

price from 6d. to 7d. from its next issue, which is going to take a little more money now that it has ceased publishing one of its other papers.

I would have liked to have a word with the Postmaster-General, as I think he controls the Australian Broadcasting Commission. I am disgusted with the horrible screeching noises that come over the air on Sundays during the presentation of some of the horror plays; and unless young people are different from what I was in my young days, they must be disgusted, too. Is that edifying or educational for our young people?

It is time the A.B.C. was asked to give a little thought to doing something better for the people in this country. It is only a young country, with a small number of people, and we are going to depend on the younger generation. Horror stories will not help them.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: What about television? Will we see horror pictures on it?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I saw television in England, but I did not see any horror pictures. I did see Mr. Menzies at times.

The Chief Secretary: Was not that a horror picture?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No. He told us stories in his nice, plausible manner. He was questioned by someone on the other side of the table, and he gave the pleasant smile he can always give when he wants to, and it was very satisfactory.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission is probably giving the public what it thinks it wants; but is it commonsense to give people all they want? Should not a medium of that sort be used to educate the people? I do not object to the broadcasting of sport, such as cricket. But why all the third-rate stuff such as that dealing with the shooting-up of people or the experiences of a man living with another's wife? It depresses me; it really does! I have to listen to it each Sunday evening at a friend's place.

An organisation such as the A.B.C. is able to build up the morale of the people or bring it down to degradation—to educate them, or to put them back in the dark ages. The A.B.C. should use its power and influence to better purpose. Broadcasting is a marvellous innovation when used to build up the morale and point to the best way of life for the people. The Press and the broadcasting people have a very great responsibility, and I do not consider they are living up to what I expect of them. However, they will say, "Why take any notice of an insignificant person like him?"

When I hear the news and wonder just how far away another war is, it makes me—an old man—very depressed. My re-

marks may not be very enlightening, encouraging or worthwhile; but I hope I have made a contribution which will reach the people. The best people outside are probably those associated with the churches, but many people cannot be attracted to them, as the late Mr. Collier said. It is hard to get people to church; but a big fight will fill a hall. I do not propose to say anything further at the moment, but I hope my contribution to this debate has expressed my true feelings.

On motion by Hon. G. C. MacKinnon, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 14th August, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

Operation of New Leases.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is there a new lease now in operation between the War Service Land Settlement Board and the settler?

(2) If so, when and on whose authority was this new lease issued?

(3) Why was the original lease agreement discarded?

(4) What are the altered and/or additional conditions imposed on the settler?

(5) As the original lease was presented to, and approved by, Parliament, why has not the new lease been submitted to Parliament for ratification?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The new lease operated from March, 1954, under written agreement with the allottees to accept the conditions of the new legislation when passed. This legislation was finally assented to in November, 1954. The lease was issued after agreement with the Commonwealth and State authorities.

(3) Leases issued under the original form are still operative. The legislation under which the old lease was framed was invalidated. The new form of lease agreement is issued under the 1954 State legislation and complies with the conditions determined by the Commonwealth for the grant of financial assistance to the State.

(4) The main purpose of the amendments is to make clear the rights of the Minister to:

(a) Charge to the lessee for all improvements whether on the property at the time of acquisition or provided subsequently.

(b) Increase the rental to cover any portion of the cost of providing structures over and above the standard charge fixed for structures.

(c) Average the cost of development of farms within a project for the purpose of adjusting the rental on each holding—subject to the economic limit defined in the conditions.

(d) To obviate any contention that the lessee purchased the demised land upon which structures sold to him are situated.

(5) In view of the fact that the new lease contained only such amendments as were necessary to make it comply with the 1954 Act and was not retrospective, it was not presented to Parliament.

STATE LAND TAX.

(a) Effect of Revaluations.

Mr. COURT asked the Treasurer:

(1) In what years were the last two revaluations made for State land tax purposes in each of the metropolitan area suburbs?

(2) What was the aggregate result of revaluation in each of these suburbs?

(3) What is the programme and timetable for further revaluation of each of these suburbs?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) and (2) The details are as follow:—

Metropolitan Suburbs—Revaluation Figures.

Suburb	Year of Revaluation	Total U.V. £	Year of Revaluation	Total U.V. £
Claremont	1932/3	372,783	1952/3	1,246,637
Cottesloe	1941/2	315,028	1951/2	877,560
Fremantle	1951/2	2,523,094	1955/6	6,532,015
Fremantle East	1941/2	163,438	1954/5	937,529
Fremantle North	1930/1	134,128	1935/6	133,178
Guildford	1936/7	92,909	1954/5	222,395
Midland Junction	1932/3	136,447	1952/3	445,585
Nedlands	1950/1	2,142,805	1955/6	7,011,760
Perth—City	1951/2	22,259,827	1955/6	32,865,174
Leederville	1951/2	1,340,759	1954/5	2,130,950
North Perth	1940/1	596,475	1954/5	2,522,395
Victoria Park	1934/5	488,118	1952/3	1,869,750
South Perth	1948/9	777,178	1952/3	2,422,740
Subiaco	1950/1	761,209	1954/5	2,412,115
Bassendean	1951/2	303,506	1955/6	810,815
Bayswater	1951/2	759,829	1955/6	2,157,365
Belmont	1951/2	650,248	1955/6	2,458,180
Canning	1949/50	508,706	1953/4	1,725,447
Cockburn Sound	1941/2	134,928	1954/5	1,634,665
Darling Range	1922/3	239,712	1951/2	517,855
Gosnells	1949/50	270,891	1951/2	418,295
Melville	1949/50	963,326	1954/5	4,481,170
Mosman Park	1936/7	155,995	1952/3	316,690
Mundaring	1931/2	158,442	1952/3	597,906
Peppermint Grove	1952/3	490,646	1955/6	999,835
Perth Road Board	1953/4	4,150,618	1955/6	8,486,464
Rockingham	1950/1	350,656	1954/5	1,388,505

(3) Revaluation programme is dependent upon the availability of the valuers, but approximately eight suburbs are included annually. For the year 1956-57, the following suburbs have been listed:—Claremont, Cottesloe, Gosnells, Melville, Midland Junction, Mosman Park, North Fremantle and Victoria Park.

(b) Payment by Widows.

Mr. COURT asked the Treasurer:

(1) What are reasons for differentiating between civilian and war widows by granting the former exemption from State land tax and not war widows except in cases of financial hardship?

(2) Will he give consideration to letting the exemption apply to both civilian and war widows especially in view of the steep increase in State land tax revenue arising from higher values?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) The exemption to civilian widows was granted by an amending Act passed in 1945. The reason for not including war widows was probably because there is no limitation to the amount war widows may earn or possess outside of their pension.

(2) Yes.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

(a) Karridale-Augusta Area.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the urgent need for electricity supplies in the Karridale-Augusta area, when does the State Electricity Commission intend continuing power lines from Margaret River to Flinders Bay?

The MINISTER replied:

The commission is not at present contemplating making extensions in this area.

(b) South-West Power Scheme.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Who decided that the subsidy of £72,000 paid over the last few years to the South-West power scheme was no longer necessary?

(2) On what information was such decision made?

(3) When will final accounts for last financial year of State Electricity Commission be available?

(4) Has any protest against the decision not to pay the £72,000 been made by—

(a) the State Electricity Commission;

(b) the consumers?

(5) To what extent will non-payment of the subsidy affect the extension of power lines and the future price of current to country consumers in the South-West?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Treasurer.

(2) On the accounts of the commission for 1954-55 and a statement in connection therewith by the Grants Commission that the subsidy would be disallowed in future payments.

(3) Within one month.

(4) (a) The commission has set out the reasons why it considers the subsidy should continue.

(b) No.

(5) This is not yet known.

FISHING INDUSTRY.

North-West Survey.

Mr. NORTON asked the Premier:

Has he knowledge of any steps being taken by the Federal Government, since the sale of the whaling station on Babbage Island, to carry out—

(1) A full scale survey of North-West waters with respect to tuna, prawns and other valuable species of fish, which are to be found there?

(2) The establishment of a pilot processing plant for the treatment of the fish mentioned in above question?

The PREMIER replied:

No, but it is understood the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry has these matters under consideration.

HIRE PURCHASE.

Application of Money Lenders' Act.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) Should the various hire purchase firms be registered under the Money Lenders' Act?

(2) If not, would transactions of these firms contravene the provisions of the Act, if such firms were subject to the Act?

(3) Will he examine the necessary amendments to bring these transactions under the control of this Act?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Probably not, although the legal position is not certain.

(2) Yes, if the rate of interest should exceed 15 per cent. per annum.

(3) The long Title of the Money Lenders' Act is "An Act to amend the law with respect to persons carrying on business as money-lenders." An English court has held (1939 Ch. 531) that it would be an abuse of the language to regard hire purchase firms as money-lenders under the Money Lenders' Acts of the United Kingdom.

GRAVEL.

Payment to Landholders and Filling-in of Pits.

Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Will the Government give consideration to making payment to landholders for gravel and stone taken from private property for main roads and other public works?

(2) Will consideration be given to the filling-in of gravel pits and leaving the land clean and in good repair when material has been removed by any Government department?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is not proposed to vary the existing policy. This includes the reimbursement of the owner for any loss he may have incurred in respect of improvements damaged or destroyed.

(2) When materials have been removed from a property, it is not practicable to fill in the excavation, but every effort is made to meet the owners' requirements in regard to restoration of fences and the safeguarding of stock.

TRAFFIC.

(a) Drivers' Licences Expiry Notices.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What are the reasons, if any, why expiry notices in respect of drivers' licences are not mailed to holders?

(2) If there are any reasons, is it considered that they outweigh the practical advantages of such a sound business practice?

(3) Will he give consideration to instituting the scheme, in order to achieve a higher standard of efficiency and provide a greater measure of service to the public?

The MINISTER replied:

The question is under consideration at the present time.

(b) Pedestrian Crossing, Perth-Kwinana Highway.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has any decision been made as to whether an overhead bridge or a subway will be the means provided at Como beach to enable pedestrians to cross the Perth-Kwinana Highway?

(2) Has a site for such a crossing been decided upon, and if so, where?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) This matter is under consideration, but no decision has been made.

(2) No.

(c) Control for Pedestrian Crossing.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Police:

In view of the fact that the installation of traffic lights at the Mill Point-rd.-Berwick-st.-Canning Highway intersection is considered impractical, will he give consideration to having a police officer stationed at the intersection on Saturday mornings for the purpose of assisting pedestrians who wish to cross the highway at that point?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (for the Minister for Police) replied:

This question has been asked of the wrong Minister; it comes within my jurisdiction.

A census was taken last Saturday and it is not considered that the position warrants control by officers of the Police Department in view of the number of pedestrians crossing the highway at this point.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Steel Used and Pipeline to Minnivale and Wyalkatchem.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Where was the steel used which was the subject of tenders called on the 13th February, 1953?

(2) When will a start be made on the main pipeline north to Minnivale and Wyalkatchem?

(3) When is it anticipated that the water will reach the latter town?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) After contracts are let the contractor does not request rollings of steel plate until instructed by the department to do so. Owing to shortage of funds the contractor has only recently been requested to order steel plate for this particular contract and to date no plate has reached the contractor.

(2) It is planned to commence the work during this financial year, but the works programme for 1956-57 is not yet finalised.

(3) It is planned to supply water to Wyalkatchem some two to three years after work commences on the Cunderdin-Minnivale main, but availability of loan funds will be the determining factor.

HARBOURS.

Improvement at Geraldton.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has any estimate ever been made of the cost of improving the depth of Geraldton harbour?

(2) If so, what was the sum and when was the estimate made?

(3) What improvement in draught of ships entering the harbour was obtained through the alteration of the "lead line"?

(4) When was the echo sounding completed and was a chart prepared as a result?

(5) If so, will he lay this chart on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Following upon complaints of ships grounding in the outer approaches to Geraldton harbour, preliminary estimates, based on meagre information, were prepared to cover the cost of improving the available depth.

(2) Estimates prepared in 1949 were as follows:—

	£
Safe draft 26ft.	500,000
Safe draft 27ft.	900,000
Safe draft 28ft.	1,500,000

(3) Echo soundings were subsequently taken and showed that by altering the "lead line" a safe draft of 27 feet could be obtained. It is estimated that this draft could be increased to 28 feet at an estimated cost of approximately £100,000.

(4) Echo soundings were completed in 1953 and Plan P.W.D. W.A. 26950, Drawing 11B, shows details.

(5) The plan will be made available in my office for inspection by the hon. member.

TRAM AND BUS SERVICES.

South Perth Routes.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he investigate the possibility of altering the route of the present Ryrie Avenue via Lansdowne-rd. bus service (South Perth) to give a more adequate service to residents in the area bordered by Rathay-st., and Tenth Avenue?

The MINISTER replied:

It is not considered justified at the present moment to make a deviation in the existing service owing to the effect it would have on those people travelling from further distances. However, the matter will be borne in mind in the event of their being a reorganisation of metropolitan passenger transport.

RAILWAYS.

Freight Charges.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

What are railway charges for carriage of the undermentioned items from Perth to—

- (a) Geraldton (Midland railway route);
- (b) Kalgoorlie;
- (c) Albany;
- (d) Katanning;
- (e) Northam;
- (f) Miling;
- (g) Mt. Barker;
- (h) Ongerup;

of—

- (1) a tanker of motor spirit;
- (2) a Chamberlain Champion tractor;
- (3) a header harvester;
- (4) wheat;
- (5) superphosphate;
- (6) hay and chaff?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

The particulars are as follow:—

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4) and (5)	(6)
	(5,404 gals.)	(2 tons 18 cwt.)	(2 tons 10 cwt.)	(per ton)	(per ton)
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
(a)	165 18 11	28 8 1	24 9 9	54 11	82 3
(b)	173 2 5	31 10 9	27 3 9	59 1	89 7
(c)	164 15 9	30 0 4	25 17 6	56 10	85 7
(d)	133 6 5	24 5 9	20 18 9	47 6	74 3
(e)	61 0 5	10 9 3	9 0 5	29 7	43 8
(f)	105 0 4	19 2 7	15 9 10	39 0	64 8
(g)	154 16 9	28 4 1	24 6 3	54 8	81 11
(h)	157 5 5	28 13 0	24 14 0	55 2	82 10

FRUIT GROWING INDUSTRY.

Supply of Cases.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) Is he aware that considerable inconvenience and additional cost was incurred by some fruit growers due to the irregularity of sizes of fruit case ends supplied by the State Saw Mills?

(2) Is he aware that the quality of cases for export of fruit in this State was so poor that it became necessary to increase the agreed-upon tolerance for width?

(3) What steps, if any, are being taken to improve the position for the coming season?

(4) What are the Government's views on the subject of quality of fruit cases for export fruit in the light of the increasing competition being met with on overseas markets?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Complaints were received in March on shrinkage of case ends supplied by the State Saw Mills and the position was met by some tolerance on the part of the Fruit Inspection Branch by acceptance of cases down to 8½ in. in width instead of 8 in. as normally required. The complaint only applied to a small proportion of cases supplied by the State Saw Mills.

(3) On the production side, kiln seasoning would be necessary with spread of delivery to minimise movement after delivery. Beyond attention to detail, there will be no basic departure by the State Saw Mills in current practice in the coming season. Use of export cases as packing boxes in the orchards is an important contributing factor in rejections at time of export and this is outside the control of the case producer. Certain advices have been given to grower organisations with respect to early and late delivery of cases.

(4) The Government subscribes to the general view that a reasonable standard of case is essential to proper marketing of export fruit.

HOUSING.

Deferred Payment System.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What was the total amount of housing contracts let by the State Housing Commission during the last financial year on the deferred payment system?

(2) To what date were such payments deferred?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £346,486.

(2) (a) The 31st July, 1956, £149,630.

(b) The 31st August, 1956, £196,856.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

Formula Used by Premium Rates Committee.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Labour:

What formula is used by the Premium Rates Committee to determine premium rates for workers' compensation insurance?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR replied:

Premiums for workers' compensation insurance are determined by the Premium Rates Committee at such rates as underwriting experience indicates should give a ratio of losses to premiums of 70 per cent. Earned premiums and outstanding claims are to be taken into account together with all circumstances, such as fluctuating wages and benefits, as are relevant at the time of each fixation.

I might mention for the benefit of the hon. member that if there are any further details he requires, the chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board would be happy to discuss the matter with him and give him the fullest possible information.

ROADS.

Allocation of Federal Aid Funds.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Of the Federal aid roads funds available to this State during 1955-1956, how much was allocated—

(a) to road boards outside the metropolitan area for or towards the construction, maintenance and repair of roads;

(b) towards the cost of works connected with transport other than roads?

(2) Regarding No. 1 (a), how much, if any, of the amounts allocated were not expended on the 30th June, 1956, and by what boards were amounts of over £1,000 unexpended and what boards and what amounts were involved?

(3) In regard to No. 1 (b), for what works was the expenditure approved and how much in connection with each work was unexpended on the 30th June, 1956?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) £260,600.

(b) £149,451.

(2) Allocations to road boards (outside the metropolitan area) unexpended at the 30th June, 1956, £84,750.

Road boards and a municipality with unexpended amounts exceeding £1,000 at the 30th June, 1956—

	£
Rockingham	1,012
Swan	2,200
Wanneroo	1,653
Bruce Rock	1,190
Cunderdin	2,000
Tammin	1,660
Victoria Plains	1,502
Wongan-Ballidu	1,200
Manjimup	1,200
Nannup	1,478
Preston	1,876
West Arthur	1,700
Esperance	1,103
Kalgoorlie	1,644
Yilgarn	1,080
Cue	1,509
Dalwallinu	1,910
Geraldton-Greenough	1,200
Mingenew	1,115
Morawa	2,000
Moora	2,000
Northampton	2,200
Phillips River	1,442
Brookton	1,400
Broomehill	1,306
Cuballing	1,020
Denmark	1,178
Tambellup	1,200
Wickepin	1,350
Gnowangerup	1,230
Nyabing-Pingrup	1,083
Lake Grace	1,339
Bunbury Municipality	1,475
	<hr/>
	£48,455

(3) The following are the details:—

Item and Nature of Work	Amount Allocated	Unexpended 30/6/56
	£	£
Level Crossings—Provision of Flash-lights	2,600	—
Special Police Patrol (Heavy Haulage)—Patrol costs	12,000	3,857
Special Police Patrol (Heavy Haulage)—Purchase of vehicles	2,000	1,213
Departmental Housing (North-West)—Key personnel	19,660	4,300
Carnarvon M.R.D. Office—Purchase and renovations	10,050	854
Carnarvon M.R.D. Depot—Equipment	230	—
Northam M.R.D. Depot—Equipment	698	—
Bunbury M.R.D. Depot—Electrification	1,015	774
Welshpool M.R.D. Depot—Bridge section—Electrical installations	340	—
Moora M.R.D. Depot—Electrical installations	55	—
Narrogin M.R.D. Depot—Equipment	385	—
Albany M.R.D. Office—Alterations	590	—
Perth Causeway Environs—Improvements—Heirisson Is.	6,000	3,000
Collie River Estuary, Bunbury—Dredging (Addit. funds)	1,600	104
Shark Bay Jetty—Additional Funds	4,870	—
Roadside Water Tanks and catchments—North of Meekatharra	1,000	1,000

Item and Nature of Work	Amount Allocated	Unexpended 30/6/56
Roadside Water Tanks and catchments Hamelin Wool Shed	200	200
Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle—Im- provements and seal breakwater	550	550
Canning River—Boring and testing	400	—
Seagle Bay Landing Ground—Improve- ments	200	198
Vibrating Sand Sprayer—Experimental tests	400	400
"Boxing out" Blade attachment— Modifications	200	—
P.W.D. Building, Malcolm Street— Wind deflectors	375	—
Dowerin Railway Yard—Construction and seal	800	—
Doodlakine Railway Yard—Construction and seal	1,170	—
Narembeen Railway Yard—Construction and seal	760	384
Wyalkatchem Railway Yard—Construc- tion and seal	835	—
Kondinin Railway Yard—Construction and seal	1,060	1,060
Kulin Railway Yard—Construction and seal	890	840
Karrakatta Railway Yard—Construction and seal	1,320	723
Boyup Brook Railway Yard—Construc- tion and seal	1,450	1,450
Traffic Fees Replacement	70,000	—
Salaries and Incidentals	5,748	836
	<u>£149,451</u>	<u>£21,743</u>

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 9th August.

MR. CROMMELIN (Claremont) [4.53]: Mr. Speaker, firstly, may I add my congratulations to those already extended to you on your elevation to the Speaker's Chair. It is quite obvious to us already that you will carry out your duties in a most efficient manner. May I also take this opportunity of conveying my thanks to the members of the parliamentary staff and also to members of this Chamber, who have, in a very kindly manner, offered me suggestions and help in this, my first parliamentary session.

I feel that, before going any further, I should take this opportunity of paying my tribute of respect to my predecessor, Hon. C. F. J. North. Mr. North, as members all know, served the electorate of Claremont for a period of over 30 years; a period of unbroken service which has been excelled by very few members of this Parliament and indeed by very few members in Australia, or, possibly in the world. I know that, as Speaker of this Chamber, he carried out his duties in a most honourable manner, and I also know that, as the member for Claremont, he did his utmost at all times for his constituents.

One approaches one's first session with some trepidation, and to a certain extent, with a feeling of frustration, but at least

a new member knows that he has been asked to do his best for the people who have chosen him to represent them in this House. I can do no more at this stage than express my sincere thanks to the electors of Claremont who have given me the opportunity of representing them, and at the same time, assure them that I shall do my best to carry out my duties to their satisfaction, to my satisfaction and, wherever possible, to the benefit of the State in general.

I do not propose to speak on legislation which I would like to see passed because I feel I am not competent to do so. I would prefer to endeavour to give a few ideas—not as an expert, an engineer or any other type of expert—on a problem, which is, today, most topical—that of traffic. I wish to express my ideas as a layman who drives a car or catches a bus, and as one who has, in the last few years, had the opportunity of driving over the continent of Europe and in Great Britain. I am sure the biggest problem with which any one person or one authority has to contend in Australia today is the different outlook between an Englishman and an Australian in regard to traffic discipline.

A man can arrive in London knowing full well that within 24 hours he is going to drive a car, and it appears to him that he will never be able to do so on account of the tremendous number of vehicles on the road, particularly when he realises there are 20,000 double-decker buses going through the city each day. When driving in London there seems to him to be more than 20,000 buses, yet within an hour of driving he can sense a feeling of consciousness that the people around him know he is a stranger and are endeavouring to help him. I can say that during the whole time in which I drove a car there, I was never bumped into, nor did I bump into anyone else.

In my opinion, the different psychological approach as between the British and the Australian motorist has possibly been brought about over the last three or four decades by the fact that in England the people have gone through a great deal of suffering caused by two world wars and their after effects. This has definitely left its mark on them, but not on their moral spirit. On the other hand, they are prepared to accept discipline to a greater degree than we are. But that is not the entire answer. The answer to their tremendous effort of road courtesy and doing as they are asked with a good grace has come from the same system as we are adopting in Western Australia today, and that is by educating the children from a very young age to learn the rules of road safety and road courtesy.

It is noticeable that in the last few years there has been a definite improvement in this respect inasmuch as today

the children of school age give their traffic signs in a most competent manner. We must keep on with this system because it is fairly evident that if we do, we will gradually educate our drivers and pedestrians to the essentials of safety on the roads. I have heard people say that it is easy to drive in London because the traffic is so slow. It is slow; it is five miles per hour. I have heard other people say, "Look how fast the traffic moves in Sydney." It does; it travels at the rate of 6.2 miles per hour! So, it can be seen that there is not a great deal of difference.

It would be a wonderful thing if throughout Australia we could have road signs on an international scale. When a person obtains a driver's licence overseas, the first thing he is given is a notice to attach to his windscreen with the result that he knows what the signs are in every country in Europe through which he travels. For example, a cross-walk is shown by a pair of legs; and an approach to a school by a picture of a little boy leading a little girl, both with school-bags in their hands.

If we could have this system throughout Australia it would be a big help not only to us but to the numerous people who are arriving here from overseas. In this regard, I query the value of having stop signs in certain places, because I feel that if there is a stop sign, it is essential for the motorist to stop. But unfortunately very few people, off the main highways, do so; and in odd places we have some extraordinary results. For instance, in driving up Princess-rd. in an easterly direction, there is, on the corner of Bay-rd., a stop sign, but coming down Princess-rd., on the same corner, when approaching the west, there is a slow to 15 miles per hour sign.

It is quite appreciated that these two signs are put there because it is a dangerous corner, but with an international sign the motorist would see "Danger" on the sign and consequently would take more care. The question of cross-walks is something, I think, which could be approached by possibly the same method, although I realise that at this stage it is not possible to have them the same as they are in England, that is, the motorist knows 50 ft. beforehand that he is getting to one by seeing the cross-walk sign; and at night it is illuminated.

Of course, road courtesy and road sense are developed there to such a degree that no motorist would dream of going on a cross-walk when a pedestrian was on any part of it, and, by the same token, no pedestrian would think of holding up a stream of traffic until such time as he realised that there was an opportunity for him to cross in safety without causing embarrassment to the motorist. So, it still gets back to the original development of courtesy from our children upwards.

The question of brighter lights on the highways is something else to which we could give consideration. I appreciate this is a big problem, but after all most of our serious accidents are caused through our ill-lit highways and consequent shadows. The same applies on the Continent. For example, in Holland the motorist is not allowed to put his headlights on at night; the roads are well enough lit to do without them.

The matter of punishments for breaches of the Traffic Act causes hardship to many people. To fine a wealthy man £5 for a traffic offence is not to impose a big penalty, but to fine a person on the basic wage the same amount is, indeed, to be severe. I feel that a series of punishments, more competent to make each and every one of us feel the effect of them, may be a better solution. If, having a family car, I lent it to my son and he drove at a reckless speed, and I knew I was going to lose the use of my car for a week, a month or three months, according to the scale of his breaking of the law, I feel sure that I—and not only I, but all parents—would think very seriously about the matter and instil into our children the fact that they would not have the opportunity of driving the car twice if they once broke the law.

Fines can also be unfair in the case of employer and employee. Why should a master carrier tell his employee to put on a case of goods and hop down to Cottesloe, and to step on it, and expect his employee to break the speed limit? It is not fair, because the man could have an endorsement on his licence for obeying instructions. If the employee were to turn round to his employer and say, "I will drive within the speed limit," it would cause the truck owner to think; that is, if he thought his truck was going to be put off the road for a month because he instructed his man to break the law.

Then we have the extraordinary effects that can arise through the one traffic offence. Here I refer to the hypothetical case of a man going around a corner, exceeding the speed limit, bouncing or skidding across to the right-hand side of the road, not being observed and then proceeding on his way. The same thing may happen a couple of days after with a different man but he is observed and is fined £5 for the offence. Still a third man may do the same thing but, unfortunately, he runs over a child and kills it. He could be up for manslaughter.

No man drives a car to kill, but there we have the same action with three very different results. To sum up, I do most sincerely suggest that a scale of punishments combining the losing of one's traffic licence and the car licence, would deter a lot of people, especially those who are the worst menaces on the road today—the speedster, the drunken driver and the driver who is under the influence of liquor but unfortunately does not know it.

I do not profess to know anything about the parking problem except that I would like to see double parking go; and I am fairly certain that it will go pretty soon. As a suggestion for the truck drivers, a special space allotted to them in the main streets would be a big help, and if that is not enough, it may be that they could be granted a certain time each day in certain streets when there would be no parking of private vehicles. It is quite evident to me, as a layman, that there just is not enough street-room to cope with the number of cars because the streets are not any bigger than they used to be, but the number of vehicles is.

It is reasonable to assume, too, that there is likely to be something done about it in order to give a lot of people a little time. From what I have read in the Press, it is fairly evident that we are going to have parking meters. Parking meters are also known as slot machines and bandits, but they are a somewhat different type of bandit from the one we usually hear about, inasmuch as they never pay out. But these machines can earn a lot of money. I understand that 1,000 machines earn £68,000 per annum for the Melbourne City Council. If we do have parking meters I hope that the funds secured from them will be put into parking spaces outside the city where we can all park; and I hope, too, that we will be provided with faster transport through the city.

I have noticed around the city block quite a number of fire hydrants, and if one leaves one's car in front of them, one suffers a fine, but—I make this humble suggestion—would it not be competent to allow taxis to stand in front of fire hydrants and also in front of picture theatres, because there would be no fire hazard, inasmuch as taxis are always manned? Even this small point would make quite a difference to the number of cars than can stand on the taxi rank.

At this stage, I have not been a member or the representative of my electorate for a long enough period to know what is required and what is lacking. I can do no more than say that there are certain things that I would like to see altered. In this regard I would refer to the fact that there is a high school in Claremont, yet children living on the western side of Stirling Highway, a distance of only 450 yards from the school, unfortunately have to travel all the way to Fremantle for their education and I hope that in the near future that position will be remedied.

Further, the children of the soldiers at Swanbourne are forced to go to Graylands to school. It is not that their parents object to their going to that school but that they are worried about little boys and girls having to catch buses at Servetus-st. These may seem matters of small moment as against problems of the State, but when

Mrs. Jones thinks her child should go to another school, it is hard to convince her of the reasons why it cannot be arranged.

We, of Claremont, are grateful for the traffic lights at Bay View Terrace. As members know, the Municipality of Claremont contains a great number of schools and school children, and it has been a great relief to us to have these traffic lights installed. We now look forward to the day—we hope in the near future—when traffic lights will be installed on all the main intersections of Stirling Highway in the Claremont area.

I have been asked by some of my constituents at Graylands whether the Government will in the near future pay attention to the state of the sewage treatment plant. They inform me that at times they suffer from the effects of that plant. If my memory serves me rightly, the plant has been in operation for about 20 years and whether it is working to the fullest efficiency I am not competent to say, but I hope it will not be allowed to get into a condition where it will not be able to work with 100 per cent. efficiency or have any chance of contaminating our beaches.

Another matter which I would like to bring to the notice of the House is that the portion of my electorate known as Mt. Claremont is at present unable to obtain gas supplies and is wholly dependent upon electric power, to such an extent that between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. it is practically impossible for the housewives to do their cooking or listen to their radios. If it were possible to have a booster installed in that area it would be greatly appreciated. I have nothing more to say at this juncture except to thank members for the courteous hearing they have given me.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.20]: I have previously conveyed to you, Mr. Speaker, my congratulations on your election to your high office, and I have done the same in relation to the new Chairman of Committees.

Next I would like to offer my congratulations to all the new members elected to this House. Those who have thus far taken part in the debate have shown that they are capable of holding their ends up, as it were, in circumstances that are not encouraging. Every new member who comes into this House and makes his maiden speech makes it—I always think—under difficult circumstances, but it is clear from the speeches of the new members we have already heard that the contribution which they will make to our debates will be a valuable one and at least some of them, I believe, will go far in the parliamentary life of our State in future years.

I think all of us feel personal regret at the fact that some who were with us in the last Parliament—and indeed in previous Parliaments—are not with us on

this occasion. Some of them are absent because they voluntarily decided to retire from parliamentary life and others are absent because they failed to survive the election contest. We know, of course, that the ex-member for Claremont was marked down for slaughter by some of his own people years ago, because he dared to develop and express publicly unorthodox ideas in connection with finance and banking.

For my part I join with the new member for Claremont in regretting that Hon. C. F. J. North fell by the wayside in a contest for his old seat. I think all of us, including the new member for Claremont, would have been much happier had Mr. North retired from parliamentary life instead of suffering defeat.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I cannot agree with your reasoning.

The PREMIER: I would not expect the hon. member to agree with my reasoning on a point like that. I have simply stated the facts of the situation and I will now take the member for Cottesloe into my confidence and tell him that the Labour Party saved the ex-member for Claremont at more than one election in the Claremont district when the inside circle of the Liberal Party, at any rate, were out to destroy him politically.

I think all members are aware that there is to be held at Canberra this week a conference at which Australia's economic problems will be discussed. There seems to be a substantial element of mystery about what the conference is actually to discuss and how the proceedings are to develop. Initially it was intended that this conference should be held in September of this year and that the Prime Minister of Australia should be chairman. That was the understanding with which the Premiers left Canberra after the fairly recent Premier's Conference and Loan Council meetings.

More recently we all received advice, individually, that the Commonwealth Government had decided to call the conference earlier. It was suggested in some of the newspapers that the conference was being called earlier because of a serious worsening of Australia's economic position. I say, frankly, that I have not any clear-cut knowledge or understanding of how the conference is to proceed, or even of any specific subjects which are to be discussed.

My office was advised today by telephone from Canberra that the Commonwealth Government had prepared a memorandum and those in Canberra wanted to know, today, where they would send my copy to me. We advised them that the best thing to be done in the circumstances was to post it to me care of the airport at Essendon, Melbourne, so I am hoping to

pick up the memorandum at the airport tomorrow morning on my way to the conference in Canberra the following morning.

We are all agreed, I think that the economic situation of Australia has worsened somewhat in recent months. I am not one of those who takes a pessimistic view of the country's difficulties or even of Western Australia's difficulties at this or any other time, but it is nevertheless desirable, I am sure, that all of us should be as realistic as we possibly can in a situation of this kind.

Some of those who have taken part in the present debate have, during their speeches, paid some attention to the conference which is to be held at Canberra commencing on Thursday morning of this week. The member for Nedlands put forward a 6-point programme which he claimed was fairly comprehensive and which I think he suggested was a fair and reasonable approach to the main problems. I believe the hon. member had one or two afterthoughts as I noticed he had a statement in the "Sunday Times" last Sunday, adding two or three additional points to the six which he outlined to us in this House last week.

Mr. Court: They were all included in my speech here.

The PREMIER: They may have been. I am simply mentioning that last week the hon. member specified six points in this House and that in the "Sunday Times" he mentioned eight or nine.

Mr. Court: I think the reporter did a better job than I did in setting them out.

The PREMIER: I am sure all of us would desire to make a sincere, earnest and as nearly as possible total approach to these problems. I must admit that I am completely at a loss to understand how anyone could offer a solution—or what might be regarded as a solution—of our problems while making no mention whatever of the questions of prices and interest rates. Obviously, the prices at which goods are sold are an important factor at some stage or other in the cost of production.

Even the ordinary family—although it is not engaged in production—does indirectly affect the cost of production through the prices which it is called upon to pay for goods, because where any system of wage justice operates, the family does receive consideration in the wage of the breadwinner for the prices which the family has to pay for the necessities of life. Therefore, any approach to these problems which does not give some consideration and some expression to the factor of prices and also to the factor of interest rates, is an approach which is not complete at all. It is an approach which leaves out of consideration a basic element in the total situation.

Mr. Bovell: But are not interest rates controlled by the supply of money available?

The PREMIER: I would not say that, but time will not permit of the hon. member and myself engaging in a dialogue across the floor in connection with that question. This conference which is to be held at Canberra on Thursday is starting about three years too late, although it might be said that it is better late than never. It could have been so much more effective if it had been held in 1953, soon after the Commonwealth Court of Arbitration judges had decided to suspend the granting of quarterly cost-of-living adjustments to wages and salaries. I think it stands very greatly to the credit of the Australian trade unions and the Australian working class generally that the decision of the Commonwealth Court of Arbitration at that time was accepted in a reasonably peaceful way by nearly all the trade unions and by nearly all of the industrial workers of Australia.

Mr. Court: I think they acknowledged it as a good decision.

The PREMIER: They did not acknowledge it as anything of the sort. They acknowledged it, on its own, as a single decision, as being bad; as being unjust. Nevertheless, they did not fight against the decision to the extent of using the industrial strength which they possess and which, on occasions, is used. If the decision of the Commonwealth Court of Arbitration, in suspending quarterly adjustments to wages and salaries, had been followed immediately—or in a reasonably short space of time—by adequate measures to control the cost of living in all States of Australia—and preferably on a combined Commonwealth-State basis—I am sure the great economic problems which face Australia today would not have developed to anywhere near the same extent that they have.

Hon. D. Brand: Would it not have been more appropriate and have proved to have been more valuable if the conference had been called after the Commonwealth Court of Arbitration had increased the basic wage by £1? That was the time that the conference should have been called.

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member could be quite right in the suggestion which he offers in that regard. I am simply pointing out that the workers of Australia were prepared to accept stabilisation proposals in regard to wages if, in addition, there had been other stabilisation proposals on the cost of living. However, instead of those who hailed the suspension of cost-of-living adjustments to wages and salaries, co-operating to establish stabilisation in regard to the cost of living, we found that exactly the opposite was done by those particular people. For example, let us take what happened in our own Parliament.

When the Commonwealth Arbitration Court made the decision to which I have referred, there was legislation existing in

Western Australia to control the cost of living and yet when our Government, late in 1953—a few short weeks after the Commonwealth court had made its decision—introduced a Bill to continue that legislation in this State to control the cost of living, those who only a few days before had hailed the decision of the Commonwealth court as the right thing to be done in the circumstances, as being a major contribution to economic stabilisation, worked day and night to defeat in this Parliament the Bill to which I have referred.

Mr. Court: And they did not do any disservice in disallowing it, either.

The PREMIER: I have some information here which will prove the contrary. I am very glad, however, to have the interjection from the member for Nedlands because it shows, if any further proof were needed of the fact, that he believes in stabilisation of the Australian economy with all the burdens of stabilisation, or most of them, being imposed upon the workers and their dependants in this country; and he also believes in imposing these burdens upon the farming community in this State and in other States because the farming community has no protection against the prices which they are called upon to pay for the goods which they have to buy and, in addition, in many instances they have to sell at whatever prices are offered to them by the buyers.

Mr. Bovell: You can do a service to the farming community by keeping rail freights down.

The PREMIER: I can understand the member for Vasse trying to draw me off the track of this line of argument, but I propose to stick to it even although he might be disappointed in that. Is it not remarkable? Last week we heard the Leader of the Country Party and, more particularly, the Leader of the Opposition, speaking in this House and condemning, very severely, even the suggestion by the Government of this State that increased charges would be made on the public of the State, including, in some instances, the farmers. I have never once heard the Leader of the Opposition even whispering a criticism or protest against the increased charges which private enterprise inflicts upon the community, including the farmers, from time to time.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He would not be game!

The PREMIER: During the last few days I have heard neither him nor the Leader of the Country Party offering any criticism or condemnation of the oil companies for the contribution they have made in the battle against inflation. Not even a whisper! Yet, when the Government which has tried for a long time not to increase charges, suggests that charges will have to

be increased because of the great cost placed on the Government by inflation, the Leader of the Opposition particularly rails against the Government, criticises it and abuses it up hill and down dale, but he never utters a whisper against the oil companies; he never utters a whisper against any other big group of business people in Western Australia when they slug the people and sock the farmers!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And you slug them by increasing Government charges every month or so!

The PREMIER: Therefore I say that unless the Leader of the Opposition wishes to become exposed to the public as one who believes that private enterprise, at its own sweet will, should plunder the people, including the farmers, and the Government should never increase its charges, I ask him to take a two-eyed view of the economic problems which Australia, including Western Australia, is facing.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are the greatest tax ranger this State has ever seen!

The PREMIER: I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition is getting a little upset, but that is not my fault.

Mr. Court: How do you explain the fact that prices rose faster in the other States with control than in this State without control?

The PREMIER: I do not have to explain it because it is not true.

Mr. Court: When you come to price control commodities, it is correct.

The PREMIER: That is my answer, and I think it is about time the member for Nedlands either took a total view of our economic problems and put up suggestions for total economic stabilisation or else ceased talking about it altogether. It is not a fair proposition for any public man, no matter to which party he belongs, to be talking all the time about our economic problems and what should be done to solve them, and never at any stage expressing a view that whatever burdens might have to be borne to establish and maintain economic stability ought to be spread as evenly as possibly over the whole community.

That is my argument. That is the attitude I adopt. And, as I said earlier, to the credit of almost all the trade unions and to the credit of most of the industrial workers of Australia, that is their view. I know that during the last few weeks there has been a type of conspiracy going on in Australia and the Liberal Party, some of the newspapers and some individuals have been up to their eyes in it. This conspiracy has been trying to convince the public of Australia that almost the sole cause of inflation is

to be found in the wages and salaries paid to the working people of Australia and that the only solution to our present grievous economic problem is to suspend the granting of quarterly basic wage adjustments in every part of Australia and, furthermore, to freeze all wages and salaries at their present levels.

Mr. Court: Do you want a complete system of controls, including wage-pegging? Because we do not favour wage-pegging.

The PREMIER: I know what the hon. member favours. He favours reducing the standards of the working people of this country to an extent necessary to safeguard the big interests of Australia from having to shoulder any burden at all. That is what he believes in and all his public utterances both inside and outside this Parliament prove absolutely what I say.

Mr. Bovell: The Premier is in no frame of mind to visit Canberra to offer a solution to the economic problems of this country.

The PREMIER: I am in a frame of mind to unmask those who are not prepared to take a total two-eyed view of the situation.

Mr. Court: What is your proposal to solve this problem?

The PREMIER: I do not profess to be able to solve it.

Mr. Court: At least I made a try.

The PREMIER: It was a very one-eyed try.

Mr. Court: You give us the other eye.

The PREMIER: I have already given it. I go further and say that I am prepared to go to this conference or any other conference to discuss, as fully as it is possible to do so, proposals to maintain the economic stability of Australia, provided everybody makes a contribution toward the programme of stabilisation. Therefore any programme of stabilisation to receive my support would have to cover not only the problem of wages and salaries, but also the problem of the cost of living, the problem of interest rates and probably some other problem as well.

Mr. Court: You know that some of these things solve themselves if you get to the root causes.

The PREMIER: I know they solve themselves if we get to the root causes, but I also know there are certain organisations and certain people in Australia who will fight to the last ditch to prevent anyone from getting to the root causes.

Some figures which I have, seem to me to have very special significance. They are figures which show the quarterly movement

in the monetary equivalent of the "C" series index since the June quarter, 1954. It was in respect of this quarter that the Commonwealth Court of Arbitration made its decision to suspend quarterly adjustments in relation to wages and salaries which were covered by awards of the Commonwealth court. I shall give the lowest city figure first and the others in order.

The figure for Brisbane where the cost of living is controlled is 19s., but the cost of living adjustments have applied to workers under State awards during this period. Queensland has the lowest movement in the "C" series index since the June quarter of 1953. The next is the City of Sydney where the figure is 20s.; next in order comes Adelaide with 22s.—I shall have another word to say about Adelaide in a moment—next comes Melbourne with 28s.; then Hobart with 30s.; next and worst of all is Perth with 37s.

I come back to Adelaide because despite the hatred which some members of the Liberal Party in this House express in regard to price control, the Liberal Party Premier and the Liberal Party Government of South Australia, with a majority in both Houses of Parliament, have stuck to their system of controlling the cost of living in that State. I think it is more than passing strange that a Liberal Party in Government should decide that it is wise to continue effective legislative control over the cost of living, whereas the Liberal Party in this State, as soon as it got out of office, as soon as it had no further responsibility for governing the State, decided that any control over the cost of living by legislative action was undesirable.

Mr. Court: South Australia also stuck to the Federal court's basic wage decision.

The PREMIER: What difference does that make?

Mr. Court: It makes a lot of difference when you compare South Australia with New South Wales.

The PREMIER: It makes no difference to the South Australian Government deciding to re-enact from year to year legislative control over the cost of living and prices. We all know, those on the cross benches here at any rate, how much political and other pressure must have been put on the Liberal Party and Premier of South Australia, and on the other members of his Government in connection with this issue. Obviously, if control over prices and the cost of living in South Australia had been ineffective, or undesirable, or dangerous, or likely to scare away interstate or overseas capital, the South Australian Premier and his colleagues would have wiped it out quick and lively. The fact that they continued the system proves beyond a shadow of doubt that the system has merit, that it is effective and that it

is considered by the Premier of South Australia and his colleagues to be a fair system in order to protect the interests of the people, including the farmers of South Australia.

Mr. Court: Have you the other quarterly adjustment break-up between food, clothing, rent and miscellaneous?

The PREMIER: Indeed I have.

Mr. Court: That is rather interesting.

The PREMIER: Of course, it is interesting. Everything is interesting in connection with a problem of this kind. The figures I have quoted are very interesting, exceptionally interesting because they show that in the States where price control operates, or where the power to exercise price control is available, the movement in prices has been very much lower than in the three other States where price control was destroyed by the parliamentary action of the Liberal Party in the States concerned.

Mr. Court: Are you going to give us the break-up of those figures?

The PREMIER: Indeed I am quite happy to try to make the hon. member happy. Being anxious always to oblige, I come straight away to what he wants to know. From the June quarter, 1953, to the June quarter, 1956, the movements in food and groceries are—

Sydney	....	....	17.2
Melbourne	....	....	18.7
Brisbane	....	....	13.1
Adelaide	....	....	18.1
Hobart	....	....	15.0
Perth	....	....	15.7

For clothing the figures are—

Sydney	....	....	— 0.8
Melbourne	....	....	+ 0.9
Brisbane	....	....	+ 1.0
Adelaide	....	....	— 1.3
Hobart	....	....	+ 2.9
Perth	....	....	+ 1.1

The figures for rent are—

Sydney	....	....	6.7
Melbourne	....	....	20.9
Brisbane	....	....	7.2
Adelaide	....	....	15.9
Hobart	....	....	35.3
Perth	....	....	63.6

Mr. Court: That explodes your argument against price control because rents were never the subject of price control; only food and clothing were.

The PREMIER: Rents were subject to control in all the States of Australia, and they were subject to reasonable control in this State until the hon. member and his colleagues got to work upon the system which was operating in Western Australia up to that time.

Mr. Court: That certainly helped solve the housing problem.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is entitled to pick up any crumbs of comfort he can find around the place. I shall not deny him the one he now picks up. The figures for miscellaneous are—

Sydney	....	....	....	4.5
Melbourne	....	....	....	11.3
Brisbane	....	....	....	13.8
Adelaide	....	....	....	6.2
Hobart	....	....	....	5.3
Perth	....	....	....	6.7

I say that if the conference to be held in Canberra this week, and if any subsequent conference to be held in Canberra or anywhere else in Australia to deal with the economic problems and to try to establish economic stability, is one at which an attempt is made to deal only with portion of the problems, then such a conference is sure to fail. If, on the other hand, any such conference attempts to deal with the problems on a total basis, to include within its consideration matters that effect everybody within the community, to spread whatever burdens or sacrifices are considered necessary evenly over all sections of the community; then such a conference would have a reasonable chance of success.

Mr. Court: Are you going to give us what you consider to be the total approach, because we would be interested to know what you do consider to be the total approach?

The PREMIER: Briefly and in the main, my approach would be that there should be a strict control over the cost of living, which would include some reasonable measure in regard to wage adjustments from time to time, which would also include a strict control over interest rates, which control over the cost of living would, in addition, prevent excessive profits from being made. I am not in favour of taxing excess profits. I do not think there is any sense in that at all. The thing to do is to prevent them from being made. If we allow excess profits to be made and we tax them afterwards, the economy as a whole is no better off because in the making of the excess profit, those who are making them are putting an undue burden upon the people who pay higher prices than they should. If the people who pay those higher prices, and thereby contribute towards making these excess profits, are themselves engaged in production, then automatically the cost of production to these people is pushed up.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Will you move at the conference to give these powers to the Commonwealth through State action?

The PREMIER: I propose at the conference to hear what is to be said, to make my own contribution, and at this conference, I should say that to make any decisions at all, it ought to be a sort of

trial run because up to this stage we know very little about what has to be discussed. I am to get my Commonwealth memorandum at Melbourne tomorrow morning. It seems to me that at the conference this week in Canberra we ought to have discussions to the fullest extent possible, but I think it is not within reason to expect this conference to make any firm decision, or to say that this or that, or something else has to be done.

Hon. D. Brand: This memorandum contains the proposals of the Commonwealth, I take it?

The PREMIER: I have no idea whatever of what it contains, not the semblance of an idea. It is the usual Commonwealth approach to the States. The Leader of the Opposition would have some knowledge of how it goes. I think this conference cannot be expected to come to any firm decisions on the propositions to be applied to achieve economic stability. The most we can hope from this conference is that there will be full and frank discussions on all angles of the problem. In that regard I am quite prepared to say what I think.

Mr. Court: Up to date you have dealt with control of the cost of living. You have not dealt with the greater aspects of the issues.

The PREMIER: If we can control the cost of living, we will broadly control the wages and salaries. If we can broadly control the cost of living, and if we can control interest rates, then to a very large extent we will control the cost of production.

Mr. Court: I think we are in disagreement, not that this is unnatural. What about the speed of development? Have you any views on the speed and method of development of Australia?

The PREMIER: Indeed, I have views in connection with that matter. I have views in connection with other matters discussed by the member for Nedlands. I think the speed of development depends on our ability to carry out what is urgently required by the community. I agree with the hon. member on what he had to say about migration. I quite agree with what he had to say about defence, but I would remind him that when members of the Labour Party said, several months ago, the same about defence and about migration as he said here last week, the insult was immediately thrown at them that they were near-communists; that they were trying to undermine the defence preparations of Australia.

Mr. Court: You never heard me say that.

The PREMIER: I frankly admit I have never heard the hon. member say that, and I feel certain that he would never say

it, and I hope he would never think it. But it is strange how the things that someone says this week and which are regarded by orthodox thought as not respectable—as sabotage or whatever it might be—are, when said a few weeks afterwards by someone else, considered to be respectable.

Mr. Bovell: There is a different way of saying it, and we must maintain our defence structure.

The PREMIER: I thoroughly agree, and so does the member for Nedlands. We all agree with that. In regard to the question of governmental public works we have to realise that in Western Australia, at any rate, we are a community where the population has increased very rapidly, and at the end of the war, because of our patriotism during the war, we had a great backlog of essential requirements such as schools, hospitals, water supply and all the rest. Therefore it seems to me to be urgently essential that, to the utmost possible and safe extent, we should push on with the provision of these essential facilities.

Mr. Court: Would you agree that we have got to a state of unbalance, temporarily, in regard to private investors in Western Australia; in other words, we need some major private industries to come here quickly.

The PREMIER: I doubt if we can adequately serve all the industries at present established.

Mr. Court: They have the power at the moment.

The PREMIER: They have, with limits. The farmers, on the land, need more water to increase production. Are we to hold up or reduce our water supplies scheme? Are we to cut down on the other essential and urgent works which are needed to assist industry? It has to be remembered that many works carried out by the Government are of great assistance to industry. Indeed, without them industry could not operate in some instances and, certainly, it could not operate efficiently in others. I know what the member for Nedlands feels about the situation. He thinks that money spent by private firms is better than money spent by Governments.

Mr. Court: Within certain sensible limits, of course.

The PREMIER: I know, but it is always so difficult to decide the sensible limits. For instance, we, as a Government, face a situation where there are not enough classrooms, not enough schools, hospital accommodation, water supply, power and all the other things which the Government, by virtue of its position, has to provide for the community. So we feel that we, as a Government, are entitled—indeed it is our duty—to press all the time to obtain as much financial accommodation as we

can in order to push on with these works. The hon. member suggested there ought to be a works priority list. Well, there has been such a list for years. There was one in the time when the Leader of the Opposition was Premier. There is always a priority list in connection with proposed governmental works.

Mr. Court: Of a sort.

The PREMIER: Of course it is of a sort; necessarily it has to be of a sort.

Hon. A. F. Watts: A good sort.

The PREMIER: I think, by and large, it is a very good system of priority. It is well balanced; it takes into consideration the more urgent needs of the people and all parts of Western Australia.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I know that the Minister for Works and I spent many hours on it in 1952.

The PREMIER: I can quite believe that, too. So, there is a system of works priorities. I get sick and tired of reading in the newspapers and of hearing people say that there should be a works priority list. There is one, of course, and there has been one for years. I can remember that before the war, when I was a Minister, there was a works priority list.

Mr. Court: Is it declared and published, or is it subject to political interference from time to time.

The PREMIER: It is subject to the possibility of political interference inasmuch as every member of Parliament who does his job for his district approaches the Minister and says, "My district requires this, and it is urgently required. What about it?"

The Minister for Works: It means deputations for the purpose.

Hon. L. Thorn: The Minister is considering one for me now.

The PREMIER: The responsibility still remains upon the appropriate Minister to decide whether the case presented to him by the member for Nedlands, or any other member, has sufficient merit to justify giving that work a higher priority than it had before.

Mr. Bovell: It would be advisable to publish the priorities of the major works, because why should Merredin and Manjimup get high schools at election time, and Busseton, which is of equal importance, be left out? We should know these things, and why.

The PREMIER: I think that every priority list as decided upon by the Government at the beginning of each financial year is maintained, by and large, right throughout the year. There would naturally be alterations here and there as, obviously, the passing of time would make it not only desirable but necessary to make some adjustment to the programme.

However, the point I want to make is that there is a priority list; and I imagine it has always existed in this State. Obviously the Government draws up a programme of proposed public works, and the programme is arranged in such a way that the most urgent and important are at the top of the list and so on down the list to the bottom. When the Government becomes informed of the total amount of money which it will have during the financial year, with which to carry out the programme, then, of course, the programme has to be pruned accordingly and that has, in my experience, always been done.

Mr. Court: I thought that when we referred to works priorities we referred to really big works throughout Australia, and to my mind some other States have had an advantage out of all proportion.

The PREMIER: That raises a new issue altogether and I can agree with the member for Nedlands that that would be so. I think, on balance, that the money made available by the Commonwealth to assist States in the East in connection with their works is out of balance compared with what has been done, similarly, for Western Australia. However, we keep battling away with the Commonwealth Government, in regard to that and other matters, even though we receive a lot of criticism from the Leader of the Opposition on the ground that we are all the time running to the Commonwealth and asking for money. Why do we go to the Commonwealth for money? To further and more quickly develop Western Australia! From where does the Commonwealth get its money?

Mr. Bovell: From the people.

The PREMIER: Of course, including the people of Western Australia. Last financial year the Commonwealth raked in over £1,000,000,000, from the people of Australia. Surely, in that situation, any Government in this State—whether our Government or a Government led by the Leader of the Opposition—is not only entitled to approach the Commonwealth, but is also bound to approach it if the Government of the State is to carry out the duty that it was elected to carry out.

Mr. Court: In view of all the money you say the Commonwealth Government gets, I am amazed that you do not want your taxing powers back.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows as well as I do that under the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Federal Government has first grab at the taxable resources of the people and I very much doubt whether the people of Western Australia, at this stage of our development, could stand one great grab

from the Commonwealth and, on top of that, another collection of taxes by the State.

Mr. Court: That would not be necessary under a proper system of State taxation.

The PREMIER: It would be necessary under any system.

Mr. Court: It would do the Commonwealth good to be free of it, also, as it would have to stand on its own feet then.

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member has much more faith in the Commonwealth than I have. My experience of any colour of Commonwealth Government is that Canberra is Canberra and Western Australia is a long way away. We deserve every shilling we get from the Commonwealth and we never get one shilling too much. More often than not we do not get the financial and other assistance which we are entitled, in this more distant State of Australia, to receive from the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You will never get enough.

The PREMIER: Whether we get enough, or not, I wish the Leader of the Opposition would sometimes get out of Canberra's corner and into Western Australia's.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [6.12]: May I, in common with some of those who have preceded me, congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on having been elected to your present office. Since I have been here there have been two previous Speakers—one from each side of the House—and each earned the respect and goodwill of all members over whom he presided. I see no reason why, during your term of office, we should feel any differently towards you than we felt to those who went before you.

I must admit that I am somewhat disappointed with what we have heard from the Premier and I believe we would have heard much more from him had it not been for the interjections to which he was subjected and which did not allow him to tell us all I think he would have told us had he had a fair go. You know as well as I do, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier is going to leave this building after dinner tonight and again I am disappointed because, before I sit down, I will refer to a number of matters and was hopeful that the Premier would hear what I have to say as, in my opinion, they are matters of extreme urgency and importance.

The Premier: I will guarantee to read your speech word for word, in Hansard next week.

MR. ACKLAND: I am relieved to hear that and I hope that at the end of his labour the Premier will not feel that the time he has spent on reading my speech has been wasted.

The Premier: I will arrange, also, for my deputy-deputy to hear everything you say after dinner this evening.

Mr. ACKLAND: During the course of his Speech, His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator, had quite a deal to say about the economic position of the State and various speakers in this House—including the Premier this evening—have referred to that subject.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. ACKLAND: Before the tea suspension I had made reference to the fact that His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in his Speech had something to say about the economic outlook in Western Australia. He said that it was disquieting and with that statement I think every one of us will agree whole-heartedly; but he also said that the position was fundamentally sound. How long it will remain so with an ever-increasing cost of production, I do not know seeing that throughout Australia, and particularly in Western Australia, we are losing so many of our overseas markets because our costs have become so great.

I am of the opinion that, rather than have controls, if there were a will to get together, on both sides of industry, and a willingness to realise that both sides had a viewpoint, the problem could be overcome. This has been done in other countries with satisfactory results to all concerned. But because of our isolation we do not seem to realise how far we are slipping behind other parts of the world. During his speech the member for Claremont mentioned the different attitude the public had towards transport, and with that I agree. The courtesy extended to travellers overseas, particularly in the United Kingdom, has to be experienced to be believed.

In this country there seems to be a strong cleavage—which seems to be growing greater—between employer and employee. When speaking in this Chamber towards the end of last year, I mentioned the splendid relationship which existed between employer and employee in the United Kingdom industries and I mentioned particularly the chemical industry where they have been able to increase their return to the worker and have also substantially increased profits while greatly reducing the cost of their products. What has happened in that industry is happening in many others, too.

I read in the issue of "The Countryman," of the 24th May, an article about conditions in Holland. It is claimed that in that country they have had freedom from strikes since 1945. Instead of the growing distrust, which we find here, industry in Holland has been able to get together and work for the common good. I should like to read an extract from the article which

appeared in "The Countryman" under the heading of "A Free Country With No Strikes." It states—

Strikes are such a widespread phenomenon that the question is often asked whether they are endemic in our western industrial society.

That they are not necessary is shown by Holland, where there has not been a strike of any consequence since 1945. There the common task of cleaning up the war's colossal mess was approached with a fresh attitude to industrial relationships. The old idea, which still survives, of an aristocracy of management has given way to a partnership in industry, of which there are probably few parallels. The biggest single factor in putting Holland on its feet is said to be an employer-employee group called the Foundation of Labour.

This is formed by seven representatives from employers and seven from the trade unions who meet round a table in a little villa in The Hague to thrash out a joint policy.

The resulting industrial peace and co-operation is reflected in the flourishing state of the country, where output has balanced the rise in wages. As a nation the Dutch have "money in the bank," in spite of losing Indonesia, in spite of immense war damage, and in spite of floods.

What the paper had to say about Holland is equally true with regard to Sweden and Germany. I believe we could have the same position in Australia if both sides had the will to work together.

Not for one moment am I going to suggest that the whole of the trouble and responsibility rests with the trade unions. I think it does to a very great degree, but I think it rests with those on this side of the House just as much. However, there are people in this State, and in this House, who would like to see the severance widened rather than have both parties working together for their mutual good.

Mr. Lawrence: What is this severance you are referring to?

Mr. ACKLAND: It can be seen in many instances. I do not want to be led aside by interjections because I have quite a lot I want to say and as time is limited I do not wish to be sidetracked.

I was interested to note that in answer to a question asked by the leader of my party in regard to railway freights, the figures show that the freight on a tanker of petrol going to Kalgoorlie costs 8.1d. per gallon or £173 for the full tanker. Yet the tanker itself is supplied by the oil company concerned. When speaking in this Chamber last Wednesday, the Premier mentioned the difficult position of the railways. Every country resident fully realises just how difficult that position is; but I trust that before the Government

decides that the only answer to the £3,000,000 or more deficit on the railways is to increase freights, it will look closely into the question of the management of the Railway Department.

It is true that there is a very real resistance on the part of those who should be working in harmony with the departmental employees and the department itself. This is caused, I believe, by the administration or management of the Railways Commission. Railway officials fail to appreciate that the customer has any viewpoint whatever. Furthermore, most of the freights are at a level, even under present-day conditions, which makes them unrealistic. I will have something further to say about that as I proceed. The long and costly hauls of goods in transit are not only irksome but they are also mainly responsible for Item No. 4, which covers the demurrage charges imposed by the railways and which, in my opinion, are no longer imposed as penalties but as a means of revenue.

The Midland Railway Co. operates its line in my electorate and some little time ago I was talking to the stationmaster at Moora. He has been posted there for some 10 or 12 years. He told me that never, at any time, during his service, not only at Moora but also at any of the unattended stations that had come under his control, had there been any demurrage charged by his company. The answer was simple. It was that people, when advised that a consignment of goods was leaving for its destination, knew not only the day but the hour when those goods would arrive. I will admit, however, that the management of the Midland Railway Co. must be a great deal easier than that of State-owned railways with its network of branch lines.

Nevertheless, there have been instances, time and time again, of people who have waited 10 and 12 days for a consignment of goods. Only today I heard of one consignment that took 21 days to reach its destination. As a result of this state of affairs, people get sick and tired of going in to the station day after day to inquire if their goods had arrived and then they have only to let one day slip and they find that they are charged demurrage. Apart from that, these people have to travel many miles to the station. I had an instance of one man in my electorate who was charged £7 10s. demurrage and two of the days for which he was charged were those on which the Railway Department did not work.

The delay in transit, in many cases, is responsible for demurrage charges. I might mention that when the present Government was returned to office I was very disappointed to learn that the Minister for Housing was not going to accept the Railways portfolio because although very often I do not see eye to eye with him, in common with other members of this House, I realise that he does administer his department and he would

want to have a look into the management of the railways if he took over that portfolio and would not take for granted what the departmental heads said to him.

It is most obvious that friction exists amongst the Commissioners of Railways themselves. I have had personal experience of that. No department, when there is friction amongst its high executive officers, can function satisfactorily. I supported, most enthusiastically, the Government which altered the control of the railways by increasing the number of commissioners from one to three. I thought that such a move would have many advantages, and had we been more successful in our selection of commissioners, I would still be of that opinion. There is no blame attachable to the McLarty-Watts Government for the type of men that we have, because a committee recommended the men appointed to these positions. The Commissioners came to this State with the highest credentials possible and, with one commissioner in particular, the fact they have not been satisfactory is to be deplored.

I understand the chief commissioner had a most successful career in the Indian railways service. I do not want to take any advantage because I speak in this House, but, in view of the large railway deficit that we have and the lack of harmony which I know exists, I say that he is unsuitable for the position he now occupies and that something more than social graces and social aspirations is needed to make a success of a position such as he holds. I would earnestly request that the Government should start its examination from the top downwards rather than rush into adopting the suggestion to increase rail freights.

The Chief Traffic Manager represents one bright spot in the Railways Department. He has done yeoman service in increasing the volume of traffic which is carried over the railways, particularly in the last few weeks. In April of this year, following a conference with him, a programme for the movement of wheat was arranged. At that time it was decided that some 35,000 tons of wheat per week would have to be moved. At the beginning of that period there was a movement of 18,000 tons per week. That, of course, is very much better than it was a few years ago when 12,000 or 15,000 tons per week was the average hauled. I might mention however that, during the past five weeks, the Railway Department has shifted more than 41,000 tons of grain each week.

If the department can keep that up, it will catch up with its lag which, from the beginning of April, has accumulated to 74,993 tons, or nearly 572,000 bushels over a 15-week period. I believe the lag will be overtaken. In the Traffic Branch there is the will to keep the wheels moving.

Those words remind me of the advertisement that one sees on every station which implores the customer to empty his truck to get the wheels moving.

I am going to quote to the House an instance of where the Railway Department imposed demurrage charges purely as a means of obtaining revenue. In the metropolitan area there is a mill that can absorb only a certain tonnage of wheat each day. During one week end, following a period when there had been no receipts for some days, the Railway Department put two or three train-loads of wheat into that mill siding and the railway siding adjoining, and although this mill worked around the clock to the total capacity of its intake, it had a very large demurrage bill to pay. When I approached the then Minister for Railways and told him the facts, he said, "We are not going to allow our railway trucks to be used for the storage of wheat." In my opinion, he was as unrealistic as the Commissioner of Railways has been on each occasion I have had cause to interview him.

Next I shall quote to the House some factual cases which have occurred in the Railway Department in recent times. Some of the facts I will give have been obtained as the result of questions asked in the Legislative Council; others are from letters I have in my possession. In the first instance, I would like to mention the fact that the Premier and his Government have been imploring people to start industries in this country. At Welshpool there is a factory—Stramit W.A. Boards Ltd.—which needs a great deal of straw as a commodity in the manufacture of boards. That firm arranged with a neighbour of mine—a very progressive young fellow—to let them have a large tonnage of wheat in monthly orders over a 12 months' period.

The farmer himself realised that he could cart that straw from his farm to Welshpool for £2 15s. a ton. That allowed—my friends opposite will be glad to know—£4 a day for the driver, the interest and sinking fund and running expenses to replace the truck at the end of a reasonable period. But he arranged with a local carrier to cart the straw. I think, however, I had better read extracts from his letter because it may be of advantage to do so.

I would like to make a correction here. He said he could have carted it for £2 5s. and not for £2 15s., and that a quote of £5 per ton was received from a contract carrier, but the Transport Board—that board named which should be named the "board for the protection of inefficiency in the railway department"—decided that this straw was not to go by road but by rail. So instead of paying £5 per ton to despatch that straw from the farm to the factory, railway freight, to which was added the cartage from the farm to Welshpool and to the factory, amounted to

£11 3s. per ton. These figures are factual and resulted in an increase of costs amounting to 116 per cent.

Each month four or five of those trucks are sent from Wangan Hills on one day and never more than one arrives at a time at Welshpool. Because of that and because there is no knowledge of when they are likely to arrive, this company has often been charged demurrage of £3 2s. 6d. for a small truck and £4 7s. 6d. for a large one. When giving me this information this young man had also told me of the trouble he had while building his home. He was one of those who built his home not by engaging a contractor but by employing tradesmen. Often the materials were delayed so long that the men were sitting around doing nothing for long periods because they had no materials with which to work.

So, towards the end of this building job when a number of odds and ends were needed, he took his 6-ton diesel truck down to Perth. He took a truck of sheep down to Midland and went to six different places in the metropolitan area and picked up his load which, by an examination of the rate book, showed that the freight on it would have been £57 15s. Add to that, £11 10s. for freight of stock to Perth and you would have, Sir, a very large saving of expense for one day's carting of stock to Perth, and of the requirements needed on the farm of nearly £60.

I would also like to mention another letter. It is a communication I received from the Glenvar Pastoral Co., which shows the irksome and foolish impositions which the people in the country are obliged to suffer. In writing to me this man said that in all the years they have been farming, they have never used road transport at all to cart their produce to and from Perth. Last year the railway freights to this property represented £5,500. On previous occasions he had brought back new trucks and had always been able to get a permit from the Transport Board to take a load of goods and materials back to the farm when the truck was going into the country.

But on this occasion he bought a second-hand truck and when he approached the Transport Board they said, "Oh no, you cannot have a permit to take anything back on a second-hand truck; that only applies to new trucks." They were both serving exactly the same purpose on the property on which they were to be used. Accordingly, this young man has advised me that in future he intends to make use of his road transport when it is suitable for him to do so. He is a man who never had any intention of using anything but rail transport because he realised that rail transport was necessary.

I might mention here that at the time this straw carting was refused by the Transport Board, the railways were not carting 50 per cent. of their target for

wheat. Yet they were utilising their trucks to take something that is not nearly as profitable to them. I expect that straw is the lightest of any commodity that the Railway Department could handle.

It is also most highly inflammable and there is always the risk of fire if it is carried behind a coal-burning locomotive. I have here figures which are not mine; they came from the accountancy branch of the Australian Wheat Board. They show that the Western Australian wheat-grower, let alone any other primary producer, is paying into the economy of the State more than the deficit of the railways each year.

The figures presented to me are for the years 1940-41 to 1952-53, a period of 12 years. They show the difference in the price at which wheat was sold for human consumption and for stock feed in Australia, as compared with the actual figures of all overseas sales—not problematical figures but actual figures—shown when the accountancy had been done over that period of years. The figures disclose that the Australian people, whether they were users of wheat for human consumption or for stock feed, received the commodity at £198,142,800 below the price that would have been received had it been sold under the International Wheat Agreement and on the free market overseas.

If we take into consideration the fact that of the 60,000,000 bushels used in Australia, 4,000,000 are used in Western Australia, of which 2,750,000 bushels are used for human consumption and 1,250,000 for stock feed, we find that the Western Australian farmers contributed £49,537,500, or well in excess of £3,000,000 over the whole of the period under review. The Government should take that matter into consideration before it decides to increase fares and freights on the railways. There are other matters I wish to refer to, small in themselves, which show the inefficiency of the railways. They are small items when compared with the deficit of £3,000,000.

Last season a special train was carting wheat from Piawanning on the Miling line southwards. The crew was supposed to stay at the Piawanning barracks, but there were no beds. All the beds had been taken away by the department to somewhere else. For a long period the engine, the guards' van and the crew of three travelled an extra 54 miles from Piawanning to Miling and back, because the beds were not available. If it costs £173 to take a truck of petrol to Kalgoorlie, I wonder what it costs the railways for this crew to travel the 54 miles each trip, over the lengthy period. To travel the 27 miles each way represents a great deal of overtime, running expenses and wear and tear, all because three beds were not available. The department did

not have to buy the three beds; all it had to do was to bring the beds from somewhere else.

Another instance concerns the fitting of a lock on to a door at one of the sidings in my district. A local tradesman undertook to carry out that work for 25s., but the Railway Department, instead, sent an inspector and two tradesmen from Northam, which is over 100 miles away, to fit the lock. These instances may seem paltry, but added together they mount up. I ask the Government to look into the management of the railways before raising the freights. That is the reason I made reference to these instances. They are happening from one end of the railway system to the other.

Another instance concerns a stove falling out in the barracks at Miling. The department sent two men from Northam to put the stove in and I believe it lasted four days before it fell out once more. The department then sent another two men from Northam to put the stove in. As far as I know, after the second effort it was all right. On each of these occasions an inspector was sent before and after each job to see that the stove worked.

I have here a letter from a lady who is very distressed because she has to travel by rail from Perth to Goomalling on Thursdays. The only train she can travel on is the Mukinbudin train which leaves Perth at 5.30. It takes the train six hours to travel the 90 miles. The train stops for one hour in Northam station. This lady has written to see if I can do anything in getting the delay at Northam station shortened.

Is it any wonder that people do not use the railways. Is it any wonder there is resistance to the Railway Department because of the slow delivery of goods, and because of the demurrage charges which are very often caused by the department and not by the individuals concerned. The people in the country want to use the railways; they realise that the railways are essential to this State, but the resistance of rail customers grows every day because of increasing inefficiency. If the freight charges go up still higher then the resistance will grow even more.

I accompanied a deputation from the Dandaragan and Gingin Road Board, which was led by the member for Toodyay, to the Minister for Transport. The deputation put up a case for an urgently needed road between Gingin via Regan's Ford, through Dandaragan, to Badgingarra and Eneabba further north. This piece of country is being developed very rapidly but it is not served by any transport at present other than a bi-weekly freighter bus of the Midland Railway Co. When we interviewed the Minister concerning this matter, he was of the opinion that the service was not needed because the freight could go over the Midland Railway Co. line.

The nearest of these settlers to the Midland line are 22 miles away, while the furthest are 40 miles. The nearest settlers travel 78 miles more by going through Moora than by the road which the deputation suggested. The Midland Railway Co. realises the necessity for a road transport service, and the residents in that district have asked for a road. All the materials required are on the spot for the making of a road. There would be no very great expense other than for the payment of the workmen. This is an excellent project to provide work for the unemployed to be financed by the additional funds which the Premier hopes to bring back to this State.

There is another matter I wish to touch on and I am glad the Minister for Transport is present. If he looks at the map he will find that the residents of this district are almost in exactly parallel circumstances to the people in the Wandering district. The Wandering residents need not travel another 27 miles to get into Beverley. They are permitted to cart their requirements in their own transport, without any irksome restriction imposed by the Transport Board. The same condition should apply in the district I mentioned, and if the people are permitted to cart their requirements in their own transport, no freight will be taken away from the Railway Department. The Midland Railway Co. realises the necessity for the service by starting a freighter bus in competition with its own railway line. I ask the Minister for Transport to give very favourable consideration to the request made, and to lift the restrictions of the Transport Board on the cartage of requirements by the residents in this district.

I accompanied another deputation from the Dandaragan and Moora Road Board areas to seek assistance for the people in the Hill River, Badgarrup, and Dinner Hill area. Nearly all of the residents are 40 miles away from the railway line at Watheroo. They settled in this district on the understanding that it was not a project settlement, and that they would have to meet their own commitments. There were 148 farms selected in this district, which represents more than 500,000 acres of land taken up. Some 53 of those people who went there were full of enthusiasm. They considered they had enough finance to make a success of their operations, but after this and the previous very wet winter they find themselves very much on the rocks. A suggestion has been put to the Minister for Lands that they should be assisted on a self-help basis.

When it is considered that the scheme suggested to the Minister will cost less than £100,000 annually for the next four years, it is interesting to note that already 6,800 acres have been ploughed and cropped and the settlers are carrying nearly 7,000 sheep and have erected 31 houses, 40 sheds and put down 43 water supplies by their own endeavours. The

great majority are in a position to carry on and it seems unfortunate that these 53 of the 148 settlers may have to walk off their properties. If the Government can find £600,000 to assist Chamberlain Industries, as was done last year, it should not be difficult to find £100,000 a year as a loan for this scheme.

I am of the opinion that the £3,000,000 loaned to Chamberlain Industries will never be repaid. These people have asked for assistance by way of a loan. I do not intend to go into the details; they have already been placed before the Minister. It is not a question of charity, but something they expect to repay over a period of years. The Minister stated that they had gone there with the understanding they would find their own finance. I believe all were sincere in their belief that they had sufficient finance and the majority should do well.

In the Badgingarra area, I have seen evidence of a pioneering spirit second to none in my lifetime in Western Australia. I have seen bits of girls who should be tripping around making themselves look pretty, picking up roots in the fields. I have seen their mothers boring postholes and driving tractors. I do hope the Government will recognise the needs of these people as the interest of the State, and that these people will be assisted to remain on their properties.

Quite recently, I think last Thursday, my leader spoke of answers that the Premier had made in the Press when he was on the election hustings. I have been looking at the newspapers and I found in the "Collier Mail" on Thursday, the 9th February, a statement by the Minister for Works. I will not deal with the electricity position referred to in the report, but will quote what the Minister had to say about water rates. He said—

It is not possible to achieve complete uniformity with respect to charges for water in one step, but the Government's policy is so designed as to enable it to proceed progressively towards achievement of this objective.

A reduction in the water rate has been made this year in a number of country districts and the maximum rate has been reduced in all cases where it applied.

In "The West Australian", I think of last Thursday, it was stated that there are no less than 25 country water districts which have had their rates considerably increased. The member for Collier will be pleased no doubt to know that the rate in his electorate was increased by 6d. per 1,000 gallons.

Mr. May: I know the rate was increased, and I am not too pleased.

Mr. ACKLAND: I thought that would be so.

Mr. Oldfield: Do you think the provision of the scheme is more important than the rates?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do, but I will deal with that when I have more time. I want to refer to decentralisation. On the 15th May "The West Australian" had a leading article, headed "Summer Water Outlook Unfavourable," part of which read—

Sooner or later the main Serpentine project which will be much bigger than Canning Dam, should alter the whole metropolitan water supply outlook. The immediate point, however, is whether Perth will be unnecessarily inconvenienced before the new pipeline (from Serpentine) reaches Victoria Park in 2½ years from now.

I was incensed at the consideration given to the metropolitan people, and the knowledge that there were people in my electorate suffering near-famine conditions. I have seen the people obtain water from dams which cost 10s. to £1 per 100 gallons—not per 1,000 gallons—to put on their properties, and I think one man at Pithara, who happens to be the hotel-keeper, was charged by the Railway Department £7 19s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons.

I wrote a letter to "The West Australian" about the water position and said something like this—

Water restrictions even if imposed for a few years, are a small price to pay for continued security and prosperity—a prosperity which city dwellers do so little to provide.

I defy anybody to satisfactorily say that is untrue. But "The West Australian" in its usual attitude to any criticism had this to say next day in answer to me—

Need we remind Mr. Ackland that it was a member of his own party who delayed for years the comprehensive water scheme.

That statement was a deliberate misstatement of fact. It alluded to Hon. H. L. Roche who, together with 14 other members of the Legislative Council of the 23 present, tried to insert a clause into the "Hawke comprehensive water scheme of 1946," which was afterwards insisted on by the Federal authorities before they would grant finance to assist the State.

My party was blamed on the ground that it delayed this scheme for years. There was no delay. Within 10 months the Minister for Water Supply, Hon. Victor Doney, secured the passage of a Bill containing this clause, which the Commonwealth Committee had insisted upon. In reply to a letter which I sent to the Minister for Water Supplies last year, he stated that a commencement would be made on the Cunderdin-Minnivale section of the comprehensive scheme next year, nine years after the passage of the Bill. The Under Secretary for Works in a letter to

me, under date the 12th July, said that the people in the Cadoux-Kokardine area could not expect to get water before 1960-61, and then only subject to the availability of necessary manpower, materials and loan funds.

There are many people in Western Australia, 12 or 13 years after the passage of the legislation, who are carting water at great expense, and since the passage of the comprehensive water supply Bill of 1947. The Government, in the interests of the metropolitan area has used both money and materials which should have been utilised in the country, to duplicate the metropolitan water mains, a water supply for Kwinana, and now the Serpentine project. Last year 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 gallons of water were saved daily during the heat waves by restricting the use of garden sprinklers to 12 of the 24 hours a day.

What was that hardship in comparison to the hardships suffered by the people in the country districts. Whilst country people have not been able to get water, the Serpentine scheme has been started; there has been a double pipeline from the hills; and water has been made available to Kwinana. All parties say they want decentralisation; and water is the first necessity for that to come into existence. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that the metropolitan area pays 1s. 9d. a thousand gallons under its rating system and 1s. 9d. a thousand gallons for excess water? Under those conditions we can buy 2,000 gallons of water for the price of a bottle of beer.

Mr. Andrew: Which would you rather have?

Mr. ACKLAND: I would rather have the 2,000 gallons of water; and that is what I have been having. I suppose there are tens of thousands of people like myself, who last year used more than double the supply of water to which they were entitled under the water rate scheme. It is a cheap way of getting it. Whilst there is so much shortage of water in the country districts, I can see no reason why the metropolitan people should not pay a great deal more for their water than at present.

I have here a list of country charges. Northam pays 3s. 9d. a thousand gallons; Merredin, 4s. 6d.; Kalgoorlie, 4s. 6d.; Norseman, 4s. 6d.; Goomalling, 4s. 6d.; Moora, 4s.; and Dalwallinu, 4s. I can see no reason why people in the metropolitan area should not pay for their excess water—I am speaking now of the suburban householder and not of industry—4s. or 5s. a thousand gallons, at least until such time as provision is made for the country districts.

Together with that, I think an alteration in the Act is needed to allow a group of people in the metropolitan area, if individually they cannot afford to put down

a bore or a well, to put one down collectively. Under every quarter-acre block that I know of in the metropolitan area there is an abundance of water, but at present it does not pay anybody to make use of it. The country people have a right to a water scheme far sooner than we have a right to put in the duplication—the Serpentine scheme—which is contemplated.

We want not only cheaper water supply but cheaper electricity supplies in the country districts. I do not know what big industries have to pay for electricity—it is not very much—but I do know that the householder pays about 3½d., according to the consumption. I have a letter here from the Goomalling Road Board, asking me to try to get the power line of the S.E.C. extended to Goomalling. The board tells me that for 30 units it paid 1s. 8d.; and from 30 to 130, 1s.; and from 130 to 330, 10d.; whereas at Toodyay, only 30 miles away, the relative amounts paid were, 7.31d., 4.31d. and, by the larger consumers, 3.3d.

Perth is growing at an extremely fast rate. Every party decries the congestion of people in the metropolitan area. Well, if we want to get them out of the metropolitan area, let us make the conditions of life in the country districts a little more satisfactory. Let us give the people their cheap water and electricity at a price comparable with that which is paid in the metropolitan area.

I would like to touch on one other matter, and that is the Government's announced intention to make some resumptions in the Mundaring catchment area. It is proposed by the Government to spend £250,000.

The Minister for Education: You are an interested party.

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, and I have never attempted to hide the fact; I am only one of a great number who have land in the area.

Hon. L. Thorn: Then you are competent to express an opinion.

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, on more grounds than one. The Minister, in answer to a question the other day, said that there were 364,000 acres of land in this area and that before Mundaring was constructed in 1902, approximately 40,000 acres were alienated, or 11 per cent. of the land; that the improved land was 7,300 acres, or 2 per cent., and that if the Government resumed this area—there is no definite announcement—it expected to spend £250,000 on the resumptions.

I can tell the Government that it has so far dealt only with the willing sellers. It has bought two properties of between 5,000 and 6,000 acres, and it is intending this week, according to the "Government

Gazette," to resume another two properties of 3,200 acres. It proposes to pay £2 10s. an acre for the land, unimproved. I have scoured the country in a similar rainfall area and in similar proximity to Perth, comprising land not half as good, and in its unimproved condition it cannot be bought for £5 per acre. I can assure the Government that if it intends to go on with this proposition it will meet with a great deal of resistance; and taking it to its furthest conclusion, instead of the resumption costing it £250,000, if justice is done it is more likely that these people will receive the sum of £400,000.

It is said that the committee has recommended this on two counts; one because of salt; and the other, because of the fear of pollution. I have inspected three properties, each of which had been acquired prior to the Mundaring water scheme coming into existence. One is known as Flynn Bros.; the other is the Clifford Estate; and the third is known as Turkey Farm, or the 19-Mile. Turkey Farm, long ago, was used as a coaching house, and on that farm they used to grow hay for the people going to Kalgoorlie before the railway was built. On not one of these three farms could we find a vestige of salt. The salt theory is a lot of bunkum!

Pollution is another item on which the committee recommended exemptions. I do not intend to deal with the scientific side of pollution but rather leave it to my friend and colleague from Darling Range, who is far more competent. He is a scientist; he holds the degree of B.Sc.; and, at the same time, he is a practical farmer on similar land. I say he holds better qualifications than any of the members of that committee, because not only has he scientific knowledge, but he also has practical experience.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's time has expired.

Hon. D. BRAND: I move—

That the hon. member's time be extended.

Motion put and passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. ACKLAND: Although I do not intend to speak on the scientific side, I have some practical knowledge of water conservation in country districts, and I know of no water, whether it runs off the land or off a roof, or comes out of a well in the ground, that does not get some marine growth in it if open to the sun. I can show members two tanks, one with a cover on it and one without. Not a drop of the water in either of those tanks has ever come into contact with any fertiliser or vegetation and the tank without a cover contains green slime. On

my farm in the summer months every sheep trough has to be scrubbed out at least twice per week because of the marine growths that form in the well water.

One can go into the Mundaring catchment area where the country has never been cleared, and where there has never been a single hoof of stock or a pound of fertiliser on the ground; and although the creeks there may run only for a few days or a few weeks each year, each one will be found to contain marine growths. I knew that this scheme had been suggested; and so, when in England last year, I made inquiries as to what was done there. Here the Government's advisers are suggesting the holding of approximately 1,500,000 acres of water catchment areas—

Mr. May: Has that anything to do with Serpentine?

Mr. ACKLAND: I am speaking of Serpentine, Canning and Mundaring; and the Serpentine and Canning projects are each bigger than Mundaring. I have estimated them with only a little over 600,000 acres each to bring it up to this figure. There are 600,000 or 700,000 people dependent on these catchment areas here, and in London there are 11,000,000 or 12,000,000 people, and every drop of water they use comes from the Thames Valley.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You would not expect a shortage of water there.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am not speaking of a shortage of water; and the improvement of this land would have the opposite effect. In any case, by making the water run off more freely than it does at present. The Thames Valley carries 50 times as much stock as would a comparable area in our Western Australian catchment areas; and yet nothing is done about it except that they treat the water there as it will be treated here, in any case, within a few years. I went to see the Liverpool water scheme—which was not quite completed, and found that all that water comes off agricultural land.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Do they use much fertiliser there?

Mr. ACKLAND: Here we may use on the average 1 cwt. of fertiliser per acre; and there they use about 7 cwt. per acre, in addition to which they use hundreds and hundreds of tons of stable manure on each property. They collect all the manure in the barns during the five months' winter period and spread it on the land at a later date.

All this land to which I refer is most valuable. It is all within the 30-inch rainfall area. The furthest of it is 40 miles from Perth and it comes to within 25 miles of the city. If we are to have 1,300,000 people in Perth by the end of this century, we will need all of this land, and a great

deal more, to feed them. I think this suggestion of the committee should be resisted to the utmost.

Mr. Hearman: What is the rainfall of the Thames Valley?

Mr. ACKLAND: I am not quite sure, but I believe London has much the same rainfall as Perth: about 36 inches. There are people, as I have said previously, who will walk off their properties if they do not receive assistance, and the money which the Government is talking of using to resume this highly productive and valuable land could be used to keep these 53 people on their properties in the Badgingarra area and thus do good for the State. From this proposed resumption nothing but harm could come to Western Australia.

The Minister for Transport: The alternative would probably be that Mundaring Weir would finish up as a salt lake.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have just said that on the three properties which I inspected—they were the only three one could inspect, being the only ones that have been cleared for 50 or 60 years, and being spread from a point 10 miles from Mundaring to almost the outer extremity of the catchment area—there is not a sign of salt anywhere.

Two or three years ago there was, in India, an expert on water pollution and purification, engaged on work for the Indian Government. I have forgotten his name, but it could easily be ascertained, and I respectfully suggest that the Government try to secure this man or someone else with comparable qualifications in order to obtain advice before it takes this absolutely foolish step of making these resumptions. The man to whom I refer would have a complete knowledge of the subject, because the Indian sub-continent is so thickly populated and highly developed that anything he had to say about the position in Western Australia could be of the utmost value.

I believe that within 20 years another committee will advise the Government of that day that this land is much more useful and will not be lost or injured or spoilt for water catchment purposes by letting it be used by the people who are already there. There is no fear of the Government ever having to throw open the 330,000 acres now held by the Forests Department. It would not hurt me to any great extent if I were put off this land but there are men there who are the second generation of workers on their properties, and others whose whole livelihood is dependent on the land they are working; and if the Government endeavours to compensate them as it is compensating others at the present time, a grave injustice will be done to each and every one of them. I thank members for the attentive hearing they have given me and for having extended the time for my speech.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [8.40]: Like the majority of other speakers in this debate, I wish to start by complimenting the new members who have made their maiden speeches, particularly the new members on the other side of the Chamber, because they have shown some degree of ability in a most difficult task—that of addressing this House for the first time. I compliment them in particular because I am well aware that anybody in the Labour Party who rises to the position of being selected as a candidate for Parliament has gone through a pretty hard school; and although he may not be a polished debater, he is undoubtedly already well able to express himself fairly clearly. The rough and tumble of our party does produce that type.

If Parliament is to function as a democratic institution, it is essential that the standard of debate in this House should be reasonably effective. It is not necessary that it be perfectly polished; but the standard of debate should be pretty clear and, as we have heard from the Premier's speech earlier today, it is essential that a two-eyed view be taken of those difficult subjects on which we differ.

New members will find that of all the legislation that comes before this Chamber the majority is non-controversial in political essence. We occasionally have differences of opinion about little details, but the main controversy takes place on only a limited number of subjects. We get along very well and enjoy the thrust and parry of exchanging opinions on the non-controversial matters. Where we do achieve a useful purpose, as a Parliament, is in examining those thoughts which are put before us and seeing that the different ideas relative to the legislation are all examined from every viewpoint.

I very much regret that this evening both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Nedlands are missing, because I wish to deal with a subject on which they have both spoken. More particularly do I wish to discuss the manner in which the member for Nedlands dealt with the subject; because he, as a new member, is failing by not taking a reasonable, balanced view of an important subject on which he is able to speak with some authority. I say that because he is a person who has had training of a type that would peculiarly fit him for discussing the subject.

Firstly, I would like to compliment him on the manner in which he presented it. Having enjoyed, at different times, the experience of acting as a critic or umpire at a number of debates, I feel it is far easier to criticise debating efforts than it is to produce them. I repeat, I would like to compliment the member for Nedlands on the manner in which he produced his subject; the manner in which he stood, and the manner in which he spoke. It

was most impressive; it was well done; and in a debating competition would score a very large number of points.

He speaks impressively; he pauses correctly; and during the pauses, one can hear the pin feathers in his wings starting to grow, because there is no doubt that he produces for himself, and for those who think like him, a belief that here is the angel of the Lord. It sounds well; but the subject matter is something which a debating critic is seldom required to discuss. However, this is a parliamentary Chamber and not a formal debating society.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What about a critique of yourself?

Mr. JOHNSON: I have had plenty of them.

Mr. Hearman: Do angels have children?

Mr. JOHNSON: I am no angel, so I would not be able to speak with authority. The point I wish to make in relation to this is that the standard of debate is important. If Parliament is to be a good useful organ in the future of this State, the standard of debates has to be watched; and it is good that it should be effective, but it is essential that we should remember that the subject on which we speak is not formal debate for which one gets marks, principally for presentation. The value of Parliament is in discussing and examining all the various points that are put forward.

In regard to the functioning of Parliament, the Address-in-reply debate is not really the correct place upon which to debate financial matters; but we have had three important speeches on finance, all of which I feel could and should have taken place on the debate on the Supply Bill, because that debate deals with a financial matter. To my mind, it would be more useful if debates on the Address-in-reply could be shortened—

Hon. D. Brand: Hear! Hear!

Mr. JOHNSON:—by giving members other opportunities of dealing with the small matters concerned with their districts—by a grievance day or by a debate on the adjournment of the House, as is done in the Federal sphere. That would reduce considerably the debate on the Address-in-reply and it would save us from having to make, as has been done here, a speech covering three or four subjects. I hope that new members will not only take an interest in the functioning of Parliament, but that they will also give some thought to a change in the Standing Orders and in the method of dealing with these matters in order to achieve that end.

I now wish to revert to a subject which I shall discuss at length. I refer to the matter of finance. The Premier has indicated that in his opinion there is a conspiracy between the Liberal Party, certain newspapers and organs of opinion which put forward the view that our financial troubles are of recent origin and are

capable of being solved by two actions: One, the freezing of the wage level; and the other, the returning of taxation powers to the States.

It is of interest to note that although the member for Nedlands produced, as he said, six items in regard to this matter, when he sent a copy of his speech to the "Sunday Times" they made the number nine. In actual fact, he has produced six or nine items of no real value. He listed a number of things which are the continuing duty of Government—in this case, the Federal Government, because it has the financial powers.

The first was that our rate of expansion had to be geared to a figure we could afford. If that idea is new to the member for Nedlands, it is not new to anybody who has given any thought to the future of Australia; and it is regarded as the continuing duty, and one of the main responsibilities of Governments both State and Federal, particularly Federal. They have to gear the country's expansion to what it can afford. That is what Parliaments are for. His second point is: A close examination of all the projects in hand, both Commonwealth and State. Once again, it is for that purpose that we have Parliaments and Governments. They are elected to ensure that the examination is effective. Also, that is why we have Ministers. Such examinations are not carried out solely by civil servants; it is a continuing duty of Governments. The next point mentioned by the hon. member deals with works priorities to ensure the best use of funds available. The Premier expressed an opinion on this and explained how it was done. However, let me say that this has always been the responsibility of a Government.

If members will read the 18th Report of the Joint Committee of the Commonwealth House in relation to public accounts, they will see just how that priority is established; how the works which a State has to carry out are listed; how they are sent to the Co-ordinator of Works; how they are discussed there before the Loan Council meets; and how the Loan Council arrives at its decision. That 18th Report of the Joint Committee is nearly two years old, which proves that the idea is not new.

The next point is that Government administration in both Commonwealth and State Governments should be streamlined from ministerial level to the lowest possible level. I have vague recollections of reading about such a similar move when I was a kid at school. I think Pitt was the one who first came under fire for suggesting this particular point. However, it has been regarded as a Government responsibility ever since there was a system of government.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You would have some bother to talk about it had it not been for the speech of the member for Nedlands.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am sorry that the member for Nedlands is not present, because I think I can teach him something; and for the purpose of having a record made in Hansard, I am putting these facts forward in detail.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I do not know whether you could enhance the teaching profession.

Mr. JOHNSON: After all is said and done, I did not remain in one class for two years when I was going to school. The next point submitted by the member for Nedlands is that defence expenditure should be examined by the best method available in the light of possible threats and modern methods of waging war. That subject is at present being examined at some length and with some publicity by the Joint Committee on Commonwealth Public Accounts. There is nothing new in that suggestion, and it has no current value, not even as a problem for debate.

The next point mentioned by the hon. member was that of eliminating waste in Government undertakings and, if need be, curtailing or disposing of such undertakings. That is an old story. The idea of curtailing or disposing of such undertakings is one that Liberals would put forward, especially when they wish to dispose of our few profitable concerns to people of their own ilk.

The way they gave away, quite recently, the whaling industry in our North-West—which was a real producer of income—might please the member for Nedlands; but there is no sense in suggesting that we should dispose of those industries which make profits for the benefit of the taxpayer, and there is no opportunity available to dispose of non-profitable industries because nobody wants them. The only reason why a Government carries them on is because no one else will do so.

The next item is one which I find has some interest. It is the statement that we should call for the cessation of State political interference in the wage structure. That is an admission which has just begun to appear in the propaganda issued by the Liberal Party; namely, that there is political interference in the Commonwealth arbitration sphere. On this side of the House we, the whole Labour movement and the industrial movement, have been well aware for many years that there is a degree of political interference in Arbitration Courts which has been particularly noticeable in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court.

That has existed no matter what Government has been in office. For many years there has been a very noticeable inclination by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to agree with or make a decision on any matter which it knew followed the policy of the Government in office. This state of affairs was very apparent when the £1 rise in the basic wage was

announced. We found such an attitude related to the war loading, and also to the freezing of the basic wage level.

It is good to obtain an admission that the Liberal Party does acknowledge this particular point, namely, that that party does interfere in arbitration matters. Previously, that party has always held up its hands in horror and commented that it was bad and was everything that it should not be. But is it bad now? Should Governments interfere in arbitration or should they not? I maintain that the position, in regard to arbitration in our governmental set-up, is such that Governments should interfere in certain matters which, in my opinion, arbitration courts have taken unto themselves quite wrongly. It is the duty of the Government to establish the level of the economy of the country. It is not the duty of a non-elected body.

The policy in relation to such matters is the responsibility of the Government; but Governments of all complexions, at different times, have sheltered behind the decisions of arbitration courts because they were not game to make such decisions themselves. That is one particular aspect which relates to those actions which have a tendency to place restrictions on the majority of people—which, of course, is the working class folk—and Governments have camouflaged their intentions by hiding behind the decisions of the courts. These courts have grasped the opportunity to establish and to wield power which they were never entitled to wield. That is only natural. Everybody likes to assume power, including judges. However, in my opinion it is important that we should recognise the responsibility of a Government to watch over the economic structure of the country. It is the responsibility of the Government and of nobody else.

The final point mentioned by the member for Nedlands is one which is of great importance as a basis for argument; namely, the return of taxing powers to the State. We all listened to the speech of the member for Nedlands when he mentioned that taxing powers should be returned to the State; and it will be remembered that this point was also mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. Before I continue: Is the Opposition going to get me a better hearing?

Mr. HEARMAN: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that our attention has been drawn to the point, I must draw your attention to the state of the House.

Hon. D. Brand: There should be at least 22 members on the other side of the House.

The Minister for Transport: We have a bigger percentage than you have.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am pleased to note that what I am saying is so distasteful to members of the Liberal Party that there remains only one representative on the front bench, and one behind, to listen to

what I have to say. The Country Party does take a 50 per cent. greater interest. Its members are more responsible and have the interests of the country much more at heart. That is frequently noticeable. When the Liberal Party members walked out, I was discussing this matter of the return of State taxing powers to the States.

Hon. D. Brand: They walked out for the lack of something better to do.

Mr. JOHNSON: If the hon. member wishes to interject, I wish he would do so a little louder.

Hon. D. Brand: I said they did so for the want of something better to do.

Mr. SPEAKER: I suggest the hon. member address the Chair.

Mr. JOHNSON: Very well, Mr. Speaker. The return of taxing powers to the States is a debatable question. It sounds well, but is plainly and completely irresponsible. It would not be taken as a point in a public debate by anybody who had any thought or responsibility towards the State of Western Australia. It may be a responsible attitude towards the Liberal Party in Canberra, because it has some value in supporting it in the mess it is making of our country for the benefit of certain big financial interests. But it is irresponsible as a Western Australian, and irresponsible and unintelligent as an Australian to think along those lines.

The suggestion put forward by the member for Nedlands is that taxing powers should be returned to the States, and that all States should agree as to how that taxing should be done; that they should also agree to a uniform method of taxing and obtain agreement before they deal with it. That sounds all right, but it is silly.

If we are to have agreement between the States as to the method of taxing, and as to the amount of taxing, whichever State is first in with its Budget will disclose the whole of the Budgets of the other States. Point one: Is that sensible? Is it responsible? If we are to have agreement in that much detail, what is the difference between that and the present system? The thought may arise in the minds of the uninitiated that, although it may be possible to have a uniform taxation agreed upon as to the method, it would be possible to have different rates of tax.

But that, of course, is not so, at least as far as the claimant States are concerned—and Western Australia is a claimant State because if we agree to taxation rates on any item below the average of non-claimant States, we will be penalised in relation to our States grant. Accordingly the effect of any agreement would be the identical effect of the current universal single taxing authority.

The further suggestion that the Grants Commission would take up the slack in no way interferes with the present situation. The whole thing is just a farrago of

nonsense. It is irresponsible, and has no bearing against a background of facts, though it may have bearing against facts as newspapers print them. We, however, are responsible people sent here by our electors to look after and be responsible to the people of Western Australia. To make suggestions such as those that have been made by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Nedlands is plain, straight irresponsibility.

It is irresponsible to suggest that since New South Wales has increased the rate of its rail fares and freights, we should not do the same. It is necessary that if New South Wales and Victoria increase their railway freights, we should make some step in the same direction because of the Grants Commission. If we do not, then we are directly reducing the amount of the grant we receive.

I am not suggesting it is essential that we follow them the whole way. But it is essential that if they make a step in that direction, we must make a similar step. The length of the step is something on which we can exercise some judgment and one which we can argue before the Grants Commission. But it is a matter on which we are not completely masters of our own destiny; and in that regard I would remind members that the wheat industry in this State is being directly subsidised by the railways, in that the amount that is allowed for freight in the production price of wheat on which the wheat farmers get their money, is greater than the rate of freight actually charged. It would not hurt our railways, therefore, to put up their rail freights to at least the amount the cockies are getting for it. That is only just.

But a direct subsidy to an industry that is well off is another matter. It was suitable when it was not well off. But now that the stage has been reached where it looks rather as though over-production is creeping in, it is quite wise to increase freight rates; firstly, to maintain our railways; and secondly, to indicate to those who are growing their wheat at costs somewhere near the margin that it might be wise for them to get into some particular type of production that is more economical for the land they have.

Mr. Perkins: Have you put this up to the Minister for Mines? It should be popular in his electorate.

Mr. JOHNSON: I think many members of the wheat-farming community would understand that if it were put forward to them. The facts and figures are available to them if they care to study them.

Mr. Perkins: I will organise a meeting of wheat growers for you if you like.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am not suggesting it would be 100 per cent. popular; no attack on a person's pocket is 100 per cent. popular.

Mr. Ackland: It is not 50 per cent. correct.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is not 50 per cent. correct, but 100 per cent. correct; and if the hon. member would like to check the figures in relation to the production price of wheat, he may do so.

Mr. Ackland: They are constantly under review; I watch them closely.

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member probably does watch them, but I do not think he understands them. The facts are as I have stated them. That was a bit of byplay.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Let us get back to the member for Nedlands.

Mr. JOHNSON: The member for Nedlands speaks with the authority of the people who put him in and the interests he represents. He is apparently regarded as a leader in that party. The member for Nedlands did suggest that it would be well to plan the economic cruising speed of the ship of State. He further indicated that he approved of planning the migration rate, of planning a wages policy, of planning Government works, and of planning Government defence expenditure.

Anyone would think that he was a socialist, except for the fact that he neglects to take any interest in planning the interest rate and profit rate. If he were concerned with planning those two items, he would have a far more balanced view. It is nice to realise that when they think they are in trouble, the mouthpieces of the Liberal Party can agree that planning is the way to get out of trouble. It is amusing to see how they wriggle when the mouthpiece of the Liberal Party, in the form of the member for Nedlands, says that the economic statement made by the Federal Leader of the party is a need for cash in the coffers.

The Federal Leader of the party said otherwise; and, in effect, that it was necessary to deal with the overseas balance, and not have cash in the coffers. On page 4 of the statement he said "there was every reason to suppose that the objective of balancing our external accounts by the middle of this year will be achieved." So we have a degree of wriggling here. We find the suggestion published in the Press while the Prime Minister is touring the world at the taxpayers' expense, that he will borrow money in the dollar market. The monthly summary of Australian conditions issued by the National Bank agrees that that is wrong, or rather it should be treated with a great deal of doubt. I refer to the July issue on page 3 dealing with the subject of overseas borrowing. It says—

We must recognise always that the interest has to be met and the capital repaid, thus imposing future burdens upon the balance of overseas payments. These burdens—especially real where, as in our case, overseas balances are subject to major changes of fortune—stress the need for careful restraint in

the matter of overseas borrowing Care needs to be exercised in the application of any such further governmental or short-term borrowings from overseas, so that excessive strain is not placed upon the balance of payments.

That is a fairly straightforward statement with which I find myself in general agreement. Yet it indicates that the Prime Minister, who during his panic session in March was concerned with the balance of payments, is doing the right thing in giving us further balance of payment troubles. It would appear that following the Liberal policy of lack of control, something termed in the Army as "the Jack system," he is trying to postpone the current trouble until after the next election.

The next matter I shall deal with is part of the speech of the member for Nedlands, part of that of the Leader of the Opposition, part of that of the Prime Minister, and part of the general discussion on our economic condition which has taken place in the Press and in conversation. That applies to the hire-purchase and discount firms which are causing some of the trouble under which we are suffering. The member for Nedlands says they have no part in it. The Leader of the Opposition skimmed over the matter. The Leader of the Federal Party had other things to say; and on page 11 of his statement, he said "under the circumstances now existing the trading banks have found that funds are being diverted from fixed deposit to finance expenditure on much higher short-term rates, on hire purchase and the like ventures."

On page 10, the statement says "under the circumstances of the market the central bank has until quite recently felt called upon to support bond prices by abnormal and in total huge purchases, and this again involved the outlay of many millions of money." Mr. Menzies was referring to the support that had been given by the Commonwealth Bank to the bond market. If anyone doubts where that money went, let him check the growth of funds made available to the hire-purchase industry.

For the benefit of Country Party members in particular, I relate a rather amusing story which I heard a few days ago about a farmer who was a client of a certain bank in a country town. Like many other farmers, he had a better return than he expected for the year. He reduced his overdraft limit; and instead of repaying the agreed £400, he reduced it by approximately £1,400. In the middle of his ploughing, his tractor went on him. Instead of trying to repair it, he decided to buy a new one. He went back to the bank and said, "Regarding the extra £1,000 I repaid on the overdraft limit, I have to buy a new tractor. How about it?"

The bank said, "We cannot advance you the £1,000 to buy a tractor. What the bank can do is to help you to buy a new

tractor through one of the hire-purchase agencies, of which we hold a 40 per cent. interest." They took him to the hire-purchase agency; but instead of paying the overdraft rate of interest of 5½ per cent. or possibly 5 per cent. for primary producers, he had to pay the hire-purchase rate of interest which is 10 per cent. or more.

The Minister for Justice: That would be a flat rate.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr. Hearman: Was it the Rural & Industries Bank?

Mr. JOHNSON: It was the National Bank, which holds 40 per cent. of the shares in Custom Credit.

The Minister for Transport: A summary along those lines appears on the front page of "The Farmers Weekly".

Mr. JOHNSON: The cost to that farmer for that tractor must have been at least £50 more. Of this extra cost some 40 per cent. went back to the bank with which he had been doing business. That is straight-out exploitation. It is completely irresponsible, but highly profitable. At the moment that firm is offering debentures at 7 per cent.

I have here a prospectus of an issue at par of £3,000,000, registered first mortgage debenture stock, to 7 per cent. per annum. The interest rates range from 3½ per cent., for three months, to 7 per cent. for five to 20 years. They also have an arrangement for fixed deposits which is of some interest because, although a person can take up registered debentures for three months, the firm will pay 3½ per cent. for money that is left with it on fixed deposit. There is ½ per cent. difference right up to the 12 months' terms.

This firm is owned, as to 40 per cent., by the National Bank. The National Bank's fixed deposit rate is 2½ per cent. for three months; 2½ per cent. for six months; 2½ per cent. for 12 months; and 3 per cent. for two years. The firm which it largely owns, and to which it is pushing its clients wherever possible, pays 5½ per cent. for two years; and the bank claims it is short of money to lend to its bona fide customers. It would appear to me to be greedy, shall I say.

Mr. Bovell: Is not that system to finance a totally different type of credit from normal banking practice?

Mr. JOHNSON: A little earlier I related an incident of a farmer who went to his bank to ask for an overdraft that he had previously had on the same security, and the bank shot him off to the hire-purchase firm with no thought for the customer, but only for the profit. It has been suggested that the hire-purchase firms have no effect upon the interest rate which is being charged for anything else. I suggest that anyone who has a few bob to invest should look at a number of things in relation thereto.

I have taken cuttings from today's paper, and there are advertisements under the heading "Money and Mortgages" for 10 per cent., 12½ per cent., and one which has been recurring for some time, for 12½ per cent., capital repayable in 7 to 90 days. There is an advertisement, on general lines, of another hire-purchase firm for money which is redeemable at 24 months' notice, at 10 per cent. Then we find "David Murray Holdings, interest 9 per cent. I.A.C. 6½ per cent. cumulative debenture stock. Doubles itself in 11 years; more than trebles itself in 18 years." Yet we find that firms who are doing important work such as the Star Bowkett Society which deals only with housing, are offering 5 per cent. What chance have such firms in the money market?

The reinvestment of the Commonwealth 3 per cent. and 3½ per cent. bonds which are due tomorrow is at 3½ per cent. for one year and 5 per cent. over seven years, or 20 years. The major advertisement that the Commonwealth has put forward in relation to the loan is not that it is a particularly good interest rate, but that if the investor has a big income, he can dodge taxation.

The advertisement shows that the yield, in real terms in relation to a man with an income of £10,000 a year, is 6.5 per cent.; whilst to the small man who has an income of only £500 a year, it is 5.6 per cent. That is buttering the fatted pig; and that is the level to which the Commonwealth Government has had to descend to try to get money for the development of Australia; whilst, at the same time these hire-purchase people are pressing forward for the milk-bar economy about which we were warned some years ago.

Mr. Hearman: Could the States or the Commonwealth deal with the hire-purchase question?

Mr. JOHNSON: That is a matter on which there is not complete agreement. The Prime Minister, in his statement in March, indicated that there was doubt as to the ability of the Commonwealth to deal with it. There is no doubt about the ability of the State to deal with an inside loan; but it is essential, if it is to be dealt with, that under the commerce power it should be dealt with so that control goes beyond the boundaries of one State.

Mr. Hearman: In other words, the States could deal with it if they got together.

Mr. JOHNSON: They could deal with it by complete agreement. Personally I think the Commonwealth could deal with it under the banking power; and certainly it could deal with it under the taxing power. I am not too sure that because of the economic emergency that is amongst us it might not be able to deal with it under the defence power; but I feel the Commonwealth should do something about it, because it is one of the major unbalancing factors of our economy.

Mr. Hearman: The States should have a crack at it as well.

Mr. JOHNSON: I was trying to point out that it was useless for one State to deal with it by itself. It can be done only if the legislation involves all the States. It will probably be one of the matters dealt with at the forthcoming conference; and because all State Premiers have indicated an interest in it, I feel sure that if there is any doubt about it the Commonwealth should deal with it by legislation, and enabling legislation to overcome the difficulty will be smartly put through all the State Parliaments.

But primarily it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth to deal with financial matters, and I think this question should be dealt with under the banking power. If this is not the issue of paper money, then there is a heck of a lot of paper being wasted. This has the same effect as the issue of pound notes, and I doubt whether anyone could find that this hire-purchase business is not the issuance of credit under the judgment of the High Court of England in relation to the Banking Act. There are some very interesting points there. I think the Commonwealth could deal with the matter; and I feel the reason why it does not is, not that it is not capable, but that it would lose its financial supporters.

Mr. Hearman: How would you deal with it? Would you try to wipe it out?

Mr. JOHNSON: No; I would not try and wipe it out because, like many another thing that is misused, it is a most useful tool, and it has a very real place in our economy. The first thing that it is necessary to do in relation to it is to reduce the excess profitability; that is, to take the excess pressure off the selling side. The next item could possibly be the insistence of a fairly high margin of deposit. There are several ways in which it could be done; but seeing it has to be carried out either by the Commonwealth, or in agreement with it, I am not going to lay down any hard-and-fast method. But one which I am certain of, is the necessity to reduce profitability.

I would mention in passing that the economic crisis with which we are dealing is by no means a sudden growth as it stems from a long way further back than March, or the previous September when the import restrictions were first brought in. It stems first from the defeat of the prices referendum when control over prices was wilfully jettisoned so that the profit-takers could get in and make the profits which they had been prevented from making during the war period.

The big profits that have been taken since then constitute an outrage upon Australia; not every profit but the big ones, some of which have been outrageous. That is the place to start first and the position there was followed by the diffidence about instituting a wool tax. I am not sure that a

wool tax was the ideal method, but it was discussed and eventually dodged. The crisis followed, also, from the throwing away of capital controls.

If we had retained those controls, even without holding on to any of the others, some of the troubles which we now have—particularly the growth of hire purchase—would have been restricted; and we might have seen instead more basic industries developed, and less of these milk-bar-economy industries coming to the surface.

I wish now to put forward two or three points that I think are of importance, and I invite anyone who takes an interest in things financial to study them and give an opinion on them. One of the first requirements for recovery from our present troubles is a change in the tax structure, and I would suggest removing indirect taxes as far as possible. Sales tax is one for which I have a great dislike, although it has some value in certain circumstances; and I would replace it by a violent increase in income tax at the top level; a review of wheat prices in a more realistic manner; and a more urgent striving for markets abroad for those products which we can export. I would like to see a realisation of the fact that the basis of the economy is the capital expenditure which the Government makes and not the capital expenditures of private industry.

The basis of our economy is the developmental work such as roads, railways, water supplies, telephone and other communications, together with similar items; and we are getting into strife economically because we have already outrun many of those capital expenditures, and it is necessary that there should be a heavy increase in taxation on the higher and unearned incomes to make a continuation of those expenditures possible.

The final point—one of great importance—is to change the Federal Government. Had it lived out its full life instead of dodging out 18 months earlier, because it knew a storm was coming, we would have been in the throes of a Federal election about now, and the result would have been vastly different from that which was obtained in a snap election on a fake issue. That is the final and most necessary change to help us out of our troubles.

Hon. D. Brand: Has Dr. Evatt any better ideas? He has not yet been able to convince anyone that he has.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is a matter upon which we will not agree. One of the most recent actions of the Federal Government; and one bound to destroy completely any idea the working people had that they could expect any degree of justice from the current Federal Government, was the extreme cynicism with which the man who passed through the objectionable legislation creating a new star chamber industrial court placed himself in charge of it.

That was the absolute depth of political cynicism, and it was an action designed to create trouble, even if it was done in sheer stupidity. In my view it was a straight-out request for trouble; and although the trouble may not come until that court tries to function, I say that anyone who respects a court created under those conditions is a most unusual person.

There is one other subject with which I wish to deal, and which the member for Nedlands did not deal with, although I think that as a responsible citizen of Western Australia he should have done so. I refer to the Western Australian products drive. We, in this State, have a great handicap in our distance from markets, and it adds to the charge on so many goods that have to be transported here. But it also acts as a form of protection to local industries, and gives them first cut at the market.

However, because of inefficiency in marketing methods or possibly monopolistic exploitation by Eastern States firms—or for a number of other reasons—Western Australian products are not as well received in this State as they should be. I made a short tour of some of the shops—and particularly the chain stores—in my area, the other day; and of the goods displayed in the windows of the chain stores, there were quite a number which, although I know they can be produced in Western Australia, were not produced here. There were jams imported from South Australia and Tasmania but no Western Australian jams showing. There was no Western Australian tomato sauce on show, although two of the shops were almost within sight of a tomato-sauce factory.

Mr. Hearman: Could we produce sufficient jam here?

Mr. JOHNSON: We could expand the production a lot closer to the requirements of the market than it is now. I do know that some of our Western Australian jams have been exported. The problem there is that the housewife does not automatically ask for it; the pressure to ask people to use Western Australian products is not strong enough.

The Minister for Transport: Do not you think there is some obligation on the shop assistants to try to encourage people to buy it?

Mr. JOHNSON: I was going further than that; I say that there is a very real responsibility on shop management.

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

Mr. JAMIESON: I move—

That the hon. member's time be extended.

Motion put and passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. JOHNSON: I will not delay the House for any length of time, but I thank members for granting me an extension. I think that the responsibility rests much more upon the shop proprietor to press for the sale of Western Australian products; because whenever he causes to be sold an imported item that could be replaced by one produced in Western Australia, he is tending to reduce the income of his own customers. That is putting it at a pure self-interest level. As a matter of Western Australian thought, he should do it for the good of the country; but as a shopkeeper, he should do it for the good of his own pocket, because an unemployed customer does not spend much in anybody's shop.

If the management of our Western Australian shops, as a group, cannot do it in their own interests, someone should do something about banging them in the pocket, because that is the only place where they will feel it. It does not seem to be any good talking to these people. It looks as though one must practically take a policeman along and make them rub their noses in it, because this self-evident fact is a matter of f.s.d. If they do not sell the products of the district, how will the people in the district maintain their employment and buy anything in the shops?

It struck me as being so simple that why the deuce they do not do it at all times is beyond me! But I presume it is more important to have a low score on the golf course, or something like that, than it is to be intelligent, even about their own businesses. So I ask anyone who is in touch with these gentlemen to point out to them that it is in their own interests; and even if they are not Western Australians, it is in the interests of the business with which they are connected to look after Western Australians and to push Western Australian products.

There is little that Western Australia cannot produce as well and as cheaply as the Eastern States. There is some fault in relation to the publicity and salesmanship, but the product itself is the equal of products manufactured in the Eastern States. If the defects of public relations and advertising of Western Australian manufactures do happen to militate against them, surely it is in the interests of the people selling them in their shops to do something about overcoming that defect! I just want to leave that thought in members' minds and to appeal for a much greater use of Western Australian products and for a much more intelligent interest to be taken in the subject, particularly by those who distribute these products through their own businesses.

On motion by Mr. Hearman, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.45 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 15th August, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

COKE.

Sources of Supply.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the large number of coke stoves in use today, particularly in country areas, can the Minister advise—

(1) Why the State Electricity Commission has discontinued selling coke to clients?

(2) What other sources of supply of coke are available?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The sale of coke has not been discontinued, but the demand is greater than the supply.

(2) The Fremantle Gas and Coke Co. also produces household coke.

RAILWAYS.

(a) Refreshment Rooms.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) How many refreshment rooms has the Railway Department now operating?

(2) How many have been closed since the 30th June, 1955—

(a) for what reason were they closed;

(b) what number of employees was engaged in the premises closed;

(c) were these employees absorbed into other employment within the department; and if not, what became of them?

(3) Is it the intention to close other refreshment rooms during the current financial year; and if so, could the Minister indicate the number affected?