

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 2nd September, 1952.

CONTENTS.

Questions :	Page
Harbours, (a) as to cost of dredging, Albany	672
(b) as to employment at Albany and Bunbury	672
Drainage, as to metropolitan survey and schemes	672
Government photographic work, as to employment of Sydney photographer	672
Basic wage, as to price of bread and allowance for rent	673
Prison sentences, as to offences in Kalgoolie-Boulder area	673
Goldfields Firewood Supply Company, as to purchase of Lakewood Firewood Company's assets	673
Mining, as to restrictions on use of salt water	673
Causeway, new, as to plans and commencement of initial work	673
Housing, as to Tramway Department dwelling, rental	674
Censorship powers, as to unsuitable publications and broadcasts	674
Workers' Compensation Act, as to introducing amending legislation	674
Address-in-reply, fifth day	674
Speakers on Address—	
Mr. Johnson	674
Mr. Rodoreda	676
Mr. Manning	681
Mr. Lawrence	683
Mr. Moir	704

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

QUESTIONS.

HARBOURS.

(a) *As to Cost of Dredging, Albany.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What price per yard is being paid to the Australian Dredging Company for dredging operations at Albany?

(2) What is the total cost of the work done to date?

(3) What is the total estimated cost for the whole of the work?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) 5s. 3d. per cubic yard.

(2) Total cost to 13/8/1952—£389,583.

(3) £510,000.

(b) *As to Employment at Albany and Bunbury.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Works:

(1) How many men were employed on the harbour development works at Albany as at the 30th June last?

(2) How many men are employed on the works at the present time?

(3) How many men were employed on the harbour development works at Bunbury as at the 30th June last?

(4) How many men are employed on the works at the present time?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Ninety-two.

(2) Sixty-six.

(3) One hundred and forty-one.

(4) Fifty-five.

DRAINAGE.

As to Metropolitan Survey and Schemes.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Water Supply:

(1) Has the comprehensive drainage survey of the metropolitan area been completed?

(2) Has he received and considered the report and the drainage schemes arising out of the survey?

(3) When was the survey begun?

(4) What was the cost of the survey?

(5) Has he taken any action arising from the report to assist such road boards as Belmont Park and Bayswater to provide essential drainage in their districts?

(6) If no action has yet been taken, will he have another look at the report to see if early approval can be given to the more urgent schemes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Water Supply) replied:

(1) The major portion which is necessary at present has been completed.

(2) A report regarding the first section of the survey covering the Eastern Suburbs between the Swan and Canning Rivers, Welshpool and the Darling Scarp, has been received and considered.

(3) April, 1947.

(4) £34,690, of which £14,920 represented an estimated apportionment to cover more detailed surveys considered necessary for future sewerage design.

(5) and (6) The reports indicate the necessity for further investigation into the whole financial aspect of the drainage problem. In the meantime, it is not possible to undertake major construction in the areas referred to.

GOVERNMENT PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK.

As to Employment of Sydney Photographer.

Mr. OWEN asked the Premier:

(1) Is it a fact that the Government has arranged for a well-known photographer of Sydney to visit Western Australia to undertake photographic work?

(2) Is he aware that a highly-qualified and experienced photographer capable of performing this work is resident in this State?

(3) Will he endeavour to arrange that for any future operations of this nature local photographers be given the opportunity of carrying out the work?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Angus and Robertson, Sydney book publishers, are publishing a camera study of Western Australia in conjunction with Captain Frank Hurley. The Government of Western Australia is assisting Captain Frank Hurley to secure the best pictures for illustrating the book. Assistance is principally by way of transport within the State.

(2) and (3) The Government Photographer is fully qualified to carry out all necessary photographic work.

BASIC WAGE.

As to Price of Bread and Allowance for Rent.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Attorney General:

In reply to a question last week, he stated that "the information was not available to the Registrar." Can he now ascertain from any person attached to the Arbitration Court:—

(1) How much the recent rise in the price of bread will increase the next basic wage declaration if all other influences are ignored?

(2) How much of the present basic wage is rent allowance?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) and (2) The Registrar has informed me that there is no person attached to the Arbitration Court in a position to supply the information requested.

PRISON SENTENCES.

As to Offences in Kalgoorlie-Boulder Area.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Chief Secretary:

Of the 45 cases for breaches of the Traffic Act as quoted under Table "C" of the Comptroller General of Prisons' report for the year ended the 30th June, 1951, and who were committed to penal imprisonment—

(1) How many of those breaches were committed in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area?

(2) What was the nature of the offence committed, if any?

(3) What was the length of imprisonment imposed, if any?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) One.

(2) Drunken driving.

(3) £26 1s. 6d. or one month.

GOLDFIELDS FIREWOOD SUPPLY COMPANY.

As to Purchase of Lakewood Firewood Company's Assets.

Mr. MOIR asked the Premier:

(1) What sum of money was made available by the Government to the Goldfields Firewood Supply Co. to enable that firm to purchase the assets of the Lakewood Firewood Co.?

(2) Was this money a gift or a loan?

(3) If a loan, how much has been repaid, if any?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) A guaranteed bank overdraft of £160,000 was made available to the Lakewood Firewood Company for the following purposes:—

(a) For purchasing the assets of the Goldfields Firewood Supply Company—£115,000.

(b) For working capital—£20,000.

(c) For mechanisation of operations—£25,000.

(2) By way of loan.

(3) The guaranteed overdraft has been reduced by £40,000, the present limit of the company's account being £120,000.

MINING.

As to Restrictions on Use of Salt Water.

Mr. MOIR asked the Minister for Water Supply:

(1) Are restrictions imposed on mining companies at Kalgoorlie, Norseman and Coolgardie in the use of salt water for the treatment of ore at present?

(2) If restrictions are in force, will his department remove them to allow the mines to use as much salt water as possible in order that scheme water may be conserved?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Water Supply) replied:

(1) Restrictions previously imposed on mining companies on the Fields in the use of salt water for the treatment of ore were lifted as from the 1st March, 1950, and as from that date unrestricted use of salt water by the mines has been permitted.

(2) Answered by (1).

CAUSEWAY, NEW.

As to Plans and Commencement of Initial Work.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Works:

(1) When were the plans of the new Causeway prepared?

(2) When was the initial work commenced as a preliminary to the actual construction?

(3) Which Minister authorised the commencement of work associated with the building of the new Causeway, and on what date?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Preliminary plans were prepared prior to September, 1944, at which date an estimate was submitted.

Plans containing structural details were prepared in the period from September, 1944, to August, 1945.

(2) Initial work on the site, 22nd May, 1947.

(3) Approved by Cabinet upon the recommendation of Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, Minister for Works, on the 20th February, 1947.

HOUSING.

As to Tramway Department Dwelling, Rental.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that a tramway worker with a family of six children is in occupation of a Tramway department-owned house at 93 Hay-st., East Perth.

(2) Does he know that in about 3½ years the rent of this house has been increased from £1 7s. 6d. to £1 12s. 6d., later to £1 16s. 3d., and recently to £2 18s. a week?

(3) Is he aware that the manager of the Tramway Department has refused to reduce the present rental to a reasonable figure?

(4) Will he take steps immediately to stop this imposition?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The rental paid at the time of purchase by the Government was 36s. 3d. weekly. Rentals paid prior to that time are not known.

(3) The General Manager on 27th August did decline to vary an agreement entered into with this tenant, signed freely and without protest on the 1st August, providing for a weekly tenancy at 58s. The rental of this six-roomed brick structure is considered reasonable and is based on the capital cost of purchase to the department and is required to cover repayment of principal, interest, rates and maintenance charges. The rentals of all departmental properties are similarly arrived at and all are subject to the initial accepted assessments between owners and officials of the Public Works Department in respect to the value of the properties purchased.

(4) Answered by (3).

CENSORSHIP POWERS.

As to Unsuitable Publications and Broadcasts.

Mr. LAWRENCE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Has any department, State or otherwise, power to censor any reading matter, newspapers or radio broadcasts that incline towards immorality or could be classed as being not in the best interests of the community?

The PREMIER replied:

I do not know of any State power that exists for the censoring of such matters.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

As to Introducing Amending Legislation.

Mr. W. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

Is it intended to introduce this session a Bill to liberalise the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

The matter is under consideration by Cabinet.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the 28th August:

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [4.42]: When on Thursday last I was granted leave to continue my remarks, which I appreciated, I was elucidating the suggestion that a manpower Budget should be introduced. The question might arise as to why I should speak on the subject at this stage seeing that the Budget will be introduced shortly and there will then be opportunity to debate the matter. I do so in the hope that when the Budget is produced, the remarks I am making will bear some fruit and some of my suggestions may be reflected in the figures. We might have schedules translating the monetary figures of the Budget into manpower figures to show the effect of the Government's programme on manpower.

A second question that arises is: Why have a manpower Budget when the normal Budget discloses so much? Lord Beveridge, in his report "Full employment in a Free Society" paragraph 182 states—

Manpower is a datum: it cannot be altered by State action. To take anything else as a datum and to try to fit use of manpower to it is to risk mass unemployment or mass fatigue.

When all the nations were on the gold standard, money was reasonably stable, commodity prices were approximately stable and wages were relatively stable. Money nowadays is not stable: it is changing in value very rapidly and we have no reason to believe that it will cease changing in value rapidly. Our practice of expressing everything in money values is,

to my mind, out of date. To use money as a measuring rod of real values is about as sensible as equipping a surveyor with an elastic tape or giving a draftsman a flexible ruler. For this reason, I ask the Government to express its figures in the manner of a manpower Budget as well as in money, because to revert to the words of Lord Beveridge, manpower is a datum.

A third question is: Just what do I mean by a manpower Budget? Apart from the report of the gentleman I have quoted, there is to be found in the reading room a publication on the Norwegian system giving details of the method of work and employment management in that country. Lord Beveridge, in the report I have quoted, deals with the same idea from a somewhat different angle, but reaches, in effect, the same result. By a manpower Budget, I mean something very like an ordinary Budget. An ordinary Budget is an expression in monetary terms of the way in which the Government of the day intends to allocate the resources at its command during the year. It shows what resources the Government has in hand and what it expects to receive in the way of income taxation and other revenue and how it intends to expend those resources, whether on hospitals, education, roads, bridges, housing or other works. By a manpower Budget I mean an expression of the same information in terms of persons.

The State has certain manpower available to it and it is the duty of the Government to employ all the resources of the State, particularly manpower, in the most effective way. I believe that a manpower Budget could express accurately just what the intention is.

Firstly, there should be a table showing the present manpower and expected increases from all sources, including young people entering industry, those entering by way of migration from overseas or other States, and any increase by the return of married women into industry. It should also show the expected decrease in manpower due to death and retirement, and by women marrying and leaving industry, and by migration to other States and abroad.

Secondly, a table showing the present distribution of manpower by industries and Government departments, and the transfers that the Government intends to make either directly inside the departments, or by legislation from one industry to another, or from Government industry to private industry, and vice versa.

Thirdly, tables directly related to the financial budget to show just what effect each provision in the Governor's Speech or the Budget itself is expected to have on employment in the State.

Fourthly, a table to show the future potential manpower; the expected entry into industry of juniors in, say, the next five years; the proportion of those juniors going into apprenticeships, and those going into legal, medical or engineering training; the known and the estimated figures; and finally to show the ideal distribution through the various industries and professions. In parenthesis, I would like to say that I do not regard manpower as representing solely those persons employed directly in industry, but everyone who does productive work; and I also include, quite naturally, women in employment.

I think these tables would cover the four questions which I feel should be answered. It may be necessary to add one or two more, but I doubt it. The necessary figures are, I believe, already in existence; if not, they can be fairly readily obtained, and then it is only a matter of relating the figures to each other. All political parties in this House are committed to a policy of full employment. If these tables are made out, as I suggest, they will show to what extent that policy is being carried out, and to what extent the Government's actions are effective in that direction. It is its duty to ensure the best possible use of all the facilities in the State.

The resources which lie in the Government's hands, if it cares to use them, are the natural resources of Western Australia—the land and what grows on it, and the minerals underneath it; and the accumulated capital of the State in its own right, and in the rights of the persons in the State, namely, our homes, factories, machinery, roads, bridges and other things. These resources lie in the hands of the State. The remainder of our resources are manpower. None of the resources, other than manpower, has any active value except by the application of manpower to it. Land has no value unless a man uses it; minerals have no value unless someone mines them; a machine has no value unless a man starts it going and continues to supply it with the necessary fuel materials; roads are useless unless people use them; and a motorcar is of no value unless someone is there to drive it.

The value of all these things lies in the application of manpower to them. The use of manpower is the only resource that can add to the welfare of the State. It is far more important to know how that particular resource is to be applied than how any of the other resources are to be used. I feel I have made my point fairly clear, and I would like to close with just one other quotation from the Beveridge report—

The object of human activity is not employment, but welfare; to raise the material standard of living and make opportunities for a wider spiritual life.

MR. RODOREDA (Pilbara) [4.56]: I intend, on this debate, to speak solely on the problems of the North-West; and as this is such a vast subject I fear I will not be able even to start to do justice to it. I have just returned from a three months' tour of my district, during which I travelled just on 5,000 miles. As a result of my travels I am more disgusted than ever with the action of this Government in doing away with one of the North-West seats. By doing so it did a tremendous disservice to the North-West, because no one member can possibly look after the problems and keep in touch with all the industries in that vast area.

The Premier: Do not your Legislative Council members help you?

Mr. RODOREDA: Does not that apply everywhere? How many Legislative Council members are there in the southern area? The southern portions of the State are swarming with lower House members. That does not affect the issue in the slightest.

The Premier: One looks after thousands of people, and the other after large areas.

Mr. RODOREDA: The move to delete a North-West seat was brought about from political motives, and certainly not with the idea of improving conditions in the North-West. If we start from the north of my electorate, at Wallal, and come down the coast to Exmouth Gulf—a distance of 600 miles—and then go inland along the Tropic of Capricorn to Jigalong on the edge of the desert, and then north to Ragged Hills—150 miles beyond Marble Bar—and then back to Wallal, we find it is a tremendous area in which a wonderful pastoral industry is carried on, and also tremendous mining activity.

The main problem confronting both these industries there is the shortage of suitable labour; in fact, this applies to all industries in the North. But nothing is being done by the Government to make better amenities available to the people there. As a matter of fact, beyond the Premier's visit to my electorate four years ago, not one Minister of the Crown has been there, except for a few brief days during the last election campaign. Not one member of the Government is the slightest bit interested in the problems of the North-West.

The Premier: That is not correct, of course.

Mr. RODOREDA: There are many and varied types of mining carried on in this area, but the Minister for Mines has not been near it. He is not the least concerned about it. One matter he should be interested in is the lack of good roads in the mining districts. Good roads are essential to every industry in the North, yet as far as most of our roads there are concerned we are back in the horse and buggy days. In fact, except for the main roads, most of them are worse than they were in the days of the camel teams.

And yet it is expected that men will go into those areas and battle against those conditions without any help from anyone. But as soon as a big wealthy company comes along and wants to start activities in the district, everything else is dropped and the plant is rushed to the site—I refer to the oil explorations at Potshot—so that roads can be made. Why does not the company have to make its own roads in the same way as the prospectors and small mining syndicates are forced to do?

The Premier: Do you not want to encourage exploration for oil?

Mr. RODOREDA: Does not the Premier want to encourage the exploration for rare minerals?

The Premier: We do.

Mr. RODOREDA: Then nothing is being done about it. There is a lead field at Kooline, 160 miles from Onslow, from which over 1,100 tons of lead was produced last year. Lead has been obtained from that field for the last four years but not one penny has been spent on roads in that district.

The Premier: What could be more valuable to Western Australia and Australia than the finding of oil in this State?

Mr. RODOREDA: That is all very well, but it is still only a possibility. What about these small shows? Why cannot they be helped? Plant is rushed up to this wealthy company which could well afford to make its own roads. But the battlers, the small mining companies and prospectors, cannot afford to build their own roads.

The Premier: The company is spending a million and a half pounds of its own money.

Mr. RODOREDA: It will be well worth while if oil is found but there is nothing definite about it. I do not object to giving the company assistance but I contend that all the other people in the district should be rendered the same assistance. We must remember that the oil company might not find a drop of oil, and surely the provision of essential roads within the company's own concession should be its own responsibility.

I stated that there was tremendous mining activity in my area, and it might be of interest to the House if I went into the subject in a little more detail. Working down from the north of that country we find there is a leadmine on the edge of the desert at Ragged Hills; a terrific body of lead 240 miles out from the port. To give members an example of the cost of living in that district let me state that eggs cost 1s. each delivered by air to Ragged Hills. The syndicate there, in common with other mining companies and syndicates in that district, subsidises each mess account by the payment of £2 to £2 10s. a week. The company does this so that its employees will not find the cost of living so extortionate.

Further down is Bamboo Creek and syndicates have been mining gold there for the last 40 or 50 years. They are still battling on and obtaining sufficient gold to keep the State battery operating for four or five months in the year. The road to Bamboo Creek, from Marble Bar, is in an atrocious condition and is the worst in the North. The men are working under most adverse conditions and yet the Minister for Mines is not the slightest bit interested, the Commissioner for Main Roads is apparently not interested, and nor is this Government, as a whole, interested in that country.

Next we come to Moolyella where they are working tin. Tin is also being worked at Coogleyong and Shaw River. At that place they have a most amazing setup, with which I will deal later on. Further down, in the Marble Bar and Nullagine areas, gold is being worked as well as wolfram and scheelite, and the company is producing considerable tonnages of these rare metals. Also, they are mining copper, asbestos, antimony and gold at the Blue Spec. The road between Marble Bar and Nullagine, out to the Blue Spec, is in fair condition but those leading to the other isolated shows could not be worse.

Further on we come to Wittenoom Gorge where they are mining blue asbestos and the population of the town is now just over 800 people. But the Minister for Mines has never been there; he is not interested. Further on in the electorate we find copper and lead being worked at Whim Creek and about 20 tons of copper residue from the old dumps are being shipped each week. New leases have been pegged by one of the big mining companies and it looks as if the area may be developed on a large scale. As most members know, Whim Creek was a big copper mining area 25 to 30 years ago.

Next we come to the white asbestos deposits at Nungerry. These are the only white asbestos deposits being mined in Australia and the Commonwealth depends on this show for its supply of white asbestos. The owner of the mine is under an obligation to supply at least 30 tons a year to the C.S.I.R.O. for the manufacture of filters, strainers etc., for use in the production of chemicals as well as penicillin and other allied drugs. This quantity must be supplied before the company can obtain an export permit. It has developed into an amazing industry. The asbestos is of exceptionally high quality and some of the top grade returns about £500 a ton.

I have had to battle very hard with the Main Roads Department, and the Commissioner, for the last three or four years, in an endeavour to have a suitable road made into that show. Only 17 miles were required and up till recently they have been able to use only one-ton trucks, but now that the road has been constructed trucks with loads of up to 10 tons are being used. This cuts down the transport costs considerably.

Coming further down, into the Ashburton district, we find copper being mined at Uaroo and lead at Kooline; over 1,100 tons of lead was mined at that field during the last financial year and its value was equal to nearly half of that received for all the lead mined in this State. The Kooline lead field could easily develop into something far bigger than the Northampton field. Yet not one penny has been spent on the 160 miles of road from Onslow. The Minister for Mines is not interested; he has not been out to the field and probably does not know it exists, even though operations commenced four or five years ago.

The other evening I heard the member for Albany finish his speech by saying words to this effect, "Nature has been very good to us in this State". The member for Albany, like a lot of other members, and probably like the Government, thinks that the South-West Land Division is the whole of this State.

Mr. Needham: Albany is the whole of the State.

Mr. Hill: I said that we want to look from Albany to Wyndham. I did not talk about the North-West because I know nothing about it.

Mr. RODORED: I will tell the member for Albany that Nature has not been very kind to this State. Even down in the South-West they have their problems—too much rain for six months of the year and not enough for the rest of the year. Is that being kind?

Mr. Hill: Nature is never 100 per cent. kind.

Mr. RODORED: The bulk of the State has not received the blessings of Nature and has to be fought every inch of the way; by "the bulk of the State" I mean that portion which is outside the South-West Land Division. The member for Albany is not to blame in that respect because the Government thinks in the same way—that the southern portion is the whole of the State. So do not let him think that Nature has been kind to this State. It is an arid, tough country and we have recurring droughts and our people have to fight every inch of the way.

But speaking of the member for Albany reminds me of the unholy mess we have made of the administration of our outports. Fremantle harbour, run by the Fremantle Harbour Trust, is supplied with all the plant and machinery and new berthing space that is required by the Harbour Trust Commissioners. They have their fund and they can get everything. But every other part of the State is dependent wholly and solely upon what some Minister says, upon what some engineer recommends or what some other people think is required. Every person seems to have a hand in it except the man who runs the port.

There is only one solution to the problem and that is to have a harbour board that will be responsible for all ports in the State, and that authority must have its own funds. The Fremantle harbour is equipped with every possible type of machine that the mind of man can conceive and yet every other port, particularly those in the North-West, is still back in the horse and buggy days as far as equipment is concerned. All the work in those ports is being done by brute strength. Two or three mobile cranes have been supplied in recent years, but still that position continues. It is time that was rectified, but the main difficulty in the North-West ports, from the point of view of the Harbour and Light Department, is shortage of labour. That being so, why has not somebody made sure that machinery was supplied, which would obviate the need for so much labour? The delay at the ports, through insufficient labour to work ships, costs the State Shipping Service thousands of pounds per annum. If a ship comes into a port and needs three gangs to do the unloading, usually only one is available. It costs from £400 to £600 a day while a ship is in port and, the longer it is delayed, the greater is the liability incurred.

But if the manager of the Harbour and Light Department wants some machinery, what happens? He has to deal with about six Ministers; he has no funds of his own upon which to draw. He has to deal with the Chief Secretary, the Minister for Supply and Shipping, the Public Works Department, and God knows who else! After all, the manager is the man responsible for running the port and he knows what equipment he needs. Unfortunately, if the Public Works Department does not think he requires the equipment, he does not get it. So that aspect, at least, should be considered by the Government. A terrific waste is involved and, as the tonnage of cargo at the ports is increasing, the costs to the department are increasing. The whole question of cargo handling and transport, to and from the ports, should be taken into consideration and some scheme evolved which will be more satisfactory than the present archaic setup.

Seven or eight years ago, Mr. Dumas, the Director of Works, on the spot, promised that alterations would be made to the jetty at Port Samson, and the same occurred at Onslow. The facilities should have been considerably improved, but apparently that is still in the blue-print stage. Mr. Dumas was enthusiastic about the proposition, on the spot, but when he got down here apparently he had so many jobs to do, and important ones, too, that he had not time to attend to this one. Apparently he concentrated on some other problem altogether. At least, something should be done, and somebody in the Gov-

ernment should take an interest in what is going on in the North-West. The berthing facilities on the jetties are inadequate.

There is constant trouble at Port Samson, and at Wyndham insufficient berths are available. Some ships have to wait 36 hours while some other ship gets out of the way. But still one cannot get anything done in the North-West. There are too many people to whom application has to be made, too many Ministers and too many engineers whose opinions have to be obtained before any work can be done. This is a vast question and it is worth the Government's consideration. I would like to get, if possible, some information from the Premier on the Monte Bello project. I do not want to encroach on any security. Oh no! Yet at Onslow the place is full of security officials, despite the fact that all the details are published in the Press.

The Premier: I know nothing about that.

Mr. RODORED: I want to know whether it was the Government's move to have this Monte Bello project undertaken in the North.

The Premier: No, it was not.

Mr. RODORED: Apparently the Monte Bello project is outside the Government's jurisdiction, but it is time it did something about it. It is right on the shipping lane and is completely disorganising the State Shipping Service. Some few weeks ago the "Koolinda" was allowed to carry only 12 passengers. Seventy or eighty people who were booked to sail in this ship were unable to travel because petrol had to be shipped to Onslow for the Monte Bello project. The same problem occurs at all the other ports along the coast and it is causing no inconsiderable loss to the State ships. I sincerely hope that that loss is being recouped.

I was at Monte Bello on one occasion when a ship unloaded many gallons of water and 20 tons of cargo, and it lost two days in so doing. I wonder whether the Government was recompensed for that delay. I bet it was not! It is time that that aspect was investigated. If this atomic blast comes off as predicted it will occur right on the shipping lane, and God knows what it will do to the seabed, or what work will have to be done before ships can use the route again. Most likely it will be necessary to resurvey that area if the blast takes place. I did not think that even the military heads were stupid enough to conduct an atomic blast experiment a few miles from our mainland.

The Premier: Surely the Naval authorities and the experts, both British and Commonwealth, have taken all necessary precautions.

Mr. RODORED: The scene is well away from Britain and from Canberra also. As far as the Commonwealth is con-

cerned, this State does not exist. I am surprised that the State Government has not lodged an objection. Surely, there are other islands that could have been selected! This experiment need not take place in the centre of the shipping route, resulting in the disorganisation of the State Shipping Service.

Mr. Hearman: Perhaps they want to see what effect it will have on the shipping route.

Mr. RODOREDA: I am disgusted to think that the whole project is to occur in that area. The Monte Bello Islands could have been one of the finest tourist resorts that ever existed. As a matter of fact, they were used for that purpose pre-war. On several occasions, parties from the vicinity of the metropolitan area went there, hired a big lighter and put in a fortnight's holiday. It is one of the finest fishing grounds along our coast, and enjoys a wonderful climate. Furthermore, it is within a few hours travel from Onslow in a fast craft, or 40 to 50 minutes by plane.

Just after the war, a company was formed to establish a tourist centre there. It purchased launches and landing barges. The whole project had passed the blue print stage and the company had arranged with MacRobertson-Miller air service to fly people there. I understand that the promoters who were financing the venture finally decided to invest their money in Garden Island, and the project at Monte Bello was dropped. If the atomic blast takes place at the Monte Bello Islands, a tourist project such as the one proposed will not be possible in the future, and no other promoters will come forward. This atomic experiment is proving a great disadvantage to the North-West.

The petrol supplies in the ports in that area are in a parlous condition. I had a terrific job endeavouring to obtain enough petrol for my car to leave Broome. I wanted 20 gallons and could not get it. Most of the petrol reserves along the coast are exhausted. The State Shipping Service is going to have an extremely difficult job to ship enough petrol to the North-West to keep the centres there supplied. There are acres of drums of petrol in the bush around Onslow which were all brought up by the State ships. The Premier can easily visualise that this has thoroughly disorganised the State shipping programme and the transport of goods to North-West ports. That is the reason for the publication in this morning's Press of a letter from the manager of the State Shipping Service.

Mr. Griffith: Has the hon. member any idea what happened to all the petrol that was left in the North after the war?

Mr. RODOREDA: I have not the faintest idea. A lot of it was condemned, because, being aviation spirit, it was only effective for a certain time. However,

the petrol to which I am referring is new stuff and has only been around Onslow since this project was initiated. Looking back over the past five years, I begin to despair that any interest whatever will be taken by this Government in anything to do with the North-West.

Mr. Hoar: It has not much time left.

Mr. RODOREDA: In nearly 20 years of Parliamentary life I have seen some Governments become pretty complacent and self-satisfied, but this one caps the lot. It is a good Government! Why, the Premier will tell us so himself! He knows it is a good Government! He will tell everybody so, and one could not get a better recommendation than that.

The Premier: No.

Mr. W. Hegney: The member for West Perth says it is a great Government; it is "grating" on the people's nerves.

Mr. RODOREDA: I think one of the reasons why so little interest is taken in the North-West is that the North-West Department is a department in name only. It has not a pennyworth of funds and the Premier himself is the Minister for the North-West. Before he can authorise the expenditure of any funds in the North-West, he has to go to the Public Works Department, or some other department, to get them.

Mr. Needham: Is he not Treasurer, too?

Mr. RODOREDA: Yes, but he has no funds for the North-West. The Estimates show about £200 for stamps and postage, but there is never a penny spent out of the Vote. It is time something was done to establish an effective department for the North-West, with its own funds and with its own authority to spend them. It is no use the Premier thinking that he can take on the portfolio of the Minister for the North-West, because he has too many other jobs to do. One must have time to spend on that important job; and it is important. We find that all the activities for the North-West are controlled by various Ministers. If the Harbour and Light Department requires some money, it has to go to the Public Works Department to ascertain whether it is available, and the amount can be approved. And so it goes on right through all the other departments. One Minister only cannot be approached to obtain an official O.K. to go on with a job. I think the right place for the North-West Department is in the North-West; a department stationed up there.

The Premier: Where would the hon. member put it?

Mr. RODOREDA: Somewhere north. Port Hedland seems to be a likely place for its establishment. It is a big centre for the Meteorological section and the Department of Civil Aviation and it is go-

ing to be an important centre from where every point in the North-West can be easily reached. That is the only solution; to have the department in the area which it administers. What knowledge of the North has the department in Perth? Other than the engineer for the North-West not one in that department has ever been there. When one tries to explain the position to the departmental officers one has to spend half one's time endeavouring to get them to envisage what conditions really exist. That is entirely wrong.

To have an effective department in the North-West with its own funds, and a man at the head of it who could say "Go!" without referring to any other Minister, could be one solution to the problem. What is everybody's business now is no-one's business, and so nothing is done. I think, even with the best intentions in the world, no State Government can really do much to develop the North-West as it should be developed. It requires lashings of money. It requires good roads and more roads so that the country can be opened up, and the prospector and the battler outback given some sort of a chance. The State lacks funds and, as far as the Commonwealth is concerned, apparently the North-West scarcely exists.

For the last couple of years I have put forward suggestions, but my conclusion is—after giving the matter a lot of thought and having had 20 years' political experience—that until new States are constituted in that area it will never go ahead in the way it should. The Premier listened to my idea and he said, "How would they start?" Australia apparently follows America slavishly in everything she does, except for one thing; she split the nation up into States, and even more small States, and made it progress. I maintain that that is half the reason for America's prosperity.

As was mentioned the other day in another place, the North-West is the goose that lays the golden egg for the benefit of the rest of the State. The Premier wants to know how the new States can be established. A terrific amount of revenue comes from the North-West. In that area it is not unusual for individuals to pay £15,000 and £20,000 income tax yearly. There is a nucleus upon which to run a new State. The State reaps its share of petrol tax from the North-West but the residents there obtain no benefit from it. If a new State were formed it would be allocated that amount of money which the whole State now receives from the Commonwealth for the North-West. There seems to be a tremendous sum paid to the State by the Commonwealth Grants Commission on account of the disabilities that exist in the North, such as the loss on the Wyndham Meatworks, but the Commonwealth Grants

Commission cannot dictate as to where it can be spent and I doubt whether the North-West gets its fair share out of it.

Recently the proposition was discussed of handing the North-West over to the Commonwealth Government to be controlled in the same way as the Northern Territory. The experience of Commonwealth administration in that part of Australia is not much recommendation as regards its ability to manage another area so far removed from headquarters. I maintain that until new States are created, not much progress will be made in the North. One of the factors that militates against progress in the pastoral industry, and the development of agriculture generally, is to be found in our archaic land laws under which some people are able to hold millions of acres and not utilise half of their areas.

I can quote instance after instance of stations in my own electorate which are from 20 to 30 miles long by 10 miles wide that have never had a hoof of stock on them for 20 years—and never will. In many instances almost half the station property is not being used. These are not single instances, for there are scores of them to be quoted. In my experience, I have found that the small man who controls a limited area of country is far better off and survives droughts and depressions more readily, while the man with the big holding gets into difficulties. The small man has few labour troubles. He does not have a mortgage of £50,000, and does not live like a lord, and get into trouble when there is a drought or a depression.

The only salvation for the country from the pastoral point of view is for the large holdings to be subdivided and then, if the holders of the properties do not use their stations, they should be taken from them and given to others who will make use of the areas. If new States were created, there would be a chance of having up-to-date land laws to suit local conditions, made by people who were familiar with the circumstances. We will never get away from the present state of affairs regarding our land laws until we abolish the Legislative Council, because that branch of the legislature upholds the rights of the men with the millions of acres and seeks to maintain their right to retain their holdings, objecting strongly should someone seek to gain possession of 100 acres out of a million so that an agricultural proposition could be gone on with. When such a proposition is advanced, the Legislative Council objects to it—and the holders of the big stations get away with it.

I have some specific complaints to voice about a few matters that serve to show the lack of interest that the present Government displays regarding the North. First, I will deal with the water supply problem at Port Hedland. Four years ago

last May the Premier was at that centre and made a pronouncement to the people that he had allocated sufficient money to provide a water supply there.

The Premier: I think I said £50,000, did I not?

Mr. RODOREDA: The Government had to construct head works, a receiving tank at Port Hedland and put down 19 miles of pipeline. Recently I asked the following question:—

When is it anticipated that water from the Turner River scheme will be available to Hedland residents?

The reply I received was:—

The completion of the scheme will depend on the rate of manufacture and shipment of pipes from Perth.

Supplies of pipes have been held up for over 12 months but it is now anticipated that the contractor will commence manufacture early in September and complete before mid-December.

Shipping of pipes may present problems—

It certainly will!

—but every endeavour will be made to get pipes forwarded and laid as rapidly as possible.

Why was not a reply along those lines given to me on the numerous occasions I have asked about the matter during the last few years? Why was that not done, instead of fantastic promises being made by the engineers as to when the scheme would be completed? As recently as last May, I made inquiries about it and was told by the engineer in charge that the water would be supplied to Port Hedland residents in September. I asked which September he meant. The engineer maintained that he was correct in his statement. I guarantee that the people will be lucky if they get their water by next September.

Last year when a meeting was held in connection with the steps being taken to pull up the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway, I was promised that the Turner River water would be available to residents of Port Hedland last September. What is the use of the Government stalling like that? Why were not the people told that they could not expect to get a water supply for some years? They were not interested in the holding up of the supply. Although last May I got an estimate from the engineer in charge that water would be available next September, we now find that the contractor has not even started making the pipes! When these things happen, I am bound to ask what parliamentary replies to questions are worth. It is a scandalous state of affairs. A pipeline can be put down at Kwinana in two or three months, yet we have all this delay!

Mr. Lawrence: They might have to pull that pipeline up, I believe.

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not know what the Government is doing to allow this to be done by one contractor. Why are the residents stalled off in this way?

The Premier: Who can the Government be advised by, apart from the engineer in charge of the work?

Mr. RODOREDA: Why does the Government not ascertain from the engineer what is being done? Why does not the Government do something about it?

The Premier: When the money was provided, the intention was that the engineer should proceed with the work and finish it as quickly as possible.

Mr. RODOREDA: Why does not the Government show some interest in it and see why the work has not been done? It seems that this is only work to be carried out in the North, and so it does not matter.

The Premier: Yes it does matter.

Mr. RODOREDA: It matters so much that apparently it has taken four or five years for 19 miles of pipeline to be made available.

The Premier: I will give the matter my immediate and personal attention.

Mr. RODOREDA: What does that mean? It does not say that the people will get water any earlier.

The Premier: We will see.

Mr. RODOREDA: This has been going on for years and something should have been done long ago. Now we learn that that the company that has the contract has not been making the pipes. It is scandalous.

The Attorney General: Was that the Hume Pipe Coy.?

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not know.

The Attorney General: There has been a strike for six months, you know.

Mr. RODOREDA: Strike! When the Labour Government put up a proposition and a war was in progress, did the Government members who were then sitting in opposition accept that explanation?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Of course not.

Mr. RODOREDA: They brushed our explanation aside.

The Attorney General: And you brush this aside.

Mr. RODOREDA: At any rate, a strike has not been in progress over the four years.

The Attorney General: No.

Mr. RODOREDA: It would not take all that time to turn out pipes necessary for the Port Hedland scheme. Surely there is a penalty clause in the contract. Will that penalty clause be availed of? Possibly

there is no such clause in the contract. It is a scandalous reflection upon the whole Administration that such things can occur. Now I come to another matter concerning which some publicity has been given recently. I refer to the Marble Bar water supply. I shall quote extracts from a letter I wrote to the Minister for Works under date the 22nd August last regarding that proposition. In the course of the letter I said—

Apparently no Government officials seem the least bit concerned about the matter.

That refers to the scarcity of water.

There are two Public Works engineers stationed in Hedland—about four hours motor car journey—and it appears to be beyond their capacity to take any effective action. What they do with their time the Lord only knows. To an outsider, it appears there is scarcely enough work to keep one occupied and in my opinion a competent supervisor could easily look after the work in this area, subject to an occasional visit by an engineer.

For the past few months the chairman of the road board has himself been putting in most of his time (neglecting his own business in the process) trying to fix up broken-down windmills, engines, pumps, etc., to provide some water, and that this should be allowed to continue is a scandalous state of affairs. The whole setup reflects adversely upon all Government officials associated with it, and the whole aspect of the pumping plant (dirty, dilapidated, uncared for, with all sorts of broken-down machinery, engines, pumps, etc., littered about) would be a disgrace to a natives' camp.

The Attorney General: Does the pumping station belong to the road board?

The Chief Secretary: Yes.

Mr. RODORED: My letter continued—

I have refrained from complaining about this matter previously, as I was hoping that some effective action would be taken, but apparently no one is worried about it. I hope immediate action will be taken to provide water for this town. It seems to me such a simple matter. I know half-a-dozen station homesteads which use nearly as much water as would be required for Marble Bar and they never seem to be short of it. Someone certainly wants stirring up. There is an ample supply of water in the wells at Marble Bar and it is just a question of getting it to the people.

I want to illustrate my point. That state of affairs has been going on for over six months. Nothing was done about it at all until my letter was received, and then there was some racing around. The outcome was that the engineer for the North-West has been instructed to attend a pro-

test meeting that is to be held at Marble Bar, and he is to make recommendations to the Government regarding what should be done. Someone suggested it was not a responsibility of the Government.

The Attorney General: I asked whether it was not a matter for the road board.

Mr. RODORED: I was not the member for the district when the local water supply was installed but I know it was put in by engineers of the Public Works Department. I am given to understand that the plant has been unsatisfactory from the day it was installed. It functioned in a way for a few years but during the last two or three years it has been a constant source of inconvenience, annoyance and expense to the road board. But for the fact that the hotel, the store and a couple of dwellings have private water supplies, the water position at Marble Bar would have been a shambles. I have received letters from the road board covering a long period dealing with the unsatisfactory position, yet the Government says it is not its responsibility. Surely it is the responsibility of someone to see that the residents of Marble Bar are supplied with water!

The Chief Secretary: Would you say that the local road board has done its best?

Mr. RODORED: The board has done the best it possibly could with the type of plant supplied. Admittedly it has had labour troubles. It employed men to look after the pumping station, but possibly they were not mechanically minded. They allowed the plant to run without being oiled and naturally caused some damage in consequence. That happened during the last two or three years when labour was scarce. The road board itself has had four or six secretaries in three or four years, and most of them turned out to be rather inefficient. This matter should have been investigated a long time ago. I am a bit annoyed about it because engineers from the Public Works Department have been visiting Marble Bar over the years, and they must have known all about it. Only when I get a bit annoyed about it and write to the department is something done.

The Chief Secretary: The engineers go to Marble Bar and they called on the board quite recently.

Mr. RODORED: I was at Marble Bar in June when the engineers were there in connection with the pulling up of the railway line. Obviously they must have known what was going on. Of course, they were consulted by the board. Even if it was not directly their responsibility, at least one would think they would have enough sense of responsibility to report the matter and try to get something done about it. But that is the general attitude in the Government departments, "What does it matter about the North? They will get through somehow or other!" Most of the towns are short of water because there is insufficient at the source; but the pity

about the situation at Marble Bar is that there is plenty of water available at the well in the centre of the town, but a 2 by 4 tuppenny-ha'penny scheme was erected and black-iron tanks were put in for storage which have rusted away, so that the whole scheme wants re-designing. It will never be satisfactory as it is now. There is a main going from the pump to the tank at the top of the hill but the water never gets to the tank because there are two reticulation branches off the main, and any water that may be pumped is used by the townspeople before it gets to the tanks: and all for the sake of half a mile of pipe!

The Chief Secretary: It does not sound like a big task the way you are putting it. It sounds like a simple engineering job.

Mr. RODORED: Of course! It is the simplest thing in the world.

The Chief Secretary: That makes it all the more amazing that the road board has never accepted responsibility for doing the job.

Mr. RODORED: As I told the House, the road board had a very inefficient plant given to it at the start.

The Chief Secretary: They were foolish to accept it.

Mr. RODORED: Now you have got something! If I had been on that board, the scheme would never have been taken over. It would still be a Government responsibility. But the Government and the department are trying to put it over all the road boards in that respect. They are trying to sell them a pup every chance they get, particularly with regard to water supply. Onslow is a classic instance. They put in a plant to pump salt water and kidded the board to take it over, and the board had been bothered ever since. Finally the Government was compelled to do something and put in a new plant before the board would consider continuing to run it. I told the Marble Bar board to resign altogether, dump the business in the lap of the Government and say, "Here is your baby; you nurse it".

The Chief Secretary: You make it appear that it is the fault of the road board in each of those cases.

Mr. RODORED: I do not want to get into an involved argument with the Minister. He can get up afterwards and tell me whose fault it is. I am telling him that, if every other method fails, it is the responsibility of the Government to do the job. Will the Minister uphold me in that?

The Chief Secretary: No; I would say that the responsibility in each case is that of the road board.

Mr. RODORED: If the board had had any sense it would have resigned and dumped the business in the lap of the

Government. Now the Government is accepting responsibility—after I have stirred it up. An engineer has been sent to do something about it.

Mr. Lawrence: The Minister feels guilty, I think.

Mr. RODORED: I wish the Minister for Works were here.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Whose responsibility was it at Mt. Barker?

The Chief Secretary: I did not hear that.

The Premier: We have done more to provide water supplies than any other Government in the history of this State.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Where?

The Premier: I will tell you. The list is a long one.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You did not do anything at Mt. Barker. I believe they need water there.

The Premier: Mt. Barker?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Premier does not know where that is.

The Premier: Ask the member for the district about that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! the member for Pilbara will proceed.

The Premier: I was there a little while ago.

Mr. RODORED: It is a pity the Premier does not go up North. He has time to run around to every tinpot place. I am told he is always somewhere out in the bush and all the time travelling expenses are mounting up.

The Premier: You cannot say that about me.

Mr. RODORED: But I have said it.

The Premier: It is untrue; it is distinctly untrue.

Mr. RODORED: Does the Premier travel without receiving any travelling expenses?

The Premier: You can have mine any time you like.

Mr. Cornell: If you believe that, you will believe in Santa Claus.

Mr. RODORED: It is about bedtime storytime.

Mr. Griffith: It is a pity "Hansard" does not record every time you laugh.

Mr. RODORED: The position with regard to the building of homes up North is worse even than that of water supply at Hedland. The Housing Commission has been five years building some houses at Roebourne. It is certainly four years since work was started on two houses, and one is half finished now.

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

The Premier: I think the member for the district should have got on the job there.

Mr. RODOREDA: I have a very thick file on this subject. Every time I go to the Commission I am told that everything is going to be all right—next week; but next week comes and the position is the same. It goes on and on and nothing is done. There have been four contractors trying to build those houses. There has never been a more scandalous state of affairs to my knowledge than what has occurred in this connection. Last year it was decided that the present scheme was no good and that contractors would be sent here to do the job. Two contractors submitted prices for erecting two other houses. They let the previous two go altogether.

Two pre-cut houses were sent up and they were finished just before December. Nobody from the South can stay in the North over the hot season; they have to come down here again. So those houses were finished before Christmas. But they are not occupied yet, the reason being that the concrete floors were found to be not too good. One can put one's hand down and take pieces of the floor and crush them like sand. Nine months elapsed before anything was done about that, and nothing would have been done yet if I had not happened to be there. I went into the houses to see why they were not occupied and I saw a fellow with a pick taking up a concrete floor, which had to be put down again.

Mr. Lawrence: It might have been like the "Silvanit" asbestos.

Mr. RODOREDA: I had to send a telegram to the Housing Commission about those two houses. I sent a wire about the end of July, eight months after the houses were ostensibly ready for occupation. The wire I sent was as follows:—

Lack of progress Roebourne housing deplorable and classic example lack interest inefficiency and disorganisation. Not one house completed after nearly 3 years from start. Please investigate. Reply.

This wire produced results. An inspector was shot up from Perth straight away to find out what was the difficulty, and I had a reply from the Minister saying that two granolithic hands and a foreman were being sent by air to put in these concrete floors. I suppose the tenants will pay for the cost of that, although every second man in Roebourne could have put down a concrete floor.

My job is not to be a Housing Commission inspector. There is an inspector on the coast. What is he doing? The same thing applies to Port Hedland houses. One has been occupied since last September but there are no storm battens on the roof, the fencing is not done, there are no fastenings on the shutters, and no bath heaters are installed. These things are not known to the Housing Commission until I report them. It is time somebody

did something about the inspector. What is he doing to allow this sort of thing to go on? Men are now finishing the uncompleted houses, and at last the department has adopted what I told it years ago was the only way to get houses built, and that is to have the Public Works Department do the job.

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

Mr. RODOREDA: That is the only way to get it done and the Commission has been forced to get back to that basis. I have been promised that those two houses will be fixed up, and that the floors will be O.K., and that the other two houses will be completed. That will be a magnificent achievement after about four years of work! It is over four years ago, I think, since the original houses were begun.

The Attorney General: Is there not anyone capable of doing a job like that in the North?

Mr. RODOREDA: Yes; but no one will take it on.

The Attorney General: They will not build for themselves?

Mr. RODOREDA: They will take it on but not complete it. Three or more contractors have been involved in the erection of two houses and the contractors who built the Port Hedland houses are still there. But the inspector does not worry much about them. The non-provision of storm battens on the roof could be fatal in a cyclonic area. If they are left off much longer, the whole house is likely to be lost in the event of a cyclone. But the inspector is not worried much. He does not report it; or, if he does, no one down here is concerned. I do not know where the Minister for Housing has got to; it is unfortunate he is out of his place.

Of course, all the expense involved in this matter will be allocated to the houses and added to the rent which the tenant will have to pay. I know that the cancellation of a contract for the Roebourne houses involved the department in about £200. That would be booked against the houses. Material supplied for the building of houses has been left lying there and three extra lots have had to be provided for the original two houses. If there were proper supervision, that could not possibly occur. What has happened is an example of a complete lack of interest on the part of everybody associated with the Government and the department.

A rent of between 65s. and 73s. is being paid for the houses, all due to the tremendous delay in the erection of the buildings from the time the contracts were let. I suppose that the rise and fall clause came into the matter and each contract let was bigger than the one before. People on the basic wage cannot afford to pay that money. An approach to the department has been made by one or two tenants, and there will probably be a reduction of

2s. to 3s. on the family income basis. Something must be done about this matter. Houses all along the North-West coast are too expensive altogether and some means will have to be found of writing down some of the capital cost, a great deal of which was caused through inefficiency and lack of organisation in the Housing Commission.

Something similar has occurred in connection with hospitals for natives at Onslow and Roebourne. Nissen huts have been lying on the ground there for two years, but no one worries about it. The non-erection of the huts cannot be due to lack of labour. Surely anyone can put up a Nissen hut!

Then there is the question of roads, especially around Onslow. I had occasion to wire the department about Onslow roads and I found that the plant had been taken away in order that work might be done for the oil company at Potshot. I sent a telegram as follows:—

All marsh crossings main road north Onslow shocking example departmental work and rapidly becoming impassable. Immediate action imperative. Advise.

Then the department got on to it and something was done about it. Apparently I, as member for the district, have to be the inspector for all Government departments up there, or nothing is done and things are allowed to go on in the same old style! These marsh crossings were made with a few loads of stone bulldozed down, when what was wanted was solid stone packed together. Following my telegram, I received from the Minister for Works a letter which said—

The Deputy Commissioner points out that it is well known that nature has presented a difficult problem to the Construction Engineer in the North-West of this State. The natural conditions are particularly difficult for roads in the expansive silty, salty marsh areas surrounding Onslow.

With all that in mind they put two or three inches of stone on a crossing and expect it to last. The letter continues—

Our district engineer has arranged for the necessary maintenance work to be put in hand as soon as conditions permit. I might add that heavy traffic, including heavy lead ore trucks, has been constantly using these crossings.

That is what the crossings were made for. He points out that traffic has actually been using the crossings. Just imagine traffic using a road! One would never expect that to happen. The road that runs out to the leadmines has had no work done on it and I am wondering why the department has been side-stepping it. Two thousand pounds per year has been granted towards the construction of that road over

the last four years. There is £8,000 in kitty, but nothing has been done towards building the road.

For some reason unknown to me or to the Onslow Road Board, and in spite of a firm promise made each year by the Engineer for Main Roads that he would do this job, it is still being side-tracked, yet on the way from Roebourne to Onslow I saw some heavy plant doing a big job on five or six miles of entirely new road through a small mountain range. There will not be one ton of the produce of the country carried over that section: It will be just a nice show piece of main road for the use of motorists. The wool from the country at one end goes to Onslow and that from the other end to Roebourne, so this particular section was not needed. Surely it could have been left until a road has been built for use by those who are mining lead and producing wool!

Anomalies such as this are due to lack of interest on the part of the Government in any departmental work in the North. Departmental officers there never see a Minister of the Crown, and when it is apparent to them that no interest is taken in projects in the North they also develop such a state of mind that they do not care very much, either. I suggested that there were too many engineers in Port Hedland, but I again say that the engineer who has to look after the main roads in the North-West has a job which three men could not cope with. In spite of that he is on his own and has to deal with an area extending from Shark Bay to Wyndham. His name is Duncan, and they call him the Flying Scotchman because he has to go 60 miles an hour to get over his territory.

The Premier: Where is he doing the 60 miles an hour? Surely he is not doing it over these bad roads!

Mr. RODOREDA: He is doing it by plane. I did not say all the roads in the North were bad. The Government has directed its attention towards the main roads there, but they are not the roads that will be used to carry the produce of the country. The roads that serve the miner and the pastoralist should receive first attention. A terrific amount of money is wasted annually in building roads in the North-West, simply because of lack of supervision. One engineer cannot possibly look after them all. I have made that complaint year after year, but still no move is made to give that man help. The Public Works Department, which we are told has no money to spend in the North-West, has staffs in three separate towns there. That just does not add up and I hope the Premier will attend to that aspect, also. We are due to have a new Commissioner for Main Roads shortly, I think, and it is to be hoped that a man with a bit of go in him will be appointed to the job.

The Chief Secretary: Did you raise any objection to that 56 miles of road before it was laid down?

Mr. RODOREDA: I did not know the work was being done. The road has been there for very many years. It is the coastal highway, but this section of it is being rebuilt with heavy machinery. I did not know it was being done, as I am not informed of what the Engineer for Main Roads in the North-West does with the funds allocated to him. He seems to have power to decide on which sections he will spend money. I do not object to that, but I do object to priority being given to un-essential works.

The Chief Secretary: You seemed to be objecting, a little while ago.

Mr. RODOREDA: The Minister could not have been listening to what I said. My contention was that priority should be given to the roads that carry the produce of the country, rather than that tremendous amounts of money should be spent on a main road that carries only a few motorists.

The Chief Secretary: The time to talk was before the work was commenced.

Mr. RODOREDA: I can do nothing but complain in this House. I am not a Minister of the Crown.

The Chief Secretary: You could have had a talk to the Main Roads Department.

Mr. RODOREDA: Does not the Chief Secretary think I have been to them? I have complained to those people until I am sick and tired of it.

The Chief Secretary: But you made no move in regard to that 56 miles of road.

Mr. RODOREDA: Be your age! I made objections as soon as I saw the work being done. I cannot be expected to keep in touch with every five miles of road that is being constructed in such a tremendous area.

The Chief Secretary: This was 56 miles of road.

Mr. RODOREDA: The Chief Secretary would not know of every bit of road being constructed around Narrogin.

The Chief Secretary: That is not the question.

Mr. RODOREDA: The question was whether I knew that five miles of road was being constructed. I have already complained about the road to the lead fields and I have more complaints to make about the Kooline lead field which, though it is one of the richest potential fields, such as mineowners dream about, is something that as far as the Government is concerned just does not exist. There are 80 men, women and children on that field, but they have no water supply, other than what they cart. There is no aerodrome, no proper road and no-one to take the slightest interest in them. They are left to battle for themselves. The prospectors have developed this field from the stage when there were on it only three

or four persons until now there are 80 people there—there will probably be 100 on the field by the end of the year. Surely a place such as that is worth a visit by the Minister for Mines, or someone in authority who could see what was necessary to be done there.

The setup on that field is different from any other that I know of. There is no big company to take responsibility for the provision of what might be termed public utilities or services. There is no-one to provide water or electric light, no-one to look after food supplies, provide a canteen, run a pedal wireless set or build an aerodrome, but that does not seem to be of any concern to the Government. These people can jump in the lake for all the Government cares. There is no treatment plant on the field and, when it was suggested that the Government could provide one, the reply was that the difficulties associated with it would be too great; that they would have to get men to run it and that that would constitute a tremendous obstacle.

One of the syndicates there has recently put in a plant and has agreed to treat the ore brought in by the prospectors. They applied for a subsidy from the Government on a £ for £ basis—the whole plant would not cost more than £6,000—but they were turned down flat in spite of the fact that production there is now sufficient to guarantee continuation of the working of the field. There are literally miles of lead on the surface and it improves at depth. There would certainly be many more people on that field if a treatment plant were provided. Surely, for the sake of £2,000 or £3,000 the Government will not allow to fade out a lead field that could be more important than Northampton. As I have said, the people there have to cart their water six or seven miles from a pool in the river. That pool will dry up before the end of the year and then these people will have to leave the field until the rains come.

Some water supply engineer should be sent to the area to investigate the possibilities of providing a permanent water supply close to the field. Projects such as this should be fostered in their infancy, and everything possible should be done for these people who are battling along entirely by their own efforts. They should not have to provide an aerodrome or a medical service or any of the other services that a population of 100 should have. Why, there are no more people than that in Marble Bar. The entire lack of action in these matters is probably due to the Government's want of knowledge or interest, but surely the request of the syndicate for assistance in establishing a plant on the spot should not have been turned down. The money would have been repaid to the department.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. RODOREDA: I think I have said enough about the Kooline lead field to indicate to the powers that be that someone ought to take an interest in the people who are battling against very adverse circumstances to produce lead to the value of £120,000. This is no small effort. At least something should be done to provide facilities for the people in that district. I refer principally to the white asbestos being produced at the Nunyerry mines. At present this mine has to send its produce by road a distance of about 140 miles.

The owner of the mine put forward a proposition to me when I was there that there was a practical route which would not be more than 70 to 75 miles. This is a considerable saving in distance and transport costs; it would practically halve the distance from the port. As well as that, this projected shorter route could be used by the Blue Asbestos people at Wittenoom Gorge and also by other mining companies. The man to whom I refer flies his own plane about the country; he has investigated this route from the air on a score of occasions. When he talked to the Main Roads engineer on the subject, the officer appeared to be interested. The man's name is Mr. Hancock and I took a trip in his plane over the projected route.

We had some pretty hair-raising experiences. It is necessary to fly out of a pretty narrow gorge in order to get down amongst the hills and the valley and he has to follow a very circuitous route to get some idea of the difficulties associated with the track in that country. From the air it looks a practical proposition. There is already a road running out from Roebourne to within 67 miles of the mine and a continuation of that road to the mining range would cut the distance in half; and it would save 20 or 25 miles to the blue asbestos mine. I think that is a proposition which could be well and thoroughly investigated. It would be the greatest subsidy this Government could give to the blue and white asbestos industry as it would save thousands of pounds per year for all time. It would amount to an enormous sum.

During the last two or three years another proposition was put up for a road to go to Wittenoom Gorge. The matter was investigated, and for some reason or another it was allowed to lapse without any definite statement being made to that effect. From what I gather there is not the slightest interest being taken in this project; this was also estimated to save about 25 to 30 miles in distance. Apparently the Commissioner of Main Roads found some difficulty about the matter and let it drop, failing any interest being taken in it by his Minister or by the Government. I have flown over this route as well as the other and I should say that the one suggested by Mr. Hancock would

be far less difficult to construct and would save approximately the same distance. Fairly difficult country would be involved but is it not worth it if it would mean a saving in cost to the people of that country? It should be investigated.

I wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Main Roads and I hope the Minister will give some consideration to it and have a land survey made—even if only a brief one—to see whether this proposition is practicable. It is difficult to compute the value of the asbestos being produced at present because there are four different grades, but some of the top grade nets about £500 a ton. The world is crying out for asbestos and this is being exported. At present there is a plant which makes four grades while the three lower grades will be made from the residues. By this new plant installed by an Eastern States company three more grades will be made and this from only 50 per cent. asbestos.

The company was having to pay freight and heavy transport charges for only 50 per cent. asbestos. It was decided to establish this plant at the Nunyerry mine in order to extract all the asbestos possible. This company uses the lower grades to manufacture all sorts of articles; the principal one being synthetic rubber tiles made from asbestos. The company was so impressed that it decided to put this plant up at the Nunyerry mine. In addition to that, there is a tremendous body of pure talc—what Mr. Hancock calls his cosmetic department. This only needs grinding in order to produce face powder as well. There are miles of this on the surface with a reef two or three feet wide.

The plant to which I have referred could also treat this talc and grind it fine enough for face powder. Mr. Hancock is considering manufacturing that on the spot because he feels that the primary producer gets very little of the ultimate price. The Government can see that this could develop into a pretty big concern. The men working on it are drawing very big wages and the industry is a flourishing one. It was started in an inaccessible place and it is only during the last three or four months that the Main Roads Department has put in a decent road.

I would now like to refer to a matter I mentioned previously, namely the tinmine at what is called the Shaw River, about 140 or 150 miles from Port Hedland. At this tinmine there is being produced two tons of tin to the value of £1,000 per ton. Only five people per week are employed on actual mining operations. But the Minister for Mines knows nothing about that, nor does the Government, nor does the country. I think some details about that interesting project would do no harm. This tin is being mined with bulldozers and a roadmaking plant. The man who first took it on was the laughing-stock of the whole country because he was going mining with a roadmaking plant. The

place was originally mined in 1948 with two men and one woman and in two months they got £900 worth of tin. The plant consisted of one small bulldozer, one small truck and borrowed scrap plant.

In 1949 a start was made in March. I might mention that this family consisted of four sons, a father and a mother. They produced £5,500 worth of tin in nine months. In 1950 they started again and produced £8,000 worth of tin; the start was again made in March. In 1951, with two additional men, and after starting in March, they produced up to the end of June, £16,000 worth of tin. That was the whole year's output in 1951. It has become the practice in most of the mining syndicates who have control of their own destinies to get out of the country for a couple of months in the summer and have a spell before starting again in March. The Mines Department has recognised that practice and has granted an exemption to all mineowners who apply for it.

In 1952 until the end of June, £14,500 worth of tin was produced. During the last two years loans were received from the Mines Department aggregating £7,600 for plant. I understand the bulk of that has been repaid and the present plant consists of two bulldozers, four trucks, one end-loader. There is about £27,000 worth of plant and it is estimated that this mine will produce from £60,000 to £70,000 worth of tin in the next 12 months. The process is interesting. The overburden is taken out with the bulldozers and a clay pug is exposed; it may be any depth such as 6 in., 1 ft., 2 ft., according to the formation of the bed of the creek. The trucks are loaded in a few minutes. Two bulldozers are employed and any man can work any machine that is there.

The clay is taken to the treatment plant where there is a man sluicing the dump with a hose and the pug travels through a rotating screen into a Denver jig. Periodically the hose operator turns a tap at the base of the jig and pure tin pours out like water. I saw 4 cwt. produced in a morning's shift, and there was still half-an-hour to go. This man told me that there was room in that area for three or four plants of the same magnitude as his, and there are other spots in adjacent areas where similar activities could be carried on. But no-one seems to know about it; no-one seems to be interested in it. This area is located 140 miles inland and linked by an atrocious road. All the roads in the North, except the two main roads, are bad; in fact, they could not be worse. Nobody seems to be interested in getting roads for the people in the North who are producing wealth.

Another matter on which I should like to touch is that of the employment of natives in that area. Some time ago a committee was appointed by the Government to investigate the question. I do not know whether the committee has yet reported.

The Chief Secretary: Yes.

Mr. RODOREDA: I should like to know what the Government intends to do. Will the report be tabled in Parliament?

The Chief Secretary: Yes.

Mr. RODOREDA: The Minister can give us an assurance that we shall see it?

The Chief Secretary: I do not know about an assurance, but there is no reason why you should not see it.

Mr. RODOREDA: Will the Premier promise that it will be tabled?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. RODOREDA: I shall be interested to see the report. The question of the employment of natives in the North must be settled and put on a firm basis. Ever since the first settlers went to the North-West, the pastoralists seem to have been of the opinion that the natives were there simply for their use. The pastoralists have had the use of native labour for 80 or 90 years. In the majority of cases, the natives have been treated well. There was no hope of their obtaining work outside the pastoral industry, and they were paid little money, though they were looked after reasonably well. However, no native could get away from the pastoral industry.

During the last few years they have been able to get away, and have been employed mainly in mining, producing scheelite and wolfram, both of which are very rare minerals, forming as they do the source of tungsten, and worth £1,000 to £1,500 per ton. In addition, they are producing gold, tin, asbestos and other minerals. Don McLeod, who is nominally in charge of the setup for native labour, has now in his care nearly 700 native men, women and children. I should say that the cost of feeding and transporting them would amount to £4,000 or £5,000 a month, and, starting from scratch, this is made possible by their own unaided efforts. They have produced the wherewithal to feed and clothe themselves and pay all the expense for the treatment of expectant mothers and cases of sickness. They have plant in the shape of semi-trailers and trucks, and some mining equipment.

I have been informed by Mr. McLeod that there is no objection whatever to as many of these natives as are required being returned to the pastoral industry, but that they must be paid a reasonable wage, and he is the man who fixes the wage. At present, this problem is in the transition stage. The pastoralists as a whole have realised, or are beginning to realise, that the day when they had the sole use of native labour has gone for ever. I see no reason why they should have claimed that their industry should have the sole right to employ natives.

It has been suggested by a few pastoralists, who have given the matter thought, that some organisation should investigate the matter and fix what might be termed a basic wage for natives. They consider that this would be the only solution to the problem. Mr. McLeod informed me that the natives as a body would not return to the pastoral industry under the old conditions, but that they would prefer to starve. Consequently, I shall be greatly interested—as I believe every member will be—to see the report of the committee, which consisted of Sir Ross McDonald and Mr. Bateman, S.M., and learn what action, if any, can be taken. This is a big question. It could be the basis of a movement that could apply to all the natives in Australia. They have produced of their own volition thousands of pounds' worth of rare minerals, and so this departure is worthy of careful consideration.

At first, the idea was very disturbing to the pastoralists, who maintained that they would be unable to carry on their stations without the help of native labour. During the last three or four years, however, they have succeeded in carrying on without a great deal of trouble, and I consider it is all to the good to have white labour employed on the stations under decent working conditions, good housing and reasonable amenities. In that one respect alone this movement for the employment of native labour might be productive of great good to the North-West.

I spoke earlier of the difficulty of getting suitable labour in the North-West. One of the big factors militating against this is the total inadequacy of the district allowance, which is farcical when we consider the present relative lack of value in money. The district allowance, to my knowledge, has not been altered since it was introduced many years ago. It was first brought into effect under an industrial agreement between the Public Works Department and the A.W.U. No investigation was made to ascertain what the allowance should be; someone fixed an arbitrary figure and it has continued right up to the present without any alteration.

Within the last few years, the A.W.U. endeavoured to put up a case to the Arbitration Court on this aspect. The court travelled through much of the North-West and the Kimberleys, and took evidence and observed the conditions existing there, but when the case came on for hearing in Perth, Mr. Justice Jackson suggested that the best course would be to drop it because no real evidence had been produced. Since then, nothing has been done.

This matter is largely in the hands of the Government. I consider that it should offer to renew the industrial agreement with the A.W.U. and agree to the insertion of a district allowance having some relationship to the present-day cost of living. The present allowance is so inadequate as

to be laughable. A figure that had value 25 or 30 years ago has little value today. This is a matter that must be investigated before men can be induced to go to the North-West and put up with all the expense, not only of living there, but also of travelling there and taking themselves and their families away for a holiday. When a man has three or four children, he finds that he needs £120 or £130 to pay fares alone.

A few days ago I tried to book a passage in the middle of December to enable three nuns at Hedland to come to Perth, and was told that there was not a vacant berth in the ships between now and Christmas, people having booked up the accommodation nine or ten months ago. Consequently, people in the North who want to come south for a change have to use the 'plane, and so people will not go to the North to live if they can get work elsewhere.

Recently, the road boards in the North have put up to me that the premium charged for third-party insurance is the same as applies in other parts of the State. A number of the motor vehicles in the North would not enter a town once in 12 months and the third-party risk would be practically nil. The risk up there is nothing like as great as in the South, and I cannot recall one case of a third party being injured, except in the Carnarvon district. The number of accidents has been practically negligible, and yet motorists there have to pay the same premium as do city people.

The Premier: Would not that apply to other outback areas as well?

Mr. RODOREDA: I am not interested in them; I am putting up a case for my own district. It certainly would apply in other outback areas. To charge the present premiums is quite unfair, and the committee controlling third-party insurance premiums should do something about it. In some instances, where the concession rates apply, the premium for third-party insurance exceeds the charge for the license. These people have to pay very high rates for the licensing of their vehicles, and they have no bitumen roads. That is another matter of which they complain, but it is difficult to find a remedy. These premiums are fixed not by law but by a committee, and I consider that the committee might well declare another area in the State wherein a considerable concession could be granted for third-party insurance premiums. There is already a difference in the premium rates between town and country, and the principle could be extended.

I should like to read a few references from a report put up to the Commonwealth Government embodying reasons for the remission of taxation in the North. This has to do with minerals generally, but it throws a good deal of light on the

position that could obtain in the North. It is stated, if Mr. Foxall is correct, that some staggering conclusions can be drawn. Asbestos, in relation to wool, could be the basis of an industry equal in magnitude to wool. Tommy Manville is an American magnate who has been married about 14 times.

Mr. Needham: He has been married 10 times.

Mr. RODOREDA: His executives came here within the last two years to investigate the asbestos industry, and they wanted to buy a white asbestos mine. They said that the world could use another one million tons of asbestos, if it could get it. It could easily be obtained north of the 26th parallel. According to the figures of one of our geologists, there is an unlimited amount of blue asbestos in the Hamersley Range. Most of it would be used in America which has no source of crocidolite, the blue asbestos, although they have chrysotile.

The production and export of asbestos to America could do a great deal to relieve the dollar shortage. About 70 years ago the world used 200 tons of asbestos per annum whereas today it uses a million tons, and could use another one million tons. Asbestos is used for a thousand and one things. It is staggering to read the American trade journals and learn of the uses to which asbestos is put; and new ones are discovered every day. The Australian Blue Asbestos Mining Company—A.B.A.; a pup company of C.S.R.—has one mine, and in the course of eight to nine years the population there has risen from about 18 people to over 800. The company owns about four square miles of this blue asbestos country, and there are probably many more hundreds of square miles similar to it.

The Premier: How much blue asbestos is being produced at present?

Mr. RODOREDA: In the vicinity of 300 tons per month.

The Attorney General: Is the company making a profit yet?

Mr. RODOREDA: The Attorney General should ask the Minister for Health because she says that this company, which is always making a profit, should have to pay for its own doctor. We know it has not made a profit, and will not do so for a considerable number of years to come, because it has had to pioneer the industry. While doing so it has used up a terrific amount of money in learning how to mine and treat the ore. It has just about solved its problems now, and by the end of the year the production—now over 250 tons a month—is estimated to be 300 tons, which is the utmost capacity of the present mill.

The Premier: Some time ago the company said it wanted 5,000 tons a year to reach the payable stage.

Mr. RODOREDA: That is right; between five and six thousand tons a year to meet overhead and make a profit. It is now getting machinery for a new mill, but until it is installed the production will be no more than about 300 tons a month. That is a considerable tonnage to be transported over 200 miles of road to the port. The company is meeting shipping difficulties now, and these will be aggravated. In addition to the asbestos, there is about 25 miles of lead-bearing country right on the edge of the desert from Braeside to Ragged Hills, and further south. About a mile from these mines is the limitless desert. In this area is about 93 per cent. of the world's tantalite. The most accessible copper in Australia is to be found at Whim Creek. Of course, there is the iron at Yampi Sound, which everyone knows about. There are mountains of chromite, ochre, antimony and talc.

Mr. Hill: I thought you said Nature was not kind to you there.

Mr. RODOREDA: Be your age! I do not mean that sort of kindness. This has to be won by hard work, under terrific conditions on the edge of a desert.

Mr. Hill: Is it not a valuable asset worth working?

Mr. RODOREDA: The Government does not seem to think so. It is not the least bit interested in it.

The Premier: You have said that so many times you will come to believe it presently.

Mr. RODOREDA: I want to impress it on the Premier because we do not get a chance on the Estimates, which are bludgeoned through in the last few weeks. That, up to date, has been the practice of this Government. In addition to these minerals there are scheelite and wolfram, and everybody knows how valuable and rare they are.

Mr. Hill: Is there any uranium?

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not know about that. There is a geiger counter at Marble Bar, but the batteries are always flat when anyone wants to test anything. It is the only one in the North, as far as I know. Up to date there has been no sign of uranium-bearing ore, but it could quite easily occur in the Wodgina area, where tantalite and beryl have been discovered. This country needs someone to take a keen interest in it so as to kick it along. The potentialities are terrific. With a little bit of sympathetic consideration, and some financial support, I think this area could advance very rapidly. I have made an extensive tour of my electorate during which I camped with all sorts of people. I camped alongside the road on my own, and with the main road gangs. Their conditions are still as bad as possible. They are worse off than any other body of workers in the North-West in regard to camping conditions and other amenities.

I received a letter last December from the Premier stating that steel-framed buildings were to be provided for these camps, but so far nothing has been done, and I do not suppose it ever will be. I have camped with prospectors, on stations, in the mining towns, with well-sinkers, and with fencers. I have seen the whole aspect of the North-West. I should say the people there have just about "had" this Government, and also they have "had" being governed from the metropolitan area. I have taken up a considerable amount of time this evening, and there are many other matters that I could well deal with, but I shall leave them until the Estimates are under consideration. I hope this year we shall be given some chance to discuss the Estimates instead of their being kept until nearly the last week so that we have no time to deal with them.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [8.8]: I listened carefully to His Excellency's Speech at the opening of Parliament, and apart from the portion where he mentioned the metal trades strike, it was a story of much progress in the past and careful planning for the future. I can only conclude, therefore, that the State is being well governed.

Mr. Lawrence: You will get on.

Mr. MANNING: I would like to make some observations and comments on a few of the subjects mentioned, but before doing so I express my sincere regret at the passing of His late Majesty, King George VI. We were all looking forward to welcoming His Majesty last year and having the opportunity to meet him. However, I trust that in the not too far distant future we will have the pleasure of welcoming Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Well read!

Mr. MANNING: I wish to comment on some of the items affecting my electorate. The extension of the South-West power scheme in the rural areas is making some progress, but the policy of the Electricity Commission is first to connect up the larger towns. Until that is completed the connecting up of the smaller towns and the farming areas will not be proceeded with. I urge that more attention be given to providing this necessary amenity to the farmers. Electric light is already available in the large towns, so that the scheme only provides what is already there, whereas most of the settlers on the farms have to rely on kerosene lamps for lighting purposes.

Mr. Oldfield: People have to do that at Bayswater.

Mr. MANNING: If the scheme were extended to the outer rural areas it would be of invaluable assistance, firstly, in stepping up production as the electricity would then be obtainable for the running of plant; and, secondly, in providing a really

necessary amenity for the wives of the farmers. Therefore I ask that a priority be given, and everything possible done to expedite the extension of the scheme to the small towns and the farms which have no electric power. I was sorry to learn that work had been discontinued on the raising of the wall at the Wellington Dam, and that the men working there had been dismissed. These men, by virtue of the fact that they had been employed on this project for some time, had become more or less skilled in their work. When the job is recommenced, other men will have to be trained to do it and this will cause delay in getting under way again.

Mr. Lawrence: Do you not think the men were sorry to be dismissed?

Mr. MANNING: The cessation of this work is also causing a great deal of concern among the farmers who were anticipating the extension of the scheme to make water available to them. The construction work on the extension of the irrigation scheme to the Bengier area has been slowed down owing to shortage of money. There is an aura of uncertainty about the scheme which is causing concern to the farmers there. I hope sufficient funds will soon be made available to complete the scheme so that the farmers will have an opportunity to plan their work. This is very necessary because if a farmer becomes disorganised with his seasonal work, it has an adverse effect upon his production.

I think a long-sighted policy is needed in connection with the irrigation survey of the Boyanup-Elgin area, where some 30,000 acres could be irrigated. As the surveying of this scheme, and getting it on paper, will take about two years, I suggest that an immediate commencement with the work be made, so that when funds are available the construction work can be started without any hold-up. We are all aware of the need to increase dairy production. The supply of irrigation water to these areas would ensure a large increase of milk, and a greater supply of butter and cheese.

Mr. May: You have more water down there than you know what to do with.

Mr. MANNING: But at the wrong time of the year. I was interested to learn the extent of the assistance rendered to the Christian missions for their work among the natives. This is a commendable move because of the good results that the missions have obtained, and the high standard of the work they are performing. These missions well deserve the support of the Government, and any further assistance that can be given them. I was pleased to learn that the Government had given a priority to the cartage of pyrites for the manufacture of superphosphate. Super is being rationed again this year and this is having a retarding effect upon the further development of land and increased production.

Mr. May: It has also gone up in price.

Mr. MANNING: Because of the ever-increasing cost of super, it will soon be beyond the reach of dairymen, and I think the Government could keep a close watch on this aspect with a view to taking some steps to provide a subsidy, or at least to ensure that the price is not increased any further.

I wish to commend the Government on the steps that have been taken to plant 2,500 acres of pines this year. In my opinion that is sound policy and I would urge that, when the Estimates are prepared, the Forests Department's funds should not be pruned. The department is also doing an excellent job in the experimental field and is endeavouring to improve the species of pines now being grown. There is also the question of fire protection work and in this field the department is taking an active part. It is most necessary that the department should have a full staff of men and nothing should be done to cut down the important work that it is performing. With reference to fire protection, I would urge the Government to encourage its forestry officers to co-operate to the full with the farmers in the areas adjoining Forests Department holdings. If this is done, it will ensure a good understanding between the forestry officers and the farmers in those districts.

The Premier: I thought that was being done now.

Mr. May: The forestry officers are the bosses now.

Mr. MANNING: That too, might be desirable. I am most interested in the construction of roads to mill towns. Good serviceable roads are a great asset to the residents in outlying country centres.

Mr. Lawrence: The member for Pilbara is interested in roads, too.

Mr. MANNING: The people in those towns have very little in the way of amenities available to them and good roads are most necessary to enable them to travel to other centres. The timber industry is a busy one and the workers engaged in it are doing a good job. The least the Government can do, in my opinion, is to provide them with good roads. I was pleased to see that the Government has allotted money for the improvement of the Hoffman Mill road, and I hope that in the near future money will be allocated for the improvement of the Mornington Mill road.

We have been promised a new agricultural college at Harvey and the Education Department proposed to take over the rural training centre. But I am getting a little anxious about the delay. I am hoping that the Education Department, or the Government, will move quickly in this matter so that we can get on with the scheme of training students in agricultural work.

There is a great need to increase our milk production. It has been pointed out to us that there are many outback areas

in this State which do not see milk of any description for months on end. I am used to seeing milk in great quantities and it does not seem right that, with such an abundance, it does not reach these outer areas. Perhaps Mr. E. A. Hughes of Maylands has a solution to this problem. He has demonstrated how skim milk and butterfat can be dehydrated and kept successfully for a lengthy period of time, and when required the ingredients can be mixed with water and restored to whole milk. This man might have the solution to the problem of getting milk into our outback areas.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But is not greater production the first essential? You have not the quantity that you can dehydrate.

Mr. MANNING: I think that the demand would force up production—if there is an increased demand, production is also increased.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The demand is there. We are short of butter and milk now.

Mr. Lawrence: That is a tricky one to get over.

Mr. MANNING: No, I am confident that with our schemes for drainage and irrigation, the production of milk will be greatly boosted in the near future—the not too distant future.

Mr. Needham: But should not the increased production come first?

Mr. MANNING: No, I think that the demand will force up production. The farmer will always be trying to produce to meet the demand.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes, but the demand has been there for some time and production is falling off. The farmer is giving it away.

Mr. May: And they are cutting down their super again, so how are you going to get on now?

Mr. MANNING: It is the responsibility of the Milk Board to see that the metropolitan area is adequately supplied with fresh wholemilk, and I do not see why it should not be the responsibility of the board to see that milk is dehydrated and sent into our outer areas.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But you must first of all get the milk.

Mr. MANNING: The Milk Board has the milk for the metropolitan area.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But not enough.

Mr. MANNING: Yes, it has.

Mr. May: You cannot put it all on to the Milk Board.

Mr. MANNING: The Milk Board is responsible inasmuch as it has supplied sufficient quantities of fresh wholemilk for the metropolitan area.

Mr. Oldfield: Is it anything like the Egg Board?

Mr. MANNING: I am certain that if the firms which are now pasteurising milk were to install treatment plants for the dehydration of milk, the Milk Board would see that it was sent to our outer areas where it could be supplied under the free milk scheme in the same way as fresh wholemilk is supplied in the metropolitan area. That would be one way of getting wholemilk to our outback areas.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Surely the hon. member is aware that within the last few months a firm in this State was fined for using powdered milk in order to produce larger quantities of milk for sale to consumers. That was done because of the shortage of milk.

The Minister for Supply and Shipping: So much of it goes abroad.

Mr. MANNING: I realise that much money has been spent on my electorate, mainly on irrigation and drainage schemes. But, as I have indicated, my electorate is one of the most densely populated and highly productive rural districts in the State and I would urge the Government to give favourable consideration to the subjects I have mentioned.

MR. LAWRENCE (South Fremantle) [8.24]: I join with His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Gairdner, and members of this Chamber in expressing my grief at the untimely passing of His Majesty, King George VI., who by his example, inspired the people of his realm during the progress of the last, but not long-finished war. By that example he showed his subjects the ways of a generous, peace-loving and just monarch. So, today while we have suffered a grievous loss we must gain comfort from the fact that his late Majesty left to us a great fortune in the shape of his daughter, whom we now revere as Queen Elizabeth II. and who has lately taken unto herself the tremendous responsibility of ruling our British Empire.

I must also fully support the remarks of the member for North Perth, that we, as our Queen's subjects, should make every effort to help our new Ruler by ensuring that Her Majesty's lot does not become too burdensome for such young shoulders. There are many ways in which this can be achieved and one of them is for the Governments of Her Majesty's various territories to govern in a responsible fashion—a fashion that will ensure the welfare and contentment of the people in those territories. However, I am sorry to say that has not been the case in respect to the present Commonwealth Government and our own State Government. I welcome this opportunity of disagreeing strongly with the actions of this Government during the last year or two.

The Premier: In trying to uphold the law.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Apparently the Premier's conscience has pricked him. I did not mention anything about that, but it is one of the points I intend to discuss during my speech. I propose to point out to the Premier many ways in which his Government has fallen down on its job, and, if he can deny that, he is a better man than I think he is.

The Premier: You are a real Opposition member.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I had an ignominy forced upon me only last week when I was called the Liberal member for South Fremantle.

The Premier: I regret that very much.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Not half as much as I do.

The Premier: I will see that it is corrected.

Mr. Needham: It was an insult.

Mr. Bovell: It was the greatest compliment he ever had paid to him.

Mr. Needham: It was libellous.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I intend to prove conclusively that the present Tory Government in this State is not worthy of holding the Treasury bench.

The Premier: You have a task in front of you; go ahead.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I think it is very simple. Let us consider the Speech that His Excellency the Governor had prepared for him by the Premier and his satellites.

The Premier: There is some good stuff here that you might like to read.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am sticking to the Governor's Speech that was prepared for him. As a matter of fact if His Excellency the Governor were here tonight and heard my later remarks I think he would take umbrage—

Mr. Bovell: At you.

Mr. LAWRENCE: —at the action that the Government took in preparing such a speech. It is full of fabrications and yet the Government asked him—actually foisted it upon him—to deliver it at the opening of Parliament. In His Excellency's Speech we find the following:—

The harmonious relationship existing between employer and employee in this State in recent years has been marred by the prolonged metal trades strike.

Now we get back to the Premier's interjection. In my opinion and in the opinion of many members on this side, the Premier has not satisfied this Chamber that he tried to do anything reasonable in the early stages to try to stop the recent strike.

The Premier: By asking the men to obey the law?

Mr. LAWRENCE: That may be so, but let us also link that up with a statement such as this in the Speech—

In 1951 coal from Collie reached a record production of nearly 850,000 tons.

And further link it up with this statement—

Time lost because of stoppages on the waterfront throughout Australia has seriously interfered with the shipment of goods to this State. Constant endeavours by the department concerned—

I do not know to what department this refers, but probably the Minister for Supply and Shipping can tell me that.

—and the shippers have, notwithstanding these difficulties, resulted in greatly increased supplies of essential commodities reaching this State.

If that is not unfair and unjust criticism of the workers of this State I do not know what is. What return have the Collie miners had for their record output? They have had thrown at them only in the last week or two—and it is now being debated in another place—the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill which is the most vicious piece of legislation that has ever been brought before the Parliament of this State. The Premier can grin, but he does not realise the full implications.

The Premier: I have never heard such exaggerated statements in my life.

Mr. LAWRENCE: And I have never heard of such an exaggerated measure. The Premier—and he can deny it if he so desires—knows nothing of industrial matters and probably has never been a member of a trade union. Particularly enough his adviser on this question, the Attorney General, is in the same category. Yet they bring forward legislation such as this of which they know nothing. The Government has proved its ineptitude by not being able to settle the strike which crippled this State for nearly six months. Nothing can convince me that if they knew their subject and knew anything of industrialism, they could not have settled it earlier.

The Premier: Yes, by giving in and saying, "Take what you want."

Mr. LAWRENCE: Not by giving in at all. It could have been settled under Section 68 of the existing Act. Is not that a fact?

The Premier: The hon. member might tell us why Western Australia was singled out for this strike.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I wish—

The Premier: I wish the hon. member would give us that explanation.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If Western Australia was singled out—

The Premier: Which it was.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That is only the Premier's opinion. If that is so it still does not excuse the Government from not being able to settle the strike here. Was the Premier fighting the differences in New South Wales, Victoria or Tasmania?

Mr. Bovell: Yes, because it was Eastern States' influence that caused the strike. We were fighting their battles.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The member for Vasse would not fight.

The Premier: We were singled out and the hon. member knows it. The strike was concentrated on Western Australia to bring us to our knees.

Mr. LAWRENCE: With the knowledge and conscience that I know it to be a fact, I want to say that anybody in the Eastern States who had anything to do with the strike was anxious, after the first month, to have it finished.

Mr. Bovell: And on their own terms.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Not on their own terms because I spoke to the representatives of the A.E.U. and the Boilermakers' Union who came from the Eastern States to ask the men here to return to work, but the men were so incensed that they refused. They were incensed because the Government would not, in any way, speak to their leaders.

Mr. Oldfield: Does the hon. member really believe that?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Do I believe it? Do members realise that the men to whom the Government refused to speak were elected by secret ballot? Does the member for Maylands deny that?

Mr. Rodoreda: He would not know.

Mr. Oldfield: Carry on!

Mr. LAWRENCE: When I look at the member for Maylands it makes it very difficult. Now we have the position that because of the excellent work done by these workers in producing more coal, in putting through a greater output of cargo in practically every port in Australia, including Fremantle, they are facing this vicious piece of legislation which in no way contributes to the industrial peace about which the Government has spoken. The Government has lost a great deal of face among the working class of Western Australia.

The Premier: I do not think so.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I will tell the Premier why. It is because the workers of Western Australia feel that the Government allowed this strike to continue for pre-election propaganda; so that the Government could say to the people, "Look how we controlled this business! Look

how firm we were in the face of adversity!" All the Government has done is to pour public money down the drain. The Premier will not deny that he lost nearly £1,000,000 on the railways and God knows what harm has been done to the economy of the State. That will not become apparent for another 12 months.

The Attorney General: Mr. Rowe and Mr. Wilson will be pleased about that.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Attorney General is awake!

The Attorney General: I am awake and I am awake to the hon. member, too.

Mr. LAWRENCE: What does the Attorney General mean by that?

The Attorney General: I am awake to the fact that the hon. member encouraged men like Rowe and Wilson to aggravate the strike.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I say that is a deliberate lie!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should say it is an untruth; it will save a great deal of time.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I will say that the Attorney General is telling an untruth. Even if the Attorney General contends that it was Mr. Rowe and Mr. Wilson—

The Attorney General: I know it was.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I will grant him that point. But if that is so why did not the Government settle the business?

The Premier: The hon. member knows why it would not settle the business.

The Attorney General: The hon. member is on very delicate ground, and the sooner he gets off it the better for everyone including himself.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I intend to get on to it.

Mr. Oldfield: Tell me! Why did you require to have organised meetings to continue the strike?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I cannot hear the hon. member.

The Attorney General: Fancy allowing three men, two of whom are communists, to control all the members of the union! The workers are a bit tired of it now because they have sacked one.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, and they are well and faithfully tired of the Attorney General and the Premier. Here is the point. When I heard of the time lost because of the stoppages on the waterfront and the praise given to the shipowners—the big bloated plutocrats, and goodness knows what they did towards record cargoes—I then found this published, and I quote from the second report of the Australian Stevedoring Industry Board for the year ended the 30th June, 1951—

Much of the complex waterfront problem is rooted in the haphazard movement of cargoes between wharves and traders' stores, which is the cause of cargo congestion, interruptions and general wharf inefficiencies. Restricted working hours, labour shortages and space problems exist throughout industry, including the waterfront. However, all these problems climax at the wharves, which are inescapably geared to the tempo and volume of activity of related industries, particularly transport and warehouses. Changed industrial conditions have fettered the wharf-sea transport process and created a tremendous problem in co-ordination.

Acute congestion of cargo on the wharves, an efficiency destroyer, was a recurring problem, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne. The cramped and awkward conditions of congested wharves constitute one of the principal bars to efficiency.

Would that be any praise to the shipowner or to the stevedore, or would it be something to blame on the worker? The Premier does not interject and answer that one.

The Premier: It is marvellous what he can take.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The departments—I do not know which are the departments concerned—refer to the essential commodities reaching this State which I take it are commodities coming from the Eastern States, and yet we find that in Sydney—I am reading from this report—discharging and loading with the production time gangs' rates, that is, the quantity handled per gang per hour, have increased over the last 12 months. What has the Premier to say to that?

The Premier: I think there is certainly room for an increase.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Is that how fair the Premier will be? He has said in the Speech prepared by the Government that not one vestige of praise is due to the worker. The worker is not even mentioned in it, and now when I quote these factual figures the Premier has the temerity to say that there is room for improvement.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If the Government improves on its past policy I will be the first to praise it, but I am afraid the praise will be a long time coming.

The Premier: I think it will be.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Therefore the Premier admits that his Government will not improve. We also find, in regard to commodities reaching this State, that the employers themselves have stated that in Sydney 76 per cent. of their number regard the work of the waterside workers as

favourable and 24 per cent. as unfavourable. In Melbourne 94.4 per cent. of the employers class the work of the waterside workers as favourable and 5.6 as unfavourable. In Brisbane it is 99.7 per cent. as against .3 per cent. In Port Adelaide it is 99.9 per cent and .1 per cent., in Fremantle 99.4 per cent. and .4 per cent. and in Newcastle 97.1 per cent. and 2.9 per cent.

That seems to be a clear indication to this Chamber and the public generally that the waterside workers are not the villains, the disrupters of the economy of this State and Australia generally, that people are led to believe. And they are led to believe it in no mean fashion through such avenues as the daily Press and the radio stations, and also through the action of the Government, because it has not one word of praise for these men, who are probably handling work that keeps the life-line of this State intact, namely, the importing of essential commodities and the exporting of our surplus commodities. Why does not the Premier reply to that?

The Minister for Health: We have heard it all before.

Mr. LAWRENCE: We find from all the reports of the stoppages throughout Australia that the blame is placed on the worker, and yet it has been admitted that time lost through rain has been equal to the time lost by stoppages caused by the worker.

Mr. Oldfield: It must have rained a lot. Cannot they work in the rain?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I cannot imagine the member for Maylands working in the wet for any employer unless the whip had been cracked.

Mr. Graham: With the Premier handling the whip.

Mr. LAWRENCE: When the Premier handles the whip, the member for Maylands is amenable and that has been apparent at times in this Chamber. Included in the time lost to workers on the waterfront are the hours of suspension forced on the workers by the Stevedoring Industry Board. Every time a worker is late because the Government fails to provide decent transport, he is fined. If a worker is one minute late and misses his number because of the ineptitude of the Government respecting the provision of decent transport facilities, he is stood down for 48 hours.

The Premier: If he is a minute late?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, if he is a second late.

The Premier: How many have been fined for being a second late?

Mr. LAWRENCE: They are fined and stood down for 48 hours.

The Premier: I would like to check up on that.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I have seen 50 men dealt with in one morning.

The Premier: Because they were a minute late?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes.

Mr. Oldfield: Because of the Fremantle tramway service.

Mr. LAWRENCE: No, because of the railway service.

Mr. Oldfield: I thought most of the lumpers came to work in motorcars.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I always thought the hon. member was silly, but I am sure of it now. It is quite apparent, and I emphasise the fact, that the Government has not given due praise or encouragement to the workers in this State. I can cite other instances to lend point to what I say. There is a rumour abroad that there will in future be no S.P. operations in Collie. I noticed in the Press a report that the workers of Kalgoorlie are not to enjoy their "swy" game any more, so that luxury has been taken from them by the present Government. I have no doubt at all that the Collie boys will be able to handle the position themselves.

The Premier: Is there any reason why men should be allowed to play two-up at Kalgoorlie and not elsewhere?

Mr. LAWRENCE: No, I do not suggest that for one moment. On the other hand I claim that if the Government had the welfare of the workers at heart—these despised workers in the opinion of the Government—

The Premier: They are not despised by the Government. That is simply your idea.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If the Premier has their welfare at heart, why did he not take action in that direction 12 months ago?

The Premier: He has not done it now.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Then the Government is not responsible for it?

The Premier: I did not know anything about it.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I will not dwell on that point any longer. In another portion of His Excellency's Speech there was this statement—

The unemployment position is satisfactory.

I say that the employment position in this State is not satisfactory. The member for Melville touched on this point the other night. As a matter of fact, on the waterfront during the last four or five days on one day 258 men were unemployed, while on other days 415, 152, 321 and 161 were unemployed. The Maritime Services Union has had many men dismissed. As a matter of fact, approximately 200 of those men

I mention, came from one organisation—the Maritime Services Union. I could wish that the Attorney General was in his seat at the moment when I am dealing with this matter. Peculiarly enough, that particular organisation had 250 members employed in Government departments, which means that 80 per cent. of the members of one union have been sacked by the Government. There are rumours that further members of the union are to be sacked from the job at Kwinana.

Mr. McCulloch: That is harmonious relationship for you!

Mr. LAWRENCE: It is delightful for the Premier to allow a statement like that to appear in His Excellency's Speech when he knows that the position is not as described. Recently the member for Fremantle, without notice, asked the Premier the following question—

In view of his answer to the member for Cottesloe regarding the number of men employed by the Public Works, Forests, Metropolitan Water Supply and Electricity and Gas Departments and the State Electricity Commission, will he give the House an assurance that there will be no further retrenchments in those branches of the Public Service and that the employment of the men concerned will be maintained?

The Premier replied:

I regret that I am unable to give any such assurance until I know what the loan position will be.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not quote from the current "Hansard".

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am quoting from "Hansard" for the Fourth Session, 1952.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may not quote from the "Hansard" report of the proceedings of the current session.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I have noted from replies to questions asked in this Chamber that the Premier has been unable at any time to give a satisfactory reply as to when men are to be re-employed or whether there will not be further retrenchments. In effect, the Premier has made it quite clear to me that today the Government is bankrupt.

Mr. Needham: It has always been that.

The Premier: It is not bankrupt.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I think it is, and the member for Melville proved that pretty conclusively the other evening. The Government has not denied it. If there is any truth in that contention, why has not the Premier been game enough to say to the people, "There we are. We are in a jam".

The Premier: I have told the people.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Premier says the employment position is satisfactory and he knows that he is sacking men by the hundreds from the Public Works Department. The position is certainly not satisfactory to the workers, and I think it is high time the Premier and his Government resigned.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The time is long overdue.

Mr. Oldfield: And the member for South Fremantle could take office.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If I were to take office in a Labour Government, I could not make a worse muddle of the job than the present Government has done. There also appeared in His Excellency's Speech this statement—

Primary industries are generally prosperous.

Yet we had the spectacle within the last six or nine months of those engaged in the dairying industry saying that down the drain went their butterfat if the Government did not pay them an extra 1s. a pound.

Mr. Oldfield: Where did you get that?

Mr. LAWRENCE: The hon. member knows where I got it.

Mr. Manning: You did not get it from the dairymen.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The hon. member knows that was the position. He knows that the primary producers threatened not to produce their commodity, and yet if the worker claimed that he was not going to work until he had his elementary right satisfied to obtain a shelter for himself, his wife and children, and he is provided with that shelter by the Government—which has happened—what then is the difference between the action of those in the dairying industry and the action of the worker?

Mr. Bovell: A lot you know about it! The dairymen did not get the extra 1s. a pound.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Did he not?

Mr. Bovell: No. He got fivepence.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That was the position all right. In addition, we had in the daily Press the statement that there would probably be a wheat famine in Western Australia. In answer to questions submitted in another place there was indicated an estimate that there would be less acreage sown for wheat this year than there was last year. Perhaps the member for Vasse will deny that.

Mr. Bovell: Let a few of your workers, who you say are unemployed, go to the country and grow some wheat or produce some butter; and they will be doing better service for the country than they are now.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I suggest to the hon. member that he should not be so narrow-minded. When the butter is produced and

the wheat is grown, the commodities are sent to the port and the waterside workers have to lump the 180 lb. bags of wheat and boxes of butter for 11½ hours a day. Someone must work on the waterfront.

Mr. Bovell: But you were talking about the waterside workers being unemployed. They should go to the country where there is plenty of work.

Mr. LAWRENCE: But if they went to the country there would be no workers on the wharf. It is merely sheer ignorance that permits a member of this Chamber to make a suggestion like that. For the last three years the Government, through the Australian Stevedoring Industry Board, has been hammering to get the Waterside Workers' Federation to increase the quota of waterside workers. Now the member for Vasse puts forward his proposition—

The Minister for Health: But you said the waterside workers were unemployed.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, on certain days. Would the Minister for Health suggest that if a man were not employed on a Monday, he should go to the property of the member for Vasse and grow some wheat or turn out some butter?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Which property of his?

Mr. Manning: Do not forget about the payment of 16s. a day.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I thought that I would get that interjection. It would be interesting for the member for Harvey to understand that the payment of 16s. per day is granted to a waterside worker only if he does not obtain employment. It applies for only five days per week. The hon. member must also realise that the 16s. multiplied by five, represents £4 per week, which is to provide for the man, his wife and family for seven days at the rate of 11s. 6d. per day. If it is a four-unit or five-unit family which is common, the five members of the family have to live on 11s. 6d. per day, and the man is not allowed to obtain employment elsewhere. If the hon. member thinks that by being granted 16s. appearance money when employment is not available the wharfie is being given something which is not due to him, because people in other industries are not receiving it, he is very unjust and very unfair.

Mr. McCulloch: Some men in other industries get more.

Mr. LAWRENCE: For some 20 or 30 years, members in other industries, especially on the Goldfields, have been given four hours' pay, whether employment was available or not on the day in question. So what have the wharfies gained? If the member for Harvey happens to be off-colour tomorrow and does not get out of bed, does his pay stop for the day? He gets appearance money: probably £3 or £4 a day. I suggest that if it is good enough for him, it is good enough for the wharfie.

Mr. Manning: What I did not do yesterday, I have to do today.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That would not be much.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: A lawyer gets good appearance money.

Mr. LAWRENCE: In the matter of primary industries, what about the War Service Land Settlement Scheme? Is that satisfactory?

Mr. Manning: You want to be sure you know what you are talking about there.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am going to leave that question to the member for Warren.

Mr. Hoar: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAWRENCE: If he does not thrash the Government on this point, I will go "he".

Mr. Bovell: He is of a kindly nature, and does not thrash.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I think I can agree with the member for Vasse that the member for Warren is of a kindly nature; but his patience has been worn to such a degree that he is ready to snap, and I think that will be evidenced within the next 48 hours. We find that with regard to the tobacco industry—and the Premier cannot deny this; nor can any of his supporters—some growers have not been able to sell one single bale of their crop this year.

I have had it pointed out to me tonight that one crop which weighed 6,849 lb., constituting 42 bales of tobacco leaf, could not be sold. Some of it was valued at 100d., some at 88d., some at 76d., and some at 12d. per lb. When a private arrangement was made to sell it, the leaf valued at 100d. was sold for 36d.; that valued at 88d. was sold for 27d.; that valued at 76d., for 27d., and that valued at 12d., for 15d. Yet that tobacco cost the grower at least 60d. to 70d. per lb. to produce. So primary industry is booming and everything thing is quite all right! I say that is another fabrication.

Another subject in which I am interested is education, not that branch of it in which the member for Harvey is interested, in connection with which agricultural colleges are established, but rather in general education. Firstly, I am concerned at the lack of classrooms, as a result of which there is overcrowding and many children have to travel extremely long distances from their residences to school. Children at Willagee Park or Melville camp have to go to North Fremantle because there is not sufficient room for them at the Fremantle Boys' School.

That is very bad, but I am more worried still about some types of education which the youth of this State are receiving. I refer to a statement made only last week by the Teachers' Union concerning the immorality of comics that are becoming

available to children of school age. We even see comics portraying criminal escapades. I believe that these comics which, as the Minister has said, are imported from America, are aimed at one thing. They are aimed at the education of the youth of Western Australia for war.

They tell of foreign races, such as the Germans, Japanese, Chinese and Russians, trying to kill our own people or torture them; and when an immature child reads such things, they are indelibly imprinted on his mind. Consequently, when the war drums are beaten by such nations as the United States, as is being done at present, we find that the child's subconscious thoughts come to the forefront and he is ready to take up arms and kill his fellowmen.

When I asked the Minister a question on this matter, he told me that he agreed in the main with the views expressed by the Teachers' Union concerning the banning of the comics complained of. He went on to say he understood that the magazines concerned were mainly imported, and that import restrictions were not within the power of the State. He said representations were being made to the Commonwealth, but suggested that a greater degree of parental control would be far more effective than attempts at legislative action.

Then tonight the Premier told me there was no power in this State for the censoring of such publications, or of newspapers, radio broadcasts or any reading matter that inclines towards immorality or can be classed as not being in the best interests of the community. That demonstrates conclusively to me that the Government is not interested in this vital matter. I propose to quote from "The West Australian" of Friday, the 29th August, as follows:—

The State president of the Women's Service Guilds (Mrs. W. Kastner) said yesterday that she was glad that the education committee of the State School Teachers' Union had recommended the banning of comics that encouraged anti-social and immoral behaviour.

Mrs. Kastner spoke of a book which gave details of how to commit "the perfect crime," discussed adolescent sex problems in an undesirable way, and was "sexy" in tone.

This book, which was a cheap production, was available in Perth and had been circulated among schoolboys

The State secretary of the guilds (Mrs. G. W. Ruston) said that certain literature for children had been discovered which, in the opinion of members should not have been allowed to pass the censor.

Yet the Government sits back in its ineptitude and allows that filthy source of education for our young school children to be circulated in this State, and has done nothing at all about it. I agree that the responsibility is to some extent on the shoulders of parents to see that these things are kept out of their homes, but I suggest we cannot lay the whole onus on parents. Children are not always at home. They can go down the street and get a comic from a friend, or buy it at the news-agent's. Is it not logical and quite fair to say that the Government should have taken some action in this matter?

The Minister for Education: Are these comics the products of recent days?

Mr. LAWRENCE: They are not.

The Minister for Education: How long have you noticed them in our midst?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not admit reading them, but I know they have been around for the last 12 months. Even the authorities of the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children have taken action in the matter but, I feel, not with any prompting from the Government. The following appeared in the "Daily News" of the 23rd August:—

HOSPITAL KEEPS AN EYE ON COMICS.

Princess Margaret Hospital for Children was "quite in accord" with the idea of preventing undesirable comics from being taken into wards, said manager C. Austin today.

He was commenting on a report that the Adelaide Children's Hospital had banned all such comics from its wards.

"Ward sisters have been instructed to confiscate any literature which appears unsuitable for children, and we ask parents and visitors to co-operate in this matter," Mr. Austin said.

He said that he did not know of any instance of undesirable literature having been taken into the hospital. But, when visiting homes in which there were children, he had often noticed comics which seemed to be unsuitable for children.

I suggest that if the hospital authorities can do that, the Government could do something about it, too.

The other point I want to touch on as far as education is concerned—and it all links up with the subjects I have been discussing—is this. Because the Government of the day in this State is bankrupt, due to being denied loan money by its confederates in the Menzies-Fadden Government at Canberra, it has not had the wherewithal to construct the schools required for the education of our children. It is high time that it made some very strong protest to the Com-

monwealth on its decreasing loan grants, especially having regard to the fact that the Commonwealth has allocated £200,000,000 to a war programme, to put into guns and bombs, and let off big blasts at the Monte Bello Islands, which will do nobody any good.

The Minister for Education: I do not think the Commonwealth is paying for that.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Somebody is.

The Minister for Education: Do not attribute the expenditure to the wrong people.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Very well, let us stick to the £200,000,000.

The Minister for Education: That would be better.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If that money were not expended on war preparations, it would be a great boon to the people of Australia if it were spent on education, hospitalisation, housing and the furthering of primary and secondary industries. This country would then go ahead by leaps and bounds. We could become one of the foremost nations of the world if we were allowed to expand.

The Minister for Education: If we were allowed to stay in the country on our own which is a very doubtful result of your argument.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I might suggest to the Minister that his Government has let many people into this country during its term of office.

The Minister for Education: We have?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes.

The Minister for Education: We have not brought a single migrant here.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I thought the Governor's Speech said 64,000.

The Minister for Education: They have come, but we have not brought them.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Does the Minister disagree with the immigration policy?

The Minister for Education: No.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Then he must agree with it.

The Minister for Education: That does not mean to say that we brought them here.

Mr. LAWRENCE: But the Minister agrees with Messrs. Menzies and Padden?

The Minister for Education: The Chifley Government started the migration scheme.

Mr. LAWRENCE: But they did not carry on with it.

The Minister for Education: Do not talk rubbish. They would have carried it on had they remained in office.

Mr. LAWRENCE: But they have not been in office.

The Minister for Education: It was a wise policy up to a point and it has been slowed down now, which is quite correct.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Commonwealth Government has only slowed it down because of so much pressure being brought to bear that it had to do so. Too much is being spent today on war instead of on peace and we seem to be at war with everybody. Our young men are going to Korea and I want to know why that war has been allowed to continue. Many people in this State today believe that Korea is just a testing ground for new weapons that the war lords are producing. I do not hear the Minister denying that.

The Minister for Education: How can I deny something about which I know no more than you do—and that is not much?

Mr. LAWRENCE: As a responsible member of the Government it is time the Minister found out. With all this expenditure of £200,000,000, what a delightful hand-out this State has received. I quote—

Canberra, Friday. State's share in finance—

This is all out of £200,000,000.

Defence contracts let in Western Australia in 1951-52 represented only 3.4 per cent of the total Commonwealth defence purchases for the year. This was disclosed in the House of Representatives today when the Minister for Supply (Mr. Beale), said in reply to a question that the contracts let in Western Australia were worth £1,420,000.

The Minister for Education: If three per cent is £1,000,000 odd the total is not £200,000,000.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Does the Minister deny that the war budget is £200,000,000?

The Minister for Education: No, but it is not all spent on these contracts.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I will read our text for today and hope the Premier will send it to his colleagues in the Eastern States. It is as follows:—

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation.

Hardly had the guns been silenced after the last war and hardly had the Government finished promising a new order—after the war to end wars—than we were faced again with the proposition of a further war—

The Minister for Education: Why not place the blame in the proper quarter?

Mr. LAWRENCE: That is what I am afraid of. How can we find out which is the proper quarter?

The Minister for Education: It is fairly obvious to everyone but you.

Mr. LAWRENCE: During the Minister's lifetime—I do not wish to be rude about his age—he has probably seen three wars; the Boer war—

The Minister for Education: I was very childish then.

Mr. LAWRENCE:—the 1914-18 war and the 1939 war, with the promise of yet another in the near future. All that time we have lived under the same old system. Does the Minister deny that? Is it not only commonsense to say to ourselves "We cannot let this continue because it will mean the extinction of our race. We must clean up that system and alter it so these things may be obviated."

Mr. Bovell: Surely you do not want to adopt the system we are fighting against!

Mr. LAWRENCE: There is no question of that.

Mr. Bovell: Yes there is.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Let us use some commonsense in the matter. No-one can tell me that even when dealing with foreign races we could not by conciliation agree to some sane system of living, without becoming barbarous and desiring to cut one another's throats, blow each other's houses to pieces and kill each other's women and children.

The Minister for Education: There was one policy of appeasement that failed.

Mr. LAWRENCE: When was that?

The Minister for Education: In 1938.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am still not satisfied that the Government of the Commonwealth and this State are making a real effort to maintain the important things of life. There is no doubt that the most important things are the right to live in peace and to have decent houses, decent hospitals and education for our children.

The Minister for Housing: Have they those conditions in the country you are apparently sponsoring?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not know, but I suggest to the Minister that if I were bound by the hidebound ideas and thoughts of members on the Government side about visiting other places and seeing for myself—

The Minister for Housing: Has the hon. member been listening to Dr. Burton?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I certainly did and thought he made a pretty constructive speech.

The Minister for Housing: I am not surprised to hear that.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Other members of this Chamber also listened to him. I have a high regard for him—not that I know him personally.

The Minister for Housing: I take it he is highly regarded by members of your party.

Mr. LAWRENCE: He is highly regarded by me and I am a member of my party. I suggest that if the Minister had the wherewithal tomorrow and were asked by the people of the State to go and check up in China as to the veracity of Dr. Burton's statement, he should go. I wonder whether he would.

The Minister for Education: I can introduce you to a man who has lived there for 15 years, and you can form a better opinion on his evidence.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That is why I am not sure regarding certain statements by Burton. But on the other hand, I must be fair and I would not be satisfied with the statements of the Minister's friend.

The Minister for Health: Why not go to Russia and see for yourself?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am speaking of China. What harm could there possibly be in the Minister for Education and I going there? I am prepared to extend an invitation to him now.

The Minister for Education: I have a great desire to come back to this country. I do not know about you.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Certainly I have.

The Minister for Education: I do not think I will start on the journey.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Minister could go to China as a tourist tomorrow.

The Minister for Health: You can get your fare paid there and back tomorrow if you would like to go.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Has the Minister been asked to go?

The Minister for Health: No, but I have been to Russia and it was enough for me, and I have been to China. I do not want to go there again.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am amazed that the Minister does not seem to know the difference between Russia and China. I am speaking of a trip to China and I do not think the Minister has been there.

The Minister for Health: I am used to telling the truth in this Chamber.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I have not heard the Minister speak very much.

The Minister for Health: I have heard you speak too much.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If the Minister does not wish to hear me she can always go outside, but I generally notice her here while I have my say. Members on the

Government side have stated that the housing position in Western Australia is good, while in fact it has deteriorated greatly. Twelve months ago I challenged the Minister and the Premier and any other member of Cabinet to come through my electorate and look at the position for themselves, but they all refused. I now renew that challenge to any Minister or any member of the House. Come down and look at the housing conditions in Fremantle! The position at Coogee Beach has deteriorated as compared with that of 12 months ago. It is a blemish on the face of such a fair State as this, and it is a crying shame that such a state of affairs has been allowed to exist.

There is a Mr. Fisher living at Coogee Beach. He has three kiddies and he came here from the Eastern States, in an endeavour to do something for himself, and lived at Coogee Beach for two years. When I went to look at his place I found three little children with their legs all ulcerated. They had been bitten by fleas and had scratched the bites which had then turned septic. The Government could not see its way fit to help that family in regard to housing and so Mrs. Fisher ultimately said, "I am going home to Mother. I will have no more to do with you because you have not provided a home for myself and the children," and she went back. Unfortunately Fisher could not go as he was under a two-year contract to Masters' Dairy. He had to stay here and now the family is broken up, yet both the Commonwealth and State Governments are asking the people of Australia to propagate the race.

Twelve months ago I mentioned in this House the case of Ian Donald McRae and told how his little girl was in an orphanage at Mosman Park, in the care of the Salvation Army. She is still there, though her parents have had a priority since 1947. The housing position has not improved for them. A woman who had been refused assistance came to me yesterday. Unfortunately her husband is serving two years in gaol for a crime he committed. He has a roof over his head and cannot be evicted. His wife has six children, the eldest being 11 years of age. Shame on this Government that five of her children are in orphanages! Yet the Government tells me the housing position is good.

The Minister for Housing: We are building as many houses now as we did a few years ago.

Mr. LAWRENCE: And the Government is not building half enough.

The Minister for Housing: I think everybody admits that.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I would like to take the Minister down to Base Flats, where I could guarantee to show him one of the

worst slums in existence in Australia. It is a disgrace for a Government to allow a situation like that to exist.

The Minister for Housing: What would the hon. member do with those people? Would he let us have something constructive?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I say the whole matter is linked up with expenditure on armaments.

The Minister for Housing: What would you do with the particular camp about which you are talking?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am not talking about a camp. I am talking about the Base Flats.

The Minister for Housing: Where would the hon. member put these people?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: In houses.

Mr. LAWRENCE: But because the Government has not a good housing programme, and because of its policy, these people are forced to live in the way they are doing.

The Minister for Housing: If you ever came over to this side of the House, which I should say is extremely unlikely, I feel sure you would quickly change your views.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If I was ever part of the Government, and I will be on the Government side very shortly—

The Premier: What portfolio are you getting?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I will leave that to the members of our party. I think we have our vote by secret ballot. If ever I am a supporter of a Government, I will raise my voice in protest in my party if I see things happening similar to those which are occurring under the present Government. In the first place the Minister said that people would be given alternative accommodation in the event of eviction. The Government has fallen down on that.

The Minister for Housing: We have housed over 500, before we decided to have a look at it. The hon. member cannot deny that.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You were warned that the numbers would exceed that.

The Minister for Housing: I personally decided to have a look and the hon. member will realise that it is about time the Government considered the matter. It is not fit and proper for the Government to provide houses for people who have been evicted and have an income of £50 a week to the detriment of those people who have two or three children.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: There are a number of people on the basic wage which the Government will not house.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I would like to tell the Minister of an instance where a fellow was willing to help himself. Under the Act the Government allows £2,000 and the purchaser of the home has to find everything over and above that figure. When it comes to preparing plans and specifications we find that the cheapest quote is £2,458.

It appears on the surface that the person has to find £458. But when he goes to sign the necessary document, he is confronted with the fact that there is also a 10 per cent rise and fall which adds another £246. This means about £700 in all. After he has found that amount as the result of a good deal of scratching and scraping—and not every working man can do this—he then finds he has to provide a block of land which costs about £250. Added to this is the cost of transfer fees, etc. which amounts to £60. Eventually we find that before any part of the foundation is laid the individual concerned has to find £900 to £1,000. This amount is beyond the working man.

The Minister for Housing: Was that under the War Service Scheme or the Workers' Homes?

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Workers' Homes scheme.

The Minister for Housing: I do not think any man would come under the Workers' Homes scheme under £2,000. You know that it is intended to raise the amount to £2,500.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The amount is still £2,000; it has not been amended yet. I have complained in this House before that the private business of the individual is often the subject of investigation by the Housing Commission. It is done at the instigation of the Minister or the Government. I want to make it clear that I am very happy with the treatment meted out to me by the officers of the State Housing Commission. I can honestly say that I have had nothing but courtesy and willing co-operation in all my dealings with them. The chairman of the State Housing Commission and I have discussed ways and means of implementing a self-help building scheme for the waterside workers in Fremantle in order to take from the Government the onus of building houses for waterside workers because the union has quite a surplus of funds.

I must complain again, however, about the practice of the State Housing Commission in investigating the private business of people who have applied for assistance. For instance, there was the case of a woman who had a row with her husband in 1944. The Housing Commission files showed that he had refused to pay her maintenance until she returned to him. When I asked the reason for that I was asked quite bluntly how, if he could not pay his wife's maintenance in 1944,

it would be possible for him to pay the State Housing Commission rent in 1952. That is a Gestapo like method to which I object very strongly. I should say that the Austrian pre-fabricated houses at the Willagee Park area represent one of the worst deals that any Government at any time has entered into in this State. If we had the money to expend, I would have no objection. But I have known of people in South Fremantle—and the member for Melville will bear me out—who pay one-quarter of their income for rent. They have paid £3 2s. a week and when I asked why that amount was charged, I was told that it was computed on the capital cost of the building. All I can say is "Shame on the Government that brought such houses as those."

The Minister for Housing: What would you have done as an alternative?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I would have done what the Government is doing today. I have seen very good places by Ausden and Prosser that would buy and sell those Austrian pre-fabricated houses.

The Minister for Housing: Were not these houses bought by every State in Australia?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not know the answer to that one. But I do know that this Government purchased them.

The Minister for Housing: At the instigation of the late Mr. Chifley.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Minister would have to prove that to me.

The Minister for Housing: I certainly shall.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I hope the Minister will. The time is fast arriving when the workers that are occupying these houses will not be able to pay the rent. What will be the Government's policy then?

Mr. Graham: Kick them out.

Mr. LAWRENCE: In answer to the member for East Perth, I feel sure that no Government will get away with kicking people out of the Fremantle area or any other area for that matter. We have had trouble in Fremantle before. I have asked the Minister, the Premier, and any member in this Chamber to come down and have a look at the position in Fremantle; they have all refused. The waterside unions have been forced to take action in order to maintain their inherent rights of a shelter over their heads. The Premier referred to the matter in this Chamber not many days ago when he talked about a political stoppage in High-st., Fremantle. I would like to know where he got the idea of a political stoppage. I feel sure that if the Premier were put out with his family he would consider he was entitled to some better treatment, particularly if it was through no fault of his own. The same is the case with the working class people; they

have to take some action to maintain their rights. Whilst I have pointed out the faults of the Government I have not pointed out all its faults. I would like to say as pre-election propaganda, that a message should be sent to the people of this State signed by the Premier setting out the true position as regards finance, just what a mess the Government is in, and so allow the people to make up their minds at the next election.

The Premier: I will send them a message in due course.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If the Premier tells the truth about the position today—

The Premier: I never depart from that.

Mr. LAWRENCE: —I am positive the Government will be thrown out at the next election.

The Premier: You hope.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not hope; I know. The Premier may smile, but I feel sure that the main item on which he builds his hope of being returned to power next year is probably the tremendous strides he feels he has made in having a secondary industry such as that proposed to be established at Kwinana. I would like an assurance to the contrary from the Premier because, as far as Kwinana is concerned, I feel it is a lost cause.

The Premier: You do?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do.

The Premier: Well, I do not.

Mr. LAWRENCE: It is surprising to me why there should be this veil of secrecy surrounding the Kwinana project. I have been slighted and kept in ignorance on this matter. My electors have come to me from time to time—irrespective of whether they have voted for me or not—and have asked me what is going to happen to land which they have in that area. As the Government has refused to tell us anything about it, I am forced to reply, "I just don't know." The Government does not know. Of that I am positive. Will the Premier deny that? If he knows, why does not he tell us? Surely he could tell us what land is to be resumed, or where the roads are to go.

A case was brought under my notice the other day of a survey having been carried right through the centre of a market gardener's property, the only bit of arable land on the section, and he came to me in great ado. I could not blame him as his livelihood was being taken from him, but I could not ascertain anything from any department. Consequently, what conclusion am I forced to? Men who were working at Kwinana have been dismissed and it is rumoured that more will be put off. Can the Premier deny that? Surely the people of the State are en-

titled to be told the true position! But the Government refuses to tell us. I conclude with a strong appeal to the Government to inform the people of the true state of affairs.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [9.46]: I was greatly disappointed to find that in the Governor's Speech only passing reference was made to the very important gold-mining industry. As is well known, this industry is passing through a very trying time and is confronted with various problems, such as rising costs, and one would have expected the Government, in the circumstances, to be showing quite a lot of concern and endeavouring in various ways to assist the industry. Some of the larger companies are able to carry on and pay handsome dividends. This has been possible because they have been able to reduce their costs of production and install labour-saving machinery. The prospector and small mineowner, however, have not been able to reduce their costs in the same way, with the result that, in the main, they have had to cease their activities.

I should like to know whether the Government proposes to do anything about the mining leases which for years have not been worked but have been granted exemption on various grounds, exemptions that in some instances have extended over a number of years. Many of the holders should not receive further exemption because the leases are quite capable of being successfully developed, even in these times. Why I am so concerned about them is that, owing to the action taken by some of the companies now working, miners are finding themselves unemployed. The Speech stated that the employment position was satisfactory. I say here and now that, in the goldmining industry, it is entirely unsatisfactory. Men who have worked in the industry for years find themselves being retrenched and unable to secure employment, owing to the methods adopted by the companies to effect economies.

Let me refer specifically to some of these leases. There is the Tindals lease at Coolgardie which, on the information in my possession, could be profitably worked if taken over by a large company. There are also leases held by Paget at Yarri and De Bernalles at Agnew, others at Morgans, and others at Burbidge. Over the years, leases have been granted exemption from working conditions. With regard to Tindals lease, I think there is a difficulty because the company owes the State Government quite a large amount of money. Something should be done by the Government about this matter because, owing to the fact that this large sum is held against the property, mining companies with substantial resources are prevented from taking over and developing the lease.

Hon. E. Nulsen: What is the amount? It is about £30,000, is it not?

Mr. MOIR: I could not say what it is. I think it is fairly substantial and I understand it is more than £30,000. If a company that holds a lease is not prepared to go ahead and work it, and there are other companies with strong financial resources who could be interested the Government should seriously consider making some arrangements with those companies. There are leases at Porphyry that have had a lot of money spent on them and exemption was obtained at the time because of labour shortage. That reason is not valid today, because there is no shortage of labour in the mining industry now. There are men in the industry who cannot obtain work.

Prospectors have not been encouraged by this Government. With other Goldfields members, I last year accompanied a deputation to the Minister for Mines from representatives of the Prospectors' Association. They put up various proposals which were designed to assist prospectors and small mineowners. While one or two of the requests were granted, in the main their proposals were rejected. That is not the attitude which should be adopted by the Government towards the industry. The goldmining industry has played a very important part in the economy of this State for well over 50 years, and it will continue to do so if given sympathetic consideration.

It is true that certain things have been done by the Mines Department. Geological surveys have been carried out which have resulted in new finds. I might refer to the Surprise and Barbara Mines at Coolgardie. These were discovered as the result of reports prepared and made public by officers of the Mines Department; but, during the time this Government has been in office, it could very well have undertaken a diamond drilling campaign on quite a lot of the areas where gold has been found at comparatively shallow depths, but where, for various reasons, reefs and lodes have faulted and not gone down. If the Government had carried out a drilling programme on those fields, perhaps the lodes and reefs could have been picked up at depth.

I was interested, when the member for South Fremantle was speaking on the housing position, in the interjection of the Minister for Housing. I have come to the conclusion that there is something radically wrong with the building of houses in this State when I hear of the enormous amounts that are paid for such purposes, and the amounts which tenants have to meet by way of rent or in purchase. On the Goldfields, houses have been built under an arrangement with the mining companies and the Kalgoorlie Road Board. They are quite decent houses, too. They accommodate small families and cost £650.

The Minister for Housing: A fine scheme, too.

Mr. MOIR: Exceptionally fine. I know the Minister is acquainted with this. He has inspected the houses and knows that what I am saying is quite correct. What I want to know is why houses like that cannot be built down here for £650. Those houses are erected by contractors who have to pay for labour and also make a profit.

The Premier: What are they built of?

Mr. MOIR: Mostly asbestos and timber.

Mr. J. Hegney: Are they lined?

Mr. MOIR: Yes. They have not all the trimmings, but if I were without a house down here I would be quite pleased to live in one of them. As a matter of fact, they are far superior to some of the older houses on the Goldfields, and I am at a loss to understand the reason why houses in the city and suburbs are costing £2,000, £2,500 or £3,000. In comparison with the houses on the Goldfields that I am speaking about, they should be mansions. I understand the Minister expressed amazement that they could be built at the price. I trust he is going into the matter to see why there should be this difference in cost.

Mr. J. Hegney: The wages would be higher there than here.

Mr. MOIR: Yes, and everything else, too. All the materials have to be freighted there. I learned only yesterday that in the railway goods sheds at Southern Cross some 18 pre-fabricated pine houses are stored; and they have been there for more than seven months. A recent check revealed that the white ants had been at work, and it was estimated that the material for two houses had been completely destroyed. I do not know why these houses have been there for seven months because, with the shortage of housing down here, even 18 more houses would have helped to the extent of providing homes for another 18 families. This matter should certainly be investigated. Such materials should not be left lying around the country to be destroyed. I cannot understand why pine houses should be taken into this area because the white ants are particularly hungry there, and they regard pine as a juicy morsel.

The Minister for Housing: They are Railway Department houses. I shall let the Minister for Railways know about them.

Mr. MOIR: They were evidently not in great demand there, although I know the railway people have for a long time been asking for additional housing. A matter of vital interest to Kalgoorlie and Boulder is the question of the change-over of the Electric Power Corporation plant from wood fuel to coal. Whilst I, in common with other people on the Gold-

fields, am pleased to see anything designed for progress and to bring about economies in the goldmining industry, I have grave doubts whether this move will be beneficial. As a matter of fact, I believe it is something in the nature of a major catastrophe for the towns of Lakewood, Boulder and Kalgoorlie. I propose to quote a few figures to show what the position will be.

According to answers given in this House by the Minister for Housing, on behalf of the Minister for Mines, to questions asked by the member for Collie, it appears that the proposed changeover is imminent. It seems that it will take place by the end of the year. If it does, the local woodline will go completely out of existence. The Lakewood woodline supplies firewood and mining timber to the Golden Mile. The changeover will mean that 500 employees of the firewood company will be out of employment. About 1,500 people live at Lakewood, or on the bush line, and are engaged in the operations of the company. Their accommodation would be gone because they could certainly not be employed in the mining industry at present. As a result, their families would have to be housed wherever they were successful in getting employment. Approximately 40 employees of the power corporation would be retrenched. I do not know how many of these people have families, but probably a considerable number would have, and of course they would be in the same position.

The changeover would also have quite an effect on the business houses at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and would probably result in further retrenchment of business employees. Another angle to the question is that if the firewood company goes out of existence, the mining industry will be faced with the problem of getting mining timber. Mining timber is cut on the leases which the firewood company holds. When its employees go through the bush to cut firewood they here and there find trees of suitable proportions to be cut for mining timber. These are used either as stulls, or to timber drives, chutes and so on.

This company has its own railways, and employs people to work and repair them, and to carry on the whole operation. If it went out of existence, all these facilities would be removed so that the mining timber would have to be carted long distances by motor truck to the Government railway, and the people cutting it would not have the profitable sideline of firewood. Consequently they would have to charge an exorbitant price to make their operations pay. This would mean that the mining industry would have an added burden thrust upon it. Another aspect is that at least one private concern which supplies firewood to the Golden Mile, and also mining timber, would find itself in ex-

actly the same position. It is a serious matter when something occurs to wipe out a thriving township and industry overnight. It would be equivalent to closing down the Great Boulder Mine overnight, so members will see what a serious thing it would be for Kalgoorlie, Boulder and Lakewood. Lakewood would cease to exist, as it is there only because of the firewood industry.

In answer to questions the Premier told me that certain moneys were guaranteed to the bank for the operation of this company when it took over from the old firewood company. The original company was getting into financial difficulties, with the result that it increased the price of wood to the mining companies. Several of those companies then joined together to purchase the assets of the firewood company with the idea of running it themselves. The Government was helpful at that time and guaranteed the overdraft of £160,000, which has now been reduced by £40,000. I take it that the Government would be secured against the assets if the company closed down overnight, but I do not think they would be very valuable as no-one would want to take them over and go into the firewood industry.

The plant is valuable for its present purpose but it would not be of much use to anybody else and, if the Government had to stand by the guarantee, I think it would find that £120,000 of the taxpayers' money had gone down the drain. That angle should be taken into consideration. The Kalgoorlie Power Corporation supplies current to Kalgoorlie and Boulder as well as to some of the mining companies. Certain of the companies have their own plants—the Lake View and Star, which is the largest, is an example. I do not know whether they provide all the current they need but they certainly do provide the bulk of it.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Do they use wood?

Mr. MOIR: No, diesel oil. The power corporation is using all the firewood available. Apart from that very little firewood is used on the mines at all. This company operates as a business concern to supply power and it shows a profit. The use of coal would certainly result in economies in the production of current, but I am doubtful whether they would be passed on to the consumer to any great extent. The result would probably be better dividends to the shareholders of the power corporation.

The Attorney General: Have they ever paid dividends?

Mr. MOIR: I am not a shareholder and I do not know.

The Attorney General: I think you will find they have not.

Mr. MOIR: They have functioned in Boulder for many years and I do not think they were a benevolent society. I always understood that they showed profits. I do not think any company would continue supplying power at a loss to mines that were showing profits of from 25 per cent. to 50 per cent.

The Attorney General: They might be trying to get their money back.

Mr. MOIR: They would not get it back by showing a loss.

The Attorney General: Or by winding up their affairs.

Mr. Styants: You are confusing the old tramways company with the Power Corporation.

The Attorney General: I imagine they have never paid dividends.

Mr. MOIR: I think they have paid dividends regularly. I understand there is some talk of the Electricity Commission taking over and it has been suggested up there—I do not know how true it is—that the cost of installing the new plant has been considerably padded. On the other hand the firewood company is selling fuel at cost to the mines as it is not there to make a profit. A further question is that of continuity of supplies of current. In the past eight years we have had no industrial trouble on the woodline. In days gone by it had a bad history of industrial disputes, due to the bad conditions prevailing, but since the last trouble in 1944 there has been no unrest on the woodline.

Mr. Yates: The stoppages were not of long duration.

Mr. MOIR: No, I think three weeks on two separate occasions. Even if there were industrial disputes there now, all the people concerned are on the spot to deal with them. Under the present management of the company we have had no difficulty in straightening out any of the small irritating problems that arise from time to time, and therefore we have had no worry about the mines being short of fuel.

Mr. Yates: Do you know what that wood costs per ton now?

Mr. MOIR: I think it is in the vicinity of £3 per ton supplied to the company. I do not say that coal will not be cheaper but I question whether this is all worth it when we take these other issues into consideration. These people will be out of employment; their homes are established and many of them have been reared in that district.

Mr. Styants: The railways will transport the coal at less than cost and will show a loss on it.

Mr. MOIR: That will be an added burden on the taxpayers.

Mr. Styants: Yes.

Mr. MOIR: All sorts of problems could arise. Had this been instituted 12 months ago the mines would have been forced to close down while the metal trades strike was in progress. That would have been a serious matter for the towns in question. The mines could have been closed down for four to six months.

There is another feature to this question. Collie coal cannot be stored and large stocks could not be accumulated. Consequently, if there was a breakdown in our transport system, or a hold-up at Collie, the effect would immediately be felt on the Golden Mile and the mines would have to close down. The other essential services in the town, such as the hospital and so on, would have to be supplied with the limited power available. The people in the industries up there are most concerned as to the possible effect, and apparently one mining company does not believe that the economies will be passed on to the industry.

The Great Boulder Mining Company is at present installing, at considerable cost, a huge diesel power house to supply current to its mines. Apparently that company has not much faith in the story that the economies effected by the changeover will be passed on to the mining industry. The Government must have entered into the question somewhere because there is a Coal Distribution Board, and surely that body should have given a good deal of consideration to all aspects of this matter before it agreed that coal should be made available.

There is another matter that will vitally affect the Goldfields and I refer to water supplies. Recently I asked some questions of the Minister for Water Supply and I desire to thank him for the comprehensive answers he gave. But his figures reveal a disquieting position so far as water supplies for the Goldfields are concerned, especially for the coming summer. Less than half the water leaving the Mundaring Weir is delivered to the Goldfields. I have a mass of figures which I do not propose to quote, but I point out to members that the average quantity of water pumped from Mundaring Weir daily, in the summer, is 9,000,000 gallons. Of that total only 4,200,000 gallons are delivered to Kalgoorlie. I asked for and obtained information as to the quantity of water pumped daily to the Goldfields, the amounts used at the intermediate centres and also the amounts held in the various reservoirs. I sought that information because for several summers Goldfields people have had to suffer water restrictions. As members are aware, that is most serious so far as those people are concerned.

Some time ago the Water Supply Department stated that it would construct new reservoirs on the pipeline and one would be built at Kalgoorlie. The Minister stated that when these reservoirs were completed, it would be the end of water restrictions on the Goldfields. That statement was too optimistic altogether and I think the Minister realised it, because later on he commenced to prepare the people on the Goldfields for the blow that was to fall. He was not honest in his statement, or his excuse, because he said that the reason for the proposed restrictions was the overtime ban imposed by the Amalgamated Engineering Union, whose members are engaged on work at the pumping stations.

Now I find that the statement has no foundation in fact because water has been delivered to the Goldfields and these new reservoirs have been filled. The capacity of the reservoirs between the No. 5 pumping station, near Southern Cross, and the Goldfields, including those situated at Kalgoorlie, Norseman and Coolgardie, is 75,000,000 gallons, and at the present time they contain 68,000,000 gallons. Therefore, we can see that all those reservoirs along the line are only 7,000,000 gallons short of their full capacity. If we relied on the Minister's statement made early this year, that there would not be any need for water restrictions on the Goldfields because of these reservoirs, we should feel happy about the position. However, on investigation, we realise that the position is extremely disquieting. When one looks at the figures showing the gallonage held in these reservoirs between No. 5 Pumping Station and Mundaring, one finds a different picture.

Those reservoirs are very low because they have a deficiency of 21,000,000 gallons. So, with the shortage of water that is likely to occur in the agricultural areas because of the meagre rainfall, and because of farmers' dams not being filled, the people in those areas will have to rely almost entirely on the water supplies from Mundaring for the carrying of their stock during the summer, which will entail a large pull on the pipeline. That will result in a depletion of water for the Goldfields and a serious position will arise. Members will readily recognise that only a certain quantity can be taken from Mundaring to be pushed along that pipeline. The various agricultural users along the line draw their water from that supply, and the Goldfields get what is left.

The reservoirs, particularly that at Cunderdin, are very short. I do not know why the one at Cunderdin is short, because it has a capacity of 47,000,000 gallons, and yet it has only 26,000,000 gallons in it. There is a further shortage of 750,000 gallons somewhere else, which makes a total deficiency of 21,750,000 gallons. That means that the Goldfields will start the summer with a shortage of water.

No. 8 Pumping Station, the last along that line, has a through-put of 4,200,000 gallons per day. Members will realise what position will arise when it is known that the daily consumption in Kalgoorlie is 4,200,000 gallons per day, the consumption at Coolgardie 200,000 gallons per day, and at Norseman 350,000 gallons per day, making a total of 4,750,000 gallons. That means that the through-put of No. 8 Pumping Station is 550,000 gallons per day short during the summer. In addition, 200,000 gallons are required for Bullfinch. Of necessity, that must come from the supply available to the Goldfields.

In his reply to me, the Minister stated that the summer period lasted from December to March inclusive. Anyone conversant with the Goldfields would say that the summer lasts longer than that. However, we will accept the period given by the Minister, which comprises a total of 122 days. The amount of water used in excess of that passed through the No. 8 Pumping Station for 122 days would be 91,500,000 gallons, and the total drawn by Bullfinch during that period would be 24,400,000 gallons, making a grand total of 115,900,000 gallons to be obtained from the storage capacity if full, at 75,000,000 gallons, or at present, 68,000,000 gallons, which are held in those reservoirs. Therefore, members will realise that a serious position will arise on the Goldfields this coming summer. The deficiency between that which will be due over and above the daily delivery on the pipeline, and what is now stored in the reservoirs will be 47,900,000 gallons; that is provided those 4,200,000 gallons daily can be supplied to the No. 8 Pumping Station.

But I have serious doubts whether that can be done in view of the meagre rainfall in the agricultural areas this winter and because the dams in those parts have very little water, if any, in them. Another factor to be considered in the figures supplied to me is that they do not disclose what is the present holding capacity of the reservoirs at Barbalin and Wadaring, and I suppose there are others in the agricultural areas supplied by Mundaring Weir. They may be full and they may not be. If they are deficient in storage, their contents may have to be made up to the detriment of the amount of water that should be supplied to the Goldfields.

Hon. E. Nulsen: And it is essentially a Goldfields scheme.

Mr. MOIR: It was originally established as a Goldfields scheme, but the position has developed to the point where the agricultural areas take more water from that pipeline than do the Goldfields.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It is not fair.

Mr. MOIR: The people in the agricultural areas should be provided with water, but not to the detriment of the gold-

mining industry and the Goldfields people, for whom the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme was first established. I say that provision should be made for water supplies for the agricultural areas apart from the Goldfields scheme, or in addition to that scheme. I notice that the Minister in an answer to a question does state that the new electric pumping station to be constructed will have a maximum capacity of 15.9 million gallons. That will be at Mundaring. Of course it is very pleasing to see that that provision has been made, although it will not be of any avail unless provision is also made to take that water to where it is required.

I have not very much knowledge of these matters but I would say that the existing pipeline from Mundaring to, say, No. 5 Pumping Station, which is the other side of Merredin, would not be able to carry more water than it does at the present time. It seems to be carrying its full capacity of water now. It may be possible to force that water through a little faster, but we know what will happen if an endeavour is made to force water through above the capacity of the pipes; it would mean that the pipes would burst and there would be considerable trouble.

I do not know whether the Government proposes to duplicate the pipeline as far as Merredin, but in my opinion and in that of a lot of people who have gone into this question the only solution of the problem is to duplicate the existing pipeline, probably as far as Merredin, which would then permit an adequate supply to be given to the agricultural areas, and would not interfere with the water supply of Kalgoorlie. I would like to quote from the report of the Department of Public Works and Water Supply for the year 1950-51. At page 42 there is comment on the new reservoirs at No. 8 Pumping Station and at Kalgoorlie as follows:—

A 12 million gallon reservoir was completed at No. 8 Pumping Station. Construction commenced towards the end of the previous year.

The construction of a 25 million gallon reservoir at Kalgoorlie was nearing completion at the end of the year.

Both of these reservoirs are lined with bituminous concrete. Provision has been made for the Kalgoorlie Reservoir to be roofed, when materials are available.

The additional storages provided by these new reservoirs will enable the anticipated increased summer consumption of the Goldfields to be met. They will also provide ample security against any prolonged interruption to supply in the main conduit.

The figures contained in that report are entirely misleading. Anyone reading them would come to the conclusion that provision had been made for water supply for the summer months on the Goldfields. No doubt that may have been the intention of the department when these proposals were put up and agreed to, and when construction was commenced. From these figures, however, I think I have revealed that such is far from the truth.

Mr. McCulloch: What about the dams?

Mr. MOIR: The dams are full because, as far as the reservoirs in Kalgoorlie are concerned, I inspected two of them on Sunday and find the answers given me are quite correct. In forecasting the shortages and restrictions of water on the Goldfields this summer the Minister attributed the position to the overtime ban imposed by the Engineering Union. In that he was not honest. I do not think he would do that wilfully but the fact remains that the statement was completely untrue. The storage tanks are almost full and the daily supply is such that the amount of water required is being pumped. If overtime had been worked then of course they would not have pumped any more water to the Goldfields. But to forecast restrictions and attribute the restrictions to a particular incident which has not occurred is not being honest.

The position on the Goldfields this summer will be very serious, as is revealed by these figures. It will be so serious that it may well restrict the output of some of the mines. It will mean that some of the mines will be restricted in the amount of ore they are able to treat. It may also mean that more of the employees in the mining industry will have to be retrenched. This is a very serious outlook for the people of the Goldfields to face, particularly on top of all the other troubles with which they are confronted. I regret the Minister is absent from the House due to illness, but I hope the Minister for Education will bring this matter to his attention to see if something cannot be done to try to improve the position that must arise from the water restrictions which on these figures seem to be absolutely inevitable.

Before concluding I would like to deal with the question of accidents in the mining industry. There have been quite a number of fatal accidents on the mines over the past few years. There was a considerable number last year and a considerable number again this year. Unfortunately it is the miner who is meeting with these accidents and the union to which he belongs is very concerned about the position. Recently the union made representations to officers of the Mines Department to see whether some methods could not be evolved which

would result in the reduction of accidents whether they be minor accidents, serious or fatal.

It has been suggested that one method would be to make provision for more inspectors—preferably workman's inspectors—to be employed in the industry so that proper supervision could take place from the point of view of the Mines Department. A second suggestion is that supervisors should have a limit placed on the size of the round which they operate in the mine, in order that they may give more attention to the various places they visit during the shift, and a third is in regard to the introduction of airleg machines with carbide tungsten bits. These machines have done away with a lot of the work formerly carried out by skilled miners.

Hon. E. Nulsen: They are very light.

Mr. MOIR: Yes, they do not require the rigging of a bar, but work automatically off the air and drill the holes very quickly. Some of the men now engaged on these machines have not had much experience as machine miners. Previously a man employed on a machine would have been working in a mine for a considerable time before starting as a machine miner and would have had an opportunity to learn from observation and conversation with experienced miners the nature of various types of ground. It is important that every miner should have a knowledge of ground because his safety and that of other men working near him is involved.

The simplicity of the new machines has revolutionised the breaking of dirt and men without much experience can operate them quite successfully. The union contends that a regulation should be introduced to set a period during which a man must have experience in a mine before he is given charge of one of those machines, and I agree with that. Some times when fatal accidents have occurred, we have been of opinion that they could have been avoided had the men had the requisite knowledge of the basic factors and judgment of the ground and the steps necessary to make the place safe for working. All the employer is concerned about is the breaking of the ore, and so long as a man has the capacity to bore the holes and provide a lot of ore, he is satisfied. The safety factor also should be considered and I hope provision will be made as requested.

A limitation of the area of the round that supervisors can cover is necessary. Nothing is done about that at present. A supervisor is a highly experienced and capable man who has spent many years in the industry and has had to pass examinations to obtain his certificate, but if he has a large area of the mine to cover, he is unable to devote the requisite time to examination of individual places. If a

reasonable area were fixed, the supervisor could devote closer attention to places that needed to be watched and give the men instruction on the safety measures to be adopted. These proposals have been submitted to officials of the Mines Department and I have no doubt they will receive serious consideration.

I suppose it will be too much to hope that the present Government will give more consideration to the matter of assisting prospectors and small mineowners. Those people in the main are responsible for the existence of the mining industry. If the prospector had not been prepared to go out and use his knowledge and spend his money, mining fields would not have been discovered, and we cannot expect fresh discoveries because the prospector is a dying race. This is due to the many difficulties confronting him, difficulties that make the game not worth while. A man who has followed prospecting for any length of time becomes enamoured of the occupation and submits to a lot of hardship before giving up, but the conditions now are such that he is being forced out of the industry and there is little chance of new finds of consequence being made.

The Government should encourage prospectors to continue in the field to search not only for gold but also for strategic minerals. I am satisfied that this State has not been prospected for quite a lot of minerals that nowadays would be a paying proposition and men should be encouraged to go out and endeavour to locate them. Before they will go out, greater assistance will have to be given by the Government.

On motion by the Minister for Housing, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.58. p.m.