessimism. I fail to see that there was any need for the amount of curtailment that has taken place. I suppose it might be said that at the present time the Premier finds a great difference in handling the affairs of state now as against a period when he had unlimited finance. Of course that goes for his Ministers, too.

The Minister for Works: It goes for everybody.

Mr. KELLY: This reduced spending power has undoubtedly placed the Premier in a very tight spot. I propose to make reference to some of the previous years during the last decade and, by comparison, to give the Committee some idea of just what progress has been made and what amount of finance the State has enjoyed from time to time. I have a number of figures here; I do not propose to deal with them all but merely those for intermittent years. I will deal with the total revenue of the State during those periods.

In 1941-42 the State enjoyed a total expenditure of £13,778,256; in the year 1944-45 the total expenditure increased to £15,669,674. There was very little difference in 1945-46, but in 1946-47 the total expenditure increased another 2½ million pounds. In 1947-48 the expenditure jumped a further £5,000,000 to 23¼ million pounds. In 1949-50 there was a very substantial increase in the total amount of expenditure in this State and it went to the high figure of £37,416,855. Some idea will be gained from the huge spending power that this State enjoyed when we come to the year 1951-52 and find that the State's spending power had increased to £59,476,000 odd.

It is not hard to realise that with that huge amount of money to spend the Government has been particularly fortunate. Many grants have been made and many requests satisfied throughout that period, particularly when one considers some of the gigantic works that have gone into portions of this State. Now that we have got down to a basis of gradually reduced spending power it is time the Government took stock in many directions. I feel that economies could be effected without impairing efficiency to any great extent.

The Premier: Now!

Mr. KELLY: The Premier says "no."

The Premier: I said, "Now!"

Mr. KELLY: I feel that the rein on unnecessary expenditure should have been tightened earlier than it has been. If that expenditure had not been reduced we would still have been going on in the lavish manner we have done in the past few years, particularly during 1951-52. I

feel, too that departmental efficiency must be examined very carefully and I am sure the Premier would agree that it is necessary to pare a lot of dead wood that exists today. That dead wood is accumulating as years go by; it is not getting any less. The same applies in the State as in the Commonwealth; the number of employees in the Government are increasing from year to year and it is time the Premier took the matter into his own hands, if his Ministers will not do it, and pared some of the dead wood that exists.

The Premier: Would you elaborate a little further?

Mr. KELLY: I will now refer to the use of motorcars and motortrucks. Every day on the road we find increasing numbers of cars and trucks in every department. I will be very interested to have an analysis of just what the increase in expenditure is both on motor vehicles and on the petrol consumed over the period of the last two or three years. I am sure the figure would be astounding. I am certain that in this connection if in no other the Government would be wise to make a closer scrutiny. From time to time we find the Government patting itself on the back because of certain happenings that have been proposed in this State during the past few months.

We have had a great song about Kwinana and about B.H.P.; we have also had a song about the other things that have taken place or are allegedly about to take place. I have heard enough to make me believe that these things will only allegedly take place. I think the Premier, the Minister for Works and their other colleagues have indulged in a tremendous amount of wishful thinking in the past 12 months. I believe that before they felt jubilation over these things a lot more affairs of state should have received more Government attention. I have sometimes asked the Premier's opinion of the gold-mining industry. How does he feel that that industry has fared while these so-called progresses are being made? Can the Premier feel happy about the affairs of the trawling industry established at great cost?

The Premier: No, I cannot.

Mr. KELLY: I am certain the Premier cannot. I will show members at a later date just what could have happened in regard to that trawling industry, and where I feel it was let down by the shortcomings of the Government.

Mr. Griffith: You are not discrediting the value of Kwinana?

Mr. KELLY: I am not speaking on the value of Kwinana; I am saying that the Government could have considered many other State affairs long before it gave consideration to such matters as Kwinana and B.H.P., and the hon. member should

know that as well as I do if he knows his district at all. I want to know how the Premier feels about the wheatgrowers. Is he pleased at the treatment they have received in the last 18 months? Is he aware that the dairying industry has been losing ground, and is still losing ground?

We have seen from time to time alarming statements made by professors and statisticians about food production, which predict dire results as to the future of food production in this State, and also as to the future of the Australian people unless some means of overcoming the difficulty is discovered. I do not find the Premier doing very much about it; nor have I seen evidence of a great deal of accomplishment by any of the Government departments. What can the Government claim by way of achievement in connection with transport? Transport matters in this State are in a greater muddle than at any previous time.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

Mr. KELLY: It is.

The Minister for Works: It is not.

Mr. KELLY: One has only to go on the roads at any time of the day or night to find that what I say is perfectly true.

The Premier: Do you think the metal trades strike had anything to do with it?

Mr. KELLY: Then there is the matter of railway rehabilitation. We heard a great deal when this Government came into office about what it was going to do about railway rehabilitation and what had not been done previously. But what can this Government or any other Government do if it has not unlimited finances? The Premier knows that the Government's remarks concerning rehabilitation were only a case of wishful thinking.

Mr. Ackland: If it had not been for the metal trades strike we would not have had so much road transport today.

Mr. KELLY: It is all very well for the hon. member to tell us it was the strike! Many other failures on the part of the Government were far more the cause of this State being in its present position than was the strike.

Mr. Brady: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELLY: Again, what can the Government claim in connection with the North-West? It needs the closest of scrutiny to find any improvements in the North-West over the last six years.

The Premier: Have you heard about the Air Beef scheme?

Mr. KELLY: Yes; and I think the Premier has little about which to be satisfied in that connection.

The Premier: You are about the only one I have heard say that.

Mr. KELLY: I am not the only one who has said it. If the Premier thinks that because he has brought beef by air, which in many cases could not have walked to market, poor-conditioned stuff to inflict on the people—

The Premier: Not poor-conditioned.

Mr. KELLY: Of course it was! I have seen meat brought by air from the North-West which I would not put in my shop if I were a butcher. I would not be prepared to foist on the public the type of meat that in some cases—not all—was lifted by that scheme. The Premier has little with which to console himself from that angle.

The Premier: Do you not think it a worthwhile experiment?

Mr. KELLY: I do not think there is a great deal to commend it.

The Premier: You are well out of step.

Mr. KELLY: No, I am not. I suppose the Premier must be proud also of the raising of freights 20s. per ton! It was a wonderful thing to bring poor-conditioned beef by air that could not walk to market, beef so poor that it could not get away from the stations on foot and could not have been removed if it had not been for the air beef scheme. I think it might easily and truthfully be said that the Premier, in cutting the throats of thousands of those bullocks, saved their lives.

The Premier: No!

Mr. KELLY: Again, what has the Government done with regard to that infamous local government Bill? What consolation can it take to itself in that direction? We had brought into this Chamber with a fanfare of trumpets—and much time was wasted over it—a local government Bill which was drawn up without consultation with the people concerned and was eventually scrapped.

The Premier: Was it not sent to a Select Committee?

Mr. KELLY: We were promised that we would immediately have another Bill; that it was a case of a temporary withdrawal only. But we have come to the end of another session and still we have heard nothing further about the Bill. There have been six years of plenty, but what has been done for the very great number of soldier settlers who have sought to be placed on farms, dairies or grazing properties?

The Minister for Works: More have been so placed than in any other State.

Mr. KELLY: We have probably had twice as many applicants.

The Minister for Works: The percentage has been better.

Mr. KELLY: It is a poor percentage, even if it is a better one.

The Premier: You are in a critical mood tonight!

Mr. KELLY: I feel quite critical. Every time I read the Budget I get hot and bothered and feel more critical than I can express. Seeing that the Premier thinks I am in a critical mood, I would ask him what great improvement has taken place with regard to native affairs. Surely the views of "The West Australian," which has such a great amount of influence over the Government, should be taken stock of.

The Premier: Have you noticed how the expenditure of the Department of Native Affairs has increased year by year?

Mr. KELLY: What is the pound worth today?

The Premier: Never mind about the pound! Take the number of natives being cared for and the actual money provided.

Mr. KELLY: Whereas in the past a native could buy a pair of dungarees for 6s. or 8s., he now has to pay 30s. Where is the Premier's analogy?

The Premier: Look at past expenditure compared with that of today and compare what is being done for natives now as against what was done in past years.

Mr. KELLY: I have done so, and the comparison is not very wonderful so far as the present Government is concerned. There has been an increase, I grant.

The Premier: A very substantial increase.

Mr. KELLY: But it has not been commensurate with the decline in spending power.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You are still getting it done on the cheap by putting the burden on missions.

The Premier: We are making money available to the missions.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is the best way of looking after the natives provided you are paying sufficient; but you are not paying enough.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Government front bench and the Opposition front bench cannot have a private argument. The member for Merredin-Yilgarn will proceed.

Mr. KELLY: I did not expect that these unruly interjections were going to take place. Recently the Leader of the Opposition spoke of the Government being bankrupt of constructive ideas. That is perfectly apparent.

The Premier: Who said that?

Mr. KELLY: The Leader of the Opposition, a man for whom I have a great regard. There is no doubt, on analysis, that that is exactly the position. All the

work that has been carried out by this Government over the past six years was planned by the Labour Government prior to 1947.

The Premier: You never thought about the railways, Kwinana, the development of Albany or development in the Great Southern.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KELLY: There is no doubt about it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You have gone quiet on rehabilitation now.

The Premier: Where?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Here.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Merredin-Yilgarn will proceed.

Mr. KELLY: As I have said on a number of occasions, what new ground has the Government broken?

The Minister for Works: Opened up thousands of acres of land. There is new development everywhere.

Mr. KELLY: It has been spread all over the State. There is new development taking place everywhere, and in nine out of 10 cases the settlers are starving for want of finance. The Minister for Works, whom I do not often assail, laughs. But he only needs to take a trip around areas outside those to which he is accustomed—

The Premier: Is this going to be the report of the Select Committee?

Mr. KELLY: This is not going to be my report. I am not dealing with the Select Committee evidence. I will tell the Premier, if he does not know, that there is a dire necessity for some action to be taken on behalf of people engaged in various industries. Where has the normal developmental policy been accelerated?

The Minister for Works: In every direction.

Mr. KELLY: The Minister started to tell me where. Look at all the broad acres that have been brought into production! But what have they produced?

The Minister for Works: I could not say.

Mr. KELLY: No; nor could anyone else.

The Minister for Works: It is the foundation of opening up a lot of land which is basic to the economy of this country.

Mr. KELLY: At a cost of millions of pounds to this State and the Commonwealth without any production whatever, and without any likelihood of production for years.

The Minister for Works: There will be production.

Mr. KELLY: I could take the Minister to farms where there has been little increased production.

The Minister for Works: That is the trouble. You are being shown places that are not progressing.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KELLY: There is little production as the years go by, notwithstanding these broad acres—

The Minister for Works: Look at the good as well as the bad.

Mr. KELLY: —that the Minister has told us about. There has been very little improvement, beyond replacements. I think, as I earlier remarked, that we have to take serious stock of these problems before we claim that any advance has been made.

Mr. May: There have been big improvements in Pinjarra.

Mr. KELLY: If I am started off on that line, I can name improvements in some other parts.

Mr. Yates: There have been quite a few at Collie.

The Premier: Collie is the most favoured town in the State.

Mr. KELLY: I now desire to deal with a few parochial matters. First of all there is the question of the junior high school at Merredin. The prefab building recently put up in Merredin is greatly appreciated, and I am not going to detract from the good job done in that connection. But the situation has only been partially relieved. The classes are still hopelessly overcrowded and we still have classrooms in various halls and in other places throughout the town. It is very unfair to our teaching staff, particularly in a centre like Merredin, where increases are fairly rapid. It will be very unsatisfactory to our teachers if this hole-and-corner policy is to be continued.

I cannot altogether accept the gloomy outlook of the Minister for Education as published in the Press some two or three months ago wherein he claimed that the Government was that close to bankruptcy that it made little difference. I feel that the time is approaching when we must give consideration to the establishment of a five-year high school plan for Merredin. I have discussed this matter with the Minister on some occasions and he has assured me there are other places in this State which have greater claims than Merredin. Narrogin is one of them. But I do not think that, on statistics, Narrogin could prove that it had any greater claim than Merredin. Taking a radius of 50 to 60 miles in the Merredin area, I feel that the department would be greatly surprised if the figures relating to children in that area were to be correlated with the various outlying districts.

There is no doubt that on analysis we can get down to a basis of calibrating these children within that radius, and it is futile for the Minister to tell us that Mer-

redin has no greater claim than Katanning. In connection with the claim for a high school, on a five year basis, it appears that up to the present no census has been taken of the districts out from Merredin as far as Southern Cross on one side and for a distance of 50 or 60 miles in other directions. The Minister should make an effort to have taken a census of the children that will be affected, so that some decision may be reached in that regard. No improvement has been made in the position with regard to the railway barracks at Merredin in the past five or six years. There have been visits from the Minister and some communications on the subject, and it has been agreed that the barracks are unhygienic, obsolete and do not conform with normal living standards.

As things are, there is no encouragement for single men, train crews or others who must use those quarters, to shift to Merredin. The lodging position in that centre is not good, and the result is that many men who otherwise would not do so are forced to use the barracks. The position is causing great concern among railwaymen at Merredin, and undoubtedly the shortage of accommodation there is causing much hardship, particularly in the case of the married man who has been transferred to that centre. When transfers take place before accommodation is available, families are frequently split up for periods of months until housing is arranged for them. Such a state of affairs is not conducive to contentment on the part of the railway staff. Not only is it unfair that husbands should be separated from their wives and families, but also it is costly to keep two homes.

As the Minister for Mines has been informed, the Ora Banda State battery is in need of immediate attention and its condition warrants a complete overhaul. It has been little more than a patchwork concern for the past few years, particularly since it first got into bad condition two or three years ago. Great credit is due to the manager of the mill and the men who are employed there and keep it going. Long delays have frequently been avoided by the sacrifices made by those who keep the plant operating. It is most discouraging to the manager to have to keep the mill running under such conditions, and there is little inducement to the employees there who are called out at all hours—far beyond the normal hours of service—in an effort to keep the plant working.

The run recently completed at the mill accounted for 1,100 tons of ore, with an average value of one ounce to the ton. In the light of present conditions, that is a substantial tonnage and good return, so the mill is well worthy of attention. I would advise the Minister that the recent run was the first since last January. That may not convey much to some mem-

bers, but when it is realised that the storekeeper at Ora Banda has had to carry the prospectors since last January, some idea can be gained of the sacrifice involved. It is unfair that a man in that position should be called upon to carry such a large amount of finance over a long period. The storekeeper who has operated at that centre for the last 30 years and who knows the conditions under which the prospectors and other operate, has now decided to give up business and, in view of the state of that part of the Goldfields, there is little likelihood that anyone else will desire to open a store at that centre.

What will be the position of the prospectors once the storekeeper has gone? They will have no one to turn to or to finance their requirements. It is up to the Government to get busy quickly and put the mill in order and have crushings put through from time to time in order that the prospectors may be able to exist. There are other matters with which I desire to deal, but I will mention them under the various departmental headings. The Government should give attention to the immediate requirements of the State rather indulge in the futuristic type of thinking that seems to have become popular in the last 12 months.

**MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [9.52]:** It does not appear that this Government intends to spend too much money on the Goldfields. There is a matter that I would like the Minister for Immigration to clear up in relation to the quarantine procedure at Fremantle. This may be more a Federal matter than one for the State Government, but I understand that the State is trying to prevent foot and mouth disease from entering Western Australia. I have on occasion to go to Fremantle to meet some of my constituents returning from Southern Europe. On the last occasion, the vessel that I went to meet was the "Oceana," which arrived on a Saturday. The people disembarking at Fremantle were not allowed to speak to me but were kept a certain distance away, in spite of the fact that I had some important business with one of them. It seemed strange to me that, while I was not allowed to speak to those people, passengers from Southern Europe who were proceeding to the Eastern States could leave the boat at Fremantle, walk off and speak to anyone. I have even seen one such passenger kiss a woman at Fremantle.

They are allowed to mix with anybody and yet those who disembark at Fremantle and who are normally resident in this State are taken to Woodman's Point and put through quarantine and fumigation. Their luggage is also treated, though it comes from the same hold that contains the luggage of people going to Melbourne or Sydney. As I have said, the "Oceana" arrived at Fremantle on a Saturday, and residents of this State who had been here

for 30 years and who were returning from a visit to Italy, had the whole of their kit taken to Woodman's Point. The people themselves were allowed to come away after 12 o'clock, but their luggage, even down to their shaving gear and overcoats, was kept there, with the result that they had to go back on the Sunday and collect it.

The Minister for Lands: There may be an incubation period for the disease.

Mr. McCULLOCH: I do not know about that. The luggage may have to stay there for a certain time, but it was hard that these goldfields residents had to remain here until the following Wednesday before they could get a train.

Mr. Ackland: Have you ever seen what foot and mouth disease can do? Anything that is done to keep it out of the country is justified.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Is it thought that a proper method is being adopted?

Mr. Ackland: Any method that will keep it out is a good method.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Is it proper to allow people coming from infested countries to mix with the general public at Fremantle or Perth? That is what happens in the case of persons returning from Italy and proceeding to the Eastern States. I was not allowed to speak to the individual I desired to converse with, and yet passengers who were going to the Eastern States were allowed off the boat and mingled freely with the people of Fremantle. I agree that every precaution should be taken to keep a disease out of the country, but the present method seems very lax. A further point is that any luggage labelled with the P. and O. or Orient Line label—often people proceed to Naples or Genoa by rail before taking ship—is not taken down for fumigation but is allowed to be taken away. If the Minister has no jurisdiction over the question, he should draw the attention of the Commonwealth authorities to the practice now adopted at Fremantle for the prevention of the entry into this State of foot and mouth disease.

Much has been said recently in this Chamber on the subject of railways, but if the restoration of week-end passenger trains is to hold up the re-entry of locomotives to service, it will be hard on the people of outback centres who are now being served by only three trains a week. The metal trades strike is being blamed for many things, but the people on the Goldfields at present have to be content with only three trains per week to and from Perth. In an emergency people will put up with a great deal. In normal times there are six trains a week giving service to the Goldfields. Three trains a week are not sufficient to carry the passengers that are offering between Kalgoorlie and Perth and vice versa. As soon as the locomotives are put into repair it is up to the

Minister to restore the normal services. If the people of the metropolitan area desire to travel during the week-end they can avail themselves of buses, but unfortunately the Goldfields' residents are not so happily placed. The engines that should receive prior attention are those capable of making long journeys to Geraldton, Albany, Kalgoorlie or over any other lengthy route in the system. I understand that a great deal of the work that should be done in the Midland Junction workshops is being sent out to private firms, and I am led to believe that the men are not too busy on the repair of these locomotives, but I may be wrong.

As to the question of insufficient water in the summer, the Minister for Works has said that this is a bogey, but I can assure him that it is not. When the Mundaring Weir wall was raised by 32 feet we were told that there would be ample water for Goldfields residents. However we have again been informed that for the coming summer, and principally in the months of December, January and February, there will be further water supply restrictions. There must be something wrong. There is more water in the Mundaring Weir now than ever before and the pipe is carrying all that it is capable of doing but still we are to suffer these water restrictions on the Goldfields.

As I have said before, even if the Mundaring Weir were raised a further 30ft. the Goldfields people would still not get any more water with the present pressure through the existing pipe. Until another pipe is constructed to meet the requirements of the people up as far as Merredin, the people on the Goldfields will not enjoy their inherent rights. I sincerely hope that if restrictions are imposed this summer they will be of short duration. I know that some of the market gardeners at Kalgoorlie had beans growing five and six feet high, and after working from dawn to dark they lost all their crops because of lack of water. That is definitely unfair. We are trying to encourage the growing of vegetables on the Goldfields, but if water restrictions continue to be imposed these men will not produce.

I wish to raise another question which concerns the Minister for Education. On page 43 of Section "A" of the Auditor General's report it is set out that the State received £67,480 from the Commonwealth Government for the free milk scheme. Of that sum £58,622 3s. 2d. was spent on the supply of milk, straws, etc., plus the administration cost—of which the Commonwealth pays half—of £530, leaving a credit balance to the State of £8,328 7s. 8d. That money is all spent for the benefit of the children in the metropolitan area and surrounding districts, and the children attending at country centres do not enjoy the privilege of being able to participate.

Notwithstanding that, the parents of those children are being taxed to pay for the milk that is being supplied to children in the metropolitan area. I cannot see why those people should have to pay for milk that the children of other parents are receiving. It is a similar anomaly to the £34,000 that was debited to the Goldfields water supply for cement but which was used on the metropolitan water supply.

The Goldfields people are now being burdened further by having to contribute to the provision of this £58,622 that is being spent on the supply of milk in the metropolitan area. If the Commonwealth or State Governments cannot provide free milk for the children in every outback centre in the State, some substitute should be supplied in its place. As I have said before, an apple or an orange is equal in nutritional value to one-third of a pint of milk. However, my remarks have apparently fallen on deaf ears. The attitude seems to be that those who are living in the outback are not entitled to the facilities that exist in the metropolitan area. As to the free hospital scheme that was in operation some time ago, but which has now been replaced by the new scheme propounded by Sir Earle Page, I would point out that he was a tragic Treasurer and now he is a tragic Minister for Health.

Under his new scheme we have to pay 35s. a day as patients in a hospital whether suffering from an illness or injuries received as the result of an accident. Up until now, an accident victim was allowed 27s. a day from the Workers' Compensation Board towards payment of his hospital expenses. A further 8s. per day is paid by that patient, as a result of people having to contribute to social services, because he is unfortunate enough to meet with an accident while engaged in industry. Tonight the Minister has indicated that £150 will be set aside for hospital benefits for a worker's compensation case. I hope he means that, because seldom does such a patient receive any benefit.

I do not see why an individual who sometimes has to pay £2 a day and not 35s. should have to pay that amount of 5s. per day out of his own pocket. If £150 is to be made available for hospital benefits, no worker who is a patient in hospital as the result of an accident should have to pay any hospital fees. In my opinion he has been penalised sufficiently through suffering from his injuries and by paying the extra cost above the 35s. a day as demanded under this tragic plan enunciated by Sir Earle Page and now put into effect. I hope the Minister for Immigration will try to influence whoever is responsible to have further inquiries made about this foot and mouth disease. The member for Roe knows more about the subject than I do and he is greatly concerned.

The Minister for Lands: I will have inquiries made.

Mr. McCULLOCH: If the Minister does so he will find that my allegations are definitely true and when he does so I hope that greater precautions will be taken against the spread of this disease.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [10.12]: The Premier, in introducing the Estimates, and two other speakers since have dealt with the subject of import restrictions. It occurs to me that they have obtained their information on the question possibly from the Press or some other source which was not fully informed. The reasons given for import restrictions do not entirely line up with the facts as they were. Before the introduction of these restrictions the facts were that over a series of years during, and since the war it had become the habit of importers to order in excess of their requirements because suppliers were not able to fulfil completely the orders made. A further reason for over-ordering was the delay in shipping at that time. However, over a period of years, supplies from the European markets in particular improved. We have now improved conditions generally regarding the supply of imports, which have speeded up considerably.

Then again, with regard to further happenings overseas, suppliers inside the sterling area became suddenly able to supply a great deal more fully and more quickly than before. The result was that orders that had been lodged in accordance with the preconceived habit of trading were delivered, not only in full but on time. This led to an oversupply of imports because of bad judgment. In every enterprise developed by bad judgment, the result is a loss of profit, and that is rightly so if we are to have free enterprise economy. Orders that were existent at the time of the import restrictions were, because of trading conditions and habits, backed by irrevocable letters of credit, which form of business demands that payment arrangements be carried out. Irrevocable letters of credit must be met, and the requisite finance found to meet them.

When supplies were coming in at the rate of two years previous supplies in six months, many of the importers could not absorb the results of their very foolish ordering. It is my opinion, which I think would be backed by the pattern of facts, that the import restrictions were imposed to protect importers from their own foolishness and bad judgment. Had they not been imposed, there would have been very little more imported into Australia. There might have been a better choice as regards what was imported, but it is a known fact that in certain sections, ordering had already ceased because there was on order at the time a sufficient supply of goods to last at least 12 months and in some in-

stances even longer than that. Therefore, I maintain that import restrictions were not imposed for the benefit of the Australian economy, but for the benefit of a limited number of people who had imported on a large scale, and had to be protected against their own folly by Government action.

It must be borne in mind that Government action was the only one that could cut across legal contracts respecting import orders protected by letters of credit. Had these restrictions not been imposed, some of the importers would have become bankrupt. That would have served them right and it would have been a good thing for Australia if that had been the result, because it would have been necessary for the goods affected to have been sold quickly, which would have had the effect of reducing prices in a manner that would not have affected employment within Australia. Everyone would have known that they were forced sales, and there would have been a reduction in prices without cost to the Australian economy, apart from a few bankruptcies. If Governments that believe in private enterprise interfere to protect those associated with such enterprise from the results of their own folly, and prevent them from paying the penalties that private enterprise extracts from those who are not efficient, those Governments should be roundly condemned by those who believe in private enterprise. In that number I trust I am not included.

During the course of debates in the Commonwealth Parliament, slight mention was made by some inquiries carried out in the interests of a firm known as David Jones. At the time the inquiries were made, credit controls with the Commonwealth Bank were limited to six months. In those circumstances the answers supplied to a member in the Federal House reflected very little credit upon the individual responsible because they indicated either that a special allowance had been made in the interests of this influential firm or that the individual conveying the answers did not tell the truth. That leads me to a subject I wish to discuss regarding the relationship of Government practices.

If we are to have an economy, based on private enterprise, it is essential that any profits that result from private enterprise should be paid and also that the losses as well should be met. There should be no protection for private enterprise by any Government that believes in that system. Private enterprise should be able to stand on its own feet. Yet we find in the Estimates subsidies made available by the Government in many forms to various sections of those engaged in private enterprises.

The Premier: And that has been done by other Governments as well.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes; other Governments have done the same. I think it is improper to claim to support private enterprise and then act to the contrary. The Premier may adopt a different attitude as regards what is proper. Perhaps all Governments have viewed it differently to some extent. There are, however, various items in the Estimates which, together with statements in the Auditor-General's report in relation thereto, I shall deal with later on. That brings me to a point I wish to reiterate. It is the duty of those whose job it is to lead, to lead. I have in mind the words of a well-known Army commander, "There are no bad troops; there are only bad officers." I would render that statement rather differently by saying that there are no bad workers, but only bad managements. That applies to enterprise, private or Government, and no person in the position of authority over workers has any logical reason to complain about the standard of work he gets from them. It is the job of the person in authority to get good work. For that reason, the Government in control of the affairs of State should take whatever credit it can find in all the things it has not done, because it has been its job to carry them out.

I mention such a matter as housing. The Government claims to have done great things in that respect. It has provided about as many houses as there have been marriages. Each marriage requires that a house shall be available if it is to be successful. Beyond that, we know that 64,000 people have arrived as migrants, and at least the larger proportion of those people will also require housing accommodation. It would appear from these figures alone that the housing situation today is worse than it was when the Government assumed office. My investigations lead me to believe that there are at least two families represented in the average home in the metropolitan area while in some there are more.

The Premier: I am sure that is not right.

Mr. JOHNSON: The average home in my electorate has 3½ adults in it, in addition to some children. Some of those children are almost at the adult stage.

Mr. Griffith: Would those adults represent two or more families?

Mr. JOHNSON: In most instances, two families. There are scarcely any houses with only one person residing there.

Mr. Griffith: That is not the position in my electorate.

Mr. JOHNSON: Then the hon. member's electorate is more favoured than mine, but the position at Leederville is as I have described it. In most instances the three adults carry at least two different surnames. In one house I visited there are five adults of the same name,



two married women having the same surname. Another point I wish to raise concerns the matter of rents. Reference has been made to the rent figure taken into consideration in the "C" series index as applied to the basic wage calculation. The Attorney General was good enough to inform me that no officer in the State Public Service was in a position to say just what was the rental figure taken into consideration in the "C" series index, but he indicated that the figure supplied by the Commonwealth Statistician was based on the rents charged for houses in 1937 with some slight adjustments and that the figure did not include any rents that had been charged since the last war.

As we all know, rents charged for old houses are usually less than those applicable to newly-erected premises. The rent for Commonwealth-State rental homes is fairly high, a good deal higher than the figure suggested in connection with the basic wage adjustments. A very eminent sociologist named Rowntree who resides in England, defined poverty as the standard of income after a rent that leaves a balance less than the subsistence level. If the rent included in the "C" series index is less than the amount paid by a basic wage earner, that basic wage earner is definitely paid below the poverty line. If a man having a margin receives insufficient margin to absorb the rent differential between the amount in the "C" series index and the actual rent, he also is below the poverty line.

I suggest that an investigation in Western Australia would show that from the rent cause alone a large proportion of the working population are below the poverty line. To say that these people are not starving would be perfectly true, but we have laid down a minimum standard and I see no reason why it should not be maintained. Further investigation along these lines is well warranted, and the figures on which the Arbitration Court computes the rent section of the basic wage should be completely reviewed in detail. The court could do this of its own motion, and it should be persuaded into that motion by the Government. The Government has at its command the Statistical Department, which could obtain figures and make a reasonable estimation of what is being paid in rent. Then we could ascertain whether or not the basic wage does allow for an income over the poverty line.

When speaking on the Address-in-reply, I suggested that the Treasurer should introduce with his Estimates a manpower budget. I had hoped that he would do something along those lines, if not in the printed document, in his Budget speech. As that was not done, I reiterate my plea that in future Budgets something of this nature should be done. To produce a man-power budget in absolute detail

would not be easy, but it would not be impossible. We have a degree of knowledge of the employment that exists at present, and this would afford a basis from which to start. The Government has its plans for legislation and for administrative action. In some cases legislation has a great effect upon employment; in other cases very little.

Quickly skimming through the index of Bills that have been introduced this session, I find that there have been but four in 48 that could be claimed to have any effect on the manpower situation. Those are the Coogee-Kwinana Railway Bill and the Railway (Mundaring-Mundaring Weir) Discontinuance Bill. Neither of those will have much effect. The B.H.P. agreement Bill may have some direct effect and so may the Anglo-Iranian Bill that was passed last session. It could be argued that the State Electricity Commission Act Amendment Bill to authorise borrowing was for that purpose, but here the effect would be only indirect.

It would not be impossible for the Government to indicate that, taking the employment situation at any given stage, its plans for certain legislative action would have so much effect on the manpower position and administrative action would have other effect. The manpower estimate would not be much more accurate than the financial estimate, but it would be an indication whether or not the Government was planning to deal with the manpower situation as it exists. We know that the time when there were three or more jobs to every person seeking employment no longer exists. Some actual unemployment prevails, though I understand the position in the more highly industrialised States is worse.

There is also a degree of concealed unemployment; I refer to people who are working less than full time. Not all industries are working every day and every week in the year whether on a five or a six-day week, or on a shift basis of more than one shift, and there are quite a number of people whose annual income will be less than they would receive from full employment. A manpower budget would deal with that situation, because it is of no use a man's being employed at high wages for three weeks if he is out of work the fourth week. He has to live on the average of the four weeks' salary, and although the week in which he was not employed would not be shown in the statistics of unemployment, he would be actually unemployed because he was receiving no wages. A number of trades, mainly those associated with the clothing industry, have had a good deal of concealed unemployment.

One other subject with which I wish to deal at this stage is transport. Our transport situation is bad, our traffic situation is sick and our accident rate is very

high. Earlier in this session, I inquired whether it was possible for people concerned in traffic accidents to be subjected to eyesight tests in the same way as some people are subjected to sobriety tests. The idea would be to discover whether there was a degree of eyesight fallibility leading to accidents and whether there were drivers on the road whose eyesight was less than that which should be required of a driver in charge of a vehicle. The Commissioner of Police, according to his report, has power to issue extraordinary licenses to drivers suffering from various defects. The total number issued was 82. Yet in the same report it is indicated that 580 applicants for drivers' licenses were found to be suffering from defective sight. Of those, 50 were discovered to be fit with glasses. The report does not indicate whether these extraordinary licenses included the 50 people who were fit to drive with glasses.

There is no indication whether the people fit to drive with glasses were given special licenses endorsed to the effect that they were to drive only when wearing glasses. I would like to request again that at least for a test period of, say, three months, every person concerned in traffic accidents should submit to an eyesight test so that statistics would be available to show whether there is more than an average number of persons concerned in these accidents who suffer from eyesight defects to a greater or lesser extent. If it is possible under the present Act, I would like to include in that those pedestrians involved in traffic accidents as well as persons in charge of vehicles, because it is my contention, being both a driver on occasions and a pedestrian on other occasions, that pedestrians can be at least as culpable as drivers in many of these accidents, though it is very seldom that a pedestrian is found to be at fault.

On page 17 of the Police Commissioner's report there is a paragraph reading—

In my last report I expressed the view that traffic control, including the licensing of motor drivers and vehicles throughout the State, should be under the control of one authority instead of being divided as it is at present under many local authorities. I desire to reiterate that statement and add that it would appear to be a hopeless proposition satisfactorily to deal with the many traffic problems which now exist and which will increase correspondingly with a greater population and progress in industry, whilst the present system of multiple control continues.

With that statement I wholeheartedly agree, and would like to see steps taken to ensure that all traffic control comes under some central authority—traffic control in regard to the licensing of vehicles, so that the standard is uniform through-

out the State; traffic control in regard to the issue of drivers' licenses so that there is a common standard throughout the State; and traffic control, if it can be achieved, in regard to co-ordination of passenger traffic under a single authority. There is also on the Table a report from the Transport Board concerning passenger traffic and that deals to some degree with the necessity for central control of passenger traffic and includes some rather illuminating figures, when it is considered in regard to the Budget figures before us, and other sections of that report. Paragraph 24, regarding co-ordination of services, reads as follows:—

Increasing fares and the financial difficulties of operators have thrown emphasis on the necessity for economy of operation. The metropolitan passenger transport system has developed under a multiplicity of operators and there has been much overlapping of routes and uneconomic competition. In the period since the board's last report, considerable attention has been given to improvement of the position.

Paragraph 25 reads—

A major improvement was effected when, in December last, Metro Buses Pty. Ltd. took over all routes previously operated by Beam Transport Ltd. to the west of Perth. This fusion of interests of two large operators in the traffic area has enabled a re-organisation of routes and eliminated unnecessary competition.

I would query that final statement regarding unnecessary competition, because I am led to believe that at least one transport organisation is paying dividends to shareholders, and yet the Budget indicates that our Government-owned passenger transport is doing less well.

Mr. J. Hegney: Where would there be the competition between the Metro and the Beam companies?

Mr. JOHNSON: That is for the Transport Board to say. I feel that competition between private companies is one of the penalties they should pay. If the various organisations cannot pay in competition, they should be eliminated and the services should be conducted for the benefit of passengers instead of for the benefit of shareholders. I would like to quote some figures from that report—

	Omnibuses.	Govt. buses.	Trolley-buses.
Passengers per bus mile	2.88	4.30	5.70
Cost to passenger per mile ... ..	9.09d.	5.95d.	5.75d.
Miles run ... ..	11½ million	3½ million	1½ million
Passengers carried ...	32½ million	15½ million	8½ million
Total earnings ... ..	£1½ million	£3 million	£½ million

It would appear that even with the elimination of unnecessary competition, Government buses and Government trolley-buses are running at a cost to the passenger of very little more than half of what the pas-

sengers of private services are paying. Those figures indicate that persons fortunate enough to be catered for by Government transport obtain a better service in proportion to cost than do those who are catered for by the private transport. That is something to which I feel they are entitled. If there is any overlapping of bus routes, it is the duty of some co-ordinating body to eliminate it, for the benefit not of the operators but of the passengers. I would like to impress on the Committee the necessity for co-ordinating traffic routes under the services which give benefit to the people carried; that is, the Government services. It is a duty we owe to those we represent to see that they get the best possible service at the cheapest price. There is no doubt that the report indicates where it comes from. The report also indicates in the same manner that Government enterprise, even under a Government that does not believe in it, can produce a reasonably good service for the people. It is probable that in the near future, under a Government that does believe in State enterprise, we will do something better.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 12th November, 1952.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### NORTH-WEST.

(a) *As to Water Supply, Denham.*

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he state what action, if any, the Government proposes to take to provide a water supply for the residents and industry at Denham, Shark Bay, where recently another shortage was experienced owing to the failure of local wells?

The MINISTER replied:

The possibility of providing a potable water supply for Shark Bay has received consideration. There is no prospect of providing a water supply within reasonable financial limits and, in fact, there is considerable technical difficulty in providing a water supply at all. The matter is still under consideration by departmental officers.

(b) *As to Slipway, Denham.*

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Transport:

What stage have arrangements reached regarding the promised slipway for fishing boats at Denham?

The MINISTER replied:

No promise has been made that a slipway would be provided. The proposal has been investigated and details, together with estimates, are under examination.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Education Act Amendment.  
Returned to the Assembly with an amendment.
2. Plant Diseases (Registration Fees) Act Amendment.  
Transmitted to the Assembly.

### BILL—PRICES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

*Third Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT  
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.36]:  
I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.37]: I cannot let the opportunity pass without drawing the attention of the Minister to the debate that took place on this measure, more particularly from the point of view of a Bill being introduced with several features mixed up in it. I hope the Government will take notice of what was said in that regard and that in future the question of putting two or three items in one Bill will be avoided. I am referring to Bills of a continuing nature, and I hope that henceforth only the continuing clause will be included in them so that fair and reasonable debate can take place on that particular phase only.