

the members concerned should take that action in the Federal House. They are trying to alter conditions laid down by the Commonwealth Government. The Minister wants Section 5 inserted so that the Commonwealth will accept it. The Crown Law Department has said that the previous proviso was just a jumble of words.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Not if you read it properly.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The hon. member has apparently missed his vocation. It was put together by a private practitioner. And he was sitting there when the telephone conversation was being carried on between Mr. Colloquhon and the Director of Agriculture. I cannot say any more than that.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	13

Majority against 3

#### Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. J. McI. Thomson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. A. F. Griffith

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker	Hon. J. G. Hialop
Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. R. F. Hutchison
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. E. M. Davies
Hon. C. H. Henning	

(Teller.)

#### Païra.

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. H. K. Watson	Hon. R. J. Boylen
Hon. H. L. Roche	Hon. J. J. Garrigan

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 10, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.3 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 13th October, 1954.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### HEALTH.

*As to Detergents and Incidence of Dermatitis.*

Mr. ANDREW asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Has the Health Department noted, in recent times, the high incidence of dermatitis, especially among women?

(2) As some doctors have stated that one of the causes for the great increase of dermatitis among women is the detergents in powdered soaps, will he—

(a) have officers of the Health Department make an inquiry into this allegation;

(b) make a recommendation and public statement on same?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (for the Minister for Health) replied:

(1) Dermatitis from the use of detergents has been reported in the medical press in several countries. No high incidence in Western Australia has been brought to the attention of the Health Department.

(2) (a) The Health Department is aware that dermatitis can arise from the use of blended synthetic detergent powders. No inquiry is required.

(b) Where prolonged immersion of the hands in detergent is necessary, protective gloves should be worn.

As most women readily associate irritation in their hands with the use of detergents or changes in soap powders, it is doubtful if a public statement is necessary. This matter will, however, be given further consideration.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

*As to Finalising of New Boundaries, etc.*

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

(1) Has any finality been reached yet in regard to the readjustment of local authority boundaries?

(2) If so, when will the newly defined boundaries be made public?

(3) If the answer to No. (1) is in the negative, when is it expected that this matter will be finalised?

(4) Will the new boundaries operate for the annual elections to be held in April, 1955?

(5) Is it intended to implement the new boundaries in conjunction with the proclamation of the Local Government Bill now before the House?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) It is hoped in the near future.

(4) This is not known.

(5) The Local Government Bill and the boundaries question are not associated matters.

### EDUCATION.

*(a) As to Improvements, Mt. Lawley School Ground.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Education:

When is it anticipated that the ground improvements will be commenced in connection with the Mt. Lawley school ground?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Education) replied:

In view of restricted loan moneys available for urgently required school buildings, no funds can be allocated for ground improvements this financial year.

*(b) As to Relieving Accommodation Situation at Perenjori.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that the lesser hall at Perenjori, situated approximately half a mile from the State school, is being used as a school room?

(2) What steps is he taking to relieve this situation?

(3) When will such action be complete?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Education) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The school building from Bowgada is to be removed to Perenjori.

(3) This depends upon the availability of further funds for buildings.

### RAILWAYS.

*As to Repairs, Seventh Avenue Bridge, Maylands.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he inform the House—

(1) When is it anticipated that repairs to the Seventh Avenue bridge, Maylands, will be completed?

(2) What has delayed the progress of this work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) March, 1955.

(2) Shortage of material and staff.

### GRASSHOPPERS.

*As to Plague at Mullewa and Bait Supplies.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he aware of the plight of local residents arising out of the grasshopper invasion of Mullewa townsite and district?

(2) What steps have been taken by the department to alleviate the difficulties as a result of this plague?

(3) Can he explain why, as reported in the "Daily News" of the 12th October, 1954, no supplies of poison bait were available for use by local residents?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) A request to submit requirements of poison bait for local distribution was sent to local authorities on the 13th April, 1954, and a reminder sent on the 1st June, 1954.

An order from Mullewa Road Board for 5 tons of bait, dated the 5th July, was received at the Agriculture Protection Board on the 12th July, and the order was placed the same day on Merredin mill, which is the contracting supplier.

There was some delay in despatch of the bait but on the 22nd September, Mullewa Road Board reported its arrival and requested a further 5 tons. This order was

also placed immediately and was despatched from Merredin on the 29th September.

No further requests have been received from Mullewa Road Board.

(3) Answered by No. 2.

#### FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

*As to Daily Average Number of Ships, 1953-54.*

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works:

What was the daily average number of ships occupying berths in Fremantle harbour for the year 1953-54?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

12.7 vessels.

#### ESTIMATES.

*As to Availability of Financial Statement.*

Mr. HILL asked the Premier:

Will he supply members with copies of the annual financial statement so that they can examine the finances of the State before they speak on the general debate on the Estimates?

The PREMIER replied:

Copies of the statement are now in the process of being printed and will be distributed to members when they become available.

#### KING'S PARK.

*As to Details, Proposed Olympic Pool.*

Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) In view of newspaper reports that the King's Park Board has agreed in principle to the establishment of an aquatic centre and olympic pool in King's Park, will he inform the House—

(a) whether he was consulted by the King's Park Board before that board agreed in principle to the proposal;

(b) whether the King's Park Board has power to alienate or lease any part of King's Park without the approval of Parliament?

(2) If the answer is "Yes," will he give the House details of the proposed establishment of a swimming pool in King's Park, before this act of desecration is commenced?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) No, but I have been advised by the board of the proposal.

(b) The board probably may establish on the reserve such facilities as will contribute to the public enjoyment of the reserve for the purpose for which it is

reserved; but no power to lease has been conferred by the Governor under Section 33 of the Land Act.

(2) Preliminary discussions only have taken place to date. The Perth City Council has yet to submit its proposals in detail to the board for consideration.

#### ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT.

*As to Introduction of Amending Legislation.*

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Premier:

Would he indicate to the House when he proposes to bring down the Bill to amend the Electoral Districts Act?

The PREMIER replied:

It is difficult to say, with any accuracy, and I would not like to mislead anybody—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you intend to bring it down?

The PREMIER: At the moment, I am replying to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. I should think the Bill could be introduced a week next Tuesday.

#### BILL—DENTISTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Railways (for the Minister for Health) and read a first time.

#### BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

*Third Reading.*

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.40]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [4.41]: I would like to say a word or two before the Bill is read a third time. The member for Mt. Lawley moved that it should be referred to a select committee and his object was to obtain information as to what the cost to industry would be. I think we can say that the Minister gave us scant information when introducing the measure. He said that he had previously introduced a Bill which was almost the same as the one now before the House and that on that occasion he had given sufficient information to members. I heard the charge made that the member for Mt. Lawley wanted to refer the Bill to a select committee in order to delay it. That is not so.

Surely members of this House have a right to obtain the fullest information possible! In today's paper I noticed that, in regard to the question of margins, one side said that the doubling of margins would cost industry £180,000,000. Even if that is an exaggerated claim, and the sum were halved, the cost to industry would be £90,000,000. Surely those who have to make

the decision should know what the cost to industry will be in regard to the question of workers' compensation. In many other avenues where Government expenditure is involved, such as an increase in pensions of various kinds, some estimate is given of what the cost will be. But in this case, as I have already said, we received scant information. The member for Mt. Lawley has made considerable research into this matter and he told us that the cost to industry would be something in the vicinity of £1,000,000.

The Minister for Lands: Over what period? £1,000,000 a year?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Over a period of 12 months. However, I am not in a position to say whether that figure is a correct one or not; but I think we should have some knowledge of what the cost will be. It cannot be said that members on this side are opposing the Bill when they ask that it be referred to a select committee to try to find out what the cost to industry will be. I think the Minister said that the increase in premiums would amount to 22½ per cent.

We also have some right to protest that the Minister in charge of the Bill was not present during an important part of the discussion. I would remind the Premier that this has occurred on a number of occasions and Ministers in charge of Bills have not been here when we have been dealing with them. I do not think that is fair to members. I well remember that, when we were on that side of the House, the present Deputy Premier offered the strongest protest when certain Ministers were not in their places and legislation affecting their particular departments was under discussion. I protest against the absence of Ministers when important legislation is being discussed.

I hope the Premier will give more information to members of another place than was presented in this Chamber on this measure. He complains about the treatment that his legislation receives in another place, but I do not think he can expect favourable consideration to be given to it unless members are fully informed of all the facts. We have not been informed on this occasion. I repeat that the attitude which we have taken on this matter cannot be construed to mean that we are opposing the legislation. We recognise that if there are increased costs something has to be done about it.

When we occupied the Treasury bench we brought down a Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act under which considerable increases to injured workers were granted. Last session, too, we agreed—not in full to the Bill presented, which was a similar measure to this one—that certain increases were necessary. On this occasion we have not been given information to which we are entitled, and I

think we have every right to ask that the Bill be referred to a select committee so that the requisite information can be made available to us.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [4.47]: I fear that I must support the points of view expressed by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to this matter and also add some other points which I think ought to have been taken into consideration. The Leader of the Opposition has referred to the cost to industry. I do not mind whether it is referred to in those terms or by some other terms. But, in the present circumstances, I think this House, and members on this side in particular, are entitled to know, with some exactitude, just what is likely to be the effect of this legislation on the amount that will be borne by people in industry of various kinds, if the Bill becomes law. I am making more particular reference to primary industry at the moment.

It is well to recognise that the prices for primary production which have been prevailing in the last few years are today by no means certain of being maintained. We are already aware of some decline in wool prices. When I say "some decline," I mean a decline below those which prevailed at the end of last season, which were considerably lower than those which had obtained in the early part of that season and, of course, much lower than those that prevailed in years before that. At the same time there is the clearest evidence that the cost of production on farms in Western Australia—as well, no doubt, as elsewhere in the Commonwealth—has been steadily increasing so that the margin between prices and costs is steadily narrowing.

Australia, and Western Australia as part of it, is substantially dependent for its economic progress and success upon the successful operation of primary industries. More particularly is that so in regard to its overseas financial resources which, when they weaken, as they have been weakening in recent times because of the fall not only in the export values of our products but also in the quantity of those products, make it the more difficult for us to import into this country supplies that we require from overseas either because those who wish to procure them are unable to make the necessary finance available or because the Commonwealth Government has, in recent times, decided to impose further import restrictions.

We know perfectly well that there would be a strong recession in business in this State and in the Commonwealth and a considerable diminution in employment and the over-employment position, I think I might say, which is in existence at present, if there were a state of affairs in the primary producing industries where the costs of production came still nearer, or perhaps exceeded,

the prices which are being received by those industries. It would be a sorry state of affairs indeed if that took place. If we look at the wheat industry at present it will be found that we are faced with two aspects which immediately come to notice.

One is the difficulty of disposing of the product in the overseas markets as compared with what was the position in recent years and the other, in Western Australia, unfortunately—and I think in other States as well—very considerable diminution of production due to adverse weather conditions. But so far as I can see there is no reduction of any sort ascertained in the costs of production, which, from the assessed figures which are accepted by all authorities in Australia, are rapidly drawing near to the average price which the wheat farmer is receiving in the net result for the product he is placing on the market.

So we can, with almost all of the products of primary industry at present, reach the same conclusion; that the costs of production are rapidly drawing near—and in some cases running the risk of passing—the prices that can be obtained by the producer for the product upon his property. Therefore it behoves us, at every opportunity, to do what we can to keep down, or at least stop from rising, the costs of production. In recent times various factors have militated very strongly against that possibility.

As one example, we know that the Government of the day has found it necessary, and very substantially, to increase the transport costs on the railway system. That, in the net result, must increase the costs of production on every property. But it is true that, in effect, the wage level has been more or less pegged in the last nine or ten months. If it had not been, I venture to say that the costs of production would, in some cases, have exceeded the available return. If that had taken place those engaged in that particular branch of industry, whatever it might be, would have had great difficulty in adjusting their financial arrangements.

Thus when we come to items such as increased premiums on workers' compensation, which I believe the Minister has intimated might easily amount to 20 per cent., and when we realise the very considerable amount that is being spent today in costs of production on the wages and remuneration of those engaged in it, we must understand that on this question of what additional amount is involved, we must have some information before we can be expected to readily agree to the proposal that has been placed before the House this week.

I think we want to do the best we can, but we must not overlook the national economy, even to some extent, nor the interest of those engaged in any particular branch of industry merely for the

purpose of increasing the benefits that are received by another section of industry. To do that would be the negation of commonsense and yet it might be what we are asked to do in this instance. If we cannot obtain the information in a regularised way and in detail, such as the proposed select committee would probably achieve for us, the natural inclination, as far as I am concerned, would be to refuse to support the measure.

The situation is this: If I do not know what it is going to do to the people to whom I am mainly responsible, in the way of increasing the costs that they are called upon to bear, knowing their difficulties both in regard to finance and weather conditions, is it not natural for me to be reluctant to support a measure which I otherwise would only be too willing to support? If it were only a question of one section sharing the increased prosperity of another, I would have nothing to say against it.

That was the position some years ago when legislation was introduced, not only by myself, but also by my colleague sitting on the front bench, to increase the benefits that were to be derived by those receiving compensation. But when it is as at present, when I see the margins to be made from primary production declining and the prospects of them becoming better diminishing, then I must ask myself: Am I to support this proposal or not? And not being in the position of having the full information available to me, I must reach the conclusion that I had better oppose the proposal. There is another aspect that should be looked into.

Last year a proposal was put forward in another place to insert in this measure a different type of schedule, which, in the net result, was not inserted. I have discussed that matter with people in the medical profession who are by no means concerned in the slightest degree with the rights and wrongs of employers' liability or workers' compensation as such. They are interested almost, if not completely, in the question of what is the best and the fairest way, from the medical point of view, to assess the compensation that is to be paid to a worker for his injury. They regard the schedule in the existing Workers' Compensation Act as a Heath Robinson type of affair, whereas the proposed schedule that was put forward last year was one which would confer great benefit on persons who suffered disabilities in the course of their employment.

But here again no opportunity has been taken to inquire into that matter and except for the information I have just mentioned, as a layman I have no knowledge of the position at all. But the information could have been obtained, and it would have been advantageous to the House and to the country if it had been obtained; and

there was plenty of time to obtain it and give it consideration. That is just another aspect that interests me, but my major reason for saying it is impossible for me at the moment to lend unqualified support to this measure, is the one which I spent some time on in the earlier stages of my remarks. I do not know what additional cost it will impose upon that section of the community which indulges in primary production, of which there are a very large number in my district. And not knowing what the effect is, I am naturally chary of the measure, as they are. Accordingly, I am sorry to say I cannot support the third reading.

**MR. ACKLAND (Moore)** [5.1]: I do not intend to take up very much of the time of the House, but I want to support the remarks made by my leader, the member for Stirling. To me it is rather amazing that the Bill should be persisted with while the Minister for Labour is away. I would like to point out to the Premier that the revenue derived by this country this year must be considerably less than it has been for the last two or three years. Already, with the drop in the price of wool—which on the first sale was roughly £20 per bale lower, and since then there has been a further slide in values—this country must lose at least £3,500,000 from the wool clip.

Having just returned from a 500-mile trip through the Mt. Marshall and Moore electorates in the wheat growing districts, I know that, whereas if we had had a normal crop of wheat this year there would have been nearly 40,000,000 bushels of wheat to be delivered; the estimate has been reduced twice, and now it is in the process of being reduced yet again. It was reduced from 40,000,000 bushels to 36,000,000, then to 32,000,000, and a fortnight ago it was suggested it would be in the vicinity of 29,000,000 bushels.

Yesterday I was in the company of the inspectors of the wheat handling organisations as they visited the different committees set up throughout the State with reference to the handling of this year's crop. Although they have not completed their final quote for this year's harvest, I feel quite confident that we are not likely to have a wheat crop of more than 25,000,000 bushels to be delivered for sale. If that is so, it must mean that we are going to have a smaller wool clip of £3,500,000; and with a crop of 12,000,000 bushels below average, it means we must have somewhere between £6,000,000 and £7,000,000 less for wheat.

On top of that, industry—and all industry—is going to be asked to bear further burdens under the provisions of this Act, if this measure becomes law. Accordingly, I thought it would be just as well to let the Government know that the people of this State are not going to have as much money to spend as they had in previous

years, and that the position could be very much worsened by the passing of this legislation. Therefore, I support the member for Stirling in what he has had to say, and would point out to the Premier the position as far as the two main revenue-producing industries of the State—firstly, wool and, secondly, wheat—are concerned. I can easily see that there will be somewhere between £10,000,000 and £12,000,000 less available for expenditure during the coming year.

**HON. A. R. V. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley)** [5.5]: I was a little disappointed that the Premier did not accept the suggestion of the Opposition that a proper, thorough and technical inquiry be made into this question. I agree with what has been said by the Leader of the Opposition, and by the member for Stirling, and I have very little to add to what they have stated.

In the course of his second reading speech, the Premier himself admitted that in some cases he did not consider the compensation was adequate, and I understood him to mean that he referred to those cases where there was total or dangerous disablement. On the other hand, he did admit that perhaps in some cases which were provided for by the Bill, some adjustments could take place. I refer to the case where a man with heart disease falls dead inside his gate and his widow gets no compensation; but if he falls dead one pace outside, compensation is payable.

There are many adjustments that could take place because the Second Schedule has not been adjusted for very many years. It certainly has not followed the trend where pensions are payable for war injuries. It would have been advisable to seek the advice and assistance of the medical profession in drawing up a schedule which would have rendered compensation comparable to the disability that was actually suffered. Accordingly, I think it was regrettable in an important measure like this that technical advice and evidence were not given.

I want to add only one more remark, and that is with reference to the Minister. I did ask the Premier for an adjournment, and he informed me that the Minister for Labour would be away if the adjournment took place. He asked my view, and I said I had no objection, as the Premier had intimated that he would handle the matter personally. So far as that aspect was concerned, I was fully aware that the Minister would not be here on Tuesday last and I expressed my personal agreement—for what it was worth—that the Bill should be handled by the Premier, as it has been.

That is only a personal explanation as far as I am concerned, and one about which the Leader of the Opposition knew nothing. I think it is regrettable that

the Premier did not allow us two or three weeks to investigate the Bill and the schedules thoroughly, because I feel much greater justice would have been done to everyone affected by the legislation, and to those who were directly and indirectly obliged to assist in the payment of this compensation. I must therefore oppose, in protest, the third reading.

**MR. BRADY** (Guildford-Midland) [5.10]: I support the third reading and am amazed that the Opposition has indulged in tactics aimed at attempting to stop the passage of the Bill. If Opposition members wanted to be fair, they would, during the Committee or second reading stages, have discussed the Bill at greater length than they did. The Bill must have gone through the second reading stage in record time and now an attack is made on it on the third reading. In a matter such as this, one can become very embittered by reason of the tactics being employed.

While I do not wish to be wrathful with Country Party members, because they may have been concerned with the future, I cannot see how the Liberal Party can be so worried because the followers of that party have reaped a rich harvest in the last five or six years; and, it appears that the harvest will continue for quite a time. Members on this side of the House are concerned with the effect of the legislation on the families of workers who are physically disabled as a result of injury received from their work.

When listening to the second reading speech of the Minister, one must have felt that he was more than fair in the way he introduced the Bill and in the comparisons he made with the other States. He said that in some States there was no limit to the compensation that could be paid. To try to catch up with the benefits received by workers in other parts of Australia, the Minister saw fit to introduce this Bill. He pointed out that Western Australia had been in the vanguard for many years in the payment of benefits under workers' compensation.

In 1925, when the late Hon. A. McCallum, as Minister for Labour, introduced workers' compensation legislation in this Parliament, it was hailed as being the best in Australia, if not in the world, yet today, this State is lagging behind most other States, and lagging behind despite the fact that it is so prosperous. Western Australia is passing through a period of prosperity despite the dark clouds hovering on the horizon. I hope that this Bill will pass the third reading so that the workers in this State will be handed some semblance of justice.

If I were a Country Party member, I would also be concerned about the cost to industry, but why should not Country Party members concern themselves with the cost of insurance generally? Why do

they not ask for a select committee to inquire into the number of insurance companies operating, and into the number of employees engaged in insurance work who could well be engaged in other types of employment? At present there are too many companies carrying on the business of insurance. If insurance generally could be transacted with fewer companies, then the cost of insurance to primary producers and to industry generally would be lower.

The remarks I made concerning insurance companies can be applied to other companies and to such factors as their taking of huge profits out of industry. Most members will realise what is going on as evidenced in a report in "The West Australian" of last week. There was a full page advertisement by the oil companies condemning the Minister for Prices for fixing the price of petrol; and, they went on to show that this was a most unfair act. They said that retail firms were getting much greater profits today than they did for many years past. That is not correct.

**Hon. A. V. R. Abbott:** But that is not shown in the Commonwealth Government's statistics.

**Mr. BRADY:** I refer hon. members to the article, and if the member for Mt. Lawley thinks otherwise, I should like to hear him. The fact remains, as is well known to everyone, that the secondary industries and the retail industries have gone through very prosperous times. It is therefore a most inhumane and anti-social attitude adopted by both the Liberal and Country Parties in this House to try to prevent the working man and his family from receiving social justice. All that this Bill seeks to do is to give the workers social justice. Just imagine the maximum amount that can be paid to the widow of a deceased worker—£2,000.

**Mr. Moir:** It is not always £2,000.

**Mr. BRADY:** Under certain circumstances it is less, when deductions are made. The sum of £2,100 would not even buy a house for the widow and her family. So if a worker sacrifices his life in industry for the economic welfare of Western Australia, his wife and children would not even be given a decent house. I think that the Country Party, backed up by the Liberal Party in this House, has adopted a most unrealistic approach in asking for a select committee. Why do those parties not ask for select committees to inquire into the action of other people who are making a direct profit from primary producers and from the community generally? The reports of such committees would be most enlightening. Members would then be able to see what sections are really getting at the farmers.

We know that there are dozens of parasites in the community. The member for Moore quoted the example of the purchasing of batteries in this connection. Just

as that went on a few years ago, it is going on in a more intense form today. For these reasons I hope that the third reading will be passed and that there will be no further waste of time.

**MR. PERKINS (Roe)** [5.15]: Now that the Government has rejected the move for an inquiry to determine a proper level of benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act, I feel there is not very much justification for passing the third reading of this Bill. Members on the Government side of the House other than the Minister, have not sought to justify any particular level of benefits. The member who has just resumed his seat—

**Mr. Moir:** How can you say that? You were not in the Chamber last night!

**Mr. PERKINS:** Of course I was. I heard all the hon. member had to say.

**Mr. Moir:** Did that not convince you?

**Mr. PERKINS:** A number of speakers attempted to make out a case for a higher level of benefits than that proposed by the Minister in the Bill. The question is: What is the proper level of benefits? Obviously members on the Government side of the House do not know. Opposition members would not like to be dogmatic as to the proper level of benefits. What we are asking for is an inquiry to find out the proper level, bearing in mind the difficulties which industry in Australia is passing through at the present time and the desire to do the right thing for injured workers.

All members will realise that the benefits under workers' compensation legislation are not the only payments received by workers if they are injured in the course of their work. A great many employers in certain circumstances do grant more than the amounts provided under the Act. That is only natural. When an employee has given good and faithful service, and is injured through no fault of his own, as a result of which his family is at a serious disadvantage, many employers will do more than what the law provides. On the other hand, there are other accidents in industry in which an employer feels compelled to pay only what is provided by the Workers' Compensation Act.

I do not want to be dogmatic about the benefits that should apply under the Act, but I do say that an inquiry should be held to ascertain what the proper figures should be. It is useless for members on the Government side to say that the cost of workers' compensation insurance does not have a very material effect on industry. If they made inquiries from employers, they must be convinced that this is one of the costs imposed on industry.

There are many industries that are experiencing some difficulty in meeting competition. We read in the Press from time to time references to the desirability of the

Government's placing restrictions on imports from overseas in order to safeguard the solvency of certain industries in Australia. I realise that in many industries there is considerable room for increased efficiency, but we must bear in mind that industries in Australia have to meet certain costs that are very much higher than those imposed upon competitors outside of Australia. Surely, if we are going to tackle the problem from a national point of view, we should not impose charges on industry before making searching inquiry to ascertain what industry can bear!

I greatly regret that the Government has seen fit to refuse further inquiry into the matter. Judging by the reply of the Premier last night, it appeared that the Government had not given very great consideration to the question of holding an inquiry. As a result of the Government's refusal to accede to our request, I feel that we would be fully justified in refusing to support the third reading of the measure until a proper inquiry has been held.

**MR. MOIR (Boulder)** [5.23]: I listened with considerable surprise to the remarks of the member for Roe. At first, I thought that he could not have been present in the Chamber last night when the matter was under discussion, but then I recalled that he was present during the debate. However, I am thoroughly convinced by the remarks he has made that he was not paying any attention to what was said. He showed that he was not even conversant with the terms of the motion moved by the member for Mt. Lawley, because he began by saying that he believed a select committee should be appointed to inquire into the question of what would be a just amount to pay to an injured worker. That was not the motion; the motion was for a select committee to inquire into the question of the added cost to industry if the amendments proposed in the Bill were adopted.

**The Premier:** And the total time occupied in discussing the motion for a select committee was about five minutes.

**Mr. MOIR:** No logical reason was advanced by the member for Mt. Lawley in support of the motion. I consider that somebody must have intimated to the member for Roe that he should have a go at the Bill on the third reading and that he merely got up and talked. It would be well if, as suggested by the member for Guildford-Midland, members of the Opposition interested themselves in the cost of workers' compensation insurance and inquired who is getting the big rake-off from it. If members of the Opposition desire figures, they can easily be obtained.

When the member for Mt. Lawley was Attorney General, he introduced a Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act, but he did not present to the House figures



showing what the increased cost to industry would be. He merely gave reasons for introducing the Bill to the effect that he thought payments should be brought more into line with the then-existing value of money. He did not see fit to supply the House with figures showing what the increased cost to industry would be.

The Leader of the Country Party, in 1948 or 1949, introduced a Bill to amend the Act, and that measure provided for considerable increases in compensation. The total amount payable was raised from £750 to £1,250, which members must agree was a very considerable increase. I was not a member at the time, but I read the reports very closely, and I cannot recall that the hon. member supplied the House with figures showing the expected added cost to industry. Thus, when members of the Opposition occupied seats on this side of the House and held responsible positions, they did not see fit to supply such figures, but now, from the other side of the House, they are asking for figures which they contend should be obtained by means of an inquiry.

If they were honest in their desire to know what the increase would be, they could obtain an approximate idea from information that is available to them. I find it very interesting to delve into figures, and I have taken out some from the "Pocket Year Book" of 1953, showing the transactions for 1951-52. The general insurance companies in that year had a premium revenue of £740,928, and the expenditure on claims amounted to £350,284, leaving a surplus to cover working expenses and profit of £390,644, or more than the total amount paid in claims.

Those figures are rather staggering. In the same year, the State Government Insurance Office had a premium revenue of £461,906, and the expenditure on claims was £157,127. Its costs are given as £42,270, so the surplus, after paying claims, was £262,509—quite a large sum in proportion to the claims paid. Thus, members will realise that the cost to industry is not the amount paid in claims for compensation, but is the surplus that accrues to the insurance companies.

Mr. Court: There is a statutory committee that fixes the premium rates.

Mr. MOIR: The member for Nedlands may know of some mysterious way of otherwise handling those figures, and if he can deduce some result different from that which I have given, I shall be interested to hear it. The combined premium revenue of the insurance companies in that year was £1,202,834. An increase of 40 per cent. under the Workers' Compensation Act would mean an additional premium revenue of £481,133. The combined claims paid out amounted to £507,311, and a 40 per cent. increase on that sum would amount to £202,924. This is not a great

increase on the amount of claims, but the increase in the revenue and the profits of the companies, is tremendous.

I suggest to members on the other side of the House that instead of worrying about whether we can afford to give this increase to injured workers, they should have an inquiry into the profits that these insurance companies are drawing from industry by way of workers' compensation premiums. I say here and now that no profit should be made out of workers' compensation. I would prefer to see some authority set up to deal wholly and solely with workers' compensation so that the total cost to industry would be the payment of the claims plus the cost of conducting the business.

As I said last night, I consider that to hold an inquiry would simply mean the delaying of the granting of the increases, and I see no justification for any delay. When the member for Stirling was a Cabinet Minister and introduced a Bill to increase the maximum income from £750 to £1,250, he must have been quite satisfied that industry could bear the burden. That amendment merely brought the State Act into line with what was operating in the Eastern States.

That is all that this Bill is expected to do. It will bring the Western Australian compensation Act into line with the legislation in the other States. I do not think there is any need for an inquiry, and I am totally against the motion that was brought forward. I fully agree that the third reading of the Bill should be approved of. I can see no reason why it should not.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [5.34]: I have not, during the second reading or the Committee stage, taken any part in the discussion on the Bill which affects a large proportion of my electors, most of whom are wage-earners in an industrial and mining town. This measure is not asking for anything over and above what exists in the majority of the States of Australia as far as workers' compensation payments are concerned. I was rather struck by the term "benefits" as used by members of the Opposition. They have a peculiar sense of what a benefit is if they think it is a benefit for a man to get injured or to lose his life in the course of his employment.

An attempt has been made to draw a red herring across the track because the Minister who introduced the Bill is not present. I can understand that from members who have not held Cabinet rank, but those who have raised the point have been Ministers of the Crown, and they know as well as I do that a Bill is not the prerogative of any one Minister, but represents the aggregate opinion of Cabinet.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Minister is in charge of his own departmental Bill, surely.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Minister may be technically in charge of the Bill here, but the principles and the contents of legislation are approved by the whole of Cabinet before a Bill is presented to Parliament. Quite a number of Cabinet Ministers are here, and they are prepared to give any information—this includes the leader of the party, who is the Premier of the State—in connection with the contents of this Bill. If it were the prerogative of a Minister to draft a Bill without having to submit it to anyone else, there might be some merit in the objection raised that the Minister who introduced the Bill was not present during the debate on it.

Hon. D. Brand: Then there was no substance in the objections raised by you people when we were over there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We will not hark back. I have no recollection of that. I certainly never raised the point. I would say that no legitimate objection can be taken because of the absence of the Minister who introduced the Bill. The measure came here with the full approval of Cabinet; and there are nine Cabinet Ministers, including the Premier, who are here and who are prepared to discuss its merits or to give information in connection with it. I was struck, during the second reading debate, with what appeared to me to be an almost callous disregard for the fate or the condition of the man who is unfortunate enough to be injured in industry. It appeared that the profits being made by the employer were more sacred than the life or limb of the individual who was earning the dividends for him.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That is entirely wrong.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I will take the assurance of the Leader of the Opposition that, as far as he is concerned, it is wrong, but it did seem to me that the whole tone of the debate was that it would mean a reduction in the percentage of dividend if the amount suggested here were granted to our workers. But this amount, after all, is what applies to their contemporaries in industry in the Eastern States. It goes without saying that firms in Western Australia have over the last 12 months made increased profits. That is quite evident by the returns which they are compelled by law to make public from time to time.

Almost any day we can pick up "The West Australian" and look at the business section where we can see that there have been increased turnover and increased rates of dividend. Why should not the workers in this State be brought up at least to the standard of compensation payments that apply in the other States, should they be unfortunate enough to be injured whilst

following their employment? If they get killed in the course of their work, why should not their dependants get the same scale of payments as are provided for in the Eastern States?

The Country Party members have given us a picture of the calamitous results which this increase of payments would mean to primary industry. I think they must have had their tongues in their cheeks because they know, as well as I do, that the rate of premium paid for a farm worker is much less than that for the factory or mine worker in this State and that the profits which have been made, and are still being made, by our primary industries—despite the adverse season that we have had so far and the slight recession in the prices of wheat and wool—are sufficient to more than cover this increased cost. Curious reasoning was exhibited by the member for Roe who, in effect, put forward the argument that because the value of our primary products was coming down, the workers' compensation payments should come down in proportion.

Mr. Perkins: That is not so.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member reads the report of his speech in "Hansard," he will find that the theme of his argument was that because there had been a recession in the prices obtaining for wheat and wool—not mentioning meat, where I do not think there has been any recession—these increases should not be granted. He did not adopt that line of argument in the days when the primary producer was receiving £1 per lb. for wool and 15s. per bushel for wheat. At the beginning of this season they said they wanted 18s. 3d. per bushel for it.

Despite the slight recession in prices of primary products, there is still an ample margin of profit for the primary producer out of which to pay the slightly increased premiums required to give the worker in primary industry these increased compensation payments. If, on the one hand, it is argued that because the prices of farm commodities are undergoing a slight recession there should be a reduction in wages and in compensation payments, it is only logical to say that in flush periods, when prices are up, wages and workers' compensation payments should rise accordingly.

The result of that argument would be that wages and compensation would go up and down like a thermometer, in accordance with the prosperity of the industry concerned. I am particularly disappointed with the attitude adopted by at least some members opposite and in my opinion, when they had yesterday an opportunity to put their side of the case—particularly in connection with the motion to refer the question to a select committee or a Royal Commission—they failed lamentably. The debate fizzled out in about five minutes and

no attempt was made to justify it. In my opinion, it has come to the notice of the political bosses in St. George's Terrace and in the war office in Hay-st. West that a very poor case was put up in this Chamber last night—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Not one word from either of them, so your imagination is running riot.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** I believe members opposite have had the political whip cracked over them for the poor case they put up when they had the opportunity, during the last couple of weeks, to state their views in connection with this matter, and as a result they are now offering this belated criticism of what, after all, in my opinion and that of most people, is a fairly reasonable proposition. If that is not so, I challenge members opposite to call for a division when the question is put, in order that we may see those who have the courage of their convictions.

Let us see those on the Opposition side of the House who are prepared to record a vote against the proposal to increase workers' compensation payments in Western Australia to at least the same rates as obtain in the Eastern States. If they are prepared to do that in the open, I will be satisfied that they have the conviction that the payments proposed in the measure are too high and would affect industry detrimentally. If they conscientiously believe that, they are entitled to vote in that way on a division. I repeat, therefore, that I challenge them to call for a division in order that we may see those on the Opposition side of this House who have the courage of their convictions and will vote against the third reading of the measure.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [5.45]:** My only reason for rising to speak to this debate, Mr. Speaker, is to try to find out what is in the minds of Country Party members in this House. Each of them who has spoken to the measure has raised the argument that an inquiry should be held because of the possible effects on the cost of our primary products, which would not necessarily be recovered in the prices received. I cannot follow that argument at all. It would be a most extraordinary sort of Royal Commission or select committee which sat to inquire into the costs of farm products, because I do not think the inquiry could possibly be completed in 12 months.

I am convinced that an inquiry of that description would serve no useful purpose at all. It would not be just a matter of indicating what was the cost of clearing per acre, the cost per chain of erecting a fence or the cost of buildings and structural improvements on a farm, because we know that the machines and materials used would embrace at least a dozen more

industries, and the inquiry would have to trace the costs back to the manufacturing industries in order to see what the effect of the increased premiums would be.

In that way the inquiry would involve the production of tractors and other farm machinery, as well as all the other materials used on a farm. Those taking part in the inquiry would have to go into the ramifications of perhaps 20 industries and when the whole result had been obtained it would be of no value whatever. It would not be possible by an inquiry of that kind to indicate what additional costs would face the agricultural industries. I can therefore only conclude that the Liberal section of this Tory Opposition must have cracked a big whip over its neighbours on the cross benches so as to get them at all costs to say something.

Let us take the argument of the member for Moore—if it was an argument or could be conceived to be such—with regard to the costs in respect of wheat and wool. The same applies to the member for Stirling, who referred to the fact that costs are daily getting closer to prices. That is true, but let us examine the statement in regard to wheat alone. In past years the wheatgrower—for the last six or seven seasons—has received many shillings above the cost of production of wheat—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: How many?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Many. The price of wheat has gone as high as 21s. per bushel on the world market and there is a guaranteed price of 14s. 1½d. per bushel for home consumption in the Commonwealth, while the costs are only 12s. 7d. per bushel. If the stabilisation scheme referendum which is being held at present is carried, as appears likely, the home consumption price of wheat in this State will still show that margin for five years under the stabilisation proposals.

On all exports up to 100,000,000 bushels, the cost of production will be guaranteed by the Commonwealth Government, and in the cost of production of wheat is included insurance, and in that is included premiums for compensation. So as far as we can look into the future—the reasonable future—the percentage increase that is liable to occur as a result of this measure being carried, is not only negligible, but will also be adequately provided for in the cost structure set up under our ordinary arrangements throughout the Commonwealth in regard to wheat.

Mr. Ackland: Do you really think that the wheatgrowers will get the cost of production for this year's wheat?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I do, because that will be the law of the land.

Mr. Ackland: Those who know say that they will not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know how the hon. member arrives at that conclusion. Every State Government in the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth Government itself, has agreed that they will get the cost of production.

Mr. Owen: Not in a drought year. If their returns are half what they normally are, and the costs are the same, the cost of production is almost doubled.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The cost of production goes up on a formula that stretches back over some 20 years and is considered to be equitable in every respect. So long as all Governments in the Commonwealth adopt a policy of that description, the wheatgrowers can rest assured that they will get the cost of production.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation in the Chamber.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Included in the cost of production will be the item of insurance, and that will include the coverage for ordinary premiums. In regard to wool, farmers are still getting more than the cost of production—a long way more.

Mr. Mann: You have no idea of what you are talking about!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know, as well as the hon. member, what is occurring. The argument of the Country Party in this particular matter—whatever reason its members had before they came here—is not sincere.

Hon. A. F. Watts: That is rubbish.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not one member of the Country Party has raised a legitimate argument this afternoon as to why the Bill should not be carried. Apparently members of the Country Party Opposition have agreed among themselves that they cannot let their comrades down; it is about time they did, and it is about time they realised what this Government has done to stop exploitation of farmers of this State. A few short weeks ago, we attempted to stop exploitation of the community when we introduced a Bill to control prices. But how many members of the Country Party voted in favour of it? Not many—in fact, not any.

The Minister for Railways: Did the member for Roe vote to protect the farmers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the true measure of the sincerity of the Opposition. All that they have done this afternoon has been, as the Minister for Railways said, to draw a red herring across the trail. Not one argument raised has had any substance, and I am surprised at members speaking the way they have done. They ought to be honest in this matter because if there is one thing more difficult than anything else, it is to assess what would be the minute increase in

costs on any farm product as a result of this measure. It is almost impossible, and only generalities can apply. But when dealing with the other side of industry—secondary industry—one can be more precise in what one's costs will be. One can fix a cost on such industries almost down to the fraction of a penny.

Over the last few years, and in particular over the last 12 months, the people in secondary industries have been able to do this because the wage of the ordinary working man and woman in this country has been pegged. That is the time, above all others in the history of the Commonwealth, that profits in industry have reached their highest level. Over that period, workers' wages have been pegged, but if one looks at any section of industry one finds that enormous profits have been made and, as a result, higher dividends have been paid.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And at the same time, more money has been paid into the Commonwealth Savings Bank accounts.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members of the Liberal Party, who are the political mouthpieces of this section, complain about increases being paid to the ordinary working man by way of compensation. These working people have nothing else to offer but their health and their hands, and the denial of increased compensation benefits cannot be justified. I do not believe that there is one member opposite, either of the Liberal Party or the Country Party, who is absolutely sincere in the arguments he has put forward on this question. If members opposite are sincere, let them face up to it on the floor of the House by having a division.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That will be O.K.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Let us do that. We ought to recognise the fact that working-class people—and they represent 90 per cent. or more of the world's population—in these days of progress and increasing prosperity, are entitled to increased compensation payments because their lives are endangered every day from eight o'clock onwards when they go to work.

Hon. D. Brand: But does not that apply to everybody?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course it does, and so should these compensation payments. It should be such a clearly understood fact that there should be no opposition from members in respect of it. That is why I say that members opposite are lacking in sincerity when they discuss this matter. They talk about supporting the working-class people.

Hon. D. Brand: They have, and they do.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When members opposite say that, they speak with their tongues in their cheeks. They ought to remember that there are a lot of people

in this country who have to depend on their judgment and decision as to whether they will be able to get reasonable compensation payments, or benefits, as the member for Roe likes to call them. This Bill has been carefully thought out and we do not need to have a select committee, or anything else, to find out anything further about the subject.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You have satisfied yourself, so you are perfectly satisfied.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot recall any amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act, introduced by the Liberal-Country Party Government, where such facts as have been asked for this afternoon were presented. So far as I know, not one member of those two parties has ever asked for a select committee on occasions when the Liberal-Country Party Government introduced an amendment to the Act.

Hon. A. F. Watts: There was a Royal Commission before the 1949 measure was introduced.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Over many years when many amendments were introduced we did not have a Royal Commission every time we had an amendment to the Act. Since I have been here, I cannot remember any Liberal or Country Party member making such a suggestion.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Now you are going back over your tracks. You said that there had never been an inquiry. That is not true.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am trying to impress upon the minds of members opposite the necessity to do what is fair and just, instead of trying to make a political football of the question for some gain that might be obtained in some quarters that the members of the Opposition personally represent.

Mr. Perkins: You do not know what a fair and just thing is!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Do I not?

Mr. Perkins: You are only guessing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: So far as the working class people are concerned, we cannot expect anything else from an Opposition that is based on the elements as we see them here.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Yes, and social services generally.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And the sooner those on the other side of the House are told about it, the better, whether they represent farming communities or not. My belief is that members of the Opposition should be reasonable about this, and to suggest that there should be a select committee appointed to inquire into something the particulars of which we all know well, is too ridiculous for words.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [5.58]: I support the third reading of the Bill. This afternoon the members of the Opposition have beaten all the funny stories that I have ever heard. However, the funny story that they have told is not so funny for the worker who becomes injured in the course of his employment. One has only to study the Bill to realise that the increases proposed by it are merely pittances. It is something that is put before the Chamber to try, in some small way, to be fair to the employee who gets injured at his work. It is not his fault if he gets hurt. He is employed to do the employer's work.

However, should he be unfortunate enough to meet with an accident whilst engaged on that employment, instead of receiving what he could earn, with his full health and strength, he receives a pittance, which is not a benefit, but a compensation. Last evening and today I have heard members opposite say that it is a benefit for those poor individuals that are unfortunate enough to be injured during the course of their employment. It is not a benefit at all. When a man receives a bonus over and above his wages, that could be classed as a benefit, but payment for an injury and the resultant suffering is merely compensation and some consideration that every just and genuine employer considers a worker should receive.

I could quote a number of instances of employers who do not hesitate to pay full compensation to their workers. They are only waiting for this Bill to be passed to allow them to grant further consideration to their employees who have unfortunately met with perhaps serious accidents. As I have already stated, it is compensation to assist an employee to carry on until such time as he can again work for his employer. Genuine employers realise the position. They are keen for the man to get well so that he may support his family and be able to purchase those requirements that he needs. I am sure that the majority of employers will support a Bill such as the one now before us.

Hon. D. Brand: There is, of course, real interest in this debate by the Labour Party!

Mr. O'BRIEN: I cannot help that. It is probably because they have heard so many funny stories told to them here that they might even have reached the stage where they are beyond laughing.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Five of them in the House!

Mr. O'BRIEN: I would agree to a select committee being appointed to inquire into the safety-first aspect of the question. I see no reason whatsoever for the Opposition members to oppose the third reading. If they wished to oppose any clause in the Bill, they had the opportunity last evening. Now, however, as has already been mentioned by my colleagues on this side of

the House, the whip must have been cracked over them and they are up and at it. Perhaps it is merely some nonsense on their part, and I am sure they will do the right thing and support the third reading when it is put to the vote.

**MR. HEARMAN** (Blackwood) [6.5]: I would not have chosen to speak on this debate if it had not been for some rather evasive statements made by members on the ministerial side of the House and the general attitude that the Government has adopted. At one stage there were only six Government members in the Chamber and while we on this side are obviously more interested in this matter, we are charged with insincerity.

Mr. Oldfield: There are only six members here now; one has just slipped into his seat.

**MR. HEARMAN**: Before making charges of insincerity against us, they might well put their own house in order. The fact that the attendance of Government members got down to only six, indicates that there are a number of them who have spoken with their tongues in their cheeks. The remarks made by the Minister for Agriculture, especially coming from him, are amazing. He certainly stated that the main agricultural wealth of this country was derived from wheat and wool. If he had read the "Late News" in this evening's paper before he had spoken he would have known that the prices in the wool exchange are 12d. to 20d. lower today.

Despite that, I would agree that our agricultural wealth is principally derived from wheat and wool. It is perhaps necessary to remind him that in his own electorate there would not be enough wheat grown or enough wool produced to feed and clothe me. However, there are dairy farmers in that district who have been working for many years for only a small return and on considerably more than a 40-hour week. That might be news to the Minister. It might also interest him to know that the fruit industry has not been happily situated for a long time. Apparently he has not studied that situation very closely.

Until I asked him to make further inquiries, he did not realise that the Singapore market had been closed to our fruit exports. The question of whether the agricultural industry can bear a further impost is one that warrants closer examination. Whatever the Minister for Agriculture might have endeavoured to lead the House to believe, it is significant that, despite the fact that he represents an electorate that produces butterfat—which is one of the struggling industries—he made no reference whatever to it. I do not know whether the people in his electorate would have been very pleased about that. I do not know whether the Minister would have made a speech of that

nature in the town hall at Manjimup. I suggest that the Minister was probably doing what he was told to. We have heard much about whips cracking, but I am certain there must have been a few whips cracked on that side of the House. If Ministers like the Minister for Agriculture make statements like those which we heard from him today, which are designed to mislead, it is time members voiced their protest.

**MR. McCULLOCH** (Hannans) [6.8]: I did not want to speak on the third reading of this Bill, but it annoys me to think that such a dog-fight should take place when we are considering the matter of a worker being compensated for injuries received. We are fighting about the blood and life of a man. This sort of thing has gone on for years, and it is no good members of the Opposition, or anybody else, saying we should appoint a select committee to consider the question.

The opposition to this Bill is not due to the fact that members opposite have not sufficient information on the measure, or that they have not had sufficient time to see or discuss the Bill. All that concerns them is, "Is the employer going to be penalised?" When the Minister introduced the Bill, the member for Roe interjected and asked, "Does the Government care what effect it is going to have on industry?" Surely, it would be a very poor Government that did not consider what effect it would have on industry!

Another matter that arose during the debate on the second reading was the interest evinced by the member for Mt. Lawley, who wanted to know whether natives would be included in this measure. There was no strong opposition to the Bill on the second reading, or at the Committee stage, but when the third reading is moved we find all the opposition in the world is being put forward. Over the years, we have always found that there has been considerable opposition to any improvement in conditions for workers; there has always been opposition to anything that is likely to increase the benefits that workers may receive.

These have been called benefits, but they are not really so, because a worker who suffers loss of work because of injury arising out of employment must be compensated. That cannot be called a benefit. In my opinion, there is not one worker in a million who will intentionally lay himself open to meeting with an accident in order that he may lay off work. After all is said and done, all that he is going to get is a maximum of 75 per cent. of his average weekly earnings, and no man would want that. Everybody would want a full week's pay. A man does not wish to be on a reduced income for the rest of his life.

Mr. May: He is suffering, too.

**Mr. McCULLOCH:** He would not want that while he is lying on the broad of his back and suffering untold inconvenience. When the member for Stirling introduced his Bill, a Royal Commission was appointed, and surely we have sufficient information available as a result of its inquiries. That commission was appointed only five of six years ago, and it should not be necessary to appoint a Royal Commission or a select committee every five or six years, particularly when one considers the expense involved. I say it is not necessary because we would obtain no more information than we have now.

I am very surprised at the opposition to the third reading. Members had every opportunity last night in the Committee stages to voice their opposition, but the Bill went through without any hesitation. After all, what will it mean in the ultimate? The Minister did say during the second reading debate that it would cause an increase in the premium of 22½ per cent. He thought it might; it is problematical: it might be more, or it might be less. Even if it were more, would that hurt industry as a whole? Is there any industry today that is showing a loss and which would not be able to afford this?

Over weeks and months we have read in the Press that certain profits have been made, and surely the people concerned would not object to paying a man a few extra coppers while he is off injured in order to provide him with some benefit! We have also heard the remark, "Why should we follow the other States?" We did not hear that from the Opposition benches when the question of the basic wage was being dealt with. At that time, it was their suggestion that we should follow the other States and peg the basic wage, but now, when we want to try to get a fair measure of compensation for the worker in this State, who is performing exactly the same work as the man in the other States, we are told we should not follow what is done by the other States. I do not believe in following the other States; I feel we should deal with matters as they arise here.

Today we have arrived at the position where the worker in this State is not sufficiently compensated for any injury he may suffer, nor is his wife sufficiently compensated. In the case of a man who loses his life, I would say that the amount in question would not buy a quarter of his life. On occasions, we have seen three or four times the amount for which we are asking in this Bill awarded to individuals by the courts, and it beats me why there should be this opposition to the proposals in the measure. When members of the Opposition were on this side of the House, they submitted amendments on three occasions when they brought their Bills forward, and there was very little delay. Is it their idea to delay the Bill?

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

**Mr. McCULLOCH:** Before tea I was saying that I was at a loss to understand why objections should be raised to the passing of the Bill. If it be claimed by members opposite that they do not know what repercussions the measure would have on industry, I reply that the figures are available to them. If they approached any insurance company, they could ascertain whether the 22½ per cent. of added cost would create difficulties for industry. We have been told that the loss ratio of insurance companies is 33½ per cent., notwithstanding that the premiums have been reduced in recent years on three different occasions. Consequently I fail to see how the provisions of this measure could affect the economy of industry.

To me it is strange that so many people should wish to restrict the benefits to injured workers. If an individual dies, even the Government is out to get some of the money from his estate. When a man has worked hard all his life and has left some property, the Government, on his passing out, takes some of the money from the estate. Surely we do not want a Royal Commission on this Bill! The member for Avon Valley was chairman of a Royal Commission and did a good job; otherwise we would not have had the Act that was passed in 1948.

To appoint a select committee on this occasion would be merely a waste of time. Whether the object of members opposite is simply to stonewall the Bill so that it will not be passed, I do not know. It might be the experience that a select committee will be appointed elsewhere and that this propaganda is designed to spur another place on to making such a move. However, it will be no fault of the Government's if that is done. Twelve months ago, we endeavoured to get certain provisions accepted that we considered to be fair and reasonable to both employers and employees, but owing to the attitude of another place on that occasion, we are still lagging well and truly behind other States of the Commonwealth.

I hope that members of the Opposition will take a realistic view of the position. I suggest that each one of them should ask himself, "How should I feel if I were injured in industry and were put on half pay?" Surely no worker would intentionally have himself injured! If he did, it would be easy to discover and he would thus disqualify himself for compensation. I do not think there would be one-half of 1 per cent. of the workers who would intentionally have themselves injured. I do not wish to delay the House and shall support the third reading.

**MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [7.36]:** It is not my intention to speak at length, but I think I should add a few words to the debate. The Minister challenged the sincerity of members on this side of the House,

but we are just as sincere in our outlook on this matter as he is. Judging by the Minister's speech, one might gather the impression that all producers are multi-millionaires and that a few shillings of extra cost for workers' compensation insurance premiums would mean nothing. We on this side of the House take the view that the worker is worthy of his hire and should receive good pay for his work and adequate compensation when he is injured in the course of his employment.

However, I wish to stress the point that many primary producers cannot bear to be loaded up with any additional costs. I am speaking now not on behalf of the wheat and wool producers but more for the fruitgrowing and dairying industries, and particularly for those engaged in market gardening. During the last twelve months, the market gardeners have been experiencing particularly hard times. For many lines, prices have been down to bedrock, and the cost of workers' compensation insurance represents quite a big item to them. I feel that if any extra cost were loaded on to those producers, the effect would be definitely detrimental.

Mr. McCulloch: Would not all of them be self-employed?

Mr. OWEN: That does not enter into the question because the market gardeners who do not employ workers have to meet the cost of their own insurance. There are thousands of men working on their own account and they find themselves in a very bad position when they suffer injury through accident. There is no compensation fund to provide benefits for them; they have to meet their own losses. Quite a few of such workers have had to give up their business on account of injury sustained in the course of their work.

It is all very well for members opposite to refer to workers and think only of employees, but there are thousands of men who are working for themselves and who have to provide for themselves in the matter of compensation for injury. I wish to repeat that it is the small farmer who will be hit by any increase in the cost of workers' compensation—and particularly those engaged in vegetable growing and similar production. At the present time insurance rates for workers in the vegetable growing industry are, I think, the highest for any type of primary production. Even if the increase amounts only to a few pence, it all adds up and the extra money will be hard to find by those employing labour in these industries.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [7.41]: I feel, Mr. Speaker, that I have a duty to speak to this debate. I was one of the two speakers on this side of the House during the second reading debate. There has been an accusation by Government supporters today that we of the Opposition failed to pursue vigorously our

arguments in respect of the Bill during the second reading and Committee stages. I may explain that I would have pursued my line of argument for the full allotted time had it not been for the circumstances that surrounded my reasons for having to hurry away from the Chamber at that time—circumstances well known to Government supporters. I confess that I was rather amazed when they showed such reluctance to enter the debate at that time, with the effect of preventing me from having the full time I would have liked in which to develop my argument during the second reading stage.

The Minister for Housing: But you have 23 colleagues.

Mr. COURT: I am afraid we are losing sight of the main reasons for the opposition to the third reading of this measure. There are two main points on which the Opposition feels very strongly. The first is the inadequacy of the information and explanations given by the Minister when introducing the Bill and the second is the refusal of the Government, following protests, to agree to appoint a select committee. I submit that when the Opposition puts forward the proposition that it has not had sufficient information and agrees to the second reading on the basis that there will be a select committee appointed, if the Government refuses to appoint that select committee, there is no object in the Opposition pursuing the matter further during the Committee stage of the Bill. The very reason why they sought the select committee is the overriding reason why a lengthy debate in detail on the clauses of the Bill would achieve no satisfactory object, and therefore there was no alternative but to express a protest during the third reading debate.

There are two lines of approach to this question of workers' compensation. The first is the approach along factual lines, where an attempt is made to analyse the pros and cons of the problem with a view to achieving equity to all concerned. The other is a rather cheap and easy let-out and takes the line of seizing on a popular theme and, regardless of facts, banging the drum as it were in connection with that theme. Sooner or later someone has to face up to the issue of what is the correct thing to do.

We prefer to do it now and not wait until we find that it is too late and that, through the failure of people to approach the problem objectively at this stage, it is the worker, in the final analysis, that gets the worst end of the stick—a result that is not intended by either side. I do not agree that the object of seeking to submit this question to a select committee was wholly and solely to determine the cost to industry. Both in 1953 and during my limited time last



night, I think I made it clear that I am not so concerned about the direct cost to industry as about the fact that we should keep the whole of this workers' compensation legislation within its proper perspective.

The Minister for Lands: Then your party does not agree with you.

Mr. COURT: It does. Follow the history of those on this side of the House in respect of workers' compensation and members will find that that is precisely what they do agree on—

The Minister for Lands: They wanted to know what the cost would be.

Mr. COURT: Of course, but that is only one of the factors.

Mr. McCulloch: The cost would not be hard to arrive at.

Mr. COURT: It has never been suggested from this side of the House by either the member for Mt. Lawley, in his second reading speech, or any other speaker, that the most important factor is the cost to industry. The most important factor of all is to see that equity and justice is done to workers as a whole, in the schedules. If members pause and reflect on the Minister's second reading speech, they will realise that he did not put forward a case in support of any particular item in either schedule. The whole of his support for the measure was based on the fact that in certain other States the rates are higher than in Western Australia.

Mr. McCulloch: That is not so.

Mr. COURT: By interjection last night I asked the Premier if he knew whether the Minister had pursued the submission made last year by a very competent medical body with regard to the schedule. Those people in their wisdom, and with mature experience in this matter, considered the schedule they prepared to be better than that at present in the Act.

I would have thought that, in view of the Minister's promise last year, he would have had that schedule analysed by the most expert people available. He has them in his own department and there are plenty of outside people who would co-operate in such matters. He should have had the schedule examined by people interested not in the pounds, shillings and pence but in the true merits of the particular cases. The Premier said he did not know whether the Minister had had that done or not, but from the fact that the Minister made no reference to it when introducing the measure, we must assume that he has not had that schedule properly examined or, alternatively, that he has had it examined and has rejected it.

Mr. McCulloch: The member for Mt. Lawley did not understand that schedule last year, either.

Mr. COURT: That is probably all the more reason why it should have been examined by the Minister and his responsible officers between the sessions. It is a further reason why the question should have been submitted to a select committee so that the items could have been explained to us by expert witnesses.

Mr. McCulloch: It would need some explanation.

Mr. COURT: If it achieved a more equitable state of affairs as between the types of accidents, it would be well worthy of study. It cannot be denied that the schedule was prepared by people of outstanding capacity. During the present debate some reference has been made to the fact that at one time this State was ahead of the rest of the Commonwealth in the matter of workers' compensation.

It is rather ironical that that point was raised by members of the Government because, if one studies the history of workers' compensation legislation and, coincidentally, industrial arbitration law, in this State, one finds that they are on our statute book largely by virtue of the efforts of another place, although they are always credited to the late Mr. Alex McCallum. It makes rather interesting reading to go back and find how one of those measures was virtually rewritten by the Legislative Council and was afterwards praised as being one of the foremost pieces of industrial legislation in Australia, yet we find that from time to time another place is castigated for what it is alleged to have done against the interests of the workers. This afternoon considerable mention has been made of the use of the word "benefit" on this side of the House.

Mr. May: You started it.

Mr. COURT: If it is the wrong word to use, I take the blame because I think I was the one who used it last night. The interjection came from the member for Collie. At that stage of my rather hurried utterance, I was referring to people who receive protection or cover equivalent to workers' compensation from their employer although they are outside the statutory limit.

Mr. May: You did not make that clear last night.

Mr. COURT: I think the hon. member must admit that I did after he interjected. If an employer gives an employee something to which he is not entitled by law, surely that is something that is additional to the normal claim. As a matter of fact, last night I was referring to that as a form of a bonus or the like and therefore as a benefit. That was the sense in which I used the word "benefit." To the best of my knowledge no one else used that word. Otherwise, the language used was in the terms of the Act, namely, workers' compensation claims.

A further point that has been hammered this evening is the reference to the alleged profits made from workers' compensation insurance. If the insurance companies are making profits out of workers' compensation in excess of the profits that are permitted on this type of insurance business, it is time the Government did something about the statutory committee that determines the premiums. My understanding is that there is a statutory body whose duty it is to appraise the situation from time to time and adjust the premiums up or down.

One can quote some years where apparently there is a margin available to the insurance offices, whether it be the State Government Insurance Office or private insurance companies. Then, of course, there are other years when the results will be entirely different. As recently as about six weeks ago, I was given to understand that the experience for the year ended the 30th June, 1954, was entirely different from that for the year ended the 30th June, 1953, or the previous year. That always will be so. Under the method of fixing the rates they have, up to date, based the premiums on actual cash outgoings and not on the accrual basis. I mentioned this last year because sooner or later the position will catch up with us.

If, for instance, there was a down-turn in the payroll of this State, there naturally would be a lessening of insurance premiums whether handled by the State Insurance Office or by private insurance companies. During the first year I mentioned, the incidence of claims from a higher payroll will catch up and we will have the anomaly, if the matter is not taken in hand straightaway, whereby in the year all of us will be seeking economies for 12 months, or a little more, and we will have delayed action from this present method of accounting.

Mr. May: Can you tell us how they accumulate all these valuable assets?

Mr. COURT: I can tell the hon. member, from personal knowledge, that if the insurance companies had not written a pennyworth of workers' compensation business last year, they would be considerably better off. The hon. member might ask: Why don't they get out of it? They do not for the same reason that a grocer does not give up that part of his business wherein he sells potatoes, matches and other lines from which he derives little or no profit, but which is an essential part of his trading.

Mr. Moir: Can you tell us by how much the premium rates were decreased last year?

Mr. COURT: They were reduced by a very considerable percentage after an appraisal by this statutory body, and that is its duty.

Mr. Moir: Do not you think it would be more just to put that money to better use by paying adequate compensation?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The State Insurance Office will need more.

Mr. COURT: My proposition is that we should examine the whole of the schedules, but we cannot do that in the atmosphere of this Chamber. That is quite apparent tonight. It would be impracticable for us to get down to a consideration of every known injury that can be the subject of a workers' compensation claim; but a select committee could. The statutory body that fixes the premiums has the duty of determining what should be levied as the premium to cover workers' compensation risk. It is not its duty to say what should be ploughed back or what should be taken from industry; it has the clear duty of fixing the premiums rates.

Mr. Moir: But Parliament should accept the responsibility for deciding what amount of compensation is payable.

Mr. COURT: It is for us to say, in the light of proper evidence, what the amounts of compensation should be. But I want to make this point clear: It is not our duty to fix those amounts on the blind, and without a full knowledge of what is involved. So I am opposed to the third reading of the Bill, not on the narrow ground of what it would cost industry, but on the basis that this House should be fully informed, either during the introduction of the measure in the first place, or by the evidence that we could obtain from a select committee. I oppose the third reading.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [7.56]: Having heard the specious arguments put forward by members of the Opposition for the purpose of delaying the passage of the third reading of the Bill, I will not take very long to add my contribution to the debate.

I think it has been clearly shown, without the need for any major evidence to be put forward, that an improvement in compensation payments is called for. It has been amply demonstrated that the amount asked for in the Bill is small and is probably less than justice. The fact that we are asking less than justice is an argument, when the Bill is passed, that that might be the appropriate time for a select committee to be appointed with increasing speed, to investigate the possibility of meeting the situation. We know that justice delayed is justice denied.

In particular I wish to refer to the plea which we have been hearing tonight about cost, and particularly the cost to the rural industry. Some members opposite will have become tired of hearing the figures that have been provided by the Bureau of Economics on the production cost index of wheat. However, I wish to refer to them

again tonight because these figures are authentic and have been provided by a responsible Commonwealth department under statistical conditions. Within the 12s. 7d. per bushel—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What is the date of that report?

Mr. JOHNSON: It is for the year 1953-54. I have referred to it so many times before that I thought members in this Chamber would have full knowledge of it. The figure of 12s. 7d., which is given as the cost of production of wheat, includes 3.77d. for insurance. That covers all insurance and the rates in regard to the various types of insurance included in that amount of 3d. out of the cost of 12s. 7d. per bushel are 49 per cent. of 3d. for crop insurance.

Mr. Oldfield: 49 per cent. of 3.77d.!

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member should not try to be clever; it ill becomes him. It is not natural for him.

Mr. Oldfield: I just want accuracy.

Mr. JOHNSON: Crop insurance is 49.2 per cent. of 3d., etc. Motor-vehicle third party insurance is 5.5 per cent. of 3d., etc., motor-vehicle comprehensive insurance is 13.6 per cent. of 3d., etc.; fire insurance is 19.3 per cent. of 3d., etc., and workers' compensation insurance is 12.4 per cent.

Mr. Moir: The Country Party members are not interested now.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Can you blame them?

Mr. JOHNSON: That was the figure for the year 1952-53. The 12.4 per cent. for workers' compensation was reduced this year to 11.8 per cent.; and 11.8 per cent. of 3.77d. is roughly  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a bushel. If, as has been suggested, the cost of this proposal would raise the cost to industry by one-quarter—of course, it would be a good deal less—then the cost to the wheat-growing industry would be one-quarter of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel. One-quarter of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel, not out of 12s. 7d. but out of 14s. which wheatgrowers are guaranteed, is about the amount which a farmer would pay for the free air put into the tyres of his motorcar.

Mr. Hearman: How can a person pay for free air?

Mr. JOHNSON: That is about what it would cost. It is so minute as to be almost free. It is less than one-quarter of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., yet we hear Opposition members crying about the cost to industry. Those figures are authentic, they are provided by the statistician and are available to members opposite, who do not know what the proposal would cost. Might I say to members opposite who have no idea what it will cost, that they are either inefficient or they are bluffing? The facts speak for themselves. I support the third reading.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	19
Majority for	1

#### Ayes.

Mr. Graham	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Moir
Mr. Heal	Mr. Norton
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. May

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Dame F. Gardell-Oliver	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Court	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Doney	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hill	Mr. Yates
Mr. Mann	Mr. Bovell
Sir Ross McLarty	

(Teller.)

#### Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Manning
Mr. Brady	Mr. Cornell
Mr. Andrew	Mr. North

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

### BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

### MOTION—"M" AND "E" CLASS HOUSES.

To Inquire by Select Committee.—  
Order Discharged.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the 20th September on the following motion by Mr. Nimmo:—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the conditions on which the prices at which "M" and "E" class houses are being sold to purchasers, and whether or not these prices and conditions are in conformity with those anticipated by the occupiers when they first took possession, and whether any, and if so, what action should be taken to secure just terms for the people concerned.

Mr. NIMMO: I move—

That the Order of the Day be discharged.

Motion put and passed.

Order discharged.

**MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR.***As to Extension and Railway Bridge Construction.*

Debate resumed from the 22nd September on the following motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman:—

That this House requests the Government to go on with the outward to the south extension scheme instead of the upriver scheme for the Fremantle harbour, and also that this House does not agree to the building of a short-life wooden structure railway bridge downstream and adjacent to the present traffic bridge as per Messrs. Brisbane and Dumas's report.

**HON. D. BRAND** (Greenough) [8.6]: Like the Minister for Works, I must admit that the member for Fremantle has been both persistent and consistent with respect to his motion for upriver development of the harbour. I have been looking through the various "Hansards" from 1950 onwards, and since that time four motions standing in his name are reported in the many pages. On reading the reports, I find that the arguments which I put forward in support of the Government's decision, are those very same arguments which the present Minister has been compelled to support.

**Mr. Yates:** Times have changed since then.

**Hon. D. BRAND:** I am referring to upriver extension of the harbour. As has often been said, this proposal has been the subject of much investigation by the most eminent engineers available to any Government. I refer to such persons as Sir George Buchanan, Col. Tydeman, Mr. Styleman, and going as far back as C. Y. O'Connor, and latterly Mr. Meyer, who was brought here from South Australia to report further on the very wordy and full report furnished by Col. Tydeman.

Since then the present Government has felt the need to set up another committee, the report of which has been tabled in this House. That committee comprised the Under Treasurer; the Director of Works; the general manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust; Prof. Gordon Stephenson, the town planning consultant; and the Commissioner for Main Roads, Mr. Leach. In setting up this committee to report on the findings of Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane in respect of the siting of the bridge at Fremantle, the Minister felt that he might be reinforced in any decision made by the Government to site the new bridge near the existing road bridge.

It will be recalled that the decision of the McLarty-Watts Government was that we should go upstream to Point Brown in accordance with the recommendations of Col. Tydeman; that is, to go upstream in the first place. Throughout this argument, the member for Fremantle stated

various reasons against this proposal, one being river pollution, another that there was no foundation for a bridge at Point Brown; that there would be limited space for the turning round of ships, and that Col. Tydeman himself was not clear-cut in his recommendations.

Nevertheless, as the Minister himself pointed out on this occasion, Col. Tydeman's recommendation of upstream development in the first place should be acted upon because of the urgent need to provide increased berthage at Fremantle, and because of the cost involved. The Minister has said to this House, "How can we expend such a large sum as would be required to develop the harbour seaward, when so much other public work is urgently required?" He went on to say that the building of schools, hospitals and the extension of water supplies was urgently required.

**Mr. Lawrence:** That is marvellous.

**Hon. D. BRAND:** I agree it is marvellous. It is a glaring instance of what private enterprise can do if encouraged.

**Mr. Lawrence:** It is an example of—

**Hon. D. BRAND:** It is an example of what big business and large industries can do with unlimited capital at their disposal and with the backing of technical knowledge.

**Mr. Lawrence:** I think this State is big enough to do it.

**Hon. D. BRAND:** Nevertheless, on this occasion the Minister pointed out that with the limited funds available, his Government could not see its way clear to proceed seaward to develop the harbour, and in the face of all the recommendations, the increased berthage requirements could be obtained by going up to the road bridge.

**Mr. Perkins:** How long would the present berths in the harbour last?

**Hon. D. BRAND:** I could not say.

**Mr. Lawrence:** It was said to be 10 years.

**Hon. D. BRAND:** But it is a very reasonable period of time. At least, it would cover the period in which certain developments could be completed at Cockburn Sound as a result of the oil refinery being established there.

**Mr. Lawrence:** But those developments have already taken place.

**Hon. D. BRAND:** Those developments have only taken place to some extent. It has not yet been proved that Cockburn Sound in its present condition is a really safe harbour. It may be proved that if a general harbour is established at Cockburn Sound, breakwaters may be necessary.

**Mr. Lawrence:** You were the Minister responsible for giving the contract to dredge the sound.

Hon. D. BRAND: I was the Minister responsible, and I am very proud to be associated with that project. In the first place, the decision to establish the refinery at that locality was based on the promise of our Government that it would dredge the channel.

Mr. Lawrence: That is correct.

Hon. D. BRAND: Our decision was also based on the recommendation of Captain Johnson who was brought here by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. to advise it.

Mr. Lawrence: You know that as well as I do.

Hon. D. BRAND: I knew nothing at all. I was prepared to take the advice of a man with world-wide experience who said it was safe enough and recommended that the company commit itself to use the channel, and not only to use the channel, but to meet 6 per cent. per annum on half the cost of the actual dredging of the channel; and that over the full period of the agreement.

Mr. Lawrence: Cockburn Sound is a safer anchorage than is Fremantle harbour proper.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am not setting myself up as a harbour engineer, and I do not say whether Cockburn Sound is safer than Fremantle, but I do know that it is admired by world authorities as a safe anchorage. In the event of development going forward as we see it at the present time, there surely will be established on the shores of Cockburn Sound a commercial harbour similar to the commercial harbours which we see in the port of Melbourne. I am pleased to hear the member for South Fremantle say that the sound is a safe anchorage, and I am certain the time is not far distant when a commercial harbour will be developed there.

May I point out that although we, as a Government, had decided to go upstream to Point Brown, after the decision of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. to establish a refinery at Kwinana, I stated in this House that we were prepared to have a second look at the proposition, to which the present Minister for Works interjected by saying, "Now you are talking!" We did have a second look. We set up a committee to recommend the action that should be taken as a result of the establishment of the refinery at Kwinana; and I stated publicly, before the change of Government, that I thought it was sufficient then to go only to the road bridge. I believed that to be the wisest policy. On the other hand, I believed that in making this decision, the bridge should be of timber construction and not concrete or steel, in order not to limit the future generations in regard to upriver development.

Mr. Lawrence: When was that review taken by the Government of the day?

Hon. D. BRAND: It was established through Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane. Certainly their report was not available to the Minister until after the change of Government, but we established that committee to advise on the siting of the bridge, upon any harbour developments and upon the impact Kwinana might have on any proposed public works.

Mr. Lawrence: I am interested in the time of the decision.

Hon. D. BRAND: I cannot definitely give the time except to say that before the change of Government we decided to have a second look; and it is reported in "Hansard" that we were prepared to do that. The recommendation of Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane was that, for the present at least, it was sufficient to go up to the existing road bridge. Evidently the Government found some difficulty in rallying support for that decision, because it set up a further committee which also recommended in favour of going only to the road bridge.

Time and again we have heard the arguments with respect to river pollution. I have heard the present Minister for Works suggest that further river pollution would result from going upstream. But he was quite happy to quote from Mr. Meyer in replying to the member for Fremantle, when he stated that salt water had the effect of purifying rather than polluting. We heard the member for Fremantle point out that the sewage discharged from the boats in Fremantle harbour was the cause of pollution and of the growth of algae throughout the Swan River. When I was Minister for Works, I said I believed the trouble was at the other end of the river; that the pollution came about as a result of the agricultural development over many thousands of acres, the establishment of stock and the general growth of population in the areas which the Swan River drained.

The manure and rubbish that was washed down from these thousands of acres, and deposited in this basin, might be the cause of the growth of algae. As yet, no one has been able to prove that. In tackling this problem, some thought must be given to easing the situation by seeing that the tributaries which feed the Swan are protected in some way. It may be that the whole of the Swan River could be placed under the protection of some controlling authority. That, however, is something for future decision. For the present, I am certain that the condition of the Swan River results from 300,000 people living on its banks. Nowhere in the world have means been discovered of preventing pollution of the sort that we see every day.

While our Government was in power, we did much to divert sewage and trade wastes into the sewerage system, and, as far as I know, the present Government has watched closely those sources of pollution.

At present, they are very minor. It would seem that while we do not divert the waters of the Swan for use in our water supply system, we take away the annual effect of the winter flush and, as a result, we have a rather stagnant river all the time.

Mr. Lawrence: Do you think it could be the fault of industries established on the river bank rather than of the population?

Hon. D. BRAND: I do not think industry can be blamed, although in its small way it contributes to the pollution of the river. Away back in the past, the filter beds, for which neither the hon. member nor I was responsible, may have contributed.

Mr. Lawrence: Much more so than the people living on the banks.

Hon. D. BRAND: Not now that most of the trade wastes are being diverted into the sewerage system. As laymen, I do not think we are in a position to say that the growth of algae has been encouraged by sewage or by waste being tipped into the river.

Mr. Lawrence: In effect, you admit that you do not know.

Hon. D. BRAND: In effect, I admit that I am not qualified, any more than is the member for South Fremantle, to say that any one of these factors contributes in any direct way to the pollution of the river. But we do know that, year in and year out, a condition has been created which has caused some anxiety and which should continue to cause anxiety to the people of the City of Perth and of Western Australia, because the Swan River is a heritage which we should preserve. It is a river that is admired by all visitors, and it is something which we should preserve as far as possible in its natural state.

Mr. Lawrence: I fully agree with you. It is one of the most scenic rivers in the world.

Hon. D. BRAND: I come back to the point made by the member for Fremantle, and say that I do not believe that the upriver development of Fremantle harbour is going to worsen the condition of the river. Our experts and advisers have stated quite clearly that any discharge from ships in the harbour is infinitesimal against the volume of salt water there.

Mr. Lawrence: Do you not think there is a nibbling away all the time upriver; that there is a liberal bite this time, and that the next time there will be another liberal bite?

Hon. D. BRAND: That is the view I have taken right through, and I have not heard anything here to cause me to change my attitude. The Minister has made the

point that on the score of urgency it is necessary to provide extra berthage and that, on the score of cost, his Government has decided that the development shall be as far upstream as the existing road bridge. I wonder whether it is necessary to build another railway bridge. I am of the opinion that greater urgency should be placed on obtaining a decision as to the route of the proposed south-of-the-river railway.

We will recall that the member for Fremantle moved in this House—it was not a long speech—that a south-of-the-river railway should be proceeded with. He said that he could envisage the existing railway route from Perth to Fremantle being used as a highway, and that the present ballast could be used for a road. I agree with him. Because of the development that has taken place here and the change of scene in secondary industry in this State, we might have even a further look—not a second look, but a third one—and we might find that we could do without a new railway bridge; that we could use the present one up to the point where we could use it no longer, and then we could establish a terminus, either at North Fremantle or, as we hope, even back in East Perth. This, however, would be absolutely dependent upon the speed with which we could construct a south-of-the-river railway. At present we are awaiting the report of the town planner, Professor Stephenson. I should imagine that one of the main points in his recommendation will deal with the route to be taken by the south-of-the-river railway.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Did you read him on railways the other day?

Hon. D. BRAND: No, but it is obvious that a south-of-the-river railway is necessary.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is very necessary.

Hon. D. BRAND: Once we have our railway system constructed on that side of the river, I would think that road transport which has become revolutionary and has developed beyond our wildest dreams, could, provided it was given a free go, be used to move whatever general goods had to be shifted from Perth to Fremantle. However, the mover of the motion has asked that this House support him in directing the Government—

Mr. Lawrence: No, requesting.

Hon. D. BRAND: —requesting the Government to extend the harbour seaward.

Mr. Oldfield: That is a sensible suggestion.

Hon. D. BRAND: I do not think the hon. member had Cockburn Sound in mind, but an extension south of the existing harbour.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Somewhere about where Meyer suggested, I think.

Hon. D. BRAND: For the life of me, as a layman, I cannot see why we should go there immediately if by extending up the river only a few chains, the present harbour, which is already in the river—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Too far.

Hon. D. BRAND: —it is already done—can have its berthage increased to help us over the period until we can ascertain whether Cockburn Sound is a safe anchorage and is a good site at which to establish a commercial harbour. It will give us time to establish and construct our south-of-the-river railway system and we should not expend money—because it is not available—on a new harbour just south of the existing one.

Mr. Lawrence: What is the estimated time of construction under your plan?

Hon. D. BRAND: I do not know: I have not gone into details. All I know is that, as the Minister said, it would require a colossal expenditure to extend the harbour seaward because before berths could be provided, large sums of money would have to be spent.

Mr. Lawrence: How do you know that?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You and the member for Greenough are making a good speech between you.

Hon. D. BRAND: Col. Tydeman pointed out that to extend the harbour seaward would require further breakwaters and certain problems would be associated with the establishment of those breakwaters.

Mr. Lawrence: Breakwaters do not have to be provided. You do not know, as you admitted earlier.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am quoting Col. Tydeman. I have no written report from the hon. member but from the authoritative way he speaks I could quote him; however, I do not think it would be worth while. Col. Tydeman has said that it would be necessary to establish certain precautions, per medium of breakwaters, before any construction could be undertaken with any degree of security.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Where do you think would make the better harbour?

Mr. Lawrence: Why do they need to have breakwaters? They do not have them at Cockburn Sound.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am quoting Col. Tydeman who, as our adviser, informed me of this fact when I was Minister for Works. It was a logical suggestion, and even at that stage Cockburn Sound was not a possibility as a harbour; at present it is.

Mr. Lawrence: It is proved.

Hon. D. BRAND: Therefore I am hopeful that the Government will maintain its stand and that it will provide the extra berthage—

Mr. Oldfield: At the expense of the river.

Hon. D. BRAND: —and give posterity a chance to decide, as a result of the experience of the refinery at Cockburn Sound, whether a commercial harbour can be established there, or whether it should be established seaward of the existing one. I believe that there is no need to go further up the river than the site of the present road bridge. I realise that even then there will be a great deal of resumption necessary in North Fremantle; that a section of the area will have to be demolished, reclaimed and re-established if a railway is to be diverted to the present road site.

That is why I suggest to the Government, and to the Minister, that they give further consideration to the necessity for the construction of a railway bridge. If it is not absolutely necessary, why not bide our time and be content to have No. 10 berth completed? Have a further examination made of the possibilities at Cockburn Sound and, as a result of the knowledge which is being obtained in this State, the construction of the harbour may be completed in much less time than is imagined now.

Mr. Lawrence: It would be interesting to know if, during your time as Minister, applications were made by firms to handle bulk cargo in the vicinity of Cockburn Sound.

Hon. D. BRAND: I have no knowledge of it, and I do not think it has any bearing on the matter.

Mr. Lawrence: I think it has.

Hon. D. BRAND: I say quite clearly that on this occasion I am supporting the Minister. I feel that all the evidence available, technical and otherwise, suggests that at least the upriver development can be as far as the road bridge and that in the event of the harbour being extended seaward, Cockburn Sound should be the first consideration. Before I conclude, I would stress that the Government press for an early decision on the site of the south-of-the-river railway and also the marshalling yards.

Mr. J. Hegney: The two engineers whom you appointed recommended that.

Hon. D. BRAND: I know; that is past history. There has been a change of Government since then and the ball is in the court of the Government. A certain report was furnished by Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane and accepted by the Government—the hon. member's Government. As a result of further information or pressure, or some other influences, Cabinet suddenly changed its mind and from a reply the Premier gave to a question I asked recently, I find that the matter is still under consideration.

That matter is closely allied to the question which is now before the House—the siting of the railway bridge and the question of whether we should build a new one at all. Once having made the decision regarding the railway, the Government will be in a better position—in fact, a very strong position—to make a decision on harbour extensions and will be able to carry on with all the backing necessary, technical or otherwise. I oppose the motion.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [8.40]: There are only two portions of this proposal with which I intend to deal. The most important, of course, is the, might I say, tragic suggestion that has been made by the member for Greenough to have the railway terminal of our system at North Fremantle. The suggestion was also made earlier by the member for Moore and I propose to point out to the House certain facts in connection with the proposal which I believe will convince members that little consideration has been given to this question by either of those speakers.

Mr. Ackland: Has any consideration been given to it by one of your Railway Commissioners?

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Yes.

Mr. Ackland: Does he favour it?

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** There are three of them. If the hon. member tells me the one to whom he is referring, I will give him the commissioner's opinion.

Mr. Ackland: Mr. Clark.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** No. Mr. Clark does not favour it. As a matter of fact, not one of the three commissioners would favour it. Their comment was that it would be tragic and nothing short of lunacy. That is the opinion of the three commissioners.

The other point with which I wish to deal was raised during the debate, and this concerns the question of whether an extension of the harbour upstream would bring about a silting up of the harbour because of what is known as littoral drift. Littoral drift, in this sense, means a drift of sand immediately off the shore and in great quantities. I would draw the attention of members to the terms of the motion, and I wish to congratulate the member for Fremantle upon his consistency in this matter and the trouble to which he has gone and the research he has made in connection with it. I would say that the opinion on the matter is about 50/50, but a little more could be said in favour of up river extension.

If we adopted the hon. member's suggestion we would be committed to extending the Fremantle harbour outside and south of the river mouth. That is the first proposal. With Col. Tydeman, I

believe that such a proposition would need extensive breakwaters. One has only to travel along the foreshore towards South Beach on a rough winter's day to realise that. Waves are breaking and coming in over an 8 to 10ft. wall and washing out enormous boulders. Water is spraying on to the street and across the railway line.

Mr. Lawrence: When were these boulders washed out? I have not seen that.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Within the last two years I have seen boulders displaced. The whole wall has certainly not been washed away, but only last winter I saw where some of the stones had been displaced and one could probably go there today and see gaps in the wall. One can imagine what that would do to large ocean liners which were tied up to the wharf. Large waves would pound vessels to pieces if no breakwater protection were provided.

It is interesting to look back into "Hansard" of the 1870's and to read the discussions that took place with regard to this matter and to note some of the doubts and convictions that were in the minds of different members as to where the harbour should be placed. There were those who advocated an upriver extension and there were those who favoured cutting through the Success and Parmelia Banks into Owen Anchorage or Cockburn Sound. Others advocated the construction of a harbour immediately outside the river, as is suggested in the hon. member's proposal.

The motion opposes the extension of harbour facilities to Cockburn Sound 14 miles distant or upwards past the railway bridge. Those are the terms of the motion. I have looked back into history a little by reading "Hansard" reports of the year 1892. There was some doubt then, as it exists now, as to where the harbour should extend and there was great difference of opinion as to what should be done in connection with it. In those days as in recent years, they brought an expert from overseas to advise the Government of the day, which was then led by the late Sir John Forrest. The expert's name was Sir John Coode and he was firmly of the opinion that there was an intense littoral drift off the coast of Fremantle and that it would be impossible for that reason to extend the harbour up the river mouth because it would continually silt up.

Sir John Coode's advice appears on page 256 of volume 1 of "Hansard" for 1892. On his report to the Government, we find a comment by Sir John Forrest as follows:—

As to improving the river entrance, Sir John Coode, who gave the question his anxious and careful consideration, considered the scheme if not impracticable, at any rate open to the greatest objection, owing to the limited volume of tidal and back-water available.



In his report, Sir John Coode said—

A consideration of this question, now that I have had an opportunity of personally examining the site and of studying the further data which have been provided, has tended to confirm the views expressed in my report of 1877, namely, that the conditions are so adverse that it is quite impracticable to treat the existing entrance to the Swan with a view to the formation and maintenance of a deep water approach from the sea with any degree of success, and that any operations of this character, except to the limited extent to which I shall refer to hereafter, would be attended with failure and disappointment.

That was the opinion of the expert, Sir John Coode, who had designed harbours in many parts of the world. He said that because of the littoral drift, or because of the almost certain silting up of the harbour, he advised against going into the harbour. Because of his preconceived views on the influence of sand travel at the river mouth, Sir John's report of 1877 contains the following statement—

I am reluctantly compelled to advise that no steps be taken to improve the river with a view to the formation of a deep water channel from the sea.

It is quite evident in reading the report of Sir John Coode appearing in "Hansard," that had it not been for his conviction that there was an intense littoral drift of sand, he would have chosen the upriver scheme in the first place.

It is remarkable that less than 12 months after finance was voted for the project south of the river mouth, the House was asked by the Premier, Sir John Forrest, to approve of a motion for an entirely different project. That appears on page 186 of the "Hansard" Volume No. 2 of 1892. Sir John's proposal was brought before the House and he moved a motion for the provision of £150,000 for an approach through Success Bank into Owen Anchorage and make a harbour there. But after further consideration, that proposal was also dropped. His proposal was the opening of Success Bank to Owen Anchorage. This was also quoted by C. Y. O'Connor at that time and it then became a question of whether they would go into Owen Anchorage and make their harbour there or whether they would adopt C. Y. O'Connor's proposal to make the upriver extension.

In a portion of his report, Sir John Coode makes it quite clear that he would favour upriver extension but for his certainty of the intense littoral drift of sand which, in his opinion, would silt up the harbour. Why I stress this point is that that aspect was mentioned in the debate. It was suggested that it would be quite

likely that if the extension of the harbour was undertaken as far as the traffic bridge, there was the possibility of the silting up of the harbour.

As I propose to show in a few minutes, eminent engineer though Sir John Coode was, his view was completely erroneous. There is very little, or no littoral drift on the shores immediately around Fremantle and there would be no possibility of the silting up of the harbour. A joint committee of both Houses turned down the Owen Anchorage scheme in favour of the inner harbour scheme recommended by C. Y. O'Connor. The most remarkable aspect presented itself in that the same Government had adopted three distinct types of harbour development schemes within a period of 13 months. C. Y. O'Connor had, in his proposition, proved himself ahead of Sir John Coode who was looked upon as the most eminent harbour engineer of his day.

It is not now a question, as our colleagues in Parliament in those days had to decide, of the difference of opinion between two eminent engineers, because today we have had the advice of, I think, five eminent engineers, and each one of them, with some qualifications, has recommended the upriver extension. In order to show exactly how wrong Sir John Coode's estimate of the possible silting-up of the harbour was, I would refer to a report by James Thompson, B.E., a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers. He was president of the Australian Institute of Engineers and at page 17 of his inaugural address, dealing with the controversy and difference of opinion between the two eminent engineers—C. Y. O'Connor and Sir John Coode—he said—

The first load of material into the North Mole was tipped by Lady Robinson in 1892. The success of Mr. O'Connor's scheme is visible to all eyes. It is somewhat remarkable that the bugbear of littoral sand travel should have been so differently estimated by these two eminent men, Sir John Coode and Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, more especially when one considers that the question of littoral sand drift had been studied and experienced by both on the New Zealand coast, where Sir John Coode had advised on, and built, several harbours. The deliberate adoption of this scheme, contrary to the advice of one so eminent in his profession as Sir John Coode, is a monument to the sound judgment and sagacity of its designer. At the same time it should be mentioned that Mr. O'Connor always held that had Sir John had the same knowledge and data of the surroundings of Fremantle as he himself had, he would have come to the same conclusion.

So it is quite evident that although there was a suspicion at that time, there is no suspicion today of an intense littoral drift.

There will be no danger of the harbour at Fremantle silting up if it were extended to the traffic bridge, as was suggested by one speaker. In the Admiralty there are charts from which they can take soundings which, in a matter of 50 yards, will differ 15ft. in this area. In the opinion of engineering experts, that is a complete vindication that there is no intense littoral drift immediately outside the harbour. If there were an intense littoral drift, we would have to face the proposition of constantly dredging the channels through the Success and Parmelia Banks.

Mr. Lawrence: Is it a fact that they are constantly dredging from Victoria Quay to "D" down shed?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** I do not know; I daresay the hon. member would know, being the member representing the district. But it would not be because of littoral drift; it may be caused by winter flooding and a certain amount of sediment. It may be because of this that a certain amount of dredging would have to be done. I do not think it is done to any great extent. The point I want to make is that, according to history—and history has repeated itself in almost identical fashion—there is no fear of the harbour silting up because of littoral drift if the harbour is extended upstream as far as the traffic bridge.

Next, I want to deal with the portion that affects the proposal that the railway terminal should be at North Fremantle. Personally, I cannot see any merit whatever in the suggestion. The member for Greenough has even suggested that we might set the terminal back as far as Perth. Where does he expect to get the marshalling yards in Perth for the motor traffic to take over from the railways? As far as the marshalling yards are concerned, we are in the position that we must shift them from the centre of Perth. Does he suggest that they should be shifted to Midland Junction, because the shortage of land for shunting yards is almost as acute in Midland Junction.

Hon. D. Brand: We have experts to tell us where they should go.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Even the experts must have land. Just imagine the proposition! We could get adequate marshalling yards five or six miles eastwards of Perth. Members can imagine the position that will arise when changing there to motor transport. The town planning consultant, Prof. Stephenson, dealt with the question of suburban passenger traffic and said that, in his opinion, it would be a great mistake to break our rail connection with Fremantle. He gave it as his opinion that as the population of Perth increases, not only will the number of people who will be compelled to use, or who will voluntarily use, the railways increase, but a greater percentage of the

whole will be using the railways as well. He quotes Melbourne and Sydney, cities which have over a million of population, and points out the difficult conditions that operate in those two cities at the present time when coping with the road traffic. Yet each of those cities has a first-class electric suburban passenger system.

Prof. Stephenson said it would be impossible to handle by road transport the whole of the passenger traffic in the metropolitan area of Melbourne and Sydney, and I think it will be agreed by any member who has been to either of those cities that the professor's opinion is entirely right, despite the fact that in Sydney not only do they have a first-class electric passenger service in the suburban area, but they have tube railways as well endeavouring to relieve the surface congestion on the roads.

Some members know what a nightmare it is to travel as a car passenger through the streets of Sydney. The congestion there at times has to be seen to be believed. As Prof. Stephenson and, I think, most of us believe, within the foreseeable future, there will be a population in the metropolitan area of Perth of 1,000,000 people. I consider, with Prof. Stephenson, that it would be a tragic mistake on that score alone to do away with the rail connection with Fremantle.

I obtained figures from the Railway Department as to what would be involved so far as passenger traffic is concerned at present if we severed the rail connection with Fremantle. Close on a million passengers per annum use the trains in and out of Fremantle. I propose to give figures presently showing the extent to which the Victoria Quay side marshalling yards at Fremantle are used and I also propose to give the House an outline of what is intended should take place at North Fremantle.

We have just on a million passengers a year at present passing in and out of the Fremantle station. If we made the terminal at North Fremantle, it would be necessary to duplicate the whole of the railway plant on the Fremantle and North Fremantle sides. In addition, it would mean that all the traffic from the South-West to and from the North Wharf would have to be taken by a circuitous route from Armadale to Rivervale and over another bridge that would have to be constructed at Rivervale. We have only a single line track there at present.

Apart from the acute congestion which would be created from at least Rivervale to North Fremantle, overloading a track that is already taxed almost to saturation point, there would be an additional eight miles of freight to pay. As the average haul for goods coming from the South-West—wool, timber, potatoes, etc., for export, oil, superphosphate from North Fremantle—all of which would have to be hauled through Perth over the single line, which would be an impossibility, there would be involved the building of another

bridge over the Swan River at Goodwood. There would be eight miles of extra travel for every ton of goods, and as the average haul is 120 miles, this would involve an increase of six per cent. in the freight rate. This increase would be imposed upon the producers of the South-West in perpetuity, because the freight would have to be hauled around there instead of being taken through Armadale into the yard at North Fremantle via Jandakot.

If we decided to make the rail terminal at North Fremantle, it would involve at least 50 per cent. more resumptions at North Fremantle than will the present proposal, because it would be necessary to provide additional shunting yards and facilities for loco requirements. I have a plan here showing what would be required in the way of resumptions in the event of the rail terminal being made at North Fremantle instead of continuing with the marshalling yards at North Fremantle and a limited goods terminal at Fremantle. The idea would be to run the goods through to the North Wharf if the bridge were built. In my opinion, there is little or nothing to recommend the suggestion of a rail terminal at North Fremantle.

As to a railway on the south side of the river, I think that, within a few years, it will become essential. At present I see no great urgency for it. I believe that if the rail connection to Fremantle is continued, by the provision of a new bridge, the construction of a line on the south side of the river could be delayed, without inconvenience, for another five or seven years, and that is the opinion of the three Railway Commissioners. No doubt the railway on the south side of the river will have to come. I do not mean that the whole project should be delayed for five or seven years, because the selection of the route should be carried out immediately. The delay in building the line would afford an opportunity to judge and learn exactly how that area is going to develop, and such knowledge would be a distinct advantage.

In addition to the passengers who use the Fremantle station, I wish to give some idea of the amount of other traffic which goes to Fremantle and which would, if the connection were severed, have to be taken to Fremantle by road vehicles.

Mr. Court: What is the basis on which you measure the passenger traffic at Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The number of people who buy tickets at Fremantle and the number who hand in tickets at Fremantle total 900,000 odd. Dealing with parcels traffic, the figures are—

Approximate number of parcels forwarded annually	85,000
Approximate number of parcels received annually	221,000
Total	306,000

Fremantle Goods Terminal:  
Goods traffic (wagon loads) handled in Fremantle Goods Terminal, 12 months ended 30/5/54.

	Total number	Greatest number on any one day
Forwarded loaded—		
(a) From outside loading roads	6,845	49
(b) From sheds	14,098	65
(c) From Victoria Quay	3,165	
Total	24,108	
Inwards Loaded—		
(a) To outside delivery roads	7,639	113
(b) To sheds	8,637	
(c) To Victoria Quay	5,581	
Total	21,857	

Number of wagon loads placed into and pulled out of private sidings between Fremantle and South Beach (not included in above) — 17,796.

Number of wagon loads of wool received last wool season — 8,830 wagon loads representing approximately 220,750 bales.

Greatest number of wagon loads of wool received on any one day—	
For delivery to private sidings	355
Through shed	63
Total	418

Hon. D. Brand: Would that be as great if you had a railway on the south side of the river?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No; if we had a line from Bellevue to Cannington and the line on the south side of the river, some of it could come around that way.

Hon. D. Brand: A very large percentage, I should say.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Not a large percentage. The disadvantage would not be so great in the case of eastern traffic because it would not need to be taken down the south side of the river. The disadvantage would be felt by the South-West traffic, where commodities for export such as wool, timber and potatoes would have to be taken from Armadale through Perth, an additional eight miles, an increase in the freight charge of 6 per cent. with an average haul of 120 miles. A double line would have to be built from Rivervale, and that would involve the building of another bridge there over the Swan River.

In addition, a considerable amount of traffic would be hauled through the metropolitan area to North Fremantle with a resultant further congestion on the lines in that area. So there is nothing to recommend that scheme. I have asked people from the Eastern States how they would view a proposal to sever their railway from the chief port, and their reply has been that they would not entertain it for a moment. When I told them that the idea had been mooted here to sever the railway with Fremantle, the reply was that to do so would be little short of lunacy.

The Government has spent some £250,000 or £300,000 on the provision of an up-to-date diesel coach service for the metropolitan area and, if the terminal were made at North Fremantle, it would to a great extent nullify the suburban service. It is passing strange to me that the previous Government should have ordered 600 stock trucks for which there was never any great use, and that now those members wish to enable farmers to shift their stock by road vehicles.

Hon. D. Brand: Done on the recommendation of the commissioners.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Now we find a former Minister making a suggestion that would mean virtually getting only 50 per cent. of service from the diesel cars.

Mr. Hearman: Where is the new bridge to be built?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member might think he is very clever in asking that question. Evidently he thinks he might obtain from me information that he tried three or four times to get from the Minister for Works. So far as I am aware, a decision has not yet been made.

The present plans for the Robbs Jetty, Fremantle and North Fremantle areas are—

(a) The construction of a marshalling yard and transfer sidings in the vicinity of Leighton for the purpose of—

- (i) Sorting inwards traffic for handing over to the port authority all traffic destined for the wharves at North Wharf and Victoria Quay, and the wheat silo.

This would mean that the sidings would be constructed on the seaward side in the vicinity of Leighton. The railway service would bring down all the goods and that would be the hand-over point between the railways and the Harbour Trust authorities, who will have their own electric locomotives to distribute the goods around the wharves. It would not only be the hand-over point for inward goods, but would also be the outward point to the marshalling yards so that the department could take possession and deliver the goods to their various destinations. To continue regarding the plan—

- (ii) Handling traffic to and from the Fremantle siding in Fremantle-North Fremantle area, including superphosphate and wool, sorting and marshalling traffic to and from the goods terminal.
- (iii) The elimination of the goods terminal at Fremantle and the handing over to the port authority of the railway land in the area, except that re-

quired for the passenger station and the necessary coach cleaning and stowing facilities.

That overcomes the objection of the member for Moore that the Railway Department will be holding on to line and land immediately off the Victoria Quay side of the wharf for the purpose of shunting operations. That will not be the case. The coach cleaning facilities will be a few lines away, and there will be no marshalling yards at Fremantle. The wagons will be brought across and the marshalling and distribution will be largely done on the North Fremantle side. There will be the construction of a goods terminal at North Fremantle and of a locomotive depot at Robbs Jetty to stable and service the locomotives working in the area—the diesel shunters working to Robbs Jetty and in the North Fremantle and Fremantle area, and the steam locomotives working to the South-West, Armadale, Kwinana and Bassendean areas. The locomotives will be shifted from the Fremantle area and the Harbour Trust will have the use, for harbour facilities, of much of the land now being used for railway marshalling purposes.

I hope the proposal to discontinue the rail link to Fremantle will not be taken seriously by any member. I doubt whether there would be any advantage attached to it, and I am certain it would have a number of distinct disadvantages. If we sever the rail link at North Fremantle and build the south-of-the-river line, bringing it in to join the Armadale-Fremantle line, either just on the Fremantle side of Bibra Lake, or on the other side, there are two proposed routes.

It would practically make worthless the line now being constructed under a statutory obligation entered into by the previous Government with the B.H.P. and other interests at Kwinana to have the line extended from Coogee to those works. I repeat that that line would be practically wasted if the rail terminal were made at North Fremantle and the south-of-the-river line were built. I believe a south-of-the-river line is essential but that there is no great urgency for it. At present, and allowing for considerable development in the Kwinana area of the existing industries and any others that may start there, I am convinced that the traffic can be adequately handled by the extension of the line now being built there.

When the line becomes overloaded to such an extent between Midland Junction and North Fremantle that it is unable to cope with the traffic adequately on two lines of way, I think the south-of-the-river line will become essential, but until such time as we see how the Kwinana area is going to develop, it would be unwise to rush in and decide that the south-of-the-river line should be built immediately. The

whole question is bound up in Prof. Stephenson's recommendations, and we do not know what they are to be. We know that the marshalling yard will have to be shifted and the suggestion made by the member for Greenough that the rail terminal might have to be made in Perth, is, I think, completely untenable.

**MR. JAMIESON (Canning)** [9.20]: I feel—as I did last year—that I must support the motion moved by the member for Fremantle. I believe that the Minister, in his opposition to the motion, was governed too much by the present tightening of the purse-strings, instead of adopting a far-sighted policy. Whether the harbour is developed greatly south of the river or in Cockburn Sound, is a matter for decision at a later date, and I feel that the question to be decided is that no more than the present proposed two or three berths should be built in the river.

Mention has been made of Prof. Stephenson's report, in relation to the south-of-the-river railway, and its possible connection with future harbour and wharf development. I would draw the attention of the House to the fact that of recent date Prof. Stephenson estimated that at the turn of the century the population of the south-western part of this State will be in the vicinity of 2,000,000. At present about 20 berths are serving the shipping needs of a population of approximately 500,000 people.

If in future we are to provide the number of berths required for a population of 2,000,000 it is obvious that any up-river extension of the harbour will be merely a stop-gap and that Governments of a later day will be forced to go outside and provide miles of wharves similar to those in the big harbours of the world. I feel that the Government cannot justify any further upriver extension of the harbour apart from the two or three berths that have been proposed.

In addition to Prof. Stephenson's estimate of our future population, we hear that a Fulbright lecturer said he considered—he justified his view on the experience of the development of the State of California over the past 50 years—that the future population of this State would be more likely to be 6,000,000. That further emphasises the fact that the Government would be well advised not to accept the advice of any engineer or expert who is inclined to find the easiest way out, in view of the present position of the purse-strings, rather than having regard to the facilities that might be required in the future by the people of this State.

Whether development costs millions of pounds or not cannot concern us much at this juncture. Many things done in the past in this State and for which we are now sorry cost millions of pounds, so

do not let us extend the harbour upriver and lock all our transport up in one small area when we could make it so much easier to handle all the incoming and outgoing cargo by dispersing the facilities over the wider area available at Cockburn Sound. Members know that Fremantle is already a bottleneck that cannot handle much more trade. I feel there is little justification for adopting a scheme that will further hamper and hinder the movement of freight into or out of the State. For those reasons, I intend to support the motion.

*[Mr. Hill took the Chair.]*

**HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle—**in reply) [9.25]: Mr. Speaker, I feel that I have been highly honoured in that two Ministers have seen fit to rise in an endeavour to knock this motion out. It is not often that two Ministers rise to oppose a simple motion such as this. The Minister for Railways talked about Sir John Coode and C. Y. O'Connor. Sir John Coode said that the mouth of the river, if opened, would, in his opinion, not remain open and he was proved to be wrong, but, on the other hand, we have not been told what C. Y. O'Connor said. I suppose he was looked upon as the greatest engineer this State ever had, and he said that if they cut through the Success Bank, the channel would in all probability silt up.

Both of those men have been proved wrong up to date, but we still do not know whether a channel through the Success Bank will silt up when the big tankers start going through it. That remains to be proved, and this man may possibly still be right. I repeat that C. Y. O'Connor said that in all probability a cut through the Success Bank would silt up and Sir John Coode said that if we opened the river, the mouth would silt up, and so far both have been wrong.

The Minister for Works gave us a great lecture the other evening and made a couple of threats—he might call them promises, but I would call them threats—when he told a couple of members what would happen if we agreed to such an expensive proposition as I put forward. I hope members have kept open minds and have not been led astray by the bogies raised by the Minister. I hope to be able to topple those bogies in the time allowed me, and if I cannot quite finish, I hope some member will move that my time be extended.

The bogies raised were the cost to the country if my proposal were given effect to, the submission that we must always take the advice of experts and the old bogey of land resumption. There was also the argument about a temporary wooden structure. I will deal with the first bogey; that of the cost of what I propose and what the Minister said will happen if

members vote for the motion. I do not think mine is such an expensive proposal after all and I hope to show that it will be cheaper for the country than what the Minister advocates.

In paragraph (4) of volume 1 of his report, Col. Tydeman states:

The port's existing 18 berths are capable, with improvements, of meeting likely trade expansion of the next 20 years or so. No new berths need be constructed until then. These improvements, on a five per cent. annual trade increase basis, can be effected gradually for completion about the year 1970. The estimated cost at the high ruling prices of today would be £352,000 for immediate improvements and £7,730,000 for long-term improvements.

In paragraph (34) he says—

The maximum annual port tonnage, 1,983,464 (s) tons in 1945, can be accepted as the capacity of existing facilities. By remodelling North and South Quays, this maximum capacity can be increased to 4,000,000 (s) tons per year, only possible in busy times with ship following ship.

By constructing one new berth in the existing Inner Harbour (on the available site upstream of the bulk wheat plant on the north bank), the total annual port capacity could be increased to about 4,200,000 (s) tons.

No. 10 berth is now being built and, according to Col. Tydeman, when it is completed the harbour will be able to accommodate shipping up to 4,200,000 tons. Col. Tydeman, in paragraph (200), vol. 2 of his report, says this—

As will be shown later, the port is not fully used, and were more ships and trade available the existing maximum tonnage of some 1,800,000 (s) tons is capable of increase with improvements to 4,000,000 (s) tons. These tonnages are within the capacity of the entrance channel. Thus, if no more than the 18 Inner Harbour berths are to be operated, little or no change to the existing channel movement and method of ship changeover need be contemplated. But if port extensions upriver are visualised providing more berths with a capacity no greater than 4,000,000 (s) tons, and involving more ship moves through the entrance each day, the existing entrance channel and its method of operation will need special examination and possible modification.

This is a big job without going any further upstream. I quoted that extract to show that I have Col. Tydeman to back up my statement and, to show that he is not

alone in that opinion, I will now quote Messrs. Brisbane and Dumas who, on page 8 of their report, state the following:—

In order to obtain some measure of the future needs of the Port, we have endeavoured to calculate the tonnage of cargo which may be handled at the port of Fremantle when the population of the metropolitan area may have reached 1,000,000, estimated approximately 50 years hence.

On the basis set out above, the total tonnage of general cargo to be then handled at Fremantle would be 3,000,000 tons, approximately treble the 1951-52 tonnage.

So they estimate that the population of the metropolitan area 50 years hence will have reached 1,000,000.

The proposition I support is that we should erect a railway bridge adjacent to the present railway bridge, and when that is done there will be room for two more berths in the existing harbour. Col. Tydeman has stated that the present harbour, with the addition of No. 10 berth, will be able to accommodate shipping to the capacity of 4,200,000 tons, and, with the two other berths, on the proposition that I support, the tonnage would be increased to 4,600,000 tons.

What do our friends propose? They propose to take the harbour up to the traffic bridge. We must have a bridge, of course. If that were done, five more berths would be provided. Let us see what the cost of those berths will be. According to Estimate No. 12, which appears at p. 170, vol. 2, of Col. Tydeman's report, the total cost of an upriver scheme, giving an alternative of seven berths, would be £7,530,000, the cost per berth being £1,070,000. However, they could not provide seven berths at that point because there is not enough room. The engineers have now admitted that. If the total cost of that scheme is to be £7,530,000, that would not be a very cheap alternative.

Messrs. Brisbane and Dumas do not give an estimate for the finished job; theirs is only a part estimate. They estimate that to demolish the existing bridge, railway track, etc., and including the cost of ancillaries and contingencies and land resumption, the total cost would be £1,480,000. However, there is a great deal more to be added to that, to which I will refer later. At page 10 of his report, Sir Alexander Gibb states that the cost of demolishing the existing bridge, including contingencies and land resumption, will be £1,160,000. That, too, is only a part estimate, and there is a lot more to be added.

It will be remembered that some time ago, when I was speaking on this subject, the Government stated that the authorities did not know anything about the bottom of the river. The then Minister, the member for Greenough, said that there was a certain amount of truth in what I said, and

that when they received Sir Alexander Gibb's report, they would know more about it. We now have that report, but we know no more about the subject. Messrs. Brisbane and Dumas stated in their report that they used the costs quoted by Sir Alexander Gibb as a comparison; but he has made no comparison because his costs comprise only a part estimate.

So we have to rely on the quote given by Col. Tydeman, and I have already given that to the House. As I said, the estimate given by Col. Tydeman was £753,000 to finish the harbour up to the traffic bridge. The part estimate given by Messrs. Brisbane and Dumas is £1,480,000, plus £4,028,000 for dredging, excavation, erection of transit sheds, cranes, mechanical equipment, railways and roads.

It is of no use building a railway bridge unless we have a harbour. They want two berths, but we cannot have the berths unless all these extras are provided. Therefore, the total estimate for the scheme proposed by Messrs. Brisbane and Dumas would be £6,208,000, which is a pretty costly affair. As compared with that, the estimate for the total work given by Sir Alexander Gibb is £6,358,000 which is also fairly costly.

What do I propose? I propose to build a railway bridge adjacent to the present railway bridge which would make room for two extra berths in the existing harbour. The cost of that work would not be half of the estimates given for the other scheme. Yet the Minister tells us that if we vote for this motion, we would have to wait until the department expends over £1,000,000 to build a breakwater outside the harbour. He is also going to tell the member for Narrogin that he will have to spend £1,258,000 outside the harbour before he can provide the hon. member with his water scheme. I say that the Minister has to get a new excuse because that one will not hold water. You, Mr. Acting Speaker, do not want to wait two or three years for your £300,000 harbour scheme. You want it now and you are entitled to it. You do not expect anyone to commence building a berth at Albany harbour and then leave it.

Old-fashioned economists would say that that is actuarially unsound. They would say that once a project is started, it should be finished. However, that is what they have done with your harbour, Mr. Acting Speaker, and they have used that as an excuse to avoid agreeing to my proposition. What is the use of telling the member for Narrogin that the water scheme in his district will be delayed because of extensions to Fremantle harbour, because the department will not go outside the harbour with extensions for another 5, 10 or 15 years?

Hon. V. Doney: I wish there were some sort of guarantee attached to what you say.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Does the hon. member think that the spending of £1,000,000 in 5, 10 or 15 years will stop him getting his water supply now?

Hon. V. Doney: I possibly know a little more about that than you do.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Well, let us hear from the hon. member.

Hon. V. Doney: You should have thought of that a little earlier.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The hon. member should have thought of it earlier. The hon. member wants his water scheme now, but the Minister tells him that if £1,000,000 was spent on a breakwater outside the harbour, in 15 or 20 years' time he might get his water supply.

Hon. V. Doney: This is an interesting discussion, anyhow.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I shall quote what Mr. Meyer said regarding an outer harbour. He said—

Such an outer harbour as I have proposed would be a good harbour. It would have a common entrance with the inner harbour which would be kept open and clear by the ebb flow of the river, and would be reasonably comfortable for vessels berthed therein from whatever quarter the weather might come. Whilst, on a rough estimate based on the unit figures employed by Mr. Tydeman (re p. 162, Vol. 11 of Tydeman Report) the cost—berth for berth—of an 11-berth instalment would compare quite favourably with the cost of upstream development.

So he says that 11-berths upstream would cost just as much as 11 berths outside. He went on to say—

In any event, whether the pilot plan for the Outer Harbour development be that offered by me or some other, I strongly urge that Outer Harbour development should be on the south side rather than on the north. If this issue can be resolved now and in favour of south side development, any well balanced plan of development will involve a considerable work of reclamation between the Fish Haven and, say, Robbs Jetty and it appeals to me that that is work that might advantageously be embarked upon in the comparatively near future.

He speaks very well of the outer harbour, but some members here do not seem to agree. Before leaving this aspect, I would like to quote what the special committee of experts had to say. In paragraphs 16 and 17 the report says—

The committee has in mind that upriver port extension in the Inner Harbour will suffice for a period of ten years. It can be visualised that the first berth upriver could be in use

in three years. The remaining four berths could be completed in the following two years.

The first Outer Harbour general cargo berth should come into operation within ten years' time.

The first five berths can be completed in five years, and the first general cargo berth at Kwinana within ten years.

The other evening when you, Mr. Acting Speaker, asked what amount would be spent if the Government decided to go outside, the Minister did not give us a direct answer but gave the amount it would cost if it was decided to build additional berths at Kwinana. These experts tell us that the first general cargo berth could be built at the end of ten years. The other evening the Minister said that it would cost approximately £9,000,000 before we would have one berth in Kwinana. I think it would be very fortunate if the Government went on with the 5-berth scheme or if there would be a berth for general cargo after 10 years.

I can just imagine what the Treasurer will say to such a proposition. I think he will turn the scheme down. The Minister showed us some photographs which indicated how Nature has done the job of providing a good site for a harbour. I can also show a photograph to illustrate how Nature has done the job at Fremantle. The shifting of the banks will be a very big job indeed. Col. Tydeman said that outside development has everything to its advantage whilst inside development will result in cramped space for ships and insoluble difficulties for posterity.

The Minister for Works further stated that we must always take the advice of experts. Of course, he does not believe in that policy unless he has changed his mind within the last month or two, because he said by word of mouth and showed by deed that he does not believe in taking such advice. He does not believe in that, but on the present occasion it suits him to accept expert advice. In this connection I quote from page 1736 of the 1951 volume of "Hansard":—

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: ... Since it was first announced that the Government had agreed to the extension of the harbour upstream, I made it my business to discuss the proposal at every opportunity with people in Fremantle who should be expected to have a viewpoint on the question. Almost without exception, those to whom I have spoken expressed surprise that anyone would consider doing other than extending the harbour seawards.

Mr. Yates: Would they be experts or just local people?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: They are experts in their own lines but not engineers. Some of them are naval men.

They brought to bear upon the question a commonsense point of view which quite often is just as valuable—and sometimes more valuable—than expert opinion. Col. Tydeman by no means said that the only thing to do was to go upstream. The Tydeman scheme proposes to go both ways. It suggests going upstream to Point Brown initially and then in years to come to extend seawards. So the Tydeman plan is a combination of both. To attempt to give effect to the plan in the way proposed, is to leave to posterity the job of extending the harbour seawards after we have gone upriver and possibly spoilt it.

But the Minister wants to go upriver now. At that time he did not want to take the advice of experts. He said that a commonsense policy was much the best plan and that is what I am saying and trying to put into operation. I am quite satisfied that if the Minister for Works looks at the spot where I propose the bridge should go, he will agree that it is a commonsense proposition.

Hon. D. Brand: Is it true that Cabinet has made a decision on the site of the bridge?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Of course it has made a decision. Ministers have had the advice of experts. They had all the experts there, together with the member for Fremantle and others, and they showed us the spot where the bridge will go across the river. I shall say something about that later. I quote from page 690 of the 1951 volume of "Hansard," dated the 12th September. It reads—

The Premier: In other words, to act on expert advice.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: We do not always act on expert advice; we act on it only when it suits us and the Premier knows that is right, too. When we do not get the right expert advice, we look for some other advice.

The Minister said at the time "when it suits us," meaning everyone of us. He did not say the Government. To show that the Minister was not so much in favour of such a scheme, I want to quote what he said when he attended a meeting of the Fremantle City Council to back up the member for Fremantle. The newspaper report reads—

Mr. Tonkin, who was commenting on reports of Mr. Tydeman and Mr. H. C. Meyer regarding the proposed extension of the Fremantle Harbour, said that he was amazed that Mr. Tydeman should report that outward harbour extension, mainly to the south, had all the necessary requirements with no exceptions and yet should favour an upriver extension which the same report admitted did present some



difficulties and would hand on to posterity insoluble problems of crossriver communications. With the advantages of outward harbour extension stated by the author of the report himself, it was difficult to see how the Government could adopt a policy otherwise.

That was plain talking. The Minister was quite satisfied. He did not want to go upstream but to go outside.

Mr. Lawrence: Why did he want to go outside?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Because he thought it was better. I quote from page 689 of "Hansard," dated the 12th September, 1951, which reads—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: . . . In such a case we have to look a little further. At the outset, I admit I am not an engineer and have no pretensions to being one. I have no qualifications in that direction, but this is not solely an engineering problem and I have to regard this from the point of view of the possible development of the State of Western Australia.

I agree with what he said. The Minister congratulated me on urging the Government to do the right thing, which was to go outside. Talking about ports and extension upriver, this is reported on page 695 of "Hansard," dated 12th September, 1951:—

The Premier: I am only quoting the experts.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I am judging by what I have seen. The Premier has doubtless seen much more than I have and would know where rivers have been improved by reason of shipping going up them. If a harbour is extended upstream, what do we get? We get wharves and warehouses and rats.

Mr. Hoar: What about the rivers in England?

The Premier: There is a lot of shipping on the Thames and on the Mersey.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I have not been to many places, but in those places I have visited I have seen what happens when harbours are extended upstream. From time to time I have seen many pictures on the screen and in books of harbour extensions up rivers, and it is fairly obvious that the rivers are not improved by those extensions. For my part, I much prefer the Swan River as it is.

That is how he showed he did not believe in the advice of experts! Now he tells us, because it suits him, but not me, that we must agree with the experts' advice. I do not think any member here will say that over the last 10 years the experts in Western Australia have agreed on the subject that we are now discussing. One

says one thing and one says another. What is a layman to do? He must do what he thinks is right and pick out what he considers is the best advice.

The Minister has shown by deed that he does not believe in the experts. Some time ago a chord railway was proposed. The experts said it had to go from Bassendean to Welshpool, and then the Government decided not to go ahead with the scheme. Not long ago it gave the engineers a chance to bring down an alternative scheme. The engineers suggested that the railway run along the river bank by St. John of God Hospital. Cabinet had a look at it and said, "Nothing doing." We have not heard anything further about it since. The Minister has shown by word and deed that he does not believe in taking the experts' advice. The Premier is smiling, so I must have hit the nail on the head. When the Premier inspected the site along the river for the proposed railway, he said, "Gee, look at it!" That was the end of the chord railway along the river.

The Premier: I said, "Hell, we cannot have it there!"

Hon. D. Brand: You did make one favourable decision on it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister for Works then went on to say that "all the experts, without exception, advised doing precisely what we propose to do." Well, they are not doing anything of the sort. Mr. Stileman never mentioned the likelihood of a bridge going alongside the traffic bridge. Gibb came out in 1929 to report on Stileman, and he saw nothing to marvel at in a scheme stopping at the traffic bridge. He never mentioned it. Col. Tydeman gave it some thought because he went into the whole of the ramifications, but he did not agree to it. He condemned it. He said it would be neither desirable nor possible.

After Col. Tydeman reported, Mr. Meyer was brought over to report on the Tydeman scheme, but he never gave it a second thought. He does not mention it anywhere. He saw in Tydeman's report that it was neither possible nor desirable, and when he saw that, he had a look at it, I suppose, and he said, "I will not have that." The ex-Premier sent home to get Sir Alexander Gibb to come out and report on the scheme. Mr. Dumas and Col. Tydeman wrote to him and asked him to bring down a report, and to put a bridge alongside the traffic bridge.

The harbour was to go up as far as the traffic bridge, and another bridge, preferably a wooden structure, was to be put there. So, Sir Alexander Gibb's men came out and looked around, but they did not recommend it. They did what they were requested to do. They were requested to bring down a certain thing, and they brought it down. Gibb says that the best place is north of the present traffic bridge

—halfway between the traffic bridge and Point Brown. Stileman, Gibb, in 1929, and Tydeman, condemned it. Meyer never mentioned a word about it and Gibb, in 1951, I think, condemned it. Then Brisbane and Dumas brought down a report recommending it. They said that they were going to do the same as Sir Alexander Gibb recommended. Sir Alexander Gibb never recommended anything at all. He brought down a plan, but he did not recommend it.

I will now get on to the question of the resumptions of land. The Minister said my speech would give a wrong impression of the position and he went on to say that the proposal to site the railway approach seaward of the traffic bridge naturally obviated the necessity to acquire valuable business sites in North Fremantle, whereas the extension to Point Brown did not. That is not correct, either. I know the place only too well, and I would say there are still valuable business sites to be acquired. One of the most valuable sites in North Fremantle must be acquired.

According to Appendix No. 12 in Tydeman's report of 1927, the resumptions will miss most of the business centre, and his plan was designed with that end in view. The estimate of £175,000 of Messrs. Brisbane and Dumas is well off the mark. I am not an engineer, but I am prepared to tell the Minister that he will not get the resumptions through for three times that amount. I think Col. Tydeman's figure is much nearer to being correct. He suggested an amount of £700,000. There are three sites in North Fremantle that are going to be resumed, and I venture to say they will cost £175,000, which is what Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane estimate for the lot.

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

Mr. Oldfield: Col. Tydeman made his estimate about 1948.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister, and in fact all the Ministers were greatly surprised to see the small amount of resumption that was necessary for the scheme! Well, if they were all surprised, I am very surprised at one of them because he lives on a hill from where he can look at this area every morning, afternoon and evening. He knows the place better than he knows his office in Perth. He should not be surprised. The Minister did not tell us what he should have told us, namely, that they were surprised at the small amount of the resumptions.

I will bet—although it is illegal to bet—that the Chief Secretary knew all about it and that he was not surprised. I think he was damn well disgusted because when we went there and were told "The bridge is coming across here," he said, "Come with me, boys, and I will show you where it ought to go." And he showed us the

site which I support. The Minister for Works did not tell us that. He said that all Ministers were surprised at the small amount of resumption necessary, but he should have told us that one Minister showed where the bridge should go. It is not a very good advertisement for the Chief Secretary to say that he was surprised at the small amount of resumption necessary or that he agreed to the proposal. I suppose he had to agree in Cabinet if there was a majority against him, but I do not think he agreed willingly, as I know him too well. Did he not say in another place—not many months ago, just before he became a Minister—that it would be a catastrophe if the harbour were taken upstream.

Hon. D. Brand: He may have changed his mind since then.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: He said it would be a catastrophe if the harbour were taken upriver and that the Fremantle members would fight the proposal to the last. In those days, they had decided to do that, but unfortunately one of them has got off the beaten track. That leaves only four of us because one cannot say much on account of the position he holds, and this other, as the church people say, has got off the track.

Mr. Oldfield: Have you not a term for it? Would you not say that he had ratted, or something like that?

Mr. Hearman: They should make you a Minister! That would fix it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must resume his seat, as his time has expired.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I move—

That the member for Fremantle be granted an extension of time for one quarter of an hour.

Motion put and passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Fremantle may proceed.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister said that Mr. Meyer had made a careful study of the pollution question and that there was nothing in it so far as the Swan River was concerned. I thought Meyer knew a lot about pollution and that he had some qualifications in the matter until I saw a letter which he wrote to the Claremont Municipal Council. It reads as follows:—

I would acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 27th ultimo, submitting a resolution of your council concerning my investigations in the matter of the Fremantle Harbour Extension Scheme.

Your council is, of course, aware of the terms of my engagement as investigating engineer. These terms only partially cover suggestions included in the resolution.

It should be borne in mind that while I have every desire and intention of carrying out the work for which I have been engaged, in as full a manner as possible, the investigations can only extend to cover my qualifications.

Any chemical, biological or analytical investigations are definitely outside my sphere as a harbour engineer.

I am assured that the particular lines of investigation suggested by you have already been referred to persons having the necessary qualifications to express opinions on such subjects of fact.

In the light of the above I think it will be realised that it will not be possible or expedient for me to attempt to cover the ground referred to in your letter.

After reading that, I could not take much further notice of Mr. Meyer in that regard. I know also that the Minister did not go too much on Mr. Meyer. When he was on the other side of the House, he did not look on Mr. Meyer too favourably. At page 690 of vol. 1 of "Hansard" for 1951, the present Minister for Works said—

The Premier of this State is very friendly with the Premier of South Australia, who was here on a visit. During that visit, a discussion took place on the possibility of an engineer being made available to give an opinion on the harbour. Mr. Playford offered to make available the services of Mr. Meyer, his engineer. Although I have not been able to check this information, I have been told that Mr. Meyer's qualifications were inferior to those of Col. Tydeman.

Further—

I am not doubting his reputation. I believe he is a man with outstanding qualifications, but I also believe that his qualifications are inferior to those of Col. Tydeman.

Mr. Ackland then interjected—

Do you know of any engineer who has qualifications higher than those of Col. Tydeman? I do not think there is one.

The Minister then said—

That proves my argument, and makes it all the stronger.

Lower down, on page 691, the Minister said—

Mr. Meyer had already submitted a proposal for an upriver harbour extension in South Australia. I ask members: What would be the chances of getting an engineer of inferior qualifications who himself had already put forward a scheme for an upriver extension in his own State, to come to another State and recommend that

proposals for an upriver extension were all wrong? The chances would not be one in a hundred. I ask members to have a look at Mr. Meyer's proposal for harbour development in South Australia. They will see there is no outlet for the water. It is an extremely shallow stream. When the tide comes up that river in South Australia, carrying silt in suspension, it would continue well up into the river and then, as it turned, the silt would drop. It is obvious to the layman that in that proposal one has to expect a considerable silting up and, not only that, but also considerable pollution.

If there would be considerable pollution in the river at Adelaide, there would be more here. The Minister continued —

Furthermore, if there should be an accident to a ship in that channel, all the shipping upstream would be completely and effectively bottled up.

If it would be bottled up in the river at Adelaide, it would be bottled up even worse in the Swan River. If the river at Adelaide would be polluted by ships, the Swan River would be polluted equally as much. I doubt whether such large ships would use the Port River at Adelaide as would use the Swan, although I have not any real knowledge on that question. I do not think the Minister was too fair to Mr. Meyer in what he said on the occasion I mentioned, because I think Mr. Meyer is a pretty good engineer and must be given credit for not agreeing to all Tydeman's recommendations. He did not agree to the proposal to extend the harbour northwards outside and did not agree to the proposal for multi-storey sheds. He did not come here practically in a bag, but agreed to what he thought was right and disagreed to the rest. Much has been said about other places, and I would like to hear the member for Albany—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I would like to hear his opinion on upriver extension.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It was said that at Woolloomooloo the water was dirty but that there was no complaint about it. If the member for Albany had read the paper the other evening he would have seen an article on the state of the Woolloomooloo harbour. It said that people were getting concerned about the position and that if something was not done, the impossible would become possible and that people would be able to walk on the water. They said it was time that something was done in order to see that "our harbour" at Sydney was not polluted in the same way as other harbours. So the member for Albany was wrong when he said that the people at Woolloomooloo were not complaining. They are, and they are not the only ones.

There was recently an international conference called for the prevention of pollution of the sea by oil. It was held in July, 1954, and I have the report with me. Members can see that it has not taken me long to get that one. Forty nations were represented at the conference, including Soviet Russia, China and Australia. The proposal they passed was that no oil was to be allowed to escape from ships within 50 miles of any port. So all nations are taking a serious view of the position.

In Great Britain they have bird societies. The water there is becoming so oily that members of these societies pick up birds and wash the oil from their feathers so that they can fly. Members can see that we are not the only country that is worried about the problem of pollution. So I hope the motion will be agreed to and that ships will be prevented from going any further upriver. If they are permitted to go upstream, they will no doubt pollute the river much more than it has been polluted up to date.

Doctors tell us that excreta and dung from a few swimmers cause polio. But the position looks pretty black today. Members must have noticed in the paper this morning, or a couple of days ago, where the people of Guildford were complaining that the porpoises were swimming in the river up there. They swim only in salt water so apparently there is very little fresh water in that area and the excreta and dung will drift into those places. It will get further and further upstream as members who live near the river will, no doubt, discover. Members have a duty to perform in this regard and if polio breaks out it will affect not only those who live near the river, but will also spread throughout the length and breadth of this country.

In 1912 a lecture was delivered at Fremantle by an eminent engineer, Mr. G. A. Lefroy. He said—

At that time the then member for the district, the late W. E. Marmion, was an advocate for the creation of Fremantle's harbour at Owen's anchorage, a rational and reasonable scheme, which was opposed by Perth interests just the same way that anything that did not lead to Perth was opposed at the present day. As a counterblast to the Owen's anchorage scheme, the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor was called upon to report on the question of opening up the river to shipping by means of the Rocky Bay channel into the ocean. Fortunately for Fremantle, Mr. O'Connor turned this scheme down with the very pertinent remark, "That the project had not sufficient advantages to warrant the creation of new interests and the sacrifice of existing ones, to which no doubt it would have a tendency."

Had the Rocky Bay project been embarked upon he had no doubt but that the shipping would be in Melville Water off Dalkeith today, and Fremantle as a port would have been non-existent. What Mr. O'Connor then foresaw would yet come about if they permitted the bridges to be removed before a deep water outer harbour scheme had been secured. It would be as well for them to remember that Mr. O'Connor's words were as true today as when they were written 21 years ago.

He went on to say—

With regard to the proposition to extend the harbour up the river rather than around Fremantle, they would probably be interested to know that the State Government in 1904 imported a Mr. Keele, an engineer in New South Wales Government employ, to report on a site for a graving dock. That gentleman had boldly recommended Freshwater Bay as the site for the graving dock, and Melville Water as a land-locked harbour. The abandonment of Mr. O'Connor's design for spur jetties on the north side of the river in favour of a straight quay by which wharfage below the bridges to the extent of at least 5,000 feet had been sacrificed, taken in conjunction with Mr. Keele's report, made it quite clear to him that there was someone out at any costs to remove Fremantle's harbour to Perth's backyard.

Before my time is up—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member has two minutes left.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN: When Mr. O'Connor made his plans for the Fremantle harbour he wanted spur jetties on the north side. Had his plan been adopted, we would have had 10,000 feet of berthage on the north side instead of a little less than 5,000, as we have at the moment. In the next room I have a plan which shows the spur jetties, but Mr. O'Connor's recommendations were ignored.

I suppose it is a bit late to start on the temporary wooden structure for a bridge, but there is no doubt that it will be accepted. It is no use the Minister side-stepping the issue by saying, "We have not made a decision." Very likely no decision has been made, but I am as satisfied as I see you sitting there, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister has made up his mind. He knows what he intends to do and he knows that his plan will be accepted. He will have a temporary wooden structure because members know how he lauded such a plan the other night. He told us of the benefits of such a plan and how, in 25 years time, if we wanted to pull it down we could do so without any trouble. He

told us that Brisbane and Dumas had recommended it. I went right through their report but I did not read that. They referred to the difference in the scheme at Point Brown and the other proposal, but they did not say too much about the wooden structure.

I hope members will agree to my motion. If it is agreed to it will not hurt anybody. It will simply be carried and it will not be necessary to do anything. But let us make no mistake. That bridge will be built alongside the traffic bridge and it will block the flow of the water going down the river. If such a suggestion is adopted, the member for Nedlands will have the smell of the river right throughout his district. I trust that the House will carry the motion and I am sorry that I cannot speak any longer. However, that is one of the rules of this House and I must abide by it.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	17
Majority for	3

#### Ayes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Mann
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Manning
Mr. Cornell	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Court	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Heal	Mr. Owen
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Perkins
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Oldfield

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Norton
Mr. Brang	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Doney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Watts
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. May
Mr. Moir	

(Teller.)

Motion thus passed.

### BILL—CITY OF PERTH SCHEME FOR SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENTS AUTHORISATION).

#### Second Reading.

**MR. HEAL** (West Perth) [10.33] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to amend the City of Perth Scheme for Superannuation Act, 1941, and has two main purposes. Firstly, it proposes, for the wages employees of the council, to introduce a unit superannuation scheme costing 12s. per unit, on a maximum of five units, which would enable a workman, on retirement, to receive a pension of £3 per week. Such a sum would not disadvantage a married man in regard to any pension benefits to which he might be entitled.

Secondly, the Bill seeks to raise the maximum benefits received by salaried officers of the council, which are now fixed at a maximum of £8 per week on retirement, to £12 per week. It will be noted from the Bill that contributions from salaried officers will be increased by 50 per cent. so that they may gain the maximum superannuation benefit.

The second main object of the amending Bill is to enable the council to subsidise the superannuation pension now received by officers who have retired. Wages employees, who now receive a pension of only 12s. 6d. a week on retirement, will have this amount increased by 50 per cent., making the total amount 18s. 9d. Those salaried officers who now receive a superannuation benefit of £4 a week will be granted an increase of 50 per cent., which will increase this benefit to £6 per week.

Those officers who are on a pension in excess of £4 per week will have the amount in excess of £4 per week increased by 25 per cent. Up to the present time, the widow of a deceased wages employee of the council has been receiving 6s. 3d. as a superannuation benefit, which is half the pension to which her husband would be entitled if he were still living. The Bill now proposes to increase that amount by 50 per cent., namely, 3s. 1½d. per week, making a total of 9s. 4½d. per week.

It is interesting to note that under this new unit pensions scheme, the wages employee contributes only one-third of the cost of a unit and the council contributes two-thirds. The schedule contains two tables showing the payments made by wages employees; one for the men who are contributing to the existing scheme prior to this Act becoming law and another for the employees who commence duty with the council after the proclamation of this legislation. Every employee in the service of the Perth City Council shall have the option of contributing to the new scheme of superannuation or electing to continue contributing to the present fund. That, in the main, covers the provisions contained in the Bill.

The Perth City Council has also agreed to confer some extra benefits on those employees who have been in its employment for the past ten years and up to 40 years. They will be given certain concessions which are shown in the new schedule in the Bill and will be able to receive their units of superannuation on a much smaller contributing scale than those who will join the scheme after this Bill becomes law.

I have received a letter from Mr. Green, the Town Clerk, which briefly explains the main provisions in the Bill and certain parts of his letter read as follows:—

The amendment has two main purposes—firstly, to make available to the wages employees of the council a unit

superannuation scheme whereby wages employees of the council may elect to take up units with a superannuation benefit of 12s. per unit up to a maximum of five units and thus enable a workman on retirement to receive a pension of £3 per week. Such a sum would have no disadvantage to a married man in respect for any pension benefits and it is felt that such a scheme would not only be advantageous to the employee but would tend to stabilise the working force of the council and thus secure in the long run a better working staff.

The amendment also seeks to raise the contributing maximum of salaried officers of the council and thus make available an increase in the maximum pension now fixed at £8 per week to £12 per week, and it will be noted that the contributions from officers for a maximum pension will rise by 50 per cent. in order to achieve the new maximum superannuation benefit.

The second main purpose of the amendment is to enable the council to conform to the steps taken by the State Government to subsidise the superannuation pension of officers now retired. It will be recollected that the State Government scheme was amended in order to subsidise retired officers of the State service because of the lower purchasing value of the pound, and the council's proposal is that superannuation pensions up to £4 per week be increased by 50 per cent., viz. up to £6 per week, and that for officers who receive a pension in excess of £4 per week the amount of pension above £4 per week will be increased by 25 per cent. An example of the effect of such an amendment for a man on a £6 per week pension would be that he would receive for the first £4 of his pension an increase of £2, and for the £2 balance of his pension he would receive 10s. making a total increase of pension of £2 10s. and a total pension of £8 10s. per week.

The provisions of the new Bill still permit wages employees of the Council to remain in the existing scheme on a basis of contribution dependent upon the age to ensure a pension of 12s. 6d. per week on retirement and, for such employees of the Council who elect to remain on this basis and not contribute to the unit scheme, the Council proposes to increase the 12s. 6d. superannuation pension by 50 per cent., being the same ratio as that for salaried officers, making a total pension of 18s. 9d. per week.

I may point out that the Council considers that, although the contribution of wages employees for the pension of 12s. 6d. per week compares with the contribution of similar wages employees in the State Service for an

equal benefit, the amount of 12s. 6d. per week as a pension does not provide any incentive for the Council's wages employees to remain in the service of the Council. Neither does the scheme provide the means whereby a wages employee may make an adequate contribution whilst working for a satisfactory pension on retirement and, therefore, the new unit scheme proposed, which will enable workmen to increase their contributions and their pension benefits up to a maximum of £3 per week, should greatly benefit our wages employees.

In conjunction with this Bill, and in order to make it work satisfactorily, there will be laid on the Table of the House, if the measure becomes law, a new City of Perth by-law No. 17 for the superannuation fund. If members wish to have a look at that by-law, I have two copies which I could make available to them. This is a most important Bill as it relates to wages employees and salaried officers of the Perth City Council, and I hope this Chamber will endorse the second reading. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.42 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Thursday, 14th October, 1954.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.