

Legislative Council because it regards them as not only unnecessary but improper at this juncture, is most anxious to ensure that there shall be no hiatus between the regulations which will, of course, exist under this Bill when it becomes law, and the State regulations which may be promulgated to take their place at some future time. It is possible for either House of Parliament to disallow these regulations if and when they are tabled. In consequence, it is possible, as a result of the activity of either House, that there might be a time when there would be no effective regulations in operation. Quite obviously, it is not the desire of the Government that that should be so. The risk of either House taking such action should not be permitted.

The Government, therefore, gives this assurance to the House, that it is considering the sort of amendment that should be inserted in the relevant clause of the Bill to ensure that a hiatus cannot exist—in other words, that there will be an effective set of regulations in operation at all times. That amendment will, I anticipate, be available when the House next meets to discuss the matter. I would also like to say that there are numbers of reasons why the Profiteering Prevention Act of 1939 was not used as the basis for this legislation. I held the view—and indeed I hold it now—that it was practicable to make use of that legislation. But we must not forget that a series of circumstances arose which apparently made it desirable that the Commonwealth regulations should be taken over. Members have expressed the view that they knew nothing of those regulations, and that what was to be the effect of the regulations, which the measure proposes to take over, was totally unknown to them. I suggest that they have had full experience of the regulations in question, as we all have, over a period of a number of years. In consequence, we are all fairly well able to judge what will be the effect of the existing Commonwealth regulations in regard to price control.

At one stage it was suggested that there should be no Commonwealth set-up taken over at all. But it was quite apparent that that could not take place, but that it would be necessary to take over not only a portion of the Commonwealth set-up but also a goodly proportion of its officials. When the situation arose, it became obvious that those people would in that way be able, far better,

to deal with the question of price control under the aegis of the State, than they would were we to bring them under some legislation which was entirely new to them. In addition, the necessity for uniformity to some degree seemed to me to override any last remaining objections I might have. For all these reasons, it was decided that the legislation should be brought down in the form in which it is now before the House. But I repeat the assurance I gave just now, and very categorically, that there is no intention on the part of this Government to allow any hiatus or gap in the regulations which might be caused by an act of disallowance by either House of this Parliament and that, therefore, measures will be taken over the week-end to bring before the Chamber an amendment suited to that purpose.

Mr. Smith: It might not be passed in the other House.

The ACTING PREMIER: At least we shall have control of the measure, and plenty of time to argue the point.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 24th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.39 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 19th August, 1948.

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

QUESTIONS.**PRICES CONTROL.***As to Staff and Expenditure.*

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What number of persons are employed in Western Australia in connection with prices control?

(2) What was the total annual cost of—

(a) wages and salaries;

(b) other expenditure?

(3) What number of persons will be taken over by the State from the Commonwealth in connection with prices control?

(4) What number of other persons will be employed by the State Government in connection with prices control?

(5) What is the total estimated expenditure for State prices control for—

(a) wages and salaries;

(b) other expenditure?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) This is a Commonwealth department and information required is not available to the State Government at the present time.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) The matter is at present under review and no finality has been reached.

(4) This is not known at present.

(5) See answers to Nos. (3) and (4) above.

BUILDING CONTRACTS.*As to Number in Country Districts.*

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

What number of building contracts have been carried out in the country (including buildings now under construction) during the past 18 months by—

(a) private builders?

(b) Public Works Department?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Statistical returns of building activity collected from builders give some particulars of locality of construction for house completions only. Such particulars were not collected, however, prior to the September quarter, 1947.

The available statistics for houses completed in districts outside the metropolitan area are as follows:—

Constructed by Contractors	Constructed by Owner-Builders	Constructed by P.W.D.
	September Quarter, 1947.	
195	79	15
	December Quarter, 1947.	
204	79	15
	March Quarter, 1948.	
157	38	3
	June Quarter, 1948.	
Not yet available	83	4

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Eleventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East)

[4.35]: I desire to congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment to the high office of President of this Chamber. I hope you enjoy good health to allow you long to carry out your duties, and I wish you every success. My congratulations are extended to Sir Charles Latham and Sir Frank Gibson on their being knighted. I wish them long life in which to enjoy the honour His Majesty has seen fit to confer upon them. At this stage I must also extend a welcome to the new members, Messrs. Cunningham, Watson and Hearn. I hope their tenure of office will be a pleasant one. We have been a fairly happy family in this Chamber, down the years, and I see no reason why that state of affairs should not continue in the future.

Coming now to my own province, there are a few important items that I wish to discuss. I have voiced my objections to the Address-in reply debate on various occasions during the last ten years, and I feel that very little notice is taken of what members say. I fail to see what has been done by any Government in the last ten years—in many instances—about requests put forward by members during such debates. However, I cannot let this opportunity pass without mentioning the Goldfields and the goldmining industry in general. It is the greatest industry in this State and is of enormous benefit to the Commonwealth as a whole. The industry today is in a parlous condition. The high cost of production of gold is causing great concern on the Goldfields and there are today not more than two or three mines in a position to carry on under the present great strain.

The high cost of production of gold is brought about by the increased prices of fuel, cyanide, steel and other stores that are necessary in the industry. I would like to see the Minister for Mines pay more frequent visits to the Goldfields. I will say that during his term of office he has been to this area once or twice, but I think the industry is of such vital importance to this State that the Minister should have only that particular department to administer. As it is he has the portfolios of Mines and Police, as well as that of the Chief Secretary. The industry is of such importance that it warrants a full-time Minister. Down the years we have had the spectacle of returns from wheat and wool being of great benefit to the State and I am pleased to say that these two commodities are once again in that position. The mining industry has also been on top, but today it is in the doldrums to some extent. I am pleased that the farmers are in such a good position because I know of the hardships they have gone through when trying to eke out an existence.

The question of goldmining leads me to the subject of prospecting. I would like to inform members of the House who perhaps do not know of the hardships which are generally experienced by prospectors in their endeavours to find the elusive weight. Prospecting is a very arduous job and requires considerable stamina and skill, plus a lot of luck.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: It is.

Hon. G. Bennetts: And guts!

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes. The men who in days gone by, made our present existence possible by blazing the trail are worthy of commendation. They had what I might term, "guts." They had hearts of steel whereas the man of today who goes prospecting is more or less better off. The men who opened up that country had to walk from Perth to Kalgoorlie through Southern Cross, up to Laverton, Murchison and places such as that.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There is one of those men in this Chamber. I refer to Mr. Miles.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Then he deserves a seat in this Chamber, for he is a man who would know what conditions were like in those days. The men of today require a lot of assistance to get ready for a prospecting

trip because it is necessary to have a vehicle, stores, water and so on. The existence of big mines is due to the work of the men who went out prospecting. When a man is fortunate enough to find something that eventually turns out to be a goldmine it is possible for that locality to be developed. It has happened scores of times, although very often prospectors are unlucky in their search for the elusive metal. In view of this I consider that prospectors should be given some assistance by the Mines Department. I know that the department subsidises them to a certain extent, but they cannot exist in the bush without outside backing. I therefore appeal to the Minister to treat them as well as he possibly can in their endeavours because I am sure there is a lot of undiscovered gold in Western Australia. These men should be fostered and it is up to the department to do everything possible in its power to help them.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: It is wrong policy to encourage prospectors to enter the mines as employees. In most cases they are men with "tickets" and the independent life in the bush is far more beneficial to their health.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes. Another matter which is affecting the Goldfields very seriously is the state of the railways. Almost every year I have been one of those members who have spoken on railway matters.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You, and Joe Mann!

Hon. W. R. HALL: Mr. Mann speaks for his province and I have the opportunity of speaking for mine. I know Mr. Mann's views will probably differ from mine, but he enjoys seeing his opinions differ from those of other members. This morning, at seven o'clock, the announcer on the wireless broadcast the expected arrival times of various trains. He gave the times for the important trains at any rate and I take it the Goldfields express is important—I would say that it is the best paying train in Western Australia. I listened carefully to the information given and I heard that the Goldfields express was due to arrive in Perth at 2.20 p.m. The announcer, I may remark, said it looked to him as though this express was travelling to Perth via Darwin! People must be used to late arrivals of trains in Perth as well as other places.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The engines have the cyclone spark-arresters fitted.

Hon. W. R. HALL: When Mr. Mann was addressing the House he spoke about a wonderful train called the "Australind." I am wondering whether it would be possible to borrow this wonderful train from the Railway Department and put it on the Goldfields run. I do not envy the Commissioner for Railways, his assistant or any of his men who are trying to do the job, because I think war-time factors have caused the late running of trains and the Railway Department suffered considerably during the war period. The department did a good job during the war but I do feel that perhaps it may be able to put some good locomotives on the Goldfields run. We have had some new coaches on the Perth-Kalgoorlie line, but we have not yet seen any new engines.

The oil-burning locomotives have made a few trips, but they seem to be able to make part of the distance only and then run out of oil. We want some new, reliable steam-engines on that run and the people on the Goldfields thought that when the new coaches were supplied, new engines would be sure to follow. The train is now called "The Spirit of Protest" in lieu of "The Spirit of Progress," but we on the Goldfields are still looking forward to being supplied in the near future with a service similar to those operating in other parts of the State. Surely the Railway Department in its wisdom can provide a better service for the people of the Goldfields! When I refer to the requirements of the residents of Kalgoorlie, I include in the consideration I hope will be extended to them the people who live in Leonora, Laverton and other such outlying places. We must remember that the Kalgoorlie express is not merely a passenger train seeing that it also conveys goods. In fact, you, Mr. President, know that the Kalgoorlie express might be regarded more or less as a mixed goods train because it often consists of five passenger coaches and three goods vans.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They would be for carrying the passengers' luggage.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I would remind Mr. Mann that, as Mr. Bennetts has at times stressed in this Chamber, perishables are conveyed by the train to the outlying centres. Mr. Bennetts referred to the posi-

tion regarding fish. Thus not only is passengers' luggage conveyed in the vans but quantities of perishables are taken on to meet the requirements of the residents of Leonora, Laverton and other places. In addition to fish, rabbits, for instance, are transported by rail.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Cannot you breed your own rabbits?

Hon. W. R. HALL: No. There are not too many rabbits in the Goldfields districts, and I would remind the House that the main industry at Kalgoorlie is goldmining and not rabbit breeding. I know Mr. Mann comes from a part of the State where they can grow plenty of rabbits.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Perhaps you want to improve the breed of your rabbits on the Goldfields.

Hon. W. R. HALL: So long as plenty of fat ones are sent there, we will not mind; but in these days rabbits are scarce on the Goldfields. Coming back to the subject of the railways, I think it high time that the Government should give serious consideration to the northern lines and endeavour to see that the trains run to a timetable with which they can cope. As members of Parliament, we know full well what happens at times when we endeavour to book a berth on the train from Perth to Kalgoorlie, or vice versa. If we succeed in getting on the train, we most assuredly do not know when we will arrive at our destination.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Do you know that the drivers and guards have had their clocks and watches taken away and have been provided with calendars?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I did not know the position was quite as bad as that.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It is.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: This is the new order!

Hon. W. R. HALL: I do not profess to be an authority in such matters, but the only remedy I can see is that the trains should be provided with better engines and be required to haul lighter loads. That step is necessary if they are to reach their destinations on time. That is the crux of the position. The trains leave Perth, for instance, on time but on account of the heavy loads and the advanced state of disrepair of the locomotives, it is quite impossible for them to be run on time.

Another point in connection with the railways that I wish to stress is that at Kalgoorlie we have had, year after year, the spectacle of men, women and children having to queue up at the railway station if they desire to book for a journey to the metropolitan area or to Esperance. Last year a meeting was called by the Mayor of Kalgoorlie to discuss the matter, and I attended it. Unfortunately the meeting was convened a bit late. We all know that when we endeavour to get the Government to move, it takes quite a long time to secure results. Nothing was done during last year as a result of the representations following upon that meeting at Kalgoorlie. I thought I would raise the matter again during the present Address-in-reply debate because I want to avoid the continued necessity for people queuing up at the Kalgoorlie railway station. As a matter of fact, instead of improvements being effected in the position, it seems to be slipping back.

Recently the local authorities on the Goldfields made an effort to get something done in order to avoid all the trouble that the people have been put to. I claim, without fear of successful contradiction, that the time has arrived when the Railway Department should combine with other transport authorities and provide a central booking office in Kalgoorlie, say, in Hannan-street. Why should the people who desire to book a berth have to go to the railway station, which is half a mile away from the centre of Kalgoorlie and to which there is no transport available? There is only one place where they can sit down while waiting their opportunity to book, and, in consequence, they have to stand there for hours on end. On the other hand, people in Perth have an opportunity to book at various places, whether it be by tourist coach or by some other means of transport, and similar amenities should be provided for the people of Kalgoorlie and Boulder, without requiring them to go all the way to the railway station. I myself am a supporter of the aeroplane services, and is it any wonder that the people are commencing, more and more, to travel by air? They do not experience half the trouble in booking a seat on the plane that they do if they wish to travel by the Kalgoorlie express. If a booking office were established in Han-

nan-street, it would be a great convenience to the people.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The new administrative staff is looking into that matter and we may expect some better provision.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I certainly hope that is so. Kalgoorlie has been in existence for over 50 years. Surely the residents there should expect progress and not retrogression in connection with their transport facilities, and it is certainly time more amenities were provided for them. Take the position of people from Laverton or Leonora who go to Kalgoorlie and desire to book their passage on to Perth! They have to stay in Kalgoorlie over Saturday night before they can book a berth on the Sunday. That is distinctly wrong.

The Kalgoorlie express is the best paying railway proposition in the State, and yet we treat the people from the Eastern States who travel by the Trans. line far better than we do our own folk. The Goldfields people do not even get equal consideration. Those who come from the Eastern States are provided with accommodation in the best of the coaches, but possibly that may be for the purpose of advertisement. After the visitors are catered for, the local residents have to put up with what is left. From time to time we have heard from members of this House what benefit this State derives from the travellers from the Eastern States compared with what is paid by the Kalgoorlie people themselves.

Hon. A. Thomson: A man living in Leonora should be able to go to the station there and book right through to Fremantle, and have done with it.

Hon. W. R. Hall: That is quite right, and he can do so, provided he does not intend to break his journey. As it is, we know that a member of this House, who is here at the moment, tried to book a berth so that he could return by train to Kalgoorlie tomorrow night, and he has not been able to get one.

Hon. W. J. Mann: He must have been asleep!

Hon. W. R. HALL: He was not. The trouble was that he did not know when he could book. He arrived here on Tuesday morning and he would not be in a position to know then whether the House would

sit tonight or whether the proceedings would have been adjourned on Wednesday.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: He would not be able to learn from the Press whether the House was sitting or had adjourned.

Hon. W. R. HALL: And so how could the hon. member know when he should book?

The Honorary Minister: Do you think a member of Parliament should have preference over a worker?

Hon. W. R. HALL: No-one has suggested that.

The Honorary Minister: Then what are you saying?

Hon. W. R. HALL: The Honorary Minister is not awake to what I said! I am pointing out that the trains are fully booked.

The Honorary Minister: There you are!

Hon. W. R. HALL: Here is a member who desires to return to Kalgoorlie and cannot get a berth on the train.

The Honorary Minister: Because the train is full.

Hon. W. R. HALL: That is all right; I am not arguing about that. The Honorary Minister is in a dream. Let me remind him that Mr. Thomson suggested that a resident of Laverton should be able to book right through to Fremantle, and I was dealing with that.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Perhaps Dr. Hislop can give the Honorary Minister a needle and wake him up.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. W. R. HALL: Surely Mr. Bennetts does not suggest that the Honorary Minister requires a needle to wake him up! I know he is not asleep, but he is not quite awake to the position.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the hon. member to proceed with his remarks instead of dwelling upon interjections.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Another matter I wish to deal with is that of granting a flat rate for water on the Goldfields. I am getting tired of bringing this question before the House. I have attended seven or eight deputations which urged that a flat rate should be adopted. We have been told that the Labour Government was backward

in granting such a concession, and so I put it to the present Ministers that the opportunity is now open to them to help the Goldfields in this way.

I hope the time is not far distant when a flat rate for water will be adopted so that the Goldfields and the various districts that take water from the pipe-line may be benefited. The people of the Goldfields are entitled to greater consideration in the supply of this essential, of which the people of the metropolitan area have plenty and may move or less waste it without much harm being done. I agree with other members that, if we could obtain some reduction in the rate charged to the Goldfields people, it would be a God-send. The Goldfields residents would be able to grow green stuff and have their own lawns and trees, and there would then be no need to talk about putting a green belt around the Kalgoorlie district. I have heard whispers that something may be done, but they have not materialised to the extent of any apparent action. Therefore I hope Ministers will take cognisance of my remarks.

In speaking of the housing situation, I propose to be brief. I feel that the Goldfields people have been left out in the cold. The procedure adopted by the State Housing Commission has been more or less to throw on the local authorities a certain amount of the work of reporting upon the applicants for homes in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder areas. I know that the local authorities do their best to cope with the work asked of them by the Commission, but as a member of the executive of one of these bodies, I consider it rather unfair that the Commission should expect them to undertake this work. The time occupied in attending to the requirements of the Commission is considerable and the employees of local authorities have plenty of other work to do. I am speaking now for the road board with which I am associated, but I daresay that other local authorities are experiencing similar trouble.

The Commission should have an officer of its own stationed permanently in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder district. That area has a population of 25,000 to 30,000 and surely those people are entitled to have a permanent officer stationed in their midst, just as there are officers in Perth, able to make the neces-

sary investigations, reports and recommendations to the Commission. If one could go into the question of the number of houses applied for and built on the Goldfields as compared with the metropolitan area, based on the relative population of each centre, the result, I am sure, would be astounding.

Dealing with roads, I consider that the Main Roads Board is doing a fairly good job, and I say this because I believe in giving credit where credit is due. Taking the last 18 or 20 years, the Great Eastern-highway has never been in better condition. However, the progress that is being made with the work is rather slow and, if the departmental officials do not watch the position very closely, they will find that, on the eastern section between Bulla Bulling and Coolgardie, the weather plus the heavy traffic will play havoc with the surface and we shall have a repetition there of the damage that has been caused by heavy wheat-laden vehicles on the road between Merredin and Perth. Those wheat trucks have caused untold damage to the roads—roads that are running parallel to the railway—and the cost of repairing them will amount to thousands of pounds. The roads were not designed to stand up to such heavy traffic.

I have been travelling on the Great Eastern-highway for the last 30 years and can claim to know something of what is happening. There is a stretch of about 100 miles between Southern Cross and Bulla Bulling that has not yet been bituminised but is in course of being graded and is in fairly good condition. I should like the Minister to tell us how long it will take to finish that section and how long it will be before the surface is bituminised. On the section from No. 5 pumping station to Southern Cross and from Bulla Bulling to Coolgardie, the progress made was very slow.

Other important towns such as Geraldton, 350 miles from Perth, and Albany, 285 miles from Perth, have good roads all bitumen-surfaced, but the Perth-Kalgoorlie-road is the last to receive attention. It seems to be a case of out of sight, out of mind. The department should not be content to carry on this work from one end only, but should have teams and the requisite plant stationed at intervals throughout the 100 miles in order to expedite it. Then it might

be possible to have the construction finished in the course of a year or two, instead of ten years hence, when some of us might not be here to see the road completed through to Kalgoorlie.

According to a statement in the Press recently, it seems that a further cut in the petrol ration is contemplated. If that is to be so, consideration should be given by the Government, or Parliament, once again to a reduction in traffic license fees, especially in the fees paid by owners of private cars. The private car owner is penalised out of all proportion today. He receives about 11 gallons of petrol per month for a 20 h.p. car and this allows him to travel 220 miles, that is, if his car is in good order. The case of the man who uses his car for both business and pleasure is different; but the man with a Class 2 license is today entitled—and for that matter has been since the war—to every reduction in license fees and to every assistance that can be given him. After all, the depreciation of his car, when compared with the mileage he can travel—about 200 to 220 miles per month—is heavy. One must also take into consideration the amount of money which these owners pay in insurance, as this is an added heavy burden for so restricted a mileage.

I wish to express my opinion on traffic in the metropolitan area. I am a fairly keen observer of traffic and profess to know something about the Traffic Act. Motorists in the metropolitan area are being greatly penalised owing to their being restricted to certain parking areas. The Police Traffic Branch—I presume, under instructions—wherever there is an opportunity to put down the lettering "No parking," certainly does so. The police are trying to drive some motorists well out of town, while at the same time allowing others who are in business to park in front of their shops for hours on end.

The streets of the metropolitan area and of the surrounding districts should be kept safe for pedestrian as well as vehicular traffic, but I consider the Police Traffic Branch is going a little too far in forcing motorists to drive round a city block two or three times looking for a parking space. Once he finds such a place, he is out of traffic. We find that the vehicle-owner today is one of our greatest assets; he is heavily taxed by way of license fees, petrol

tax and otherwise, and should not be burdened more than is absolutely necessary. Some privileges should, in my opinion, be extended to him that he is not receiving today. There are many other matters upon which I could touch this evening, but I shall probably deal with them on another occasion.

With regard to workers' compensation, I repeat what I have said on previous occasions, that the Act contains anomalies which should be removed and I hope legislation will be introduced for that purpose. The Miner's Phthisis Act should be amended to enable turned-down miners and their wives and families to receive greater benefits and higher weekly payments. It is no credit to any of us that we should permit these men to suffer and not do something to brighten their remaining days on earth.

Hon. A. Thomson: I quite agree with everything you say. We have all to take the blame.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Mr. Thomson is quite right. I pay regular visits to Wooroloo and, believe me, Sir, we have some very sick people there who have not much of a future before them. When one finds his friends and colleagues in such a place, he realises what it means to be suffering from such a malady. I hope the Government will endeavour to see that the men who have given their lives to the goldmining industry get increased payments, weekly or otherwise, and other benefits, so that they may have some little extra enjoyment in the days left to them. I thank members for their patient hearing. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. SIR FRANK GIBSON (Metropolitan-Suburban [5.18]: I desire to be associated with other members in the congratulations that have been extended to you, Sir, on your re-election to this House. For many years you have rendered great service to your province and to the State generally, and your very fine victory is evidence that the people of the Goldfields still have the fullest confidence in you. One does miss, however, as a result of your occupancy of the Chair, those extremely close analyses of the financial statements submitted to the House. These were a valuable source of information to members. I also join with members in the good wishes extended to the newcomers

amongst us. All of them have served in many phases of community activity and their presence will be a source of increased strength to the House. Having listened to the excellent speech delivered in this Chamber by Mr. Watson, I am sure, now that you, Mr. President, are occupying the Chair, we shall in future hear from him some further enlightening observations on the finances of the State.

It is not my intention to refer in detail to the many matters dealt with by members in speaking to this debate, but there are one or two subjects upon which I would like to touch. The questions asked by and the answers given to Mr. Thomson were particularly interesting to me. They show that over the last two years a considerable sum of money has been lost by the Government in the sale of electricity to the City of Perth and the Fremantle Tramway Board, at the prices fixed by agreement in 1906. At that time the Fremantle Tramway Board had been generating its own power for some years for lighting and transport and was also supplying current as far as Cottesloe. The agreement to take supplies from the power house then to be erected at East Perth was forced on the board under threat by the then Government to enter into competition with it. The agreement was for a term of 25 years, with an option for a further period of 25 years. The option was exercised, and the agreement now has about another 16 years to run.

It may be interesting to members to know a little of the story of the Fremantle Tramways and Electric Lighting Board. In 1906 it borrowed a sum of £80,000 to establish a plant for the generation of power for lighting and transport purposes. Somewhat later another £40,000 was borrowed. This loan money has been repaid, further assets have been acquired, now valued at £350,000, and the board has no loan indebtedness. In addition, a sum of over £80,000 has been handed over to the two councils concerned as their share of the profits. I often wonder what would have been the position of the Perth tramways had they been run by the Perth City Council and the profits used for the maintenance of that service, instead of the Government having taken them over, with the result that today, next to Sydney, Perth has the worst tramway service in Australia. Whether what has been done in Fremantle

could have been done had we been generating our own power over the years, I cannot say; but I have sufficient confidence in the capacity of local government to believe that we could, with our own generating plant, have done as well.

In the original plant erected, power was generated at 50 cycles. The new power house at Perth compelled the re-wiring of motors to suit 40 cycles; and now, for the new power station at South Fremantle, re-wiring to 50 cycles will be necessary. We are anxiously awaiting the completion of the new station. When power is available, there promises to be great industrial development in Fremantle. Following the cessation of hostilities in 1945, the Fremantle City Council immediately commenced to put into operation plans envisaged during the war, and one of the first measures was the adoption of a complete town planning scheme. My friend Mr. Davies was associated with that work and is a member of the committee responsible. With a realisation of the possible requirements of industry, the council, before commencing the town planning scheme, set aside 150 acres of land for industrial purposes so that the development of the town planning scheme would not interfere with or retard the immediate expansion of industry.

The area is located within 3½ miles of the harbour, well elevated on slightly undulating ground, having both bus and tram transport. Within the short space of 18 months two factories have been erected at a total cost of £60,000 and they have commenced manufacturing. They are the premises of Rheem Australia Pty. Ltd. and Woocombers Ltd. The West Australian Worsted and Woollen Mills Ltd. have commenced the erection of a £20,000 factory, and plans are prepared for the erection of factories by the Wright Varnishing Coy. Ltd., and H. B. Brady & Coy. Ltd. Application for factory sites have been received from the Dunlop Rubber Coy (Aust.) Ltd., and the British Australian Lead Manufacturers, and both these large industrial concerns have intimated that they will commence the erection of factories immediately power is available from the new power house in South Fremantle. Two new local companies have also applied for sites for a foundry and an engineering works. It is estimated that when these factories are

all in production they will employ 700 people.

Hon. A. Thomson: I think your council is to be congratulated on having such excellent foresight.

Hon. Sir FRANK GIBSON: Realising the labour requirements of industries, the council has made available 80 acres of land within half a mile of the industrial area for residential purposes. To date approximately 80 homes have been erected or are in course of erection, and the construction of a further batch will be commenced immediately. An area of 16 acres in the residential section has been allocated for a school site, five acres for a community centre, and a further area for a shopping centre, and a recreation and sports ground has already been developed. The first step in the industrial development of Fremantle has been taken and further progress is indicated. I would like to say how deeply I regret that Mr. W. H. Taylor was not retained in the service of the Government until the power house at South Fremantle had been completed.

Hon. A. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir FRANK GIBSON: He has been associated with the Government electricity supply almost from its inception. The plans for the power station at East Perth and the new station at South Fremantle were prepared under his personal direction and supervision. I can quite understand the concern of country members that the industrial activities of the metropolitan area are able to purchase power so much more cheaply than it is available in their districts, but I do not know how the position can be remedied. Perhaps those in authority in the Commonwealth Government who are advocating the unification of our railway gauges might be persuaded to help. The number of people who would benefit from the construction of a broad gauge line from Perth to Kalgoorlie—estimated by the Commonwealth Government to cost some £9,000,000—is very small compared with those who would be benefited in our South-West and Great Southern if a similar sum were made available for the building of dams and the erection of generating plants in those areas. I think that a standard gauge is desirable, but water and power are essential in the

country areas on whose productive capacity the prosperity of the city depends.

The housing problem is one that is causing great concern to us all. I am of opinion that a lot of unnecessary recrimination is taking place about what this Government or that Government did or did not do. Each Minister who has been associated with this department has done his best to meet the increasingly difficult problem of house construction. Every responsible officer of the Housing Commission has been efficient and honest in the carrying out of his duties, and it is unfair that under the protection of parliamentary privilege the probity of these men should have been impugned. As a council in Fremantle, our relations with the officers of the Housing Commission have been particularly happy. At all times the members of that Commission have been willing to co-operate. The original group of 37 houses at Hilton Park was constructed under four contracts made between April, 1945, and April, 1946, and the group was finally completed in April, 1947. It was expected that the contractor would carry on with repetitive work, but he intimated after the completion of his contract that he could not undertake further construction. Tenders were called in July, 1947, but the prices were considered too high and no tender was accepted.

A joint approach was then made by the Fremantle Council and the State Housing Commission to local builders, and the problem was discussed at a well-attended meeting of Fremantle builders held in October, 1947. As a result, a liaison service was set up in Fremantle to assist builders, and an officer of the State Housing Commission was deputed to attend at Fremantle twice weekly especially to deal with builders' requirements. This service has been appreciated and it has reduced the time lag as well as giving builders direct contact with Housing Commission officers in their own sphere of operations. The joint approach of both authorities and the co-operation of builders have enabled the Commission to undertake a further batch of contracts totalling in all 51 homes, spread over four separate contracting firms, which homes are in course of construction.

Arrangements are in hand for an additional 72 homes, some to be built by existing contractors and some by additional

contractors it is hoped to attract to the district, making a total of a further 123 homes. The council has worked in close co-operation with the Commission, and while the programme at Fremantle has been fraught with difficulty, nevertheless, the combined efforts of all associated with the industry have resulted in substantial progress being made in recent months. The cost of road construction in this area to service these homes is estimated at £17,000. The total increase in building costs from January, 1946, to the 30th June, 1948, was 28 per cent. In the period from November, 1947, to January, 1948, costs increased by 21 per cent. due to heavy additions to the basic wage and the implementing of the 40-hour week. From January, 1948, to August, 1948, costs increased four per cent. In our district we have much to thank the Housing Commission for, because of the interest it has displayed and the assistance it has given.

I would like to mention the report of the Royal Commission on S.P. betting. I was disappointed at the result of that inquiry. I think the suggestions I made some sessions ago are still worthy of consideration. I know that Australians are keen on betting, and many who cannot afford to bet indulge in the practice. People in various localities should have the right to say whether facilities for S.P. betting shall be provided or not. As far as my municipality is concerned, I would suggest that a referendum of the ratepayers be taken to find out whether or not they wanted such facilities. If they did, I would give the local authority the power to run a tote, and any profit accruing could be used to provide amenities for the people living in the area. If the ratepayers decided they did not want those facilities, I would then see that the police took every possible step to prevent S.P. betting.

Some two or three sessions ago I also referred to the intention of the Government to make provision for the further extension of Fremantle harbour. Following an inquiry, Mr. Tydeman, an engineer, was appointed to make investigations and submit a report. I am wondering whether that report will be made available to the members of this State Parliament. I hope it will, and that it will not be long before it is. I support the motion, and take this oppor-

tunity of personally thanking those members who have been good enough to offer their congratulations to me.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [5.33]: I congratulate you, Sir, on again being unanimously elected President of the Legislative Council. That is a very nice tribute on the part of members. I also wish to congratulate the new members. The last elections resulted in three new members coming to this Chamber. I do regret, however, the circumstances which caused one of the vacancies—the death of the late Hon. L. B. Bolton. Very generous tributes have already been paid to the late hon. member, and I feel that with his passing this House and the State generally have lost a valuable citizen. In addition to his many activities that have already been referred to by members, he was for a number of years a member of the Murray District Road Board. That was during his very busy days when he was establishing his business and his farm. He used to travel more than 100 miles and give one whole day to attend those meetings. He was indeed a generous man in public affairs, and his passing means a great loss to the State generally.

I congratulate the Government on its attempt to govern in the best interests of every section of the people. I do not think the statement made the other night by Mr. Bennetts, to the effect that the Goldfields members could not expect good treatment at the hands of the present Government, is correct. It is not, I might say, in accordance with the facts. We know that the Ministers have gone a long way towards meeting the requests of Labour organisations. On one occasion the Minister for Transport even went down to the Trades Hall. We know also that the Minister for Mines has done a great deal of travelling in order to meet miners and get first-hand information on the spot. I am of the opinion that workers generally were surprised at the sympathetic treatment they received from the present Government. That does not fit in with the suggestion made by Mr. Bennetts.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The Minister came to Kalgoorlie, but we got no results.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: When the Government took office the greatest problem it had

to deal with was that of the railways. There is no doubt, they were in a state of collapse. Although the late Government ignored the warnings given by the Commissioner of Railways, we have to remember some of the circumstances that obtained during the war. We do know that the Midland Junction workshops did a wonderful job in those days. They manufactured a considerable quantity of rolling-stock and sent it East—to Queensland, I understand. They also did a lot of marine repair work. Furthermore, there was an acute shortage of labour and materials. So, apart from the neglect of the late Government, there have been other extenuating circumstances which have helped to bring about the present condition of the railways. Whatever mistakes have been made, the fact remains that transport is a major problem for the Government to overcome. Unfortunately the present state of affairs is likely to continue for some time because, of a large number of locomotives that have been on order for some time, the Government does not expect to receive any until the expiration of about another 12 months. By then one would expect the position to be worse and not better.

The fact that the Railway Department or the Government has to transfer so much of its freight to road transport is very serious indeed, because the Government does not only lose that revenue, but a great deal of damage is being done to our roads. We have just heard Mr. Hall talking of the highway to Kalgoorlie. Many other roads are similarly situated. They have to be made good by the Main Roads Department which will have to use its revenue for that purpose, when it is sorely needed in other directions. Whichever way we look at it, the railway prospects for the next 12 months or so do not appear very bright.

It is imperative that the farmers should receive delivery of their super within reasonable time for next season's cropping. The position was not good last year, and it seems as though it might be even worse in the coming season because it appears there will be an increase in the superphosphate requirements. Unless steps are taken early to meet the difficulty, no doubt there will be considerable trouble in transporting the large amount of superphosphate likely to be needed. In 1947 some 2,920,000 acres were top

dressed with superphosphate, and this year it is anticipated that 2,500,000 acres will be so treated. The output of superphosphate in 1936 was 227,629 tons. During the war there was a falling off in production owing to rationing, but for the 12 months up to the 30th June last, output had been increased to 333,412 tons, which I believe is a record for the manufacture of superphosphate in any one year.

Our country must have superphosphate. No man can farm successfully without it and there are thousands of acres of country suitable for stock raising, with the aid of top dressing, as yet undeveloped. Even with the population that we have today we could clear that land, a great deal of which is lightly timbered and could be dealt with cheaply with suitable machinery, if that machinery were available. In that way the quantity of superphosphate needed could be doubled in the next 10 or 15 years. There has been some suggestion by farmers that we should build more superphosphate works. Apart from the proposal to build a factory at Albany, I know of no centre where one could be constructed economically.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What about Norseman, or Esperance?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: If we have more works to manufacture the same quantity of superphosphate, the farmers will have to pay more for it. The greater the production from existing factories, the lower the cost of manufacture. It is not wise to try to build factories all over the place. It was suggested that one of the metropolitan factories should be transferred to Merredin, but an expert told me the other day that we might as well try to transport the Mundaring Weir to Kalgoorlie as to try to transfer one of our superphosphate works to Merredin. They are so constructed that the job would be impossible. I think there is a chance of the Albany factory being built within a reasonable time, but apart from that it will be a long while before there are many such factories in our agricultural areas. The cost of building a superphosphate works today would involve anything up to £800,000.

There has been some criticism tonight of the Kalgoorlie trains, and I think it referred to the ordinary passenger trains serving Kalgoorlie and the Goldfields dis-

tricts. I am sure the Westland is the best train in the Commonwealth and that the Railway Department should be given that much credit. This is not my own opinion only, as I have had it also from two or three of the leading railway officials of Victoria. I was surprised that they were prepared to admit that the Westland was the best train in the Commonwealth. We know that considerable delays are experienced, not only on the Kalgoorlie line but throughout the railway system of the State. The locomotives are the principal cause of delays and perhaps there is also some lack of interest on the part of the employees in meeting such situations. When a train is late it seems that nobody hurries and one would really think the train was ahead of time, from the way some of the personnel go about their jobs. More co-operation between some of the employees and railway officials would make things better than they are today. It must be admitted that the position is difficult, as there are not sufficient engines to do the work.

There have recently been talks between this Government and the Commonwealth authorities about the uniform broad gauge railway in Western Australia and through to the Eastern States. I do not think it would be wise at present for that work to be put in hand, owing to the shortage of labour and material. There is a shortage of steel throughout the Commonwealth and I feel that railway construction should stand over for some time to come. Furthermore, when the proposal for the line to come down the Avon Valley is being discussed, I hope consideration will be given to building it so that it will not interfere with the Avon Valley in the event of its being required for water storage purposes. To do otherwise would be a serious mistake. In due course I believe that valley will be required to store water for the metropolitan area—either that or some of the rivers further south will have to be reserved for the purpose.

It has been said that there is a certain amount of salt in the Avon Valley and I do not know whether the possibility of preventing salt coming into that valley has been ascertained, or what investigations have been made. I do know that experts

consider the Avon Valley to be a wonderful catchment area. They say it would impound a huge volume of water, sufficient for the requirements of the metropolitan area for a long time to come. It has also been said that if the water is not of absolutely first quality, hundreds of millions of gallons will be required for industrial purposes. Some big industries require tremendous volumes of water and this scheme would be useful for that purpose. When the late Alex McCallum was Minister for Works he told me it was the intention of the Government to reserve the Serpentine River for metropolitan water requirements. We know that from Armadale to Pinjarra there is a fine tract of country served with schools, railways, roads and so on, and that millions of gallons of water run to the sea annually through the streams in that area. It is a pity that that water should be reserved for metropolitan requirements when it could be the means of so much extra production in that district. The land there is suitable for irrigation.

If the Avon Valley can be harnessed to supply some of the needs of the metropolitan area, possibly the river I have mentioned, and also the North Dandalup brook further south could be used for farming and irrigation purposes. Some time ago there was also talk of taking water from one of these streams to the Great Southern railway. I think that is possible and that those rivers should be reserved for that purpose and for the rural areas, instead of bringing the water to the metropolis. Whatever is done about the East-West railway, let us be fair and broadminded so that what is done will be proved in years to come to have been in the right direction. A survey, called the Dale River survey, was made of the Armadale district. I do not know very much about it but I contend that water is most important and that we cannot have too much of it. Every water scheme that the Government can put in hand will be of great benefit to Western Australia.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It will be necessary if we increase the population much more.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: The increase in population must come. We cannot stop it. The question of railway freights has been discussed in this House and it has been said that freights have not been increased

for the past 30 years. That is not exactly correct, because in 1944—I think that is about the year—the Commissioner of Railways brought down regulations which were placed on the Table of this House. The regulations were for the purpose of increasing railway freights outside the metropolitan area. Members representing country districts objected to that policy and stated that the increase should apply over the whole State, because it was a national matter and that the farmers, or the people in the rural areas, should not be the only ones to bear the burden of that increase.

In view of those objections, the House disallowed the regulations, but shortly afterwards the authorities saw fit to re-introduce the proposed increases under the Government Railways Act, which of course deprived this House of any jurisdiction to deal with the matter. In that way the alteration was brought about and it was the last increase made. I think all members are resigned to the need for a general increase in freights. I do not suggest that it is necessary to tell the Government that there will be objections raised if the same thing is done again. What I do suggest, however, is that any increases which are made should apply to the metropolitan area as well as to country districts. If that can be done, I am sure there will be no objection or complaint from country people about the extra freight they are called upon to pay.

There is some very valuable undeveloped land between Armadale and Picton Junction. We are settling people further afield and there is an attempt to open up new districts, which must be done when we have such a large number of new settlers. There is a lot of good land in this tract of country and there are some very good farmers in that area. These people have protested from time to time that they are not served with proper drainage and irrigation facilities. They have complained that a good deal of the country lacks drainage and have made several applications for the work to be carried out. Recently the North Drakesbrook farmers unanimously requested the Government to give them an irrigation scheme. We do know that irrigation in the South-West has considerably increased production and it is well worth while, wherever possible, to establish such schemes.

I hope the Government will give close attention to this area of country because the milk factory at Waroona, I understand, is prepared to take all the milk that can be produced in the district. Apart from that we have a guaranteed price for butter-fat for at least five years and the price is not likely to collapse even then. With good prices and an assured term I would say that now is the time to undertake development of this country. We should not wait for years until there is a depression, and the price of butter-fat has dropped, before these developments are undertaken. The farmers are getting good prices at the moment and would be able to increase production if this work were carried out. I know that finance has a good deal to do with the matter, but the Government would be well advised to look at some of these areas and assist the farmers as far as possible to increase production.

It was announced recently that the Prime Minister intends to use more than two-thirds of the petrol tax for Consolidated Revenue. That is one of the worst things that could happen to this country. In 1926 the original Act was introduced in the Commonwealth Parliament and provided for a petrol tax of 3d. per gallon to be used for road purposes only. With the depression the tax was increased by about 4d. per gallon. This was done to offset the depression. During World War II. the tax was again increased, bringing the amount up to something like 11d. per gallon. Last year a deputation representing the whole of the Commonwealth waited on the Prime Minister with a view to having some extra money from the petrol tax paid to local governing authorities. The intention was to try to get an extra 3d. per gallon, which would have made the amount up to 6d. per gallon for road purposes. The deputation received a sympathetic hearing, but that is practically all it did get, although the Commonwealth Government said it would grant these authorities £1,000,000 per year for three years.

This is now the second year and the local governing authorities throughout Australia received £1,000,000 last year, and the same amount this year. This sum of money was spread over all local governing authorities in Australia. After next year another agreement will have to be drawn up. I do not know what

they will get, but according to the attitude of the Prime Minister it appears that the petrol tax is likely to be used for Consolidated Revenue until we have a change of Government in the Commonwealth sphere. It is a great pity and altogether wrong that the motoring section of the public should be called upon to pay a sectional tax on behalf of Consolidated Revenue.

The money being paid to Western Australia from the petrol tax is used by the Public Works Department for main roads. Very little of it is available for local governmental purposes, and I can assure the House that local governmental responsibilities are so great that there is no hope at all of laying down bitumen roads and paying for the work out of ordinary road rates. Unless some assistance is forthcoming from the money which, in the first place, was intended to be used for road construction, then we are likely to have bad roads in country areas for some time to come.

The best news I have read for some time appeared in this morning's issue of "The West Australian." I am referring to the rebuff by the Collie miners to the Communists in that district. Old miners have told me that they have known for some time—in fact, for many years—that there were a few Communists in the district, but felt that they could not do anything about it. However, it seems that the miners now feel it is the time to show their authority and they have come out in the open and told the Communists just where they stand. It is a good thing not only for the coal industry at Collie, but for Western Australia as a whole. We depend very largely on coal and I consider we are indeed fortunate to have a body of men who have acted as they did at Collie. It is an opportune time for the Government to assist these men. It is not a political matter because no person should make political capital out of this question. There is no doubt that Communism is not only a menace to this country, but a menace to the world.

Recently in another place the member for Irwin-Moore made reference to Communists in schools. He was quite right. We know perfectly well that the school teachers, as a rule, are not communistic, as most of them are loyal citizens, but this department, like other Government departments, seems to harbour a few Communists. Adherents

of this party are all over the place and it is unfortunate that there are some in the Education Department. I consider it wrong to have even one Communist in the service if it can be avoided, because in the schools it is quite easy for them to do a great deal of harm. A head teacher recently told me that he had an assistant in his school who made no secret of the fact that he was a Communist and who talked about their ideals quite openly.

We know that the Government cannot do a great deal about it, but it might go so far as to check up on these individuals. We know what harm they can do, and we certainly do not want them to be in charge of any of our schools. It is bad enough for them to be associated with the teaching staff. If the Government were to go to that extent, it would be doing something to cope with the situation. I hate to think that the Communists are looked upon as being associated with a political party. They are nothing but a gang of disloyalists. When a union is prepared to do something about them, it is up to everyone else to pull his weight. If it is not the Government's business to do what it can in the matter, then it is no-one's business. Even in the case of the Education Department, steps should be taken to deal with the matter at the earliest moment.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. TUCKEY: There is another matter regarding the Traffic Act, and I shall again refer to a subject I have mentioned on previous occasions. What I have in mind is the menace of glaring headlights. If a driver is to comply with the regulations, it means he must be a danger to himself and to the public. If he were to comply with the regulations that control the beam of the lights, he could not do so in such a way that other motorists on the road would not be dazzled by his strong headlights. If he did so, he would not comply with those regulations. It is practically impossible to drive a car, except in lighted streets, in other than a dangerous manner if one tries to comply completely with the regulations. I know that the Royal Automobile Club, in common with others, seldom adjusts lights to comply strictly with the regulations because of the danger to the public generally. I trust that when the Traffic Act is next amended, this point will be looked into.

When regulations are promulgated, they should be so framed that they can be observed by those concerned without having to run the risk of accident.

Getting back to the Collie situation, I understand that requests have been made for some improvements to the bathrooms or changerooms at some of the mines. I also understand that there has been some delay in complying with those requests because of lack of materials. I suggest that in such a matter—I know the work is essential, because I have inspected what is available on at least one of the mines—the question of materials should not be brought into it. Factories are being built in the metropolitan area and certain other buildings are in course of construction. In the case of the request from the Collie miners, I think provision should be made for the necessary supplies to be made available. It would be a wise move not to ask the miners to continue putting up with unsuitable conveniences any longer than is necessary. In my opinion, the difficulty could be overcome, and I hope that whatever can be done to maintain industrial peace on the Collie coalfields, will be attended to by the Government. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. R. J. Boylen, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 31st August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.6 p.m.