

I have spoken before in this House on the comments made by the Director General of the International Food Organisation, Sir John Boyd Orr, wherein he has stated, after perusing many more figures and facts than any of us can possibly hope to see, that the world is entering into a most difficult food supply position. We know from figures recently quoted that actually the nutritional standards of the Asiatic peoples have fallen, I think, some 6 per cent. since before the recent war. In the past when food supplies became difficult the traditional remedy was to open up new food-producing areas throughout the world. However, there are now no new food-producing areas to open up, and the only remedy to feed an ever-increasing world population properly is to make better use of existing areas which are already being farmed.

In Western Australia we have the same responsibilities as other people in the rest of the world and, if we do not take heed of the problem I have been discussing here tonight—the extension of salt encroachment, particularly in our wheat areas—then we shall not be living up to our responsibility. Actually what has happened over the years has been that some of the best agricultural land in Western Australia has been lost due to salt encroachment. I hope that even before the report is available from this officer from the Eastern States, the Government will realise the seriousness of the position and at least start some preliminary work, because I feel that if this officer has the experience he is reported to have, his report will be extremely alarming. From the individual producer's point of view it is a serious matter and it is therefore necessary to take some action to safeguard our own economy. The wider aspect of doing our duty and the feeding of expanding world population is one that we must not lose sight of, and it is the practical way in which we can do our share towards maintaining food supplies in the world.

On motion by Mr. Hoar, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.9 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 6th September, 1950.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Question : Fremantle Harbour congestion, as to diversion of shipping to Albany	573
Motions : Health Act, to disallow biograph box regulations	572
Soil Conservation Act, to disallow clearing regulation	576
Address-in-reply, eleventh day	578

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

QUESTION.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR CONGESTION.

As to Diversion of Shipping to Albany.

Hon. J. M. THOMSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) In view of the shipping congestion at the Port of Fremantle, will the Government discuss with ship owners a proposal that ships be diverted to Albany unloading direct into rail trucks at the wharf, thus enabling a quicker delivery of goods?

(2) If this proposal were agreed to, would the Government make a special port-to-port rail freight available?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The matter of diverting ships now calling at Fremantle for the purpose of relieving a congestion at that port has been discussed with ship owners. The possible use of Albany and its available facilities has been considered together with other outports. From the ship owners' point of view the difficulties of diverting Fremantle ships to outports including Albany, are unsurmountable.

(2) Uniform rates apply over the whole of the Government railway system.

MOTION—HEALTH ACT.

To Disallow Biograph Box Regulations.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [4.35]: I move—

That the whole of new Part III of the Public Building Regulations, made pursuant to Section 178 of the Health Act, 1911-1948, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 23rd September, 1949, and laid on the Table of the House on the 29th September, 1949, be and are hereby disallowed.

I would point out that these regulations are not on the Table of the House at present. They were laid on the Table on the evening before the House adjourned last session, so it is quite feasible that members will not have had an opportunity of knowing exactly what they contain. Most of the regulations deal with structural

alterations of buildings that are usually devoted to the purpose of displaying animated pictures. They are displacing regulations that seem to me to have served a very useful purpose and in my opinion should be allowed to continue to serve that purpose.

Under the old regulations provision was made that alteration need not be effected to buildings in existence but should apply to new structures. It is true that since those regulations were introduced in 1933 there have not been very many picture houses erected throughout the State. There have been some, and they are modern buildings that I think we can be proud of architecturally, and the conveniences for the public are excellent. That is the main thing in the regulations. There are one or two other points which have been discussed before, namely the necessity for registered operators and safe biograph boxes. This House in the past has dealt with that side of it very freely and very understandingly. I think the idea behind the Chief Secretary's Department, which received its advice from the architectural branch of the Public Works Department and which controls these bylaws, has been to avoid any risk from fire.

It seems to me, however, that at the moment it is very inopportune to force people to make structural alterations to buildings that over the years have served their purpose exceedingly well and where there has been no instance of which I am aware of any outbreak of fire. As I go through the regulations and explain my view, I hope the Chamber will agree that it is not opportune at the present time to insist that these regulations be given effect to. Every bit of building material we can get hold of is either required for housing or for amenities because of the increased population we are carrying in this State as the result of immigration. I do not think we should go out of our way to ask people in isolated areas, such as in the country districts to make these extensive alterations. That would be a waste of building material which we should conserve in every way possible for the construction of homes.

I shall go through the regulations because members will not have had an opportunity to know exactly what they contain. Under the regulations of 1933, provision was made that they should apply only to new buildings. No. 3 of the new regulations proposes—

Biograph boxes shall be constructed in accordance with the following specifications:—

So alterations will have to be made in all theatres that do not comply with these regulations. Copies of the regulations, I may point out, are not available at the Government Printing Office. I endeavoured to get a copy, but I owe it to the courtesy of the Chief Secretary's Department that

I was able to get a mimeograph copy for use here. When regulations are framed and gazetted, only a limited number of people see them.

I presume the Government would say that it is the function of a builder to keep himself acquainted with any alterations made by the law or by regulations under the law, but it is a very difficult matter to wade through the "Gazettes," and those are the only publications in which they are printed, and a perusal of them is the only opportunity the public has of getting a knowledge of what is required. The man who directed my attention to this matter had paid £300 to an architect to design a new picture palace in the metropolitan area. When he submitted the plan for approval, it was found that these new regulations had come into existence and, as his design did not comply with them, considerable alterations were necessary to bring the design up to requirements. That seems very unfair.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Was not the architect to blame?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: He was not aware that the regulations had been gazetted. "Hansard" contains a list of the papers that are tabled, but these regulations were laid on the Table only on the final day of the last session and members, after the all-night sitting, were probably too tired to go through them on the following day.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is the duty of a member to keep himself up to date in those things.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is so but I am afraid that not many members read the "Government Gazette" from one end to the other. Regulations are published in only one issue of the "Gazette" and, if one misses them, it is just bad luck. The new regulation No. 3 states—

Biograph boxes shall be constructed in accordance with the following specifications:—

(a) In buildings of brick, concrete, stone or similar construction, the biograph box walls shall be of brick, concrete, stone or other similar approved fire-resisting material, and the ceiling shall be of reinforced concrete. The floor shall be of concrete and shall be reinforced or otherwise supported and strengthened to the Commissioner's approval. The window frame and sash frame for such box shall be of steel.

Under the old regulations, a wooden-frame window could be used, but all those windows will now have to be taken out and steel frames substituted. What struck me forcibly was that, if the building is constructed of wood instead of brick, asbestos sheeting might be used, but people who have an asbestos ceiling to their biograph boxes will have to pull it down and

substitute concrete. Anyone with a knowledge of building would know that if this were done, the walls would have to be reinforced. The floor would also have to be pulled out and a concrete floor substituted. The flooring is generally covered with fire-proof material, and there has not been any instance that I have heard of where a fire has caused any damage. The time is inopportune to insist upon alterations of this sort being made. The regulation continues—

(b) In public buildings of timber-framed construction, or constructed of other non fire-resisting material, the biograph box may be of timber-framed construction, provided that the walls and ceilings are lined internally with asbestos sheeting of not less than 3/16th in. in thickness. The floor, if of wood, shall be protected by two layers of asbestos sheeting not less than 3/16th in. in thickness, cemented together. Otherwise, the floor shall be of concrete to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Public Health. The window frame of such biograph box may be of wooden construction, but no other woodwork, other than sashes and sills, is to be exposed within the biograph box.

This shows that the department is insisting upon alterations to brick buildings and yet is prescribing quite a different structure if the hall is built of wood.

(c) The biograph box shall have an internal height of not less than 8 feet and a floor space and horizontal sectional area according to the number of picture projecting machines accommodated therein, as follows:—

No. of Machines.	Minimum Width.	Minimum Depth.
1	6 ft.	8 ft.
2	12 ft.	8 ft.
3	17 ft.	8 ft.

This means that of all these places, very few comply with these requirements and therefore will have to be reconstructed to meet the new conditions.

An additional 3 ft. shall be added to the above width for every stereopticon. For every additional projecting machine an additional 5 ft. shall be added to the width.

The depth of the box to be measured in the direction of the screen.

This again means that most of them will have to be reconstructed. When the regulations were introduced in 1933, the department did not insist upon the buildings being of this standard.

(d) Every biograph box shall be provided with at least one exit situated towards the rear of the biograph box away from the projecting machines and shall not open into the

auditorium unless provision is made for an entrance lobby with two doors between the auditorium and projection room.

Nearly every one of these boxes opens on to the auditorium and consequently alterations will be necessary there. I do not propose to deal with all these matters because some are already covered by the Act and the previous regulations. Here is a rather interesting provision in Regulation No. 4—

4. All picture theatres where three or less picture entertainments are conducted per week and which are not provided with mechanical or mechanically assisted ventilation, shall have at least one external wall to the biograph box, the complete outer surface of which shall be in contact with the outer atmosphere. In the external wall or walls, at a level not more than 2½ in. above the biograph box floor, a fresh air opening or openings, aggregating the following net clear area of opening shall be formed.

That is to provide for ventilation in the box, but it will entail complete reconstruction of a box on that account. However, as the box would have to be pulled down for other reasons, this arrangement could be included when the reconstruction took place.

Such opening or openings shall be connected by the shortest or most direct course with the external atmosphere by means of properly graded flues formed of galvanised iron or other approved incombustible material. The external face of each flue shall be fitted with a shield or wind baffles, and the internal face shall be fitted with suitable wire mesh and an adjustable damper.

All these things have to be done just because somebody has suddenly found that the ventilation is not what it ought to be. The present ventilation in all biograph boxes is almost as good as in any other building. The regulations number only seven altogether, but they are broken up into paragraphs, each of which deals with a different matter. We cannot disallow just some of the paragraphs, so I have to ask for the disallowance of the lot. Regulation 7 provides—

All picture theatres where more than three picture entertainments are conducted in one week shall be provided with—

(a) sufficient and separate sanitary accommodation for each sex of artists and staff of the theatre and where sewerage or bacteriolytic treatment system is available, a water closet situated in close proximity to the biograph box and

easily accessible to the biograph operators. Such sanitary accommodation shall be separate from that provided for the public.

If three pictures a week are shown, additional sanitary accommodation does not have to be provided, but if there are four, and there is a female assistant on the door and a male in the bio box, there must be two sanitary conveniences and, in addition, another pretty close to the bio box. In such theatres I should say the longest period the employees would be on service would be three hours. The girls generally come dressed for their work and they go straight home when they finish. In places where pictures are held only a few times a week, they are usually conducted in the evening. The regulation continues—

- (b) Washing facilities for the biograph operating staff consisting of a wash basin or a sink connected to a water supply system.
- (c) Separate cloak and change rooms for each sex of staff and artists comprising not less than 12 sq. ft. of floor area for each person, such floor area to be exclusive of space occupied by lockers, cupboards, benches, shower recesses or other appurtenances. Cloak and change rooms to be lighted and ventilated to the approval of the Commissioner of Public Health.

If the normal sanitary conveniences are at the back of the hall, then pipes have to be run to the bio box which is generally at the other end, and that means unnecessary expense. For that reason we should not allow effect to be given to these regulations. Very careful provision is made, too, for ventilation, and I have already read a good deal about that regulation, but Regulation 9, paragraphs (b), (c) and (d), deals exclusively with ventilation beyond what is already provided. Regulation 10 states—

During the whole of the time that the projector machine is in operation the licensed operator shall be provided with an efficient assistant operator who will be responsible during the temporary absence of the licensed operator.

That is done today, so that there are always two operators in the bio box. The regulation continues—

During the whole of the time that the projector machines are operating there shall not be more than three persons in the biograph box. The projection machines shall be con-

stantly attended from within the bio box by a licensed operator during the exhibition of film.

Dealing with the licensed operator, in the latter part of last session this House disallowed certain regulations because of the type of examination provided for them. This seems to me to be a backhand sort of method of insisting upon what we rejected last session. I would point out that in New South Wales, where there are 10 picture theatres for every one in Western Australia, the operators do not have to be registered. After all, it is not a question of examination papers, but of practical knowledge and the care that is given by these men, that counts. Therefore to insist upon their being registered or licensed, and having to pass some sort of examination—I read the paper here last year—seems to me to be quite unreasonable.

I agree that wherever there is a danger of fire the greatest precautions must be taken, but I point out that in the old days the films were very inflammable and, of course, many of them are still being used. Those films were known as nitrate films, and they would burn if a glowing cigarette was placed against them; and having once got alight they were very difficult to extinguish inasmuch as even dipping them in water would not put them out because they provided their own oxygen. They could not be smothered. Usually if they caught alight in the box the lid was closed and they were allowed to burn themselves out. The new films, instead of using nitrate, use acetate which reduces their inflammability to that of paper. All 16 mm. films used today are made of this material, and a change from the 35 mm. is taking place as rapidly as possible.

Here I have an advertisement showing the methods of using these new films, which will be adopted by the picture people as soon as they can possibly purchase them because of the great reduction in insurance on the films. I pointed out to the House on the last occasion I raised the question of the disallowance of such regulations, that the responsibility did not rest only on the people using the films. They rent the films and the firms who own them—those who issue the films to the various operators—are very careful to see that the machines and the bio boxes are up to date.

Hon. H. Tuckey: They have an inspector who sees to that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The inspector goes around not less frequently than once a year. Of course, the films are extremely valuable. The cost of making a film sometimes runs into many hundreds of thousands of pounds. Therefore the owners are most careful to see that the films are protected in every way

possible. They are particularly careful, because of the inflammability of the film and the possibility of its destruction in other ways, to see that their interests are preserved. Thus there is every care in that respect and that is the reason why we very seldom hear of a fire in a picture theatre. However, it is a very strange thing that when these fires have occurred it has generally been a licensed operator who has had the misfortune to be in the box. After all, any accident can happen with any person; sometimes accidents are unavoidable and sometimes they are not.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is just as well that a licensed man was in the box when the fire started.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It might have happened with an unlicensed man too. I am one of those people who believe in fatalism so I think that it would have happened anyhow and it would not matter who was there. It does not mean that because a man is a licensed operator he can prevent a fire taking place. There is no doubt that these people are harassed more in this State than in any other State in Australia.

I cannot do more than point out to this Chamber what an utter waste of material it will be if these regulations are allowed to stand, because at present we are conserving all possible material to overcome the housing shortage and provide for other buildings that are necessary for the amenities of the people, and the increasing population of the State. Therefore, I hope that the House will disallow these regulations. If my motion is agreed to it will not mean that we have not any regulations in existence. The old regulations that have existed since 1933—and a very good set of regulations it is, too—will come into force again. Architects and builders know those regulations and find no difficulty in carrying them into effect.

Hon. H. Hearn: Do you know what the examinations will be for the licensed operators? Will they be the same as we rejected?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is so.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do not be led off the track.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is exactly what has happened. These are building regulations and have nothing to do with the operators. The Chief Secretary's Department has the licensing of these buildings only for a special purpose and the department uses the Public Works Architect's Branch for advice. The State Electricity Commission controls the other side, so we have a sort of dual control in regulations of this sort. I hope that I have made myself clear enough and have given members an intelligent idea of these regulations. I trust that the House will disallow them because if they

are disallowed it will be in the interests of people who are waiting for building materials. At least we can do without regulations of this nature until we have overcome the shortage of houses.

Hon. G. Fraser: Your only objection is the use of materials.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: And the additional expense.

On motion by Hon. H. Tuckey, debate adjourned.

MOTION—SOIL CONSERVATION ACT.

To Disallow Clearing Regulation.

Debate resumed from the 23rd August on the following motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter:—

That Regulation No. 3 made under the provisions of Section 22 of the Soil Conservation Act, 1945, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 14th July, 1950, and laid on the Table of House on the 1st August, 1950, be and is hereby disallowed.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.4]:

I am sorry that Mr. Baxter is not here as I intended to ask him to withdraw this motion because I give the House an undertaking that this regulation will be withdrawn and a new one framed. There is a lot in what Mr. Baxter says and as he is not in his seat, I would tell members that I have no objection to the House disallowing the regulation because there is something wrong with it. The people who framed the regulation had the right intentions but I must admit that I missed the point.

The objection which Mr. Baxter has raised is to the word "improvements." I think it was definitely intended, although I will admit that it is not clear, that the improvements would be on the two acres used for domestic purposes. Actually, the regulation does not say that. It says—

improvements on any land in such conservation district.

That is where the mistake occurs. I appreciate Mr. Baxter drawing my attention to this matter but I would remind members that it is almost impossible to avoid missing some of these things because there are so many regulations tabled. Sir Charles Latham mentioned last night the fact that Ministers let these things go through. It is impossible not to miss some of them. The intention was perfectly clear as far as the framers were concerned, but as Mr. Baxter has rightly pointed out it does leave an opening, and in the new regulation I intend to take out the words after "domestic use." That will mean taking out the words "or improvements on any land in such conservation district." That, of course, will mean that the regulation will be tougher and harder but I have no objection to it.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It will not hold up the development of land, will it?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, it applies only to two acres of land which are to be used for domestic purposes.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I thought it applied to all farm land.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is how it reads now but I do not think it was ever intended that way. It says—

Provided that this regulation shall not apply to the clearing of areas of two acres or less for other than agricultural or pastoral purposes.

However, I have no objection to the disallowance of this regulation, which, at the moment, is being re-drafted by the Crown Law Department.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.7]: It is rather unusual that on two days running I should raise the same objection, but I am becoming rather worried about this sort of thing.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Have a look at your own regulations.

Hon. G. FRASER: When regulations are gazetted I realise that there must be some good reason for them and that they have been framed by people who should know their business. I always think seriously before I vote for a motion for disallowance. I take the view that when the experts in the departments draw up regulations, they do so for a particular purpose; either the protection of the public, the protection of the Government or to improve whatever may be appertaining to the regulations. That being so I give serious consideration and generally give way to those who have more experience in that particular line.

If I vote for the disallowance of a regulation I do so only after convincing argument has been put up by those who desire the disallowance. Yet, for two days running we find members moving motions for the disallowance of regulations and the Ministers getting up and saying that they are going to withdraw the regulations concerned. Can anyone have any faith in any regulation if that is going to be the attitude? I have lost all faith, although I like to vote for those who put up a fight and are endeavouring to improve conditions in the State. It looks as though instead of doing things by regulation, we shall have to resort to the unwieldy method of covering everything in the respective Acts. I am sure nobody wants to do that.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why not?

Hon. G. FRASER: Many Acts are hard enough to follow now but if we included in those measures everything we wanted to cover, they would be unwieldy and no-one

would understand them. The framing of legislation, as we do it, giving certain powers to competent bodies to draw up regulations covering particular phases, has always appealed to me as being the better method. On two days running similar motions have been moved, and now we have a third motion seeking to disallow certain other regulations. I do not know how the motion will fare; I may vote for it and I may not.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: It is a good man who can admit a mistake.

Hon. G. FRASER: This motion may complete the hat trick. However, my point is that the Honorary Minister has now undermined my confidence in the officials of the State who draw up these regulations. It is a bad thing when any member reaches the stage where he loses confidence in the people who are drawing the salaries to do particular jobs. Therefore, I hope the Government will give further consideration to that aspect of the matter. It might be the means of making Ministers more careful in accepting regulations before those regulations are gazetted. I think I can be pardoned for taking that attitude because it appears to me that the particular Minister in each case must have been exceedingly lax. I repeat that is a bad thing when a member loses confidence in the departments handling these matters.

The Minister for Transport: The regulations disallowed yesterday were disallowed with the knowledge and consent, and at the request, of those who originally framed them.

Hon. G. FRASER: That makes the position worse.

The Minister for Transport: Not at all. They found, by actual practice, that the regulations were not workable.

Hon. G. FRASER: I should think they would find those things out before putting the regulations into force. That is the point I am quarrelling about.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Evidently the point they wanted was not covered.

Hon. G. FRASER: The point I am concerned with is that the regulations were gazetted before they were fully considered. It looks to me as though we have reached the stage where we are turning out regulations the same as sausages.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Nonsense!

Hon. G. FRASER: It does not appear to matter to the persons concerned whether the regulations are O.K. or not.

Hon. L. Craig: Some of them have the same amount of meat in them as sausages.

Hon. G. FRASER: This should be a warning to the Government and I trust that it will give serious consideration to the aspects I have mentioned and that the

Ministers concerned will pay more attention to the regulations before they are gazetted. I hope we shall not have a similar spectacle during the rest of this Parliament where immediately a move is made to disallow a regulation, the Minister agrees to a withdrawal.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood) [5.13]: There are one or two aspects to which I wish to reply. If a Minister, after consultation with one of his principal officers—

The **PRESIDENT**: I draw the Honorary Minister's attention to the fact that he has already spoken to the motion.

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: Have I not the right of reply?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You have already spoken. It is not your motion.

The **PRESIDENT**: The Honorary Minister has already spoken to the motion and therefore cannot speak again, unless by way of a personal explanation.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eleventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.14]: In addressing myself to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, I desire, at the outset, to congratulate Mr. Simpson on being elevated to Cabinet rank. We trust—as far as political affairs will allow us so to do—that he will have a happy time in the office that he holds. I, too, desire to be associated with other members who have already addressed themselves to this House, in extending a welcome to the new members. The contributions they have made since they came into this House have shown at least that they are conversant with the policy on which they have been elected. I feel sure that they will apply themselves to their many tasks and serve those who sent them here.

It is a matter for regret that this, the first session of the twentieth Parliament, should be opened under the cloud of war. I feel sure that each and every one of us associated with the affairs of State, trusts that, by some means or other, the present war, if I may describe it as such, shall not be permitted to extend beyond Korea. When we consider the situation, we are forced to wonder whether or not something has not gone wrong with humanity. World War I was, people told us at the time, a war to end war. Following upon the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations was established in an endeavour to police the nations of the world and to settle international difficulties without recourse to

war. Unfortunately, by 1939, that move was shown to have failed, and eventually there developed the second World War.

Since the later hostilities ceased, another body, known as the United Nations Organisation, to which the democracies of the world have subscribed, was inaugurated with the object of devising ways and means whereby differences between nations could be settled diplomatically, without resorting to hostilities. The trend today in the international sphere is not, however, what we would desire. To me, the present state of affairs appears awful. It is ghastly to think that by 1950 the conditions throughout the democratic world are such as to compel the United Kingdom, which 10 years before had stood alone in the fight for democracy, to spend, in the interests of self-preservation, one-eighth of the national income for defence purposes. We trust that ways and means will be evolved so that the hostilities in Korea will not be extended beyond the present limits. I trust that a peaceful solution will, before long, be found of the problems involved.

In perusing the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, which he delivered in this Chamber on the opening day of the current session, I notice that there are a few matters to which I would like to allude. First of all, there is the reference to provision that is being made for the rehabilitation of the State railways. We all realise the necessity for a system of transport such as the Government railways being brought up to a reasonable standard of efficiency. I realise that the railways represent the principal means by which the development of the State has been accomplished, and that it represents the main artery for commerce in Western Australia. Due to the effects of war, the system was allowed to drift into a condition that was not in the best interests of those associated with it or of the people generally. The present Government is endeavouring, as did its predecessors in office, to procure new rollingstock. New locomotives were purchased by the Labor Government. They are known as the Garratt type, and were responsible for a certain industrial upheaval in the Railway Department. Now the present Government has purchased 35 "PM" locomotives which, in turn, are not considered suitable, the reason being, I understand, that they are not permitted to be attached to passenger trains because of the high speed necessary which, in turn, has a detrimental effect on the permanent way over which the locomotives run.

When we have our experts in engine construction sent to England to supervise the building of the locomotives on order, there is something wrong somewhere when, after those engines are imported, they are found to be unsuitable for the purposes for which they are required. I trust that the Minister for Transport, under whose ministerial control the railways come, will

take it upon himself to advise the House what it is proposed to do to make those engines suitable for use in connection with passenger trains. I understand it is also proposed to purchase another 60 "W" class engines which, I believe, are of the low-wheel type suitable for the haulage of goods. Whatever the purpose may be for which the engines are being procured, I trust they will be found more suitable than has been our experience hitherto with imported rollingstock, and that they will not cause inconvenience to the department and the travelling public.

There is also some proposition respecting the introduction of certain diesel engines. I believe that form of transport is essential in certain districts, particularly on country spur lines that are non-paying propositions. By using diesel coaches over those sections, I believe it will be possible to run faster trains and provide cheaper service. In my opinion, something similar is necessary on the suburban lines in the metropolitan area. The present method in that branch is for one locomotive to haul a set of coaches over the system from Fremantle right through to Bellevue and to Armadale. In many instances, the coaches are not used to full carrying capacity, and it seems a waste of money and engine power to haul heavy trains through the metropolitan area during the daytime. I consider it would be better if, during the off-peak period at any rate, diesel electric cars were run over the suburban lines more frequently, with stops between stations. With the introduction of the new system of issuing tickets, I feel sure such a service in the metropolitan area would be found much more convenient than the present arrangement.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It would be worth trying it out.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: There is another point. It seems to me that the administration of the railways is sometimes not as beneficial to the public as it should be. I have in mind the fact that the department does not go after a certain volume of traffic to which it is entitled. Those associated with business interests at Fremantle deprecate the fact that, when passenger ships arrive at the port, people are met and taken direct to the metropolitan area. From the local point of view, they think that passengers arriving there should at least have an opportunity of seeing Fremantle first. We would all agree with that, but unfortunately the Metro Bus Company usually has a number of buses stationed in Edward-street alongside the overhead bridge, which is immediately opposite "G" and "H" sheds, where the passenger ships tie up. People walk across the bridge and travel to Perth direct by the buses.

In view of the fact that the railway lines run right along Victoria Quay, I think the department should provide trains direct

from the ship's side to the metropolitan area, by which means it could secure a certain amount of revenue that is at present diverted to another means of transport. This matter should receive consideration because a large amount of the taxpayers' money is invested in the Government railways which, over the years have assisted in developing the State. Unfortunately, due to the effect of war conditions and the shortage of rollingstock and locomotives, the department has not been able to cater for the traffic offering. In this instance, I see no reason why the passenger traffic from the ships, with the exercise of a little business acumen, should not be retained by the department.

Turning now to harbour extensions, I have no intention of setting myself up as one capable of criticising the scheme submitted by Colonel Tydeman. That scheme has been placed before the Government in two sections, one referring to upriver development and the other to an outer harbour. Without endeavouring to offer suggestions that could be regarded in the light of criticism, there are some points we who are interested in the matter feel we should make. Colonel Tydeman, in my opinion, is a very eminent engineer. He is a gentleman I hold in the highest esteem. I have been particularly struck by his courtesy. It is not usual to find in a person possessed of such knowledge and expert capacity a willingness to get down from his pedestal and discuss an engineering proposition with laymen in laymen's language. On the few occasions I have had the pleasure of meeting Colonel Tydeman, he has always been prepared to come down off his engineering pinnacle, discuss the scheme, listen to criticism and explain matters in language that any layman could understand.

I want it distinctly understood that I am in no way endeavouring to set myself up as an authority or as one competent to criticise the scheme proposed by Colonel Tydeman. As I say, his scheme has been advanced in two parts. It is the democratic right of those elected in a democratic way to represent their constituents in Parliament, to express the opinions of people from various points of view. Some of us are of the opinion that the outer harbour portion of the scheme should be the first to be put in hand. I am under the impression that the 18th berths which are available at present in the harbour and which it is conceded are capable of dealing with a 5 per cent. increase in shipping, would be able to carry on the work of the port for the next 20 years. That being so, there does not appear to be any need for great hurry about putting in hand the upriver extension of the harbour. This is one aspect on which some members representing Fremantle districts disagree with the report as presented to Parliament, and as accepted by the Government.

The main point about which I wish to say something is the fact that it becomes necessary to remove the railway bridge, which we understand has almost reached the limit of its usefulness and will not be safe for any great length of time. It is necessary that it should be rebuilt. We feel that instead of taking the railway bridge and the traffic bridge to Point Brown it should be possible to replan them so that they will come in off North Fremantle without going so far as Point Brown. By doing that it would not be necessary to take the proposed line across Stirling Highway at Leighton and the highest part of North Fremantle and across the new high level bridge at Point Brown to East Fremantle.

I was wondering what would have happened if the original proposal to build a concrete-and-steel bridge had been given effect to in the early part of the present decade. I understand that was the proposition, but it was decided that the present traffic bridge should be erected at a cost equivalent to two years' interest on the concrete-and-steel bridge. One wonders what would have happened if the concrete-and-steel bridge had been built to replace the one in existence. Had that been done, would it have been the Government's policy to demolish it and build another bridge as far upstream as Point Brown?

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: We would have been committed to an outer harbour scheme.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I think that is so. If this bridge is to be removed to Point Brown it will mean the resumption of quite a lot of private property, not only at North Fremantle but also on the Fremantle side of the river. It has been said that the provision of an up-river scheme would be less costly than an outer harbour, but that has not always been conceded. I do not know that it is possible to ascertain the cost because no-one knows the actual amount of private property that would have to be resumed; and until we are aware of that, we cannot tell what the cost of resumption would be. It was pointed out by Mr. Fraser, when he was speaking in the debate on the Supply Bill, that quite a lot of improvements were being made in North Fremantle, such as the installation of sewerage and gas. Again, only recently, in reply to a question I asked in this House, we were informed that, in connection with an improvement of the water supply in Fremantle, a large main was to be brought down from Swanbourne.

Hon. G. Fraser: Why Swanbourne?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I do not know. But if that is done it will have to cross the river. I have been told that it will be laid in 1952, but I feel sure that the new bridge will not be built by then and I am therefore endeavouring to ascertain actually where that line will cross the river.

If these various projects cross the river on the existing bridges, will the pipe lines, which will be a charge on the community, be installed and then be regarded as waste after the new bridges have been built? I think a start should be made on the outer harbour and the railway bridge re-planned and rebuilt so that it would not, to any great extent, affect the highest part of North Fremantle.

There is another aspect. I understood, when I listened to a lecture by Mr. Tydeman, that it is within engineering possibility for the harbour to be extended right up to Perth. I feel that we should try to protect the interests of posterity. If we allow an extension of the harbour up-river to Point Brown, there is no certainty that at some future date it will not be decided to take the harbour further up the river. I believe that the high parts of the Swan River, and also the ocean, are a heritage of the people; and I deprecate the fact that industries such as the State Engineering Works, the superphosphate works and the sugar works have been allowed to establish themselves on the elevated part of North Fremantle, with river and ocean views. To my mind those particular sites are a heritage of the people and should have been retained for the people.

What would have happened if we had not had men of strong character in office in the early days of the State? I appreciate their statesmanship and their courage in retaining for the benefit of the people Mt. Eliza, now known as King's Park. Quite a lot of pressure must have been exerted in various quarters to have that part of the river alienated, but the people to whom I have referred looked far enough ahead to prevent that particular spot from being utilised by private interests. If the extension of the harbour is permitted to proceed up-river, then within the next decade or the next quarter of a century somebody will decide that it shall be taken further still towards Perth.

The Swan River is a heritage of which we are proud and we should not allow it to be used as a harbour, particularly in view of the fact that it is possible, according to the report of Mr. Tydeman, to construct an outer harbour. The existing facilities are said to be capable of dealing with a 5 per cent. increase in shipping, which has been the average for the past 20 years. In the meantime a start could be made with the outer harbour project and the bridges would not have to be removed for the time being, with the exception of the railway bridge, the removal of which is absolutely necessary. When I first came into this House I asked whether Mr. Tydeman had been authorised to inquire into the provision of a dock at Fremantle and, if not, whether he would be asked to do so. The reply was that he had not been but that he would be asked. I am very pleased to know that he has done some extensive research into this

question of docks and has made a fine contribution to the subject in his report, which is a guide to the Government and anybody else interested in the question.

There is only one point about which I am a little concerned. I quite agree with Mr. Tydeman that it will be necessary to provide a good deal of finance to establish such a dock and also to maintain it if it should be built in Fremantle. Mr. Tydeman has suggested that not much shipping coming into Fremantle would require to use the dock; but if such a dock were built in the Fremantle harbour he considers it should be a graving dock and not a floating dock. He has given the dimensions of the ships that trade in this port and of the dock that would be necessary to accommodate them and points out that it would not be a payable proposition. I find that I have to agree with him. On the other hand, I feel that the provision of a dock at Fremantle is a national question and one that should be pursued by this Government in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government. Ways and means should be found to establish such a dock on the western coast of this continent.

On inquiry I have ascertained that the nearest docks to Fremantle are at Batavia and Sourabaya, which are 1,800 miles away; Melbourne, 1,900 miles; Singapore and Sydney, 2,500 miles; and Brisbane, 2,900 miles. They are the nearest docks to the western coast of this continent and I consider that the western side of Australia is as important as the eastern. There are docks at Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane; and although I am not in a position to know, I think I am safe in saying that the Commonwealth Government made available some of the finance needed for the establishment of those docks. It is necessary in the interests of the western portion of the continent to build a dock here. That might lead to a section of the Australian fleet being stationed in the vicinity of Fremantle, which, in view of the present trend of world affairs, would be a very wise move. In addition, the dock would be available to such private ships as desired to make use of it. With the aid of a subsidy from the Commonwealth Government it should be possible to establish such a dock. I do not know that the matter should be looked at entirely from the point of view of pounds, shillings and pence. Mr. Tydeman has not definitely recommended that the Government should make provision for a dock, but he has pointed out the financial aspect, and I trust the Government will take the matter up with the Commonwealth authorities to see whether something cannot be done in that regard.

The Governor's Speech also contains reference to the North-West. On page 7 appears the following—

As the development of the North-West is essentially a national problem, an approach has been made to the Commonwealth Government for special provision for the North-West in any national developmental scheme.

I agree with that; and in view of the fact that the Grants Commission has also recently made an inspection of that part of the State, I feel it is time the State Government sought financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the development of the North-West. I sat back in my seat the other night to listen to Mr. Hearn when he said he intended to say something about the North-West, but the only two points I could gather from his speech were that he desired to fire a political gun at the previous State Government for not having done something for the North-West; and that he wished to give away to the Commonwealth all that part of the country north of the 26th parallel or the Tropic of Capricorn. I, for one, do not agree with that.

I feel that we are not fully aware of the potentialities of our North-West, which I consider is going to be of great benefit to this State in the future. I trust, therefore, that the Government will do everything possible to induce the Commonwealth to make available as much finance as it can for the development of that part of our State. Mr. Hearn also said that the 26th parallel is the boundary between South Australia and the Northern Territory. It is now 40 years since the Northern Territory was transferred to the Commonwealth, and I have yet to learn that that Government has done anything much to develop that part of our country except in the vicinity of Darwin, where some development was necessary for defence purposes. If the northern part of Western Australia was transferred to the Commonwealth I do not think there would be any greater activity there, on the part of the Commonwealth Government, than there has been in the Northern Territory during the last 40 years.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: They wiped out a lot of taxation in the Northern Territory.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Our North-West is a national problem and, although Mr. Hearn desired to fire a political gun at the previous Government, it is admitted that the State, with its taxing rights, had not the finance necessary to develop the North-West. Western Australia has an area of 975,900 odd square miles and a population of just over 500,000. It is therefore not possible for a State of this size, with its meagre population, to provide the money necessary to develop the North-West. The Commonwealth Government is the source from which the finance should come and I hope the Government of this State will do everything possible to get the Commonwealth to make available finance for this national work of development.

I will deal now with the housing problem, which directly affects the welfare of our people. In the course of his Speech His Excellency mentioned that it is the intention of the Government to make provision for 5,000 new houses in 1950. I trust it will be able to provide those houses, because up to date I am wholly dissatisfied with the housing position, particularly as it affects the West Province. Although a number of houses have been built in that area, there are at present about 100 people seeking accommodation in the flats at Melville Park East, Vale Park, the Leighton camp or the Woodman's Point camp. Those people are unable to obtain accommodation in flats at the reconstructed camps because there are no houses being built to accommodate the present occupants of the flats.

The system adopted by the State Housing Commission is to put people into flats in the Fremantle district and gradually transfer them to houses as they are built. I do not know whether that policy exists in regard to other parts of the State, but the difficulty is that until more houses are constructed, it is not possible to transfer the present occupants of the flats to homes of their own, and hence there are no vacancies occurring in the flats. I am extremely dissatisfied with the position in regard to small unit homes. It comes vividly to my mind that during the 1947 election campaign members of the present Government, while on the hustings, said that if returned as a Government they would build houses for small unit families.

For the whole State 252 such homes have been built. There are three at Bayswater, two at Bassendean, 57 at Belmont, one at Carlisle, 30 at Claremont, six at Hilton Park, 44 at Manning Estate, nine at Midland Junction, 74 at South Perth and six at White Gum Valley. Hilton Park and White Gum Valley are in the West Province, and in that area only 12 such houses have been built since the present Government came into office in 1947. In common with many other members, I am interviewed by many people with small unit families who are trying to get accommodation, but I am told by the Housing Commission that no houses are being built for them. If it is possible to build a large number of small unit homes in other parts of the metropolitan area, surely the West Province, where there is a large amount of industry, is entitled to a fair proportion! I am entirely dissatisfied with the efforts of the Housing Commission so far in the West Province, which has a population of about 45,000 people.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There are 30,000 people on the goldfields and we have not one such house.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I do not think the West Province has had a fair deal in this regard, and I ask the Government to do something to improve the position as so many people in my electorate are unable to find accommodation of any sort. There

are families of two and three units living on verandahs and in rough camps and they are unable to get any proper accommodation.

Hon. G. Fraser: Some of them cannot even get tents.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: They are lucky if they can get tents. Fremantle and the surrounding districts are endeavouring to encourage the establishment of industries in those areas. A large number of industries have already been established in and around Fremantle and it is necessary that more accommodation should be provided to house the workers. I have mentioned that only 12 small unit homes have been erected in the West Province and, of that number, very few have been allotted to local people. The State Electricity Commission contends that its employees are essential workers, and they are brought to the Fremantle district and put into small unit homes. I am quite content to see them coming to Fremantle, but I do not think they should receive preference over people already in that district, in regard to housing, as many such people are engaged in essential work on the wharves or in the railways.

I took up this question with the Minister for Railways and asked could he do something to help find accommodation at Fremantle for some of the railway staff who work shifts. His reply was that it was a matter for the State Housing Commission to attend to. I do not think his reply was reasonable and I ask him now whether he will take this matter up and endeavour to have accommodation provided for railway workers and others in essential industries in that area. Recently the Government decided to issue permits for houses up to 12½ squares. Quite a number of people were under the impression that they would then be able to get homes within a short space of time.

During my recent election campaign I pointed out to the electors of the West Province that, although they would be able to obtain permits for houses up to 12½ squares after the 1st July, they would still have to wait many months for their homes. Although such permits have been issued people are unable to obtain material with which to build. There appeared in "The West Australian" of the 31st August last, under the heading of "Kalgoorlie Housing" the following:—

While at Kalgoorlie, Mr. Wild inspected a prototype two-bedroom house of timber and asbestos with a combined dining-room and lounge.

Further down the report continues—

The shortage of flooring boards was brought to the notice of Mr. Wild. He advised any local contractor experiencing difficulty in obtaining housing supplies to get in touch with the Commission's liaison officer. Mr.

Wild said that an instruction had been issued to supervisors of State housing jobs in country districts to forward a report each Monday morning, particularly in relation to shortages of materials.

Whilst contractors are generally able to obtain supplies, a number of people who have received permits for 12½ square houses are unable to obtain any building materials at all. They come to members asking for help and, when we in turn approach the State Housing Commission, we are told that these people have been given the highest priority and have been granted permits and must now fend for themselves. That is not fair. The person who is willing to build a self-help house is assisting to improve the housing position generally, without taking much out of the labour pool, and he should be able to secure supplies of material. In many cases such men have to wait for up to six or eight months for their building supplies.

I noticed in the Press recently some caustic remarks by the Honorary Minister for Housing with regard to certain people who are supposed to supply building materials. I applaud the courage of the Honorary Minister in speaking his mind in that way. I believe that one of the reasons for the shortage of timber at the present time is that too much is being exported from this State. We should look after our own people before sending any great amount of timber out of Western Australia.

Hon. H. K. Watson: We should look after the self-help home builders in preference to using all the available material in the building of rental homes.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: There may be a point in what the hon. member says. Nevertheless, housing is a national question and the State must build houses if many of our people are ever to have homes of their own. Unfortunately, what is being done now should have been done between 1919 and 1939. That is when houses should have been built, but nothing was done—

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Not in all those years?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Not under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. There are 140 families living in the flats at Hilton Park. Although they are very grateful to accept that accommodation at the moment, the conditions under which they are forced to live and the fact that some of them seem to have lost hope of ever getting homes of their own, lead me to think that the Government will have a social problem on its hands within the next few years—a problem the magnitude of which it will be impossible to measure in pounds, shillings and pence. It was originally agreed that those camps should be converted into flats for a five-year

period. That term has expired and it will be necessary for the flats to be used for another five years.

When a large number of people are herded together in community living, under what border on slum conditions, we find that the status to which we hoped to raise them is being lowered. The Government will have to take cognisance of what is happening there, or else the generation that is being reared under such conditions will not be able to take its proper place among the citizens of the State. The Government should do everything possible to secure the erection of more houses in order that we might discontinue using these flats for residential purposes.

At Melville camp there is a problem which is pretty acute at the moment and has been so for some considerable time. I do not know whether members are aware of it, but it relates to the system of providing electric light in that camp through a master meter. Some of the camps are divided into four and five flats and the total amount of electric light used during the month is divided equally between the people occupying the flats in the camp. To give members an idea of what those charges are I will quote a list of them for the months of May and June. The list is as follows:—

Flat.	May.			June.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
65	1	3	1	1	13	9
66		17	4	1	5	4
67		17	4	1	5	4
124	1	10	6	1	16	0
127	1	10	0	1	10	10
129	1	0	0	1	10	0
135	1	0	0	1	10	0
119	1	10	10	2	0	10
118	1	18	6	2	11	1
122	1	19	11	2	4	11
106	1	3	4	1	13	9

It will be generally agreed that those charges are absolutely exorbitant. I do not know that anybody living in a four-roomed house would use that amount of current.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Who sells the electricity to them?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: It is sold by the Fremantle Tramways Board through the State Housing Commission and registered by a master meter. Of course, the State Housing Commission is not altogether to blame for the excessive charges because the people who live in the flats are not quite fair to each other. Some have electrical appliances which others have not, but they all pay an equal share of the total amount of electricity as registered by the master meter. It has been suggested that it is the intention of the Public Works Department to rewire all of the flats and to provide each of them with a separate meter. That suggestion was made sometime ago and I

would therefore ask the Government to see that these flats are rewired at an early date so that the occupants of them will be relieved of the excessive payments for electricity which, of course, must be recognised as exorbitant.

I wish to mention one point about the Fremantle Hospital. I realise that hospitalisation throughout the State is an important question and one which the Government will have to give attention to for some considerable time in the future. Unfortunately, in Fremantle the position is that, by necessity, a new hospital must be built there before very long. We have been informed by the State Health Council that it will probably be seven years before that hospital is built. In the meantime there does not seem to be any plans and specifications or blue print available to guide the hospital authorities in what they have to do. It is known that certain additions will have to be made from time to time and I think it is only right and proper that plans and blue prints should be prepared and made available, at least to the hospital authorities, so that they may know whether it is the Government's intention to rebuild the hospital on its present site or to erect it on some other location.

Several opinions have been expressed but one to which I subscribe is that the present site is the most suitable, provided that the building known as the old Base Flats—previously the old Base Hospital—were removed and also that the position of the two schools, the one facing Alma-street and the other facing South-terrace were shifted. This would mean that all the land in that area could be used for hospital grounds and the space will be adequate for the needs of future years. It is anticipated that a large hospital would be necessary in view of the rapid expansion of the population and I think that something should be done to advise the people who control the Fremantle Hospital at present as to what is the Government's intention relating to new hospital construction.

It must be borne in mind, of course, that the hospital will need 500 beds in order to provide space for the admission of coloured seamen who are sent to it from the ships entering Fremantle harbour. A separate ward should be provided for these seamen, and it is particularly necessary, from a sanitation point of view, that not only a separate ward, but also separate lavatory facilities should be provided for these men. At present, the average bed occupancy is 170.68 and there are 66 beds on verandahs, so it can be easily realised that the hospital accommodation is not what it ought to be. I am therefore quite certain that the Government will take it upon itself to advise the hospital authorities whether the site of the Old Base Flats is to be the location of a

new hospital and at least to make available blue prints or plans as to what is to be the intended future of that hospital.

Education is a question that comes very forcibly before the people at present due to the fact that we are not getting sufficient recruits into the teaching profession because the salaries offered are not a sufficient inducement. In fact, commercial and business undertakings are holding out much greater inducements. Young people who would be likely recruits to the teaching profession are therefore lost to it, and I think the Government should give more attention to this aspect of the matter. It has already tackled the problem from one angle, but I believe that this is a question that must be given earnest consideration because, in the next few years, there will not be sufficient students leaving the Teachers' College to replace the natural retirements.

As to the Hilton Park School I am rather astounded that it will be admitting scholars up to the second standard only. I feel that in a growing district such as that, a school should be built to provide more classes. I have asked questions in this House from time to time as to whether it is proposed to make additions to the school and I have been informed that they will be made if necessary. I feel it would be far better to add a few more classrooms to the school now than to have to turn scholars away from it because of its being too small when declared open.

Hon. G. Fraser: There are a lot of children in that district.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: That is the new housing area and one which, of course, will have a large child population in the future, and as it is only reasonable to expect the provision of a school which would cater for standards much higher than the second standard, I hope the Government will take steps to remedy the position.

Hon. G. Fraser: What school would the children have to attend after reaching the second standard?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: They would have to go either to the White Gum Valley School or the Beaconsfield School.

Hon. G. Fraser: Which would be the nearer?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The White Gum Valley School.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What did you say the number was attending that school?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I did not mention any number, but it has reached its full capacity now. With the transient housing in South-street quite a few scholars will come from there and as the Hilton Park School has a full complement it can be fully realised that something will have to be done to extend it.

We have heard quite a lot about price control recently and I feel that each and every one of us is concerned about the inflationary spiral that is taking place, but it does not appear that anybody is able to do anything about it.

Notwithstanding the number of promises that were made during the referendum campaign and the last State elections that the State would control prices, and also the promises recently made during the Federal elections that the shillings would roll back into the Liberal pound of 1939, it now appears that those shillings are like Old Man River; they are still rolling, and as a rolling stone gathers no moss the position does not seem to improve. I feel that the Government should attempt to do something in the matter. Notwithstanding the difficulties that present themselves, we find that the recent record wool prices are going to affect the cost of clothing and blankets and, of course, the price of wheat also has a great effect on the prices which people have to pay for the necessities of life.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Not here; there is a fixed price.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Not here, but wheat and wool are sold oversea at high prices.

Hon. G. Fraser: Meat has a fixed price, too.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And you are paying more than the fixed price for your meat.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The Government should give some attention to this problem. Promises have been made that the Government can control prices and it is therefore up to it to fulfil those promises.

Hon. L. Craig: What do you suggest should be done?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am not the Government and it is the Government's obligation to fulfil the promises made. It should not make such promises if it does not intend to fulfil them because the people will not swallow them all the time.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Do you want us to control wages?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I feel that these statements are made knowing full well that the price of wool has a tendency to spiral upwards. The effect of the exchange rate also has some bearing on the matter and yet we have these promises being made that the State Government and the Commonwealth Government can do this and can do that. It is up to those Governments to show what can be done because if prices go much higher I do not know what is going to happen. If prices rise the basic wage rises with them.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not with them, after them.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Especially if the workers ask for £10 a week basic wage.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: They will want more than that if costs go much higher. The Government should give consideration to the problem because it made promises that it would control prices but yet we find that prices are continually soaring.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The next subject I want to speak about is that of Argentine ant control. Members will be aware of the fact that it is necessary to take certain measures to control the Argentine ant pest, particularly in the coastal areas. That, of course, is essential because it is possible by the transportation of goods to transfer the pest to the country districts. Certain measures of control have been undertaken by the Public Health Department in conjunction with local authorities. A large amount of money, in some cases, has had to be expended in an effort to stamp out the pest.

Arrangements made with the Public Health Department and the local authorities provide for the necessary supplies of D.D.T. to be made available by the Government together with vehicles and pumping equipment and certain labour. It became necessary for the local authority to expend certain sums of money, and this obligation having arisen in the middle of the municipal year, the amount involved was not budgeted for. Therefore in many instances it had a detrimental effect on the financial position of several of the local authorities. As far as Fremantle was concerned the debit balance was £446 16s. 4d., which did not include the salaries of health inspectors amounting to £224 odd.

Since then new regulations have been gazetted, which place the responsibility for the control of Argentine ants on the local authority, which, on submitting a draft of the estimates of cost to the Public Health Department, may be subsidised by the department. This is another item of expenditure foisted on the local authority. It always appears to me that anything appertaining to revenue is claimed by the Government but any expenditure whenever possible is added as a burden on the local authorities. I am dealing with the facts as they apply to the City of Fremantle and, of course, proportionately, it would also concern many of the other local authorities, large or small, depending on their population and rateable values.

As far as Fremantle is concerned, the municipal area is 3,800 acres. At present the maximum health rate is 9d. and the present rate is 8½d. in the £. The maximum for the sanitary rate is 6d. but the charge is 4½d. There is not a great margin before the council will reach its maximum rating. I wish to place before the Chamber the actual area of land from

which the local authority can claim rates and will produce the figures. So far as the Commonwealth Government is concerned the navy, the military and Government offices account for 90 acres, which is 2½ per cent. of the total area. The State Government, for various purposes, including departmental offices, has an area of 271 acres, and the State Housing Commission 341 acres, making a total of 612 acres, or 17½ per cent. of the whole area.

Under the heading of "municipal" we find that section accounts for 30 acres; roads, streets, etc., 456 acres, reserves and recreation 360 acres, commonage 885 acres, making a total of 1,731 acres or 45½ per cent. of the whole area. Private ownership accounts for 1,367 acres or 34½ per cent. of the whole area of 3,800 acres. I referred to the State Housing Commission occupying 341 acres. Eventually rates will have to be paid on the houses built upon that area, and I do not wish to be unfair in that regard.

The whole point is that if the local authority is to be held responsible for the eradication of the Argentine ant it will be necessary for the expenditure to be met. Under regulations recently gazetted by the Public Health Department, local authorities are obliged to bear the cost of eradication in all public places, the department supplying only the insecticide and the pumping plant. The estimated cost will be £1,000, made up of wages of three men £870, hire of truck for cartage of rubbish and spray £130. That estimate does not include the salary of the health inspector. I have already stated that the health rate is at present 8½d. with a maximum of 9d. and the sanitary rate 4½d. with a maximum of 6d. It will be realised that the suggested expenditure will necessitate an increase in the rates up to the maximum that can be levied. I understand the idea of the department is to make certain refunds to local authorities.

This is a question which affects the whole State, and it is the opinion of the local authorities that the Government should bear the full cost of the eradication of the pest. We know a vermin tax is collected in certain areas of the State, though not so much in residential parts, nor from Crown land. I feel that the sum of £1,000 is a large burden for Fremantle to carry; indeed, it is too much. The Minister should make every possible endeavour to see that the charge is met otherwise.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Why not apply the vermin rate to all lands?

Hon. G. Fraser: Ask the Government to carry out the recommendation of the Royal Commission.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: There is another question of vital importance to the people, namely, the necessity for cultural and educational development in the community.

Ways and means of promoting that development are provided by the establishment of free lending libraries. I take this opportunity to compliment the Government upon having established a small scheme in country districts. However, to cover that project an advance of £1,000 was made available—it was a mere bagatelle—to local authorities on a basis of £ for £ subsidy up to £50. That is a good start, but I appeal to the Government to see whether it is not possible to extend the scheme still further and to take in the larger areas of settlement in the metropolitan districts.

Fremantle has already a free lending library. The basis of calculation is worked out at 2s. per head of the population, which is regarded as a fair margin for the supply of the necessary books, labour, etc. In some cases the cost rises to 3s. 8d. per head of the population in the large cities of the Eastern States. Free lending libraries have been recognised as part and parcel of the administration of local authorities in the United Kingdom over a period of 100 years. America has a magnificent public library service, which in the United States is controlled by local authorities. New Zealand has also adopted the same sort of scheme based on a subsidy from the Government.

Tasmania has introduced a scheme, and in New South Wales only recently 70 municipal libraries came into being as the result of the Library Act, which was passed in 1939 and applied in 1945. Queensland has an arrangement for subsidising such libraries. I feel that with a view to making it possible to improve the cultural and educational development of the community generally, the Government would be wise to make provision in the Estimates for subsidising local authorities that are prepared to bring into being free municipal lending libraries.

There is another matter that is interesting the people of Fremantle. I refer to a native who has lived within the confines of the district practically all his life. He was reared by white people and brought up from boyhood under white civilisation conditions. He claims today to be 65. During his life he has worked and paid the necessary taxes. At present he cannot draw any old age pension because the Pensions Act does not provide for such payments to aborigines. I understand he receives some benefit from the Department of Natives Affairs in the form of stores. It is an indictment against our white civilisation that such people who have been reared under such conditions should be thrown on to the scrap heap without receiving any assistance. He and his spouse have camped in various parts of the commonage. From time to time they have had to move because parts of the area have been cleared for housing. He finds the position very difficult. If something is not done to alleviate the conditions

under which these people are trying to live, they may lapse into crime through no fault of their own. The Government should do something to make financial arrangements whereby some aid can be given to aborigines so situated. Of course, this should be done under control, but such people should be enabled to spend the evening of their lives in reasonable comfort.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [7.45]: Before speaking in support of the motion, I should like to extend my congratulations to the new members who were successful at the recent elections. Particularly do I wish to congratulate Mr. Thomson and Mr. Baxter, who have taken the seats previously occupied by their fathers. They are fortunate in having, at their age, an opportunity of reaching this stage in public life. Maybe they are somewhat handicapped in view of the very high standards set by their fathers, but if they are able to maintain those standards, I am sure it will be a satisfaction to themselves and they will be a credit to the House.

At the outset I desire to deal with the water supply position of the State generally and the necessity that will be forced upon us before many years have passed for a re-orientation of thinking by those charged with the responsibility of controlling water supplies. Having regard to the conditions prevailing in the areas I represent, it is urgent to press by every means possible for the completion of the comprehensive water scheme. I feel some concern that there should be an idea that this scheme will represent the beginning and the end of the problem. I quite heartily concur in the sentiments expressed by Mr. Craig that in view of the limitations of our potable water supplies, we must conserve all the water possible where it falls. We are not in the fortunate position of many of the older countries or some of the Eastern States in the matter of supplies of potable water, and it would be suicidal not to take the long view, perhaps for 60 years ahead, of what may happen if we continue to permit the rainfall in areas having an average of 18 to 28 inches to run to waste.

On the Great Southern particularly, but not alone there, we have sufficient catchments for the conservation of a considerable quantity of water, but there seems to be reluctance to consider that aspect very seriously. Admittedly, some of the supplies, in themselves, are inadequate, but I think our approach to the matter should be that these local supplies are valuable and that the comprehensive scheme, or any scheme that might be instituted, should be supplemental, so that there will not be complete reliance on the comprehensive scheme for supplying the water needs of various districts.

Lately I had an opportunity to read the report of an address delivered by the chairman of the Perth Division of the Institute of Engineers of Australia, Mr. F. M. Kenworthy, an officer of the Government Water Supply Department. I commend that address to the consideration of members, because Mr. Kenworthy appears to be very well informed of the position, as is natural, that being part of his job, and seems to take a long view and is highly appreciative of the serious position in which this State could be placed. He pointed out that, in the next 60 years, with a population of a million people in the metropolitan area, we shall have reached the limit of the economical supply of water to that area, and that development must be planned with a view to assisting decentralisation if the State is to carry anything like the population it should. Areas in the South-West give some scope, but throughout his address he stressed that water was going to be a deciding factor in the populating of this State. I do not intend to quote extensively from his address, but there is a brief passage I should like to read to emphasise that point. He said—

It is my opinion that a policy of decentralisation away from Perth is in the best interests of over-all development and is indeed necessitated by the limitations of the supplies of water.

While we cannot claim to have the knowledge Mr. Kenworthy possesses, it has been apparent to some of us for a considerable time that more attention needs to be paid to conserving the water in local supplies, as well as installing comprehensive or major schemes to supplement those supplies, if the future of the State is not to be prejudiced by an inadequacy of supply.

In support of my statement that those responsible did not seem prepared to tackle the problem from this angle, I had in mind what occurred recently at Katanning. There the local supply is admittedly inadequate, and has been for some time, largely on account of inability to fill the existing reservoir. Representations have been made for additional surface bituminising, but so far no progress has been made. It has not been possible to convince those responsible of the necessity, and the only reason I have heard advanced is that, as the comprehensive scheme will be there in about five years, the additional expense of bituminising would not be justified. To bituminise another 60 acres of catchment area should not occupy more than 12 months, so that within the next three or four years, considerably more water could be stored in that reservoir. Again I emphasise the point that more of the rainfall—it is about 18 inches—would be conserved locally and thus reduce the demand ultimately to be made on the comprehensive scheme.

There is another matter to which the department might give a little thought. In areas where water has to be brought from afar to furnish the requisite supplies, people erecting new buildings, or even those with established buildings should, through the local authority, be compelled to provide a certain amount of water storage of their own. At the moment, the supply of rainwater tanks is short, though somewhat easier than it was; nevertheless, it is still difficult. I know of one local authority that insists upon the owners of buildings storing water in this way. I understand there is some doubt as to whether it has legal power to insist, but so far it has not been questioned. The department might consider this point and, if there is any doubt as to the legality of that action, authority could be given for a local governing body to insist, as soon as material is available, upon the owners of buildings providing one or two water tanks—anything up to 3,000 or 4,000 gallons—so that the demands on the comprehensive scheme might be lightened.

At the moment there is a growing demand for public water supplies. There may be some question as to the extent to which we in this State should permit our available supplies to be used for irrigation purposes, but I think little doubt exists that irrigation will be extended and, maybe, considerably extended. The demand for irrigation in the South-West is going to need a lot of water. Then there are certain areas not included in the comprehensive scheme—I refer more particularly to Pingrup, Kulin and Lake Grace—where, in parts, it is not possible to provide catchments owing to the existing water level and the salt encroachment. It is impossible to get reservoirs to conserve sufficient water to meet local needs, and the water will have to be conveyed there by one of the major schemes. Although it has not been proposed that such districts should be included, I think we shall have to face the possibility of their being included and so provided with this essential of life—an adequate supply of water.

Then we shall have the growing needs of the city which, in common with the whole of the State, seems to be approaching an era of considerable industrial development. The demand for water is going to grow, and I think this justifies us in asking the Government to put in hand a hydrographic survey of the potable waters of the State. I believe that some sort of a survey has been made, but has not been carried out as thoroughly as a survey of that nature warrants, having regard to our dependence on water.

I want to deal now with another subject that may be somewhat controversial, although I trust that if we have to consider legislation in respect of it before the session closes, we

shall be able to do so without becoming lost in a fog of discussion. I refer to the matter of the native or half-caste population. The question affects the whole State, more or less, but I make it clear that I do not profess to have any knowledge of conditions in the North-West where so many of these people present a problem. I do say, however, that in the Great Southern and certain portions of the South-West the half-caste and native problem is becoming an urgent and tremendous one.

An extremely acute social problem is developing there with the increasing numbers of these people. Unless we can institute a policy to accelerate their assimilation into the population of the State, within a few generations, Western Australia will have a big problem on its hands, and I could feel happy to think I will not be here to try to deal with it as it will be insoluble by then. It seems to me that in the first approach to this matter we must recognise that the adolescent or adult native has the form or shape of a man, but the mentality of a wayward child. It is not his fault, as the natives were a backward and almost degenerate race in their original state. They have not been able to stand up against our white civilisation, but have drifted into a mode of life which suits their mental makeup, and we, as a people, have to deal with them.

One of the worst enemies of the half-caste, from my own observations and experience, is the sloppy sentimentalist who is only too ready to weep on his shoulders and bemoan the fact that the unfortunate native has had the country taken from him. I would not like to convey the impression that I see no possibility of good in the native, and I would not like it to be thought that it is any suggestion of mine that he should be treated harshly or unkindly, but I do say that unless the native, for two or three generations, is disciplined and controlled, we shall never deal adequately with this problem. We have no hope of doing anything with those who have reached adolescence under existing conditions. There are odd ones, of course, who promise to be tolerable citizens, but the great majority are utterly hopeless.

If we are to deal adequately with the future we have to look to the children. I am informed by some of our educationists—and we can accept this as correct—that the average native child up to the sixth standard can compete successfully with the white child, but from then on, the majority of them, owing perhaps to early maturity, their breed, or family association, deteriorate scholastically. To deal with the subject we have to arrive at some means of keeping the adults within a certain area where the children can continuously attend school. Unfortunately there is at present no control. Most of these people will stay a few weeks or

months in a particular place and then go perhaps 20, 30 or 40 miles into the bush, and then move on to another area or return to the original one. During that time there is no possibility of teaching the children hygiene or civil responsibility. As a result, when they leave school, they become as shiftless and thriftless as their older brothers and parents. To me their deterioration seems to date from about the time when, without making any effort to demonstrate to these people the need for some show of responsibility on their part we, with a developing social conscience, decided to pay them child endowment. Since that time, in many of these families, no one has worked.

Hon. G. Fraser: That happened before child endowment.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Up to that time, they had to do some work, but today they lead an idle life. I can assure any hon. member who might doubt me on the matter that he could not tomorrow get a native or a half-caste to drove sheep along a road at £3 a day—which is reasonably good pay for a not over-onerous job. That is the last rate that I know of. I was informed only the other day by a gentleman interested in the stock business, and who does a good deal of this sort of work, that he has not been able to get one for two years. This might be an extreme case, but I know of one instance where child endowment is drawn for 16 children. The living conditions and standards of these people are such that they do not spend much for actual living expenses except, perhaps, on an occasional bottle of wine, so that they manage reasonably well.

We come to this point, that it is at least a three-generation job that lies ahead of us. We have first of all to devise means—and I think it could be done through child endowment, or some such method—whereby native families could say in which district they would be prepared to remain. Reasonable accommodation should be provided for them, and if they left or did not measure up to tolerable standards in regard to hygiene and sending their children to school, then the endowment could be withheld from them.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would have a hard job to stop them going walkabout.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: The half-caste would not worry about going walkabout.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: That is so. The half-caste that we speak of is little more than a quarter-caste in many instances and he has not much of the real native instinct, but if he grows up shiftless and thriftless he goes away hunting for a while, and that sort of thing. He does not go walkabout, as we understand it with the real bush native.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Some of them have a house.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Some have, but others do not seem to have any ambition to own a house. We must bring in some method of control.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: They will not stay fixed unless they have somewhere to stay.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: That is so, and when we provide them with such a place we must see that they stay fixed. From what I can see of the native he would not remain in one place, even if he were given a palace to live in, unless he was controlled. We come back to that point every time. I would like to see control of child endowment made through our Native Affairs Department, and a definite policy adopted to keep these people in the one locality until we can get their children to the sixth standard at least. By that time they would gain some idea of hygiene and their responsibilities as citizens. If we could get one generation up to that standard we would have the prospect of getting the following generation a little further ahead. I have no doubt that, if we could do that, then within the three generations I have referred to, a great number of these people would turn out worthwhile citizens. It is of no use thinking we can do it overnight or just by weeping on the half-caste's shoulder and being sorry for him. We have to take the long view, which entails disciplining those who have already reached man's estate.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The Church of Christ Mission at Norseman does something in that regard.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Possibly we can learn something from them in regard to farm schools and native farms as they apply in South Australia. I do not know the position there, so I am not able to comment on it. But from my knowledge and experience of these people, whether it be done as I suggest or not, the basis of the matter is control of the present parents with a view to working for the future generations and bringing the children up with some idea of citizenship and to gain something more in the way of scholastic knowledge than the average child is getting today. I was interested the other evening to hear Dr. Hislop's comments on the liquor trade which is reaching such a stage that it is necessary for some consideration to be given to its development.

I am not averse to liquor, and never have been, and whilst this may bring criticism upon me from certain quarters, I say that I am not averse to a considerable increase in the number of licensed premises. In fact, it seems to me that we are inclined to make a mistake in the other direction, and that with a restriction on the number of licensed premises

we are placing too big a premium on those in existence. Some country towns have only one hotel, which can do as it likes. To me there seems to be with hotelkeepers a tendency more and more to cater for the bar trade, and to let the rest of the functions, by way of providing accommodation, to be dealt with perfunctorily. I cannot believe that there are insuperable difficulties in the way of reducing the alcoholic content of the liquor in Western Australia. It seems extraordinary to me although I have been able to take my liquor reasonably well since I was—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Say since you were 21.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Yes, I will say 21, because I would hate people to think I had broken the law before that age. It amazes me to see the hold that liquor seems to have today in the community. One can go almost anywhere and nothing can be done without an adequate supply of liquor. It can be seen at all social events, at dances, and everywhere else. I am most concerned about the position at country dances. There are little country centres where there is usually only an old school house or a small hall and when these country centres hold dances they are confronted with a problem. A lot of lads come out from the nearest towns, probably with a five or 10 gallon keg, or a case of beer. There is no way of stopping the practise. However, I am given to understand that under a wartime emergency regulation there was prohibition against consuming liquor within so many yards of a place of entertainment.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It was half a mile.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I did not think it was as far as that. However, that regulation has lapsed and the police are powerless, provided there is nothing outwardly objectionable, to restrict the consumption of liquor at these places. Time and again we see chaps who get a bit more than is good for them—it might be at halls in country centres 15 or 20 miles from the nearest town—and free fights develop. Even in the towns in the country the same thing happens. I suppose it holds good in the metropolitan area too, but metropolitan members would know more about that position than I do. For many people today a dance is nothing more than a good booze up. I doubt whether we could restrict drinking but surely it should be possible to reduce the alcoholic content and thereby reduce the effects of drinking.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: How would you do that with spirits?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I do not know how that could be done but I think I would be right in saying that only a small amount of spirits is consumed as compared with beer at the functions I am speaking of.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would rather see them put canaries instead of boxing gloves in the beer.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I think canaries would be indigestible, too. The Licensing Court, as at present constituted, seems to be very active and is trying to do something to maintain reasonable conditions. However, I cannot help wondering whether its powers are insufficient or whether the court is faced with a set of circumstances wherein it is unable to achieve very much. I feel that the trend towards a monopoly in the supply of beer in Western Australia is not in the best interests of the community and there are circumstances that could intrude that would not be altogether desirable. How the Licensing Court can correct matters without fresh legislation, or amendments to the present legislation I am not in a position to say. As Dr. Hislop suggested, it is a problem to which we must give serious thought.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Do you not think it is a problem largely for parental control and not so much for legislation?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Perhaps 30 years ago it would have been possible to do something but it seems to me it would not achieve much today because in a large section of the community many parents seem to adopt the attitude that the adolescent should be allowed, in these things, to do more or less as he likes. There does not seem to be that parental control today. Personally, I doubt whether that is an improvement but then again I may be a little old fashioned in my viewpoint and one hesitates to be dogmatic in that respect. If we have to rely on parental control for some correction of the present conditions, then we will not achieve it. We will finish up by going from bad to worse. This position is developing into a serious social problem.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: And you think legislation could correct it.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I think that our legislation could do with a review. Let us review the whole question. Not much has been attempted in recent years and it would not be fair to lay all the blame on those who framed the original legislation because these developments have only taken place in the last five to 10 years. I do not believe in too much restriction on the supply of liquor. As I said before, I think we could do with more hotels and I would not like to see any restriction in hours. Our present hours are much better from the point of view of drunkenness and over-indulgence than the hours we had during wartime. Although this may have nothing to do with the particular social problem, I think the State Government would be well advised to get rid of its interests in hotels. I think the State would make much more out of it by selling the hotels and investing the money, or saving the Government from borrowing that sum of money.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You would get far more by leasing them.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If they were leased the Government would certainly get a lot more but they would not be run as efficiently and I am afraid that the State, as a landlord, is always looked upon as fair game. I would sooner see the Government sell the hotels and then the interest return received would compensate for the amount of profit being made today.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: The brewery would be the owner in the long run. The brewery is buying them all.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: At the moment we have considerable animation in respect of land development and settlement. Naturally, I would not like to see anything done or contemplated which would slow down our land development plans which have in view further production in Western Australia. We have many difficulties today with our public works programmes and other governmental efforts. They are restricted because of the need for plant, difficulties with labour and the heavy commitments on Government plant and manpower. Therefore, I think we would be better advised if greater efforts were made to develop much of the country which today is undeveloped but is occupied by people who want to be farmers.

I do not want to leave the impression that I am averse to land settlement schemes. However, from a practical point of view, under existing social and working conditions, if we were successful in developing 400 or 500 new farms tomorrow, and even at the cost originally suggested, we would not be in a position to find enough of the right people to occupy them. In the heavier rainfall districts—and I have in mind that area of country which has an adequate rainfall, but is not so heavily timbered as the extreme South-West, and stretches from west of Beverley, through to west of Mount Barker and west of the Great Southern railway, east of the Darling Ranges—this is an area, almost a new province, and less than one-third of it cleared. That means that there is less than one-third of this area which is developed in the sense that it is producing something.

We have reached the stage where we require big plant for this sort of thing. We cannot get men to take on clearing contracts at any price. I know of cases where men have had opportunities to make £3 a day but they have walked out. Therefore, we must do that work in a big way with big plant and teams of men that we can get together. The average farmer is not in a position to afford that expenditure because it would cost him somewhere between £10,000 and £15,000. He would also require a mechanic and probably a dozen men to assist with driving the plant, the chores, the burning up and various other jobs. Whilst I have no great enthusiasm for governmental acti-

vity in this sort of work, I do think it should be possible for the Government to assist private contractors to go out into this country and make themselves available to existing settlers who have not been able sufficiently to develop their land.

That land has little or no value to Western Australia until it is cleared. This work must be done by large plant and the average farmer cannot afford to purchase that plant himself. If the Government can provide the means for contractors or men to acquire plant and build up an organisation and purchase their plant on easy terms of repayment over the next few years, our purpose and our future would be better served. It would also be better for us to devote our energies to clearing land for the men who are already there. Those people already have their overheads, have established their homes and, in fact, have going concerns. If their land is cleared first it will go straight into production without further cost to the community.

On the other hand, if a new scheme is put into operation the overhead, cost of buildings and everything else would have to be added. In order to obtain men to start up such a scheme we would have to scrape the bottom out of the labour barrel and probably only half of them would stay on their farms. The men who are already there have an interest in their properties. They have a knowledge of the position and have the prospect of keeping their own children on those properties. They will eventually be the farmers who will acquire new properties as well as continue to develop the old ones. As it is now, so many of the younger generation have before them the struggles their parents endured and an appreciation of the more congenial life available in the cities and towns. They see no recompense in staying on the farms and so they are drifting away.

We are now seeing a generation of older people engaged in trying to maintain their farms and altogether too many of the younger people drifting to the city. At the moment wool and wheat offer appreciable profits—wool more than wheat. As a matter of fact, wheatgrowing is not so very profitable as some people imagine. I have in mind however, some of the smaller farming propositions in the area we are trying to develop under new schemes, particularly where the dairy industry is concerned.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Those are the people we should help.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: We see them battling on areas with 50 or 60 acres of clearing, and it is for them just a mere subsistence. There is nothing particular on the holdings to interest the younger generation, and they are not prone to remain to assist their parents. If those farmers were in a position to have 200 acres of

clearing on their holdings, the community would derive immeasurable benefit from the point of view of increased production.

The State would also benefit by making the conditions sufficiently attractive for the younger generation to remain there. I would like the Government to give a little more encouragement to that phase of our activities, even if to some extent new settlement projects had to wait a while. If the Minister deals with this phase in his reply, I suppose he will say the Government is already doing so. However, it is dealing with only a part of the problem, and much more could be done.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: What you are saying I advocated three years ago.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Is the Honorary Minister telling me that he is not in agreement with his Government?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Do not draw me out.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I know the Honorary Minister's opinions only too well.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I wish I knew them.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I do not want the Honorary Minister to misunderstand me. Dealing next with our road policy, particularly as it affects the main road system of the State, I presume that other members, like myself, are much concerned about the situation. The other night Mr. Logan made a statement that other members can confirm. He said that the Main Roads Department was bituminising only 100 miles of road per annum. If that rate is kept up, it will take 100 years before our major roads are sealed.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We shall have to start all over again before that.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Yes, long before that. We shall have to go back to where we started. Take the position regarding Albany-road. If one were to drive blindfolded, one could tell exactly when the Wagin turn-off was reached. From that point northwards trucks are carting wheat and super. out, and the road will not stand up to it much longer. We are in the unfortunate position with regard to the rehabilitation of the railway system that not any great advance has been made since pre-war days.

Hon. G. Fraser: They would not believe me when I said that.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Well, I am hoping! Certainly the rehabilitation of the railways has not made the progress that we could wish. Before it does make any material progress to the extent that it can cope with the freight loads offering, I am afraid we shall not have any roads left. Although I do not know of them, some efforts may have been made at maintenance. I certainly have seen some cul-

verts that have been repaired, but I have noticed no topdressing with bitumen carried out on the roads for years. I know that some was done during the war period, but there has been none since.

The roads were not constructed to deal with the heavy traffic that traverses them these days. I know that neither the Government nor the department itself can be expected to correct the position overnight. More consideration should be given to the heavy loads that are conveyed over them at present, possibly by limiting the speeds at which the trucks may travel. In England heavy-duty trucks have been limited to a speed of 15 or 20 miles, and in that country the roads were constructed infinitely better than ours have been. Here it is nothing to see trucks carrying 20 tons of super, attaining a speed on level stretches or down slopes of from 40 to 45 miles an hour. The results are apparent. It will be no time before the roads are completely cut up, and I certainly think the Government should give some consideration to decentralising our roadwork. Where local authorities are able to undertake any of it, they should be allowed to do so.

Better still, the Government might adopt the broader view and endeavour to induce contractors to engage in such-like operations. If they were offered 1,000 or 2,000 miles of road construction or bitumen surfacing, contractors with the necessary plant available or the wherewithal to obtain such plant should be allowed to get on with the work. I know there would be a howl of criticism if that were done and contractors were allowed to make a profit out of it, but any profit so made would be more than repaid to the community as a whole. At the present rate of progress, in two or three years' time the road position will be hopeless. There must be people who would be prepared to undertake the work, if not in Australia then in the United Kingdom or America. A move along that direction would mean that our road system would benefit considerably. If profits were made out of the work, the State would be the gainer.

Hon. G. Bennetts: At Kalgoorlie there is a contractor who would be prepared to do work of that sort.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: He should be allowed to do so. I believe that if the Government were to give consideration to doing what I suggest, it would be beneficial to the State. There is so much work for the technical men of the department to carry on with and to keep the plant and labour available fully occupied. Most decidedly I think serious consideration should be given to finding other ways and means of getting the work done, if we are to have roads left before the railways are rehabilitated. Otherwise we may finish up with neither railways nor roads.

There are a few other topics that I could deal with but I shall not delay the House any longer. I have dealt with a few matters that are exercising my mind at the moment, but as to whether anything can be done about them remains to be seen. That no immediate answer may be found I can well understand. However, I urge that some consideration be given to the points I have raised. I conclude by expressing my support of the motion.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South-East) [8.42]: I desire to add my congratulations to the newly-elected members, two of whom, I note, are not present this evening. I know they will prove to be worthy successors to their fathers who were members of this Chamber for so many years. I desire also to extend my congratulations to Mr. Strickland. I feel certain that he will prove a distinct asset to this House and will admirably serve the interests of the North-West which he represents. Having read his maiden speech on the Address-in-reply, I appreciate that he has an intimate knowledge of the requirements of that part of the State.

I do not propose to delay the House long because at this stage of the debate the tendency is for members to reiterate what others have already stated, particularly concerning matters that affect their respective provinces. It is necessary to do that because repetition may have the effect of impressing various points upon the Minister respecting the requirements of the districts members represent, so that he may convey their views to his colleagues in Cabinet. There are only one or two matters with which I shall deal. First of all, I want to touch upon the mining industry and will refer to one or two phases affecting it both from the employment point of view and that of the general progress of mining. I refer not only to the managerial side, but also to that of those who are actively engaged in mining operations.

One of the most acute problems is that associated with the shortage of labour. I impress upon the Minister the fact that the serious shortage of both labour and material has hampered greatly the mining industry during, and since, the war. A scheme is in operation at present for the introduction of migrants into the industry, and many of them have been employed there. Some of the companies have undertaken the provision of houses for the men. A proposition was advanced by the Lake View and Star Company with the object of taking over the Boulder racecourse and converting it into a camp for migrants, just as it was used during the war years for the accommodation of thousands of men attached to the Air Force. Naturally the migrants will not be content to remain in such a camp and in due course will

require homes. If that is not attended to, they will not be content to stay in a mining town.

This is a problem to which the Housing Commission will have to give greater consideration than it has in the past. I say that in all sincerity because if anything were to happen to the industry, not only Western Australia but the whole of the Commonwealth would suffer in consequence, seeing that it is the greatest dollar-earning activity at this juncture. The majority of the migrants are young men and it is only natural that they will wish to get married. This will mean that they will require houses, and if they cannot get the necessary accommodation they will go elsewhere—transfer to the metropolitan area or some more closely settled district. In that case, their services will not be so profitable to the country as they are now in the mining industry. While on the subject of housing, I claim that help should be generously extended to those who have shown that they are capable of helping themselves.

On the Eastern Goldfields, the finger of scorn cannot be pointed at the residents. Several building projects are under way there, mainly sponsored by local governing bodies. Already about 100 houses have been constructed by the local authorities and by members of the 28th Battalion Association, which has erected some 28 houses as the result of the purchase of materials from old goldmining centres such as Wiluna and other outback places. However, the housing problem is still acute. On the fields today there are many married men whose wives and families have to live in the metropolitan area or in the country districts. The time is certain to arrive when such men will drift from the mining areas unless homes are found for them.

I hope that the Minister for Transport will convey to the Minister for Housing the serious position existing at the present. I am talking not of Kalgoorlie and Boulder alone, but of other goldmining towns such as Norseman and Southern Cross and a town which is coming into prominence at present—namely, Bullfinch. The Western Mining Corporation has extended its activities in all these districts, and I think that is a good omen for the industry provided we can secure the labour and materials to keep it going. With regard to the railways, as far as the Goldfields are concerned, there has been a marked improvement in passenger traffic. I think this may be due to the fact that some 35 engines were ordered for passenger service; and though they were not able to be used for that purpose, they were employed on goods traffic and the better engines used on the goods trains were returned to passenger traffic. The result is that in recent months the Kalgoorlie Express has occasionally run on time, and

has rarely been anything from two to eight hours late as was frequently the case 12 months ago.

On numerous occasions I have been asked to draw the Minister's attention to what I myself, and the majority of people on the Goldfields, consider to be the disadvantage occasioned by the discontinuance of the Tuesday night express from Kalgoorlie to Perth and from Perth to Kalgoorlie. This action caused considerable inconvenience to business people, has diverted a good deal of traffic and will have had the tendency to divert it for all time from the railways to other modes of transport such as motor cars and aeroplanes, etc. People will become accustomed to using these other forms of transport and their patronage will be lost to the railways for all time. It will be a short-sighted policy if consideration is not given to the reinstatement of those express trains.

For the past few months one of the matters which has caused grave concern to the people on the Goldfields has been the shortage of meat. I do not propose to discuss the position at any length, but thousands of parcels of meat have been arriving weekly in Kalgoorlie and Boulder during the last few months since the shops have been closed. The shops are open now with a limited supply of frozen meat, but parcels of meat are still being sent up from Perth. However, the weather is becoming warmer and the heat in the vans is not conducive to the meat keeping, particularly when it has to remain therein for some 12 to 18 hours and, prior to being transported, may have been several hours in the goods shed. In the circumstances, I suggest that until the meat position eases consideration be given to having a refrigeration van placed on the Kalgoorlie Express at least once or twice a week, for the convenience of people who have small parcels of meat sent to them.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: What about the meat the Government has made available? Are you not going to say anything about that?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: I have not the faintest idea of what is being done. If I knew the position I might not ask the Government to install a refrigeration van. I am not doing it for the pleasure of having the Government install such a van. I have no idea when the position will be relieved; but no alleviation seems to be likely in the immediate future, and therefore I suggest that consideration be given to installing this van at least once a week. Many people have refrigerators of their own and are able to keep the meat in them, but lots of others have not refrigerators and consequently they have to cook the meat almost immediately they obtain it.

Meat, of course, is part of the staple diet of men engaged in an industry as arduous as goldmining, and I think

that consideration should be given to affording every assistance to people on the Goldfields who have supplies of fresh meat sent to them. Another matter which affects the people in my province—and this may sound strange so far as the Goldfields are concerned—is the scarcity of shipping at the port of Esperance. If there were a proper and regular service from the Eastern States to Esperance that port would serve somewhere in the vicinity of 35,000 people living on the Goldfields.

I suggest that efforts be made to ensure that there is a regular monthly shipping service from the Eastern States to Esperance for the convenience of the people I have mentioned. There are all facilities necessary for unloading vessels at Esperance and, if necessary, for loading them, too, though I doubt that there would be much loading done at present. There are facilities for these operations both during the day or at night; and if such a service could be established; it would be a definite saving to the people using the commodities so transported, because the distance from the Eastern States to Esperance is shorter than from the Eastern States to Fremantle and there would be a lower freight charge. It is a shorter distance between Esperance and Kalgoorlie than between Perth and Kalgoorlie—a difference of about 150 miles. If goods were transported via Esperance to Norseman there would be a saving of 500 miles. The shipping of goods from the Eastern States to Esperance is a matter that should receive the serious consideration of the Government.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What about giving us the "Kybra" back?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: I have heard so much about that, that I was going to leave it alone. I did not intend to speak about shipping from Fremantle to Esperance, but I suggest that the Government should give consideration to that matter. I do not think there would be any necessity to take a ship from the North-West run; but could be made available, even if one had to be purchased. Not only would it serve the purpose of carrying goods from Fremantle to Esperance, but it would be useful to the tourist traffic as well. Esperance is not only an ideal summer, but also an ideal winter holiday resort. There are not many seaside resorts that are ideal for holidays in the winter, but in spite of the difficulties that people have to face down there, it is hard during the winter months to secure accommodation in Esperance. I feel certain that it would become even more popular if there were a more regular shipping service from Fremantle.

Hon. G. Fraser: They would be using more local goods then, too.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Yes, probably more local goods would be used if there were a shipping service between Fremantle and Esperance.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Could you suggest where the Government could obtain a ship for that service?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: No, I am not a member of the Government.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is what they pay you for!

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: The establishment of such a service might also be an inducement to private enterprise or even to the Government to establish a plant at Esperance for the manufacture of super. There are many hundreds of thousands of tons of pyrites available at the Iron King mine at Norseman that could be used for conversion into sulphuric acid for use in the manufacture of super. That has to be partly treated in Norseman and then conveyed to the Bassendean works, a distance of 500 miles; whereas if a plant were established at Esperance, it would have to be transported only 120 or 130 miles and could probably be shipped from Esperance to Albany and distributed from Albany to the greater part of the South-West area. The establishment of such a plant would not only be of benefit to Esperance but would also result in a saving of freight for the farmers in the whole of the southern portion of Western Australia.

While I am speaking about Esperance, I should like to suggest that the Government consider giving some assistance to oil companies in the placing of a petrol installation at that port. Esperance serves a large percentage of Western Australia's population in catering for the Goldfields areas, and petrol is one of the most expensive commodities used on the Goldfields. It is 1s. a gallon dearer there than in the metropolitan area, and at Esperance I think it is about 1s. 3d. or 1s. 4d. a gallon dearer. The Lake View and Star Gold Mining Co. gave this matter considerable thought, and eventually installed its own oil tank at Esperance because it appreciated the saving in freight that would result from having a tanker call at Esperance instead of the company having to cart petrol from Fremantle to Boulder. That tank has been in existence for a good many years and proves what an advantage an installation would be to the general public using motorcars on the Goldfields.

There are some people to whom the payment of an extra 1s. a gallon for petrol does not make much difference, but there are many on the Goldfields who depend on the use of petrol in their businesses. There are carriers and taxi-drivers who would be able to give a better service at reduced rates to people on the Goldfields if they were able to obtain their petrol at a cheaper price. It is a far different proposition to hire a taxi on the Goldfields from hiring one in the metropolitan area. Reverting to the necessity for a shipping service for Esperance, I would

point out that many of the shortages experienced on the Goldfields would be overcome if such a service were established.

Only recently we were confronted with a shortage of powdered milk and, what is more serious, of baby foods. Lactogen, which is one of the most vital foods for children, from infancy to 12 months of age, was absolutely unprocureable. That may be a reflection on the companies who are handling the product, but it is imperative that kiddies should have this food. I suggest to the Government that, in the event of another shortage occurring, a subsidy by way of reduced freights by air might be granted for the transport of the limited amount that is required on the Goldfields. A lot has been said about price control and I do not intend to deal with that subject except to say that I think a more serious view should be taken of this matter in the larger centres. At times inspections are made by inspectors of the Prices Branch, but in the large centres permanent inspectors should be appointed. I do not think that they would have to launch many prosecutions, but their presence would act as a deterrent to those who imagine they can flout the law. There is no doubt that the prices regulations are evaded; but if we had inspectors in Kalgoorlie and some of the larger areas in the country, would-be offenders would think twice before committing breaches, knowing that they could be reported on the spot.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You had better not tell that to the master butchers in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: They know my views on the matter. The subject of education has been dealt with by other speakers. It is one that is causing grave concern on the Goldfields, chiefly because schools and individual classrooms are very overcrowded. There are schools at which outbuildings have been converted to accommodate students, and in the majority of instances the classes are far larger than they should be. I consider that supply teachers should be engaged. It is no use saying they are not available, because they are. If use were made of their services, some of the classes could be halved. The hospitals are in a somewhat similar position. That at Kalgoorlie is reasonably well equipped, though the accommodation is severely taxed.

But at places like Norseman and Esperance, particularly at Esperance, the hospital is far too small, and consideration will have to be given to remedying the position, especially during the holiday period when at Esperance the population is increased by 2,000 or 3,000, and the hospital has accommodation for only 11 patients. There are other hospitals which are in a similar position. Not only should

consideration be given to enlarging the hospitals, but additional equipment is also urgently needed. Operating theatres and X-ray equipment are required. I stress this because in many instances in country districts the doctors are capable of rendering any service necessary to patients if only they have the equipment. I am not referring to Kalgoorlie, because that has one of the most up-to-date X-ray plants in Australia; but the people of Esperance and other districts have to go to the Royal Perth Hospital or to private hospitals in the metropolitan area for preliminary examinations of this kind, and unless they actually need treatment by a specialist, that is an expense which is unnecessary and of which they should be relieved by the provision of equipment for small country hospitals.

With the approach of summer not only Kalgoorlie and Boulder but also all the districts from Mundaring to the Eastern Goldfields are again faced with the prospect of water restrictions. It is not that water is not available from the weir, but that the carrying capacity of the pipeline is not sufficient. The Government will have to give consideration either to enlarging the present pipes or laying a duplicate pipeline from the reservoirs at least as far as Southern Cross. We of the Goldfields do not wish to deny water to the farming areas, but this scheme was instituted for the Goldfields and, if the position can be relieved in the way I have suggested, I do not think we should be deprived of reasonable supplies of water.

A shortage of water is a great hardship for people on the Goldfields—particularly for the women of that area—and increases the sacrifices they must make in comparison with those who live in the metropolitan area. Messrs. Cunningham and Bennetts have dealt conclusively with the question of vermin in the farming areas of my electorate and I hope some solution of the vermin problem will be found. The grasshopper menace was alarming in the Southern Cross and Merredin areas last year and must undoubtedly be a matter of grave concern to those engaged in farming. The highway from Perth to Kalgoorlie has been completed except for a distance of about 75 miles and I trust that before the end of this year that section also will have been bituminised.

The road between Coolgardie and Esperance is usually in bad condition during the summer months and I think the Government should do something to improve it. The people of the Goldfields use that road continually from November to April and it takes a heavy toll of their vehicles, particularly in the case of older cars. The road between Esperance and Ravensthorpe was in a terrible condition. I understand that it has been improved to some extent, but if a decent highway were built between

those centres there would be some incentive for people from the metropolitan area to go through Albany and Ravensthorpe to Esperance and back through the Goldfields. The Government should give consideration to the construction of such a highway in the near future. I realise that the Main Roads Board is short of plant on occasions but there are a number of smaller road boards that are anxious to obtain road contracts in their own interests.

I read in the Press last Thursday statements attributed to a certain reverend gentleman speaking to a conference in London. He dealt with euthanasia, birth control, sterilisation and abortion. Usually when those matters are discussed in the public Press one learns of societies or organisations formed to support such theories. Those bodies generally desire to have these things legalised, even in a country like Australia. I have very strong views on these questions and do not think the average person would be much impressed by the statements attributed to this gentleman.

Euthanasia is often termed "mercy killing" but I think that in reality it can be termed nothing but murder. If legalised it would simply allow unscrupulous persons to approach unscrupulous doctors in order to rid themselves of the responsibility which they would otherwise have to assume until the sufferer passed away from natural causes. It has been said that it would be merciful to destroy at birth children born deformed, but the lie is given to that by the fact that many children born with defects of various kinds have lived to become the leaders in many spheres of life.

It is not for man to decide that any child should be destroyed. The engineer who designed the Sydney harbour bridge was once a spastic child. If such a child could live to become a genius no-one has the right to decide that any infant should be destroyed under any circumstances. If we could draft every man, woman and child in Australia into our Defence Forces, we still could not defend ourselves against an invader. To practise birth control in a country such as this seems to me to be nothing but race suicide. Sterilisation as mentioned by this reverend gentleman was adopted by Hitler in dealing with the Jews, but I do not think Australians would be anxious to treat perverts in that way.

The Country Women's Association in Victoria suggested that perverts should be segregated for life in farm colonies and though not quite agreeing with them, I think they may be on the right track. There are ways in which to prevent perverts committing crimes or to rehabilitate them if they have committed offences. I do not think sterilisation is a solution of the problem. The reverend gentleman then

mentioned that abhorrent subject, abortion, and said that under certain circumstances it would be justified. I place abortion in the same category as euthanasia.

Abortion is murder of the unborn child, whereas euthanasia is murder at some stage after birth. I feel that those who support the views of the reverend gentleman are concerned more with their own hardship in looking after an invalid than with the sufferings of the person whom they would destroy. Next this gentleman said that suicide has become more or less accepted in society, but I try to be charitable and think that any suicide is mentally unbalanced at the time of his action, either through ill-health or business or domestic worries. I think we should adopt the old fashioned attitude of our fathers towards suicide and realise that those so inclined are either mentally unbalanced or are cowards leaving their responsibilities to others to bear. The person who preaches such doctrines to the people is a greater moral misfit than the physical misfits whom he would destroy either before or after birth.

On motion by Hon. R. M. Forrest, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 6th September, 1950.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Education Department, as to housing of cultural sections	597
Fremantle harbour, as to review of Tydeman scheme	597
Water supplies, as to State-wide flat rate Mine Workers' Relief Fund, as to increasing allowances	597
Hospitals, as to Geraldton regional site Chandler Alunite Works, as to supply of gypsum and plaster	598
Prices Control, as to woollen materials Railways, (a) as to Upper Darling Range buildings, etc.	598
(b) as to Brew spark-arrester	598
(c) as to "PMR" class locomotives	599
Gas supply, as to utilisation of local coal Traffic, as to suspension of motorist's license	599
Address-in-reply, sixteenth day	599

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

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

As to Housing of Cultural Sections.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is it proposed either to erect or acquire premises in the city for the purpose of properly housing the cultural specialist sections of the Education Department, viz., visual education, music, arts and crafts, physical education and vocational guidance?

(2) If so, what stage has been reached in this regard?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Efforts have been made to acquire premises for the visual education and arts sections, but so far no suitable premises have been found. Consideration is being given to the erection of premises, but no decision has yet been reached.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Review of Tydeman Scheme.

Mr. SHEARN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In view of his reply to my question on the 31st August, regarding terms of reference for the inquiry into the Fremantle harbour extension proposals, will he give an assurance that all the matters raised by me in a question on the 23rd August, and also by correspondence, will be included in the terms of reference?

(2) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) The hon. member can be assured that all matters about which he is concerned will be covered in the inquiry.

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to State-wide Flat Rate.

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister for Water Supply:

(1) When will he put into operation a flat rate charge for water under Government control in this State (except irrigation), in accordance with a motion agreed to unanimously last session in the Legislative Assembly?

(2) If not immediately, why?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) As the problems concerned have not materially altered since the hon. member was on this side of the House, the Government proposes to have all aspects of the subject investigated by a committee, the appointment of which is now being considered.