

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 23rd August, 1956.

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

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE, WEDNESDAY.

Point of Order.

Hon. D. Brand: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, was the motion for the adjournment of the House actually put last night?

The Premier: I hope so.

Mr. Speaker: I might explain to the House that, when I had put the motion I was under the impression that I had declared it carried. It was not until after I had left the Chamber that I realised what had happened. I asked for the ayes and noes, but I did not announce that the ayes had it. It was not until I was outside the Chamber that I realised I had sensed the feelings of the House and had taken for granted that the motion was carried.

Hon. D. Brand: I was merely clearing up a very doubtful situation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. May: Could not you sleep all night?

Mr. Speaker: I do not know now whether I sensed the feeling of the House correctly at the time, but I thought I did.

QUESTIONS.

MEDICAL SCHOOL.

Assurance on Free Tuition.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Premier:

Because of the principles on which the University of Western Australia was founded, will he give an assurance that tuition in the new medical school will be free?

The PREMIER replied:

An assurance can be given that no person qualified to enter the medical school for training will be refused entry on financial grounds.

SULIMAN RAMADAN.*Tabling of Files Concerning Release.*

Mr. MANN asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

Will he table the files dealing with the release from custody of Suliman Ramadan?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:
Yes.

EDUCATION.*(a) Supply of Typewriters to Donnybrook Junior High School.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Education:

Can he say if the three typewriters approved by the chief administrative officer of the Education Department last April for supply to the Donnybrook Junior High School will be supplied this financial year?

The MINISTER replied:

The typewriters were received by the school on Thursday, the 16th August.

(b) Funds for High School Building Plan.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) In view of the fact that the urgently needed high school building plan outlined by him in answer to Questions (2) and (3) on Tuesday, the 21st August, is, as he said, "subject to the availability of loan funds," has the Government any alternative to merely waiting for additional funds from the Loan Council?

(2) Does he feel that the phrase, "subject to availability of loan funds" absolves the Government from all responsibility in properly apportioning available funds to provide for urgent educational requirements?

The MINISTER replied:

Contracts for the erection of classrooms have been let on the deferred payment plan.

The Government will continue to allocate from loan funds the maximum amount possible, having regard to its overall programme.

I might add that if the hon. member has any practical suggestions in this regard, the Government would be pleased to hear from him.

(c) Enrolment for High Schools.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) In what high schools are the enrolment figures over 1,000 students?

(2) What is the present enrolment for these schools?

(3) What is the planned enrolment for these schools?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Kent Street
Midland Junction
John Curtin.

(2) Kent Street 1,566
Midland Junction 1,193
John Curtin 1,073

(3) Kent Street 1,560
Midland Junction 1,790
John Curtin 1,615

(d) Policy on Maximum Enrolments.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is there a firm policy on maximum enrolments in—

- (a) primary schools;
- (b) high schools;
- (c) technical schools?

(2) If so, will he please state it?

The MINISTER replied:

It is not possible to fix definite maximum enrolments for primary, high or technical schools. However, when the enrolment of a school becomes unreasonably high, the department takes whatever measures are possible to alleviate the position.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.*Funds Spent on Bunbury Power Station.*

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the total amount of funds spent during the last financial year on the Bunbury power station?

(2) What is the total amount of loan funds that has been, or is to be, set aside this financial year for the Bunbury power station project?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £1,814,227.

(2) As the loan programme has not yet been approved, no specific amount has been set aside.

NORTH-WEST.*(a) Provision at Ports of Air-Sea Rescue Equipment.*

Mr. NORTON asked the Premier:

Will he have certain essential items of air-sea rescue equipment, such as lifebelts and inflatable dinghies kept at all North-West ports for use in cases of emergency as at present no such equipment is available?

The PREMIER replied:

Lifebelts and dinghies are kept on North-West jetties. The request will be further investigated.

(b) Taxation Concessions and Financial Assistance.

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Premier:

Will he advise the House if the Commonwealth Government has given any definite answers to the requests made by the all-party delegation for taxation concessions and financial assistance for the development of the North-West?

The PREMIER replied:

Only in connection with the granting of assistance to the blue asbestos industry at Wittenoom. Repeated requests for decisions on the other questions have not yet brought any results.

(c) Deep Water Port at Derby.

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Premier:

Can he indicate when finance will be available for the provision for a deep water port at Derby?

The PREMIER replied:

Not at present.

DRAINAGE.**Funds for Collie Townsite.**

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

Will he advise if any loan funds will be provided this financial year, to assist in dealing with the Collie townsite drainage problem?

The MINISTER replied:

No final allocation of loan funds for the current financial year has yet been made.

The matter of granting financial assistance to country local authorities (including Collie) undertaking major drainage schemes is under active consideration.

WELLINGTON WEIR.**Acreeage of Water Catchment.**

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

What is the area of land (in acres) comprising the water catchment area of the Wellington Weir?

The MINISTER replied:

The catchment area comprises 694,900 acres.

LIQUOR.**Press Report on Illicit Sale and Conduct of Police.**

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Did he see the report in the "Daily News" of the 18th instant of the prosecution of a Maylands shopkeeper for selling a bottle of whisky?

(2) Is such report substantially in accord with fact?

(3) Did the police constable concerned act on his own initiative, or under instructions from a superior?

(4) Is it practice for police to persuade persons to commit offences?

(5) In what other branches of police work do police officers act in this provocative manner?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) Under instructions from a superior officer.

(4) No.

(5) Police officers do not so act and the statement in court was quite untrue. A reply by the Acting Commissioner of Police denying a much similar allegation has been handed to the "Daily News" but unfortunately not published. The public would be well advised not to accept as factual all statements appearing in the Press.

RAILWAYS.**(a) Housing of Kalgoorlie Workers.**

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

(1) Is the accommodation of railway workers in Kalgoorlie a problem at the present time?

(2) Has the department a long-range plan for the proper housing of workers in Kalgoorlie?

(3) If so, has the department acquired any land for the implementation of the project?

(4) If the answer to No. (2) is "Yes," what is the extent of the plan?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) No, there are private houses to let and for sale at Kalgoorlie.

(2) No. The Railway Department is able to handle minor housing programmes only. The implementation of major programmes is a function of the State Housing Commission.

(3) and (4) Answered by No. (2).

(b) Passengers and Operating Costs.

Mr. WILD (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Early last week I addressed a question to the Minister concerning the number of passengers and the cost of running suburban trains at weekends. When I indicated that the answer to the question was not satisfactory and that I felt the information should be available, the Minister said he would have a look at it and let me know. Can he let me know whether he has any further information?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

There is some further information available from the Railways Commission. The advice is that the reply given previously could be enlarged upon by adding that some of it would not be available at all and some of it would have to be estimated.

Dealing with the three questions that were submitted, the replies are as follows:—

- (1) The normal records of the W.A.G.R. and of railways generally do not set down passenger journeys with such timing. In addition, there are no records to show the number of passengers travelling on season or weekly tickets during the times mentioned, nor those who buy return tickets on Fridays and may travel on the return journey at any time up to Monday, nor even those who travel one way on Saturday morning and may return in the afternoon or evening of that day. Passengers are not counted except when a census is required.
- (2) Answered by No. (1).
- (3) This information is not recorded for such period. On reflection this will be seen to be equally unreasonable to expect. Some of the staff on suburban passenger services also work on goods freight traffic (i.e., signalmen, shunters, yard staff, etc.)

HOUSING.

(a) *Vacant Rental Homes at Albany.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

How many Commonwealth-State rental homes are vacant at Albany?

The MINISTER replied:

One house at present.

(b) *Houses Erected and Vacant at Medina.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many homes have been erected by the State Housing Commission at Medina, under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement, or Workers' Homes Act?

(2) Of the above, how many are vacant?

The MINISTER replied:

There is no readily available segregation of Medina-Calista houses. The figures hereunder are for Kwinana.

- (1) (a) Commonwealth - State rental homes—143.
- (b) State Housing Act—Nil.
- (2) (a) Commonwealth - State rental homes—Nil.
- (b) State Housing Act—Nil.

(c) *Contracts Let for Various Types of Homes.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many contracts (and for what amounts) have been let this financial year by the State Housing Commission for—

- (a) Commonwealth - State rental homes;
- (b) Workers' homes;
- (c) War service homes?

(2) How many of the above are pre-cut, timber-framed?

(3) How many contractors are engaged in the erection of pre-cut houses?

The MINISTER replied:

	No.	Amount
(1) (a) Contractors	87	—*
(b) Contractors	20	£42,881
(c) Contractors	136	£363,511

*Amount not available owing to a number being P.W.D. contracts.

(2) 25 (North West only).

(3) 15.

(d) *Houses Built by Commission and Private Concerns, and Allotments.*

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many houses were erected in the metropolitan area for the year ended the 30th June, 1956—

- (a) by the Housing Commission;
- (b) by private concerns?

(2) How many houses were erected in the country areas for the year ended the 30th June, 1956—

- (a) by the Housing Commission;
- (b) by private concerns?

(3) How many houses erected in the metropolitan area by the Housing Commission have been allotted to two-unit families?

(4) How many houses erected in the country by the Housing Commission have been allotted to two-unit families?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) 3,043.
- (b) Figures not yet available.
- (2) (a) 653.
- (b) Not yet available.
- (3) 831.
- (4) 22.

I might add that the reason for the figures not being available, where indicated in the reply, is due to the fact that they are collated by the statistician's office extending over the whole State and it is necessary for them to await returns from the respective local authorities.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.*Form of Undertaking.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What is the form of undertaking to serve the sick that is given by medical practitioners registered in Western Australia?

(2) To whom is such undertaking given?

(3) What steps are taken and by whom to ensure that such undertaking is observed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) In the Hippocratic oath medical practitioners give a professional undertaking to serve the sick.

(2) To each practitioner's own conscience.

(3) Complaints concerning the professional conduct of medical practitioners are dealt with by the Medical Board, which is established under the provisions of the Medical Act.

ROADS.*Condition of Albany Highway.*

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

(1) Is he aware of the deplorable condition of that portion of Albany Highway which runs through Victoria Park?

(2) As the roadway cannot be repaired until the disused tramlines are removed, can he inform the House—

(a) Will this work be put in hand in the near future?

(b) If the answer is in the negative, can he indicate when this work will be put in hand?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) This road surface does need attention.

(2) It is intended to remove these tramlines in the latter part of this year and early next year.

ROTTNEST AIRSTRIP.*Obligations of Federal Government.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Premier:

(1) Is it a fact that under an agreement entered into between the Federal Government and the Rottneest Board of Control, the Federal Government is responsible for maintaining the serviceability of the aircraft landing strip at Rottneest?

(2) If this is so, what steps, if any, have been taken to ensure that the Federal Government fulfils its obligations in time to facilitate air transport to this popular holiday resort for the approaching summer period?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Representations will be made to the Federal Government regarding this matter.

AGRICULTURE.*Western Australian Potatoes.*

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is the Government aware that 200 tons of potatoes left Donnybrook at 10 p.m. yesterday for the Eastern States in a convoy of road vehicles?

(2) Is the Government aware that £60 per ton is on offer for potatoes from Donnybrook?

(3) Is the Government still of the opinion that such trafficking in potatoes to the Eastern States is not of sufficient consequence to have any effect on local supplies?

(4) Has any consideration been given recently by the Potato Marketing Board to the raising of the price of potatoes to local growers?

(5) What is the price per ton paid by the board to local growers?

The MINISTER replied:

As I have only just received a copy of this question I was unable to get any details. In regard to No. (1), I am not aware that 200 tons of potatoes left Donnybrook yesterday, but it would not surprise me if that was a fact because in recent days there has been a change in the policy of the board respecting the export of potatoes sent to the Eastern States. I understand that up to 200 tons of second-grade potatoes have been approved by the board for sale in the Eastern States, and it could well be that a fair proportion of the 200 tons mentioned in this question consisted of that grade of potato, but without notice I am unable to give a definite reply.

I am aware that £60 is being offered for potatoes from Donnybrook. The Potato Marketing Board and the Government, if I might be permitted to speak on behalf of the Government although the matter has not been referred to it, do not consider that the quantity of potatoes being exported from Western Australia to the Eastern States has had a serious effect on home supplies up to the present, so much so that at present they are arranging for quite a considerable quantity of second-grade potatoes to be sent to the East. In addition, they know that they can quite safely dispose of some 300 to 400 tons of first-grade potatoes without in any way affecting the supply for the local market.

The Potato Marketing Board has given consideration to the raising of the price of potatoes to local growers, but as I have explained before, the board, in carrying out its function in the present excellent

manner, has not only given thought to the requirements of growers, but at all times has taken into account what should be paid by consumers. That is the reason why the consumers in this State can buy potatoes at a reasonable price, this State being the only one in the Commonwealth where that position applies.

In answer to No. (5), I believe that the price per ton of potatoes payable by the board to local growers is, approximately, £34.

POLICE.

Tabling of File.

Mr. JAMIESON (without notice) asked the Minister for Police:

In view of the public interest shown in Police Department File No. 4340/54, will he allow this file to remain on the Table of the House for a further week?

The MINISTER replied:

The file referred to has already been on the Table of the House for seven days and members have had reasonable opportunity of viewing it. Great inconvenience has been caused to the Police Department and to my own department in answering questions and public statements relating to the file. In the circumstances, it would be best for all if the file were returned to my office, and any member who desires to see it may do so there.

GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT SERVICES.

Increased Fares and Losses.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) As the impact of higher tram, bus and ferry fares will be keenly felt by the public and as these increases will affect the cost of living regimen, will he indicate what are the prime causes behind the loss of £273,000 incurred by the Tramways Department for the last financial year?

(2) What practical action is the Government taking, apart from raising fares, to prune the losses for this financial year?

(3) What is the loss shown on the—

(a) tram services;

(b) bus services;

(c) ferry services
for the last financial year?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Regarding the reasons for the losses, they could be under two headings. Firstly, that there are higher operating costs, and, secondly, a continuing tendency for a greater number of people to use private cars. I might mention that the falling off in patronage of public transport services occurs in every part of Australia, and I understand in very many other parts of the world.

(2) As members are aware, in order to meet the position so as to effect economies and avoid duplications, overlapping, etc., the Government at present is considering proposals for the establishment of a single operating authority in the metropolitan area.

(3) The losses shown under the various headings over the past 12 months are—

(a) Trams—£57,677.

(b) Trolley-buses—£93,118; omnibuses—£115,322.

(c) Ferries—£6,948.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

Monopoly by State Insurance Office.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Premier:

On the 10th March, 1956, the report published in "The West Australian" of the Premier's policy speech for the State elections, said that provision would be made for all workers' compensation business to be transacted through the State Government Insurance Office. Does this mean that it is proposed to introduce legislation for the purpose of giving a monopoly of workers' compensation business to the State Government Insurance Office?

The PREMIER replied:

Consideration will be given by Cabinet in the near future to that question.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. May, leave of absence for four weeks granted to Mr. Rodoreda (Pilbara) on the ground of urgent public business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. MAY (Collie) [2.38]: Not merely because I want to follow the example of other members who have spoken on the Address-in-reply in conveying their good wishes to you, Sir, on your elevation to the Speaker's Chair, but for personal reasons, I desire to express my congratulations on your elevation. Likewise to the new Chairman of Committees, I extend my good wishes. I hope that with a reasonable Opposition he will not have a difficult time while he occupies that position.

Hon. D. Brand: Something he would not have received if you had been over here.

Mr. MAY: That remains to be seen. I also congratulate the new Minister for Police. I hope his term of office will be pleasant and long. To the Government I offer my congratulations on its return to power but I suppose that was only to be expected.

I express my deepest sympathy at the passing of the late Hon. Harry Hearn, M.L.C. He was a genial soul. I sat with him as a member of the Joint House Committee for some years and I learned to value his keen sense of humour and of duty to see that whatever was done for this Parliament was right. I also express my regret at the death of the late Hon. Don Barker, M.L.C., and extend my sympathy for his widow. He was a man who lived for the North-West of this State. What he did not know about the North-West was not worth knowing and I think members will agree that he had plenty of ability to express himself in another Chamber in regard to the needs of the great North.

Personally, I regret that the Leader of the Opposition is not in his seat as usual this afternoon because there are one or two—

Hon. D. Brand: The Leader of the Opposition is absent this afternoon attending the funeral of a relative.

Mr. MAY: I appreciate that information. I did not intend to say anything detrimental to the Leader of the Opposition who is a man I respect, but do want to make one or two observations regarding his speech on the Address-in-reply and would have preferred him to have been present, because I would not say anything behind his back that I would not say to his face. I appreciate the information given me by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and regret the reason for his leader's absence.

When the Leader of the Opposition spoke to this debate, he had one or two "grizzles" to put before the House. Apart from his remarks on the result of the State election, I consider his was a good and informative speech. I remember when the Prime Minister was over here at the time of the last Federal election—I listened to him in Forrest Place outside the G.P.O.—he was assisted by the present Leader of the Opposition of this House and I remember the Prime Minister saying, "Where is this great Labour Party? I am trying to find it, but I am unable to find this great Labour Party in this State anywhere." The Leader of the Opposition was backing him up. In this regard, I want to say that should the Prime Minister return to this State on his way back from his present tour, I think the Leader of the Opposition should do the right thing and invite the Prime Minister to visit this Chamber.

Members: Hear! hear!

Mr. MAY: I do not know whether the Deputy Leader of the Opposition remembers that occasion, but I do quite well, and the Prime Minister was almost tearful because he could not find the "great Labour Party" in this State. He was not far wrong when he said, "the great Labour Party".

Mr. Evans: Crocodile tears.

Mr. MAY: I do not think he lied. I would offer him the opportunity of coming to this Chamber in order to discover just where this "great Labour Party" is.

Hon. D. Brand: Dr. Evatt could not find it, either.

The Minister for Transport: Not much! You cannot keep your members together in this Chamber.

Hon. D. Brand: I do not know about keeping the members together—the Labour Party will not read us a screed on how to keep them together.

Mr. MAY: I have the floor at the present time and I feel that the Leader of the Opposition tried to console himself in regard to the result of the last State general election by comparing the overall figures. It does not matter what the overall figures were; the ultimate result can be seen in this Chamber.

The Minister for Lands: In the numbers.

Mr. MAY: The Leader of the Opposition also spoke very briefly and carefully on the coal situation in this State. He said that at one time we did not know whether certain railway engines could run from day to day. I would like to know what he had in mind when he said that. I could have understood his remarks if he meant that the engine drivers and the firemen are supposed to run to a schedule day by day, having regard to the class of coal or "muck" they were supplied with to keep steam up and run to a timetable. I will not say any more about coal at the moment but will do so before I sit down.

I want to make a few observations which affect the Forests Department of this State. It would appear that when a certain individual area in a particular locality is a bit down on its luck, there are people who are always prepared to throw at it everything, including the kitchen sink. At the present moment, I feel that the electorate I represent could do with a helping hand in regard to certain matters. We find at this particular time the Forests Department is adamant and will not allow any more settlement to take place in the Collie electorate. The Water Purity Committee is of the same opinion, and, just for luck the Mines Department, has thrown in another restriction which will confine a very large area to what they call a "mining reserve". Therefore, between the three departments I have mentioned, the outlook, so far as settlement around Collie is concerned, is very bleak.

With regard to the Forests Department, I want to say—and I have said it before in front of the Minister and the Conservator of Forests—that I believe the karri and jarrah country of this State should be well and truly preserved and I am 100 per cent. behind the Forests Department in its efforts to do that. However, I still express the opinion that it was never

intended, when the Forests Department was brought into operation in this State, that it should take into the State forests land containing no marketable timber and which had been taken up for selection many years ago but for some reason or other had been forfeited.

When I get applications from people who are desirous of re-selecting that land, I am invariably told it is reserved for State forest purposes. I do not think that was ever intended; the Forests Department should look after the timber wealth of the State and not interfere with productivity outside the forests.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Have you seen the Minister personally? The Minister could speak for himself in that regard.

Mr. MAY: If one looks back in Hansard, one will find that I have offered this suggestion on several occasions, and I am still of the opinion that the Forests Department has its own particular job, and I would say that it has its own particular limitations.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Would you say the Minister is a dictator?

Mr. MAY: No, not by any means. I have had experience of dictators, but that was when I was on the other side of the House. I do not believe it was ever intended that the department controlling the forests in this State was to be allowed to take land without any marketable timber, and some without timber at all, into the State forests. I believe that the forests as they are cut over afford a reasonable opportunity for the department to proceed with reforestation. I again make the plea in this Chamber that where land anywhere in the State has not a growth of marketable timber of value to the State, the Forests Department should let it alone. Irrespective of what Government is in office, I will continue to advocate that.

Mr. Ackland: You will have lots of support.

Mr. MAY: I want to say something about what the member for Darling Range spoke of last night, namely, the question of protecting our various dams and reservoirs from salinity. I am a long way with him on what he said last night. There has been this effect at Wellington Dam that further settlement in the area I represent has been completely closed down. This extends well past my area and into the electorates of Narrogin, Blackwood and Harvey. The best piece of land, without a doubt, in this State, and in the most assured rainfall area, has been completely closed down because the Water Purity Committee can think of no other alternative to protect the water from pollution than to stop further settlement.

Let me point out the ridiculous position that is arising in connection with this. As members know, if land is selected, one man takes up a fair stretch of country.

If all the land in my area and in the other electorates to which I have referred, were allowed to be selected, it would not be one iota of the cause of pollution compared with the township of Collie today. There we have a large town of between 9,000 and 10,000 people who are living right on the banks of the river because it runs completely through the town. If there is to be any cause of pollution, that surely will be the biggest one. I was wondering, when the member for Darling Range was speaking last night, how the salinity of the water would be affected in the case of Wellington Weir where the water for irrigation that is taken from the weir is drawn from the bottom of the dam. I think that is one of the solutions to any purification of the Wellington Weir. I hope that the question of the purity of water, so far as weirs and dams are concerned, will receive full consideration.

Surely we can discover some effective solution other than the closing down of the best areas in the State at a time when men in my electorate would give anything to take up land there. They cannot do that because they are prevented by three departments. It wants only some common-sense and thought given to the question for an alteration to be made. Imagine what would be done in England or America! In my particular case, they would close down half of England if they wanted to protect the water there. But those in control there have other methods, and why should we not adopt them here? If our people do not understand the position sufficiently well, we should either bring somebody here from those countries, or send someone from here to learn what they are doing.

Mr. Bovell: The hon. member is quite right, and I will join with him in a deputation to the Minister concerned.

Mr. MAY: On no occasion that I have spoken previously in this House have there been so many members of the Opposition with me.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are on the right premises.

Mr. MAY: If I did not know they were sincere, I would view their support with suspicion.

Mr. Bovell: We have the same problems as you have.

Mr. MAY: I want the hon. member to help me.

Mr. Bovell: The other day I wrote to the Minister for Works about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Bovell: This matter is very deep in my heart.

The Minister for Transport: I can understand the Opposition members being up a pole, but I am surprised at the member for Collie.

Mr. MAY: I have been up it for quite a while now, and I will sit on top of it until I get satisfaction!

Hon. D. Brand: The Minister for Forests wants to chase you up another pole.

Mr. MAY: I am glad everyone is so interested; I was afraid they would all walk out or do something like that! There is one other matter I wish to speak about and that is in regard to the small timber mills that were brought into existence after the end of the last war to assist in the provision of timber which was in very short supply as a consequence of the all-out war effort. Owing to the timber situation today, many of these small mills are closing down, and I am alarmed about the position of the workers at those mills. There are not many of them, but I remember reading an article in a newspaper a short time ago which stated that the Forests Department was most anxious to expand its work of reforestation. I suggest to the Minister for Forests that it may be possible, instead of uprooting these people from their homes, for the Government to employ them in the reforestation of our State forests.

The Minister for Transport: What do you mean by uprooting these people from their homes?

Mr. MAY: Take for instance the mill at Harris River. The men employed at that mill have their homes in Collie; some of them are purchasing their homes from the State Housing Commission. These men go out to the mill each day and come home at night. If these people have to go elsewhere to find employment, they will have to leave their homes, on which they have already paid a certain amount. I feel certain that consideration should be given to the situation by the department, and, providing the Minister in charge can get sufficient money to extend the reforestation work, I think a marvellous job could be done in settling those people. Although the mill is closed down and these men have been temporarily thrown out of employment I think they could be employed by the Forests Department. If that department is so keen on embracing all the land possible outside of the State forests, it should compensate these men by providing them with employment.

The Minister for Transport: If we could get coal a little bit more cheaply, we would have money available to spend in that direction.

Mr. MAY: The Minister will get all the coal he wants later on. I would point out that the number of weirs and dams in this State is constantly increasing and if we are to reserve sufficient land to avoid pollution of the water in these newly created dams—on the present system—we will end up with more of our country reserved than settled. The population of Western

Australia is increasing constantly and the supply of water will have to be increased in proportion. We already have the spectacle of a new weir being built at Serpentine and that will need a large catchment area.

If the present process continues I can visualise the time when all our land will be reserved as catchment areas and no one will be able to live in the country districts at all. I wish now to refer to the grain distillery built at Collie during the war period, but never used, thank God, because the war finished when it did. I believe that flax-growing which was established at Boyup Brook is now on a permanent basis and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, all that flax has to be transported to Melbourne for processing. I think the Department of Industrial Development should consider using the grain distillery at Collie for the purpose of processing the flax and I believe the flax-growers themselves would appreciate a move in that direction.

Mr. Hall: Was that not considered earlier?

Mr. MAY: Yes, and the necessary money was forthcoming at that time, but the expert who was to undertake the work of processing the flax at Collie started off on the wrong foot and we lost him. Since then the project has drifted into the background. I am making this suggestion to the Department of Industrial Development because I feel that the flax should be processed here, thus providing employment for our own people.

The next question to which I desire to refer is the coking of Collie coal. There is no doubt that this coal has been positively and successfully coked. The coke has been tried out by foundries in Perth—in fairly large quantities—and the reports on its use are highly favourable, but it seems to me that quite a long delay is ensuing in regard to establishing the economics of the process and I have not been able to discover the reason for that. Every time I make inquiries I am informed that those concerned are trying to establish the economics of coking Collie coal and that until they have done so nothing further can be achieved. One gets tired of that sort of answer and so I mention the matter here in the hope that the question will receive attention.

Imported coke, I understand, costs anything up to £28 per ton and so I expect that the local coke will have to be produced at something below that figure, but so far I have been unable to find out what progress has been made in establishing the economics of the process. This is the 10th year, at any rate, in which I have advocated the cause of our coal in this Chamber and until now no other voice has been raised in support of my contentions either here or in another place. But at long last

I am glad to be able to say that a member in another place has shown some interest in the matter, as members will see for themselves if they care to read his speech.

The member to whom I refer could not be expected to be so well informed on the question as one who has worked and lived his life in the industry, but I was very glad to know that at least one other member was sufficiently interested to take the question up and expound it in that Chamber. He said, with reference to coal, "It is a problem of vital importance to the State," and there is no question about that. He also said, "Collie and coal mean many things to many people." I wish now to say that I despise any member who tries to throw off at me because I represent Collie coal in this House, or any member who maintains that we are on the downward grade. Members can take that as they like, because I mean it.

There is not a more vital problem in this State today than that relating to Collie coal, the method of its production, and what it means to the people of the State and the State itself. There are those who, in spite of the fact that we have this extremely valuable asset, will not regard it seriously because they say oil can be bought cheaply at the present time. I noticed in last night's "Daily News" that another expert has entered the field. I refer to Mr. Gavin Casey who wrote under the caption, "Cost-Plus is Killing Collie." He is quite wrong; cost-plus has killed Collie. Mr. Casey then continues with a diatribe about the reasons why the present position has been reached in regard to coal. I say now that he does not know anything about the merits of the case at all, and I think that is sufficient comment.

No doubt, under a system of cost-plus and would-be mechanisation, the coal industry in this State has been completely ruined. Year after year I have stood up in this Chamber and asked somebody to take a grip of the situation there and save the industry before it was thrown to the dogs.

Mr. Nalder: Who is in a better position to do that than you are? At least to initiate it.

Mr. MAY: I took every step possible; I have asked somebody to take a grip of the situation, year after year, and yet I have not heard one member get up on his feet and support me. Not one member has got up and said that he recognised that what I was saying was perfectly true. So do not let the hon. member try to put the blame on me, because I can only be the mouthpiece of the men in the industry and those responsible for that industry. Year after year I have spoken about the public money that was being wasted there—wastefully wasted—and I might as well have been talking to somebody outside,

because it had no effect. Not one member offered to come to Collie with me to see what was going on.

Repeatedly I pointed out that machinery was being bought under the cost-plus system, and valuable dollars were used to pay for it—and they were valuable after the war—yet the machinery was lying idle on the surface. It stayed like that for years until I made a noise about it in this Chamber. But what happened then? The machinery was taken down below and still was not used. That is only one of the little things that went on under this wretched cost-plus system which will, if we are not careful, cause us to lose an industry that is valuable to this State.

Mr. Court: Have you made much progress in the last three years in your representations to the Government?

Mr. MAY: I have, and I will give the hon. member a specific instance. I am glad he mentioned the point.

Mr. Court: We are anxious to hear about it.

Mr. MAY: I would mention the Stockton open-cut! That was the first open-cut granted to the companies at Collie. After the overburden was removed there was a 3ft. layer of shale. The hon. member will have to listen very carefully because I would hate him to miss any of what I am about to say.

Mr. Court: We are all ears.

Mr. MAY: As I said, after the overburden was removed, there was a 3ft. layer of shale—it is called shale but I think that is only to give it a decent name because it is really stone—on top of the seam of coal. But did the coal company tell the men that they had to take off that 3ft. of shale and remove it with the overburden? No! It was mined with the seam of coal and, what is more, the company got 70s. a ton for it.

Mr. O'Brien: Dear, oh dear!

Mr. Johnson: That is enterprise.

Mr. MAY: The people responsible for selling that to the State Electricity Commission and the Railway Department deserve to be put into gaol.

Mr. Court: Who accepted it as coal when it was not coal?

Mr. MAY: The Railway Department and S.E.C.; they had no other alternative because no other coal was available.

The Minister for Transport: Whose job was it to check the coal at the mine?

Mr. MAY: There is an inspector there but he cannot look at every mine.

The Minister for Transport: What about the employees?

Mr. MAY: I want to finish the story because the member for Nedlands asked me what has happened over the last three

years and I want to tell him. When the present Minister for Mines took over the portfolio three years ago, I immediately drew his attention to the position down there and he would not believe it. I said to him, "All right; come to Collie and see it." He did so, and as a result that 3ft. of shale or stone, as it should be called, was removed with the overburden, and those who had been buying the product—the poor devils—and had been trying to use it as coal, were relieved of some worries at least.

Members would be astounded to see some of the things that have gone on in the coal industry. If they had been sufficiently interested to go down and have a look before some of these things were smothered up, they would have been amazed. The member for Dale knows what went on, but he is not in the same happy position as I am of being able to get up and talk about it. I am not tied by St. George's Terrace interests—not a bit of it.

The Minister for Lands: The industry ought to be nationalised.

Mr. MAY: The Minister has said that the industry ought to be nationalised. This is an industry run by private enterprise and I do not know whether the Minister will be sorry or not that he has reminded me about this point. Members opposite delight in getting up and talking about private enterprise. I believe that most of them think they are right in what they say.

Mr. Bovell: We are sure we are right.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member should not be too sure. He would be advised to wait for a moment or two instead of butting in.

Mr. Bovell: This country would sink if it were not for private enterprise.

Mr. MAY: We were told that the Government of the day—not this Government—would supply sufficient funds to the coal companies to enable them to mechanise the existing mines at Collie. That is quite a laudable object. Amalgamated Collieries received £636,936, the Griffin Coal Company, £430,000 and Western Collieries £467,500, making a total of £1,534,436. That money was supplied for a specific purpose—to enable the companies to mechanise and develop their deep mines—so that the promises which were given when the first open-cut was started—that immediately the deep mines came into full production the open-cuts would be closed and the consumers would be given the best quality coal—could be honoured. I want members to bear in mind that over the last 10 years various Governments have advanced to the coal industry, which is run by private concerns, over £1,500,000. At present the sum outstanding is £1,046,594.

Mr. Wild: How much do Amalgamated Collieries owe out of the £600,000 advanced to it?

Mr. MAY: They owe £261,944.

Mr. Wild: Would that company be the only one to honour its contractual obligations?

Mr. MAY: I am not denying that.

The Minister for Lands: The hon. member is a full bottle on coal.

Mr. MAY: I would say that Amalgamated Collieries were in a most fortunate position because for years they had a monopoly before the other two poorer companies commenced to operate.

Mr. Wild: Now they are providing cheaper coal, with cost-plus, than the other people.

Mr. MAY: For years they had the best possible conditions for winning the coal.

Mr. Wild: Then what are you complaining about?

Mr. MAY: I am complaining about the fact that during the time Amalgamated Collieries had a monopoly in this State, the company did not go on and develop its mines as it should have done. The company went here, there or anywhere a pocket of good coal showed up.

Mr. Wild: Are you a miner yourself?

Mr. MAY: That is the reason why it has not been possible to mechanise those mines. But we are getting away from the answer I wanted to give the member for Nedlands. When the first open-cut was granted it was agreed that the open-cut system of mining in Collie would cease immediately the deep mines were in a position to supply all the coal needs of the State. That condition was agreed upon. These advances were then made to the various coalmining companies to develop and mechanise the deep mines with the sole object of closing the open-cuts as soon as possible.

Mr. Wild: What have you done about the open-cuts?

Mr. MAY: I will tell the hon. member later what I have done about the open-cuts.

The Minister for Lands: The member for Dale must feel guilty about something.

Mr. Wild: I know that the coal we are getting now is cheaper than you could give us under your nationalised system.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAY: Over the years the Government has advanced to the various coal companies more than £1,500,000 for a specific purpose, namely, to develop their mines and to produce the best coal possible for our public utilities. The situation is that a private company or private enterprise—for which the Opposition stands—has borrowed money from the State to produce an

article which, in the first place, does not belong to it but to the State. This company then sells the coal to the State at a profit after producing it on the money that was loaned to it by the State.

Mr. Heal: It is a hell of a state, is it not?

Mr. MAY: —and the Opposition calls that private enterprise! I suggest that they must feel very proud of such private enterprise. No wonder the member for Vasse has cleared out of the Chamber! In fact, I am surprised that there is even one member left on that side of Chamber. Members opposite get up and speak on private enterprise. I point to that coal-mining company as an example of it, and I defy anybody to query what I have said. The figures I have quoted are not mine; but the official figures.

Mr. Wild: Why do you not get rid of this cost-plus system?

Mr. MAY: I know that what I am saying is hurting members opposite. It is a case of the scab coming off the sore. I have to say such things to make the people opposite understand what can happen to a valuable industry in this State unless they, like myself, try to take some interest in it and ascertain the real reason why our industries are turning from Collie coal to alternative fuels. I can tell the House much of what is going on down at Collie under this cost-plus system.

Mr. Wild: And why do you not get rid of it?

Mr. MAY: Members opposite would never believe what a mess the previous Government helped to create. The hon. member's Government was in office for only six years but it did terrible things to our coalmining industry.

Mr. Wild: But you have not done anything to get rid of the cost-plus system.

The Premier: The member for Dale did it in less than six years.

Mr. Bovell: I was absent from the Chamber trying to stop the company which the hon. member is talking about from getting more land.

Mr. MAY: The member for Vasse is only trying to make apologies for his absence, but I know why he left the Chamber. He was not game to sit and listen to what I had to say.

Mr. Bovell: You are the most fearless person I have ever met, but even you have not got me bluffed.

Mr. MAY: I would not try to bluff the hon. member. Had these mines been developed in a proper manner during the period over which this money was advanced by the various Governments in office we would not find ourselves in the situation that confronts us today. As soon as the coalmining companies realised the potentialities of the open-cut method of mining,

they were not interested in developing their deep mines. They were not interested one scrap!

Let me tell the House what happened. Immediately the Mines Department discovered, by boring, the 46ft. seam of coal at Muja, the Griffin Coalmining Co. ceased its operations in an endeavour to develop the Centaur mine. All the company's efforts were concentrated on open-cut mining. I would have no objection to this policy of the companies if the open-cut method produced the best coal for customers, but it does not do that at all. There is no chance of cleaning, by mechanised methods, the coal that is produced from open cuts. This coal is all bulldozed into one big heap and all the rubbish imaginable is loaded into the railway trucks for railing to Perth and for that the companies receive 70s. a ton. It is that type of coal which is ruining our industry.

I have paid a visit to the various industries in the metropolitan area that were in the habit of using Collie coal but which have since switched to other fuel and I have said to those in charge, "Why are you now using an alternative fuel?" Invariably, the reply I received was, "Go out to the back and have a look at the coal that has been supplied". I did so, and I was ashamed of it. In fact, I am ashamed of the coal that is used in the fire grates in this House. In it one can see large lumps of stone which cannot possibly burn. That is the sort of thing which our industry has been putting up with over the years. Is it any wonder that users of Collie coal have turned to some alternative fuel?

Mr. Court: What do you propose for Collie?

Mr. MAY: The best thing that could happen to Collie would be to take all the leases away from the companies and nationalise the mines.

Mr. Wild: You deny that the Government tried to buy shares from the Griffin Coalmining Co. in order that it could nationalise the company's concern?

Mr. MAY: Why should it not buy shares instead of lending the company money all the time? It would be advisable for the Government to buy the shares instead of advancing money to these companies and getting nothing in return. If the Government bought the shares of the company at least it would get something back. There should be some definite authority set up in this State to control the coalmines, and I do not care what Government appoints it. I asked the previous Government to take such action and I have also made a similar request to the present Government. Some body should be created which can say to the coalmining companies, "You are not developing these mines in the way they should be developed." I have said to the

State Coalmining Engineer, "Why do not you tell them what to do?" and he has replied, "I have not the necessary power."

Mr. Wild: You have had three and a half years in which to grant him the power.

Mr. MAY: That is not my responsibility.

Mr. Wild: No, but it is the responsibility of your Government.

Mr. MAY: I am not the Government; I am merely a supporter of the Government, as the hon. member should know.

Mr. Bovell: I think you have something there.

Mr. MAY: I have never known the member for Vasse to agree with me so completely. The State Coalmining Engineer has never had the power to tell the coal-mining companies what to do. When the previous Government appointed the State Coalmining Engineer I thought that such an appointment would be the be-all and end-all of all our troubles. I thought that he was going to put the industry back on its feet, but I am afraid that such has not been the case. An amount of £2,750 plus expenses is being paid to a man who has no power at all so far as the coal mining industry is concerned. I told the past Premier the same thing.

Mr. Heal: Did he believe you?

Mr. MAY: He had to.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Is that because his advice would not be accepted?

Mr. MAY: No. It is because he has no power to demand it. Why should we not give him that power.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: He has an advisory power.

Mr. MAY: He has power in relation to safety measures but he has to advise the Government as to what should be done.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It is the Government's responsibility from there.

Mr. MAY: I am not a member of the Government. I am merely endeavouring to have some action taken, and if the hon. member can show me how that can be done, I shall be very pleased to hear him. As I have pointed out we are literally throwing £2,750 down the drain. We have our own State Coalmining Engineer and he has sufficient powers relative to safety measures. When the appointment was made, we thought it would be the solution and that the man concerned would be able to go down the mine, no matter which company's mine it was, and if the development was not being carried out with the money that was being set aside to develop the mine, we thought he would be the man to direct the company to do something about it. Now, however, we find because private enterprise or a private company is involved, that that is not to be the case. That is the position in which we find ourselves.

Mr. Wild: What about introducing a private member's Bill?

Mr. Heal: Would you support it?

Mr. MAY: I am not criticising the individual.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You are criticising the Government.

Mr. MAY: I am not, and no matter how hard the hon. member tries to get me to do so, he will not succeed.

Mr. Nalder: Anyway, you are making a good job of it up to date.

Mr. MAY: I wish I had been able to do as good a job in getting members of this House interested in the coal industry over the years. Whenever legislation is brought down and mention is made of the wheat industry, or any other important matters, I give them my whole-hearted support. But not one member in this Chamber has ever supported me in the outcries I have made in regard to what has been going on in the coal industry in Collie. That is what I am going crook about. Why do not half a dozen members or so ask me to make provision for them to look around Collie and see the mines? I would be glad to take them down the mines and show them around. But not one member has approached me in this matter.

Mr. Bovell: The Leader of the Opposition went down a mine at Collie.

The Premier: Why?

Hon. D. Brand: For the same reason that the Premier went down an asbestos mine.

Mr. MAY: I can tell the hon. member why, but on second thoughts I will not do so because the Leader of the Opposition is not in his seat. At any rate, I have still to see the member for Vasse go down a mine.

Mr. Ackland: Some of us were down there last March, but you did not approve of it.

Mr. MAY: I did, but the hon. member did not do much good for himself considering the specific reason for which he went down that mine. I will not mention the specific reason, because I think members fully appreciate it.

The Premier: The Country Party would not go to Collie again.

Mr. MAY: Many solutions have been put forward as to why the coal industry seems to be on the decline in this State. It is only those people who are directly connected with the industry—and more particularly would I like to mention the men who work in it and have done so all their lives—who are in the best position to say what should be done. Nobody is in a better position than they to say what

should be done to try to stabilise an industry which is of great value to this State and one which, if lost, will bring disastrous consequences in its train.

Collie today would have no need to be afraid of any alternative fuel had the game been played by the authorities over the last 10 to 15 years. Had our mines been developed as they should have been, we would have been able to produce good, clean deep-mine coal—the best coal it is possible to obtain in this State—at a price which would have met the wishes of the consumers. Had this been done the door would not have been opened to foreign oil companies to come here and establish themselves at the expense of an asset which belongs to the State itself.

Mr. Court: What price do you think coal should be sold at?

Mr. MAY: It is not my job to fix the price, but I have a fair idea.

Mr. Court: At what price should it be fixed to be competitive with oil?

Mr. MAY: The hon. member has the opportunity to find out; I am certainly not going to take the trouble to secure the information for him. When the hon. member is prepared to show sufficient interest in the industry, but not till then, will I give him any information.

Mr. Court: I think you must be having some awful rows with your Premier about this.

Mr. MAY: Does the hon. member think so? I do not think the Premier looks particularly sad, and I am quite happy. Accordingly, I think that remark is quite irrelevant. A feeling has been created that it is preferable to obtain coal by the open-cut method than by deep mining. That is a fallacy. If the deep mine were properly mechanised with conveyor belts running up the pit head over the screen, it would be possible to obtain coal as cheaply from that deep mine as from the open-cut method. The most important factor would, of course, be that the coal so obtained would be of excellent quality, and would not contain the 75 per cent. rubbish that we have been giving our consumers.

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

Mr. MOIR: I move—

That the hon. member's time be extended.

Motion put and passed.

Mr. MAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members. I did not know I had spoken for so long.

The Premier: You had not. The interjectors have taken up half of your time.

Mr. MAY: That is perfectly right.

Hon. D. Brand: I move that you be allowed another hour!

Mr. MAY: I would be very glad of another hour if that were possible because there is a great deal I want to say.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has half an hour to go.

Mr. MAY: In conclusion, I would like to say that there is nobody more interested in the welfare of this State, or in the method of producing coal—the best coal possible—at the most reasonable price than the man working in the industry.

Members: Hear! hear!

Mr. MAY: Nearly all those men have their homes in Collie; they are buying them on terms. They are quite happy to work their hours in the industry. It makes them very discontented and concerned, however, to see the quality of coal that is being supplied to our consumers—those loyal consumers whom we still have. It breaks their hearts when they feel they have no redress. Since the war the union itself has spent hundreds of pounds in bringing deputations to, and holding conferences in, Perth, in order to make the responsible parties realise that something should be done about this industry. So far they have got nowhere. I do not mean to say that only the men can understand the position. If the proper perspective were put before the companies as to the best method of mining coal in Collie, surely they, too, would understand.

For well over 30 years I have known the miners, some of whom are retiring on account of age. I have found that all they wanted in life was to be able to go to work in the morning, to come up in the afternoon, to go home and attend to their gardens. They asked for little else. They gave a fair day's work. When they see the money that is being wasted in the industry which could have been put to greater advantage if spent in the proper direction, they become disheartened.

The men who have worked in the industry all their lives understand the position best. The advice of outside experts may be obtained, but when it is boiled down the men who have worked all their lives in the industry understand best. They have grown up with the coal industry and they have learned to love it, although it is not an industry which people like to follow. It is not very nice having to work in the slush all day with water continually dropping on them. The miners are more likely to meet with accidents and suffer casualties than are those who are engaged in many other industries. Despite those adverse conditions, the Collie miners have never jibbed.

When the Leader of the Opposition took over the government of this State, he appealed to the Collie miners for a greater effort. He knows as well as I how the miners responded. Production was stepped up from 600,000 tons to over

1,000,000 tons per year. The industry was expanded because the Government wanted the coal, and the miners responded. What future faces the miners today? What is their reaction to industries that should be using coal? Those industries are using an alternative fuel because they cannot get the class of coal required owing to the present method of mining.

I appeal to members to give some thought to this matter. Individual members can be helpful. I give the warning that once the oil companies get a stranglehold on the fuel market in this State, oil will not be sold at the present price. Let us not make any mistake about this. I make this prophecy: Before many years have passed, industries which today have turned to oil will be coming back to Collie coal. I can remember the 1930's when the Collie miners worked two shifts a week through lack of orders for coal. From that low output, production was increased to just over 1,000,000 tons a year. I prophesy that the coal industry in Collie will see better days once more.

If the consumers who have turned to oil today want to be taught a lesson, they will get it. They will find later that they will be glad to return to using coal when the price of oil has risen considerably. Let us not forget that Kwinana oil can be purchased in South Australia for £2 per ton less than in this State. That is the policy of the oil companies. The people have not awakened to that fact. It is a pity that in the meantime their action will crucify a valuable asset of the State, that is, the coalmining industry in Collie.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.3 p.m.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Harvey) [4.31: I desire to make one or two observations and to bring a few matters to the notice of the Government, but first of all I offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your appointment to the Speakership of this Assembly. I also congratulate the Chairman of Committees. In addition, I express my regret at the passing of the late Hon. Harry Hearn and the late Hon. Don Barker. I am sure that those two hon. gentlemen will be missed very much in this Parliament.

Foremost among the items on which I wish to speak this afternoon is the raising of the wall of the Wellington Weir. Much depends upon pressing on with this work. As members know, at the present time some preliminary work is being carried out at the Wellington Weir, such as preparations for increasing the height of the wall and enlarging the storage capacity. I mention this subject, because in the allocation of moneys, the Government should in no way prune the amount that is required to carry out this work. The undertaking itself is most important as much depends on it and it is a national asset.

I point out the effect that it will have on the production of milk. Of the whole-milk which comes into the metropolitan area, two-thirds is produced in the area south of Pinjarra, mainly from the districts extending down to the Capel River. The production of milk would be affected by an increase of the irrigation districts. In 1945 the consumption of milk in the metropolitan area was approximately 7,000,000 gallons. At the present time it is approximately 11,500,000 gallons, so it is reasonable to assume that by 1965 the requirements of the metropolitan area will be something like 16,000,000 gallons a year.

To match that demand there is a real need to maintain an ever-increasing production, and, as has been proved in the past, the best method of doing it is by irrigation. The pressing on with the raising of the wall of Wellington Weir and the going ahead with the setting up and the extending of the Collie irrigation district to these new areas, will help to meet that demand.

The Minister for Transport: If the water in the Wellington Dam were salty, it would not be much use, would it?

MR. I. W. MANNING: As the Minister knows, water from the Collie River and Wellington Weir has been extensively used in the Collie irrigation district, and there is no reason to suppose that there is going to be a problem of salt content in that water.

The Minister for Transport: Certain suggestions I have heard in this Chamber within recent days could lead to that state of affairs.

MR. I. W. MANNING: The only answer I can give to that is the one I have just made, namely, that the water has, up to date, proved itself and the irrigation of the Collie district has been successful. There is also need to expend money on drainage in the area that it is proposed to irrigate. I have mentioned before that a big area in the Boyanup district is, during the winter months, covered with several inches of water and badly needs draining. If it is the Government's intention to press on with the extension of the irrigation district, then the area to be irrigated must first of all be drained, and it is necessary that this part of the scheme be closely watched, and money set aside to have the work carried out.

Of course, the drainage in itself would be a tremendous improvement to the district because it would assist to increase production. It is necessary that whole-milk should come from a consolidated area because the transport of milk cannot be delayed. Therefore a reasonably consolidated area is required where the milk can be picked up readily and taken quickly to the depots. The area extending down to Capel River, which is now zoned as a whole-milk zone, is a well-consolidated

area and it lends itself to irrigation and could very largely match the demand for increased supplies of milk.

It could, of course, also assist in the production of beef. The irrigation districts over the past few years have been responsible for supplying a large amount of the beef for the metropolitan area. With an increase in population there must also be an increase in the demand for beef and while it is perhaps easier to step up the production of whole milk, it is not so easy readily to step up the production of beef. Therefore, these points should be closely watched by the Government when making allocations of loan money for public works. If the Public Works Department has an item allowing for a considerable amount of work to be done on the Wellington Weir, I hope that when the Government does its pruning, it does not prune that item.

Another important angle is that relating to employment. Works such as irrigation provide ready employment and when the project is in close proximity to major towns, like Collie and Bunbury, where one could expect a certain amount of unemployment, they are in a good position to absorb the available labour. The Government could well afford to look at that angle of the question when making its allocations. Not only would the raising of the wall of the Wellington Weir and the impounding of more water assist the South-West, but there is also the Great Southern to be considered. The pipeline to Narrogin is to be extended to the south and many people are anxiously waiting for water from that scheme.

Then again, another important question in relation to drainage is the concern felt for some time at the annual flooding in the Cookernup area. Many years ago, when the Harvey River diversion was dug, it assisted to drain a large tract of country west of Cookernup and many dairy farms were established on land which had previously been under water during the winter months. In recent years, however, the Harvey River has been breaking its banks and flooding that area and is no longer capable of taking all the water away.

I suggest that the department should survey and investigate the possibility of putting in another diversion running from west of Cookernup back to and linking up with the present Harvey River diversion in the vicinity of the Old Coast-rd. That work would call for a great deal of surveying and investigation but I believe it could be done by running through the various lines of swamps in that country and it would be of considerable value, not only in draining the area which we seek to have drained—the plain country west of Cookernup—but also some of the swamps further towards the coast. I hope the Government will give early consideration to this question because at the

moment there are farmers who are suffering considerable damage from flooding in the Cookernup district and there is also an opportunity of improving the area further to the west.

Another important question raised by the member for Darling Range last night was the policy of the State Electricity Commission. Throughout the South-West power scheme it has carried out a policy of linking up to the scheme four farms per mile. One can readily imagine that there will always be someone who is just outside the radius, or a little over a quarter of a mile from the nearest neighbour. Instances have been brought to my notice of what seemed to be particularly good potential consumers who have been denied power because they were a little further away than the commission was prepared to take the current.

I have suggested to the commission that in such cases, rather than link up all around the district and go away leaving one man without power, it should give the person concerned the opportunity to pay for the extra distance that the current would have to be taken. If the farmhouse was perhaps a couple of hundred yards more than the quarter mile from the scheme, the owner of the property should be given an opportunity to say whether he was prepared to meet the cost of taking the power that extra distance.

A question that is causing concern relates to the installation of septic systems at country schools. I am disturbed that so little is being done in this regard. We are all concerned about the health of children and where there is a large number of children congregated, as in some of the larger country schools, every endeavour should be made to see that their health is properly cared for, and that cannot be done with the present sanitary arrangements. I would like the Government to place on the Estimates a special item for septic systems at country schools and make a special allocation of money, so that something could be done in this regard every year, even if there were perhaps only a dozen schools dealt with in each 12 months. That would represent some progress, where at present there is a little or none in this direction.

Mr. Nalder: Do you know of any country schools fitted with septic systems?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Yes. In most cases where new schools are built they have septic systems installed, but there are many schools that have been up for a number of years and where this work remains to be done. That is why I say there should be a special allocation of money to ensure that at least some schools are attended to each year in this regard.

Mr. Bovell: How do they get on where the local authorities do not provide a sanitary removal service.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I understand it is the responsibility of the local authority to have that work carried out. The member for Darling Range also made reference to our main roads. I am a frequent traveller along the South-West Highway and I learnt, from the answer to a question I asked the Minister for Works the other day, that a sum of £131,000 had been expended on that highway during the last financial year. We had a rough ride previously on that road and still get a rough ride and it seems to me that we do not get much value for the money expended on our roads.

The proposed expenditure for the present financial year in this regard is anticipated to be something like £146,000. When we realise that we pay 1s. 2½d. per gallon in petrol tax and that 8d. of that is used for the maintenance of roads, I feel that we could reasonably expect decent roads to travel on. Where the Main Roads Department is carrying out such extensive repairs, surely, as time goes on, an improvement in the roads should be noticeable! In many instances, when travelling over the South-West Highway—that is the road which I use quite frequently—my car has suffered damage because of the condition of the road. Consequently, I am most anxious to see that we get better value for the tax we pay.

Another point I wish to mention is in regard to assistance to dairy farmers. I am most concerned that there has been such a long delay in putting into practice any sort of a scheme at all. We all know that various suggestions have been made as to how dairy farmers on partly developed or under-developed properties, and who are in need of assistance, can be helped. Different plans have been suggested but little has been done. In fact, no scheme has yet been put into actual practice and I feel that the State Government should get busy and do something about it.

The suggestion I make is probably the best way to assist these people—that is, to send a bulldozer to each of these farms and allow the farmer concerned to direct its operations for a certain period, say a week or two weeks, or for a period of time in which say, £200 or £400 would be spent. Then the farmer could be left to continue the development. In that way considerable assistance could be given to those farmers who are on partly developed properties. It would enable them to push on with development and so boost their incomes.

The other day I asked the Minister for Works a question in regard to gravel pits and the state in which these pits have been left after the Main Roads Department or other Government departments have finished with them. Although this might seem a trivial matter it is not trivial to those whose properties have been entered

upon and a considerable amount of gravel taken. The Main Roads Department and the Public Works Department come in and take what they want and then leave the place a wreck. While the Minister assures me that they will not do any damage to the property, or if they damage fences they will repair them, it is not good enough.

Mr. Nalder: Some local authorities are responsible for the same thing.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Yes, but the only difference is that the local authorities pay for the gravel they take.

Mr. Nalder: Not always.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The Government departments certainly do not pay compensation. The value of land today is such that even gravel country is worth a lot of money and while it is necessary that these departments should be able to take road-making material, I believe it would be a practical move if, while bulldozing, they were to push back the topsoil to the edges of the pit and when the job had been completed push the earth back into the pit again and so level off the topsoil. In time the farmer would find that the patch would be quite suitable for growing grasses, etc.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I think the position is that the local authority can take material for work within a certain radius but the Main Roads Department can take the material for work anywhere.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: That is correct. I wish to support the member for Vasse in the suggestion he made last night—and I offer this support after careful consideration—about the life of Parliament being extended. I do not know whether this has occurred before, but ever since I have been a member of Parliament there seems to have been one election after another and I am sick of the word. I am sure that the people with whom I associate are also sick of the word "election". I agree with the hon. member that a Government, in a period of three years, has hardly had time to carry out the policy upon which it was elected.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It has had plenty of time to put up taxes and charges.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I quite agree, but that will always be the case. It takes no time at all to do that sort of thing.

Hon. D. Brand: Members of the Government made up their minds very quickly after the election.

The Minister for Transport: They still have not made up their mind, as you know.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: We could give further careful consideration to the point. Not every country in the world has a Parliament with a life of three years; plenty of them have five-year Parliaments. While I feel that under some Governments the

country could go to the dogs in five years, I suggest that a four year term for Parliament would be quite suitable.

Mr. Bovell: The present Government being no exception.

The Minister for Transport: It has just received an overwhelming vote of confidence from the people.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I think a four year term would be quite reasonable.

Mr. Lapham: Bring down a private members Bill in that connection.

Mr. Bovell: With the Commonwealth and State elections each to be contested, the expenditure involved is too great to have a three year term for Parliament.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: That is so; we should give consideration to the tremendous expense of elections both to the country and the taxpayers. I think some careful consideration should be given to this point so that the term will be sufficient to enable a Government to put into effect the policy upon which it has been elected. I feel sure that that would be doing a worth-while service to the community. I have no other matters I wish to discuss at this stage.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Question put and negatived.

Hon. L. Thorn: Nigger drivers!

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [4.28]: Firstly, I would like to compliment the member for Collie on the interesting speech he made on the coalmining industry this afternoon. As we all know, he is the only champion for the cause of Collie in this House, and, being the member for the district, he knows a lot about it that we do not know.

Mr. Nalder: He is known as "King Coal."

Mr. JAMIESON: Of course, he is known as "King Coal."

Mr. Bovell: He said that Hon. G. C. MacKinnon had made a similar speech in the other Chamber.

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes. I understand that he has a counterpart in another place who puts forward the case for Collie. I compliment them. We must, as the member for Collie said, use our State assets wherever possible and I feel that more consideration must be given in the future to developing and using a fuel which can be provided locally. However, I disagree with him in one regard. He said that no member in this House had ever wished to go down and have a look at the area. On several occasions I mentioned the matter to him and I shall take the opportunity, as soon as possible, of having a look to see exactly what does transpire in the district of Collie and in the mines themselves.

Mr. Lapham: I will join you.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am sure that now that the invitation has been made openly, a number of other members will join the member for North Perth and myself and we will probably get a better idea of the national asset we have in our coalfields down there, despite the fact that we do not seem to be getting a national equity out of it. However, the misgivings of the past and the things which have put the industry into the state in which it finds itself today have to be forgotten because it is no use crying over them.

In my opinion, we have to look to the future to see what would be the best method of improving production and getting a decent coal fuel for our various industries and the railways of this State. While, of course, we realise that dieselisation is of use to the railways in areas where water is short, there can be little justification for it in the south-west corner of the State where in the main we generally have adequate supplies of water for local purposes. The necessity for maintaining the use of coal in that particular area is greatly warranted.

While I am dealing with locomotives, may I turn my mind to the railways which are always a problem in so far as the Treasury and, indeed, the people of the State are concerned? We all know that each year the Railway Department faces quite a considerable loss, and the people of this State have to face up to, and somehow or other, overcome the position that prevails in regard to those railway losses.

Some few years ago the new commissioners, or perhaps one of the heads of the accounts section, was instrumental in recommending the installation of international business machines in that branch of the railway service. As all members would know, this is a clerical form of automation, and automation is generally regarded as a principle whereby man-hours can be saved by use of mechanised means. In other words, we should be able to dispense with labour costs and improve our system of production or, in the case of accounting, our recording services.

Whether this has been achieved by the installation of these machines is very doubtful. The information I have—and, of course, the present Minister has often indicated to me that everybody seems to know more about the running of the railways than those who are running them—is readily made available by those who are concerned in the running of the railways and it is to the effect that everything is not as it should be even in regard to such things as the international business machines that now operate in the accounts branch.

The reports at this stage indicate that even though they have not been long installed, they are antiquate models and

that we would need to spend quite a lot more money to bring them to a pitch where they would be of use to the extent that the recommendations in the first place implied they would. In replies to questions on this matter some few days ago, it was pointed out that, despite the installation, and the now reasonably successful working of these machines, the employees of the accounts branch now total 269 whereas before their installation they totalled 264.

In so far as the rental of these machines is concerned, as with most electronic machines, the firm that makes them maintains them. They do not sell them; they receive a most lucrative rental as they should if the machines were as efficient as they were said to be. The payment of £15,000 a year for their use is probably not an excessive figure. However, from sources that seem to be only too willing to supply information, it would appear that they are operated on a figure in excess of £15,000 a year.

That may be the actual rental figure, but I understand there are also various accounting costs, etc., and that, all in all, the yearly total is £24,000. So it will be seen that it is not a very economical proposition particularly when the machines are not saving such a great amount; indeed the amount saved last year was said to be a sum of £8,737 net. It is estimated that when it is fully in operation, £32,400 per annum will be saved. However, again I want to point out that unless these machines are replaced by modern devices, we will not have the success that we should from them.

One of the proofs that just now these machines do not work to improve things is the method adopted in working out the pay of the employees of the department by these machines. In the case of the running staff in the railways, we find that instead of their getting the various award extras in the normal pay period, which they have been receiving for so many years, they are now paid much later. This means that should a local man or some other person in the running staff go on a tucker box journey, or if he has some special allowances, it is the best part of a month before he receives that pay and the amount that is credited to him, particularly if the expenses are incurred in the second week of a fortnight.

Accordingly it becomes a complex affair to check the amount of the pay and see that it is correct. There is no guarantee that the result of the deduction will be perfect. As a matter of fact, the information I received from the department was that the machines are correct to within about 5d. and the fluctuation of the current has an effect on them. They are not always as accurate as they should be. The onus is placed on the worker to check his pay to see that the amount is correct,

and on some occasions when various rates and times are involved, it is difficult to do that. In the case of the person in the accounts branch who says it is a much better method, it is, of course, easy for him to check his time and pay whether he works overtime or not because he has no special rates apart from the fact that he is paid time and a half or double time.

In other parts of the railway system, however, there are many things that have to be taken into consideration: there are factors like percussion money and dirt money and so on. I suggest that the railway accounts branch should receive some prodding from the Minister to the effect that if the machines are to be installed and used, they should not be allowed to prove a retrograde step. If that happens, it is reasonable to assume that it will slow down the work and make other incorrect calculations as it has in the case of the pay. There have been quite a lot of complaints in regard to the amounts of taxation deductions and other deductions which have varied over the weeks. This should not be so if the machines functioned as the catalogue said they would.

I would like to see an important section such as the accounts branch, which is, after all, responsible for watching the financial position of the department, run as efficiently as possible, but I do not think that the present set-up is as efficient as it could be. A definite inquiry should be launched and it should be watched over by the Minister to make sure that we get value out of such concerns because, heaven knows, we are paying enough from our revenue to maintain the railways in the present financial crisis.

While dealing with railway matters, I shall pass on to the proposed marshalling yards and the railway connecting links operated with them at Welshpool. The member for Fremantle and myself violently disagree with the possibility of a transit shed being established at Welshpool and I feel that even though it has been recommended in Professor Stephenson's plan it will probably never come to pass. However, on the other hand, the marshalling yards project looks like being a practicable proposition in the foreseeable future. My problem in the Welshpool area is the satisfying of people who own land there that is affected—or likely to be affected—by the development of the railway marshalling yards and the connecting links of the railway system of the State.

The engineers of the department could, I feel, expedite the finalising of their plans in order to let people know exactly what is required. It has been openly stated by the Minister for Town Planning and, of course, the Minister for Railways that they would not require anything other than the area needed for railway purposes. In other words, the area that has been allocated, or is proposed to be

allocated, for heavy industries needing railway access, would be a matter of private treaty in the future. When people wanted to sell, they could go to those who required this service. In regard to the other areas that will be acquired or resumed, it is imperative that an immediate step be taken to finalise any plan and, accordingly, to advise all those people who are situated near the proposed site for those yards.

I will now deal briefly with a few matters appertaining to the Education Department. I have over the past year or so constantly bombarded that department with requests for a review of various school sites. I have even gone so far as to usurp the rights of some of the other members by suggesting that all school sites in the metropolitan area should be reviewed to see if there were any possibility of obtaining additional land adjacent or close to those sites. In many cases such land is available and the committee is very slow either to acquire or resume such areas.

We must realise that if they do not go ahead with respect to these fast-growing schools which require more space, the areas they now have will be filled with school buildings and they will have very little space for recreational purposes. It is only by keeping a constant watch on the various road board planning methods that they can allot areas which will be available for use. I do not say they should be acquired immediately but where there are broad acres not subdivided adjacent to schools, an indication could be given to the owners that at some future time the Education Department would desire to secure their properties and would be interested to negotiate with them.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Can you give any instance of schools that have areas nearby that could be resumed?

Mr. JAMIESON: One case is the Carlisle school which is rather crowded as regards playing grounds, as it has been heavily built out since the war. However, the local road board, through its adviser, Miss Feilman, has had the whole area town planned into what is known as the Peet Park plan and by the shortening of the roads about the school area, extra space can be provided. It will be possible for the properties in the area to be acquired without doing anybody any damage if this land is required to enlarge the school area. The planning is good and the board concerned is to be commended for having gone to such an extent to make sure that any proposition undertaken in this direction will be in accordance with the overall plan. I suggest that where other areas are concerned, such as the Cannington school where there is an estate close by that has been acquired by a Perth departmental store for a supermarket, some consideration should have been given to the matter before the land was

disposed of. There is still land adjacent to schools that could be used, but if action is delayed any longer, owing to the development we see around the metropolitan area and the desirability on the part of young couples to build as near as possible to schools, that land will be quickly taken up to the detriment of the Education Department, and in the long run that department will be forced to resume developed areas. If they examine these sites from the town planning angle of local government, they will find there are many instances where extensions could be made to present grounds, and I recommend the Government to do something along these lines at an early date.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I feel sure if you put a firm recommendation to the members of the school sites committee, it would suit them.

Mr. JAMIESON: No, they are not keen to acquire anything they feel they can do without at this juncture. If they adopt that attitude areas will be effectively built out and the department will be unable to enlarge school properties at a later date. That is the position, and it is useless for the member for Cottesloe to argue that it is not. I have written plenty of letters to the department and while the authorities appreciate that something should be done, they always advise me that owing to the expense it is not practicable so far as the department is concerned.

Under the sponsorship of the youth education branch of the Education Department, clubs have been established at many centres around the metropolitan area, and in the main they have functioned effectively so as to give the youth of the district concerned some interest in activities of an educational nature. Even if they are not all educational activities, they are a social advantage to them so that they have an interest in their leisure time. The department, I understand, started to sponsor these centres only in the country, and the bulk of the youth centres that are established are still in the country districts, but we find they have been successful wherever they have been established in the metropolitan area.

I suggest that the establishment of these centres is one of the most important phases of finally educating the young minds of the community to their responsibilities. There are many of them in the postwar period who have not been guided as they should have been and have, of course got into strife during their idle hours. The leaders of the various centres are generally the teachers from the school around which the centre is established, and their tolerance in handling some of the rowdy and rough element is highly commended by me.

Repeatedly I have seen them in action where they have had to overcome an unpleasant scene before being able to run

their clubs. In this connection, the Minister for Police has been very helpful in that he has guaranteed assistance in ridding the various districts of the undesirable elements. These undesirable elements seem to be effectively controlled in the country because there is always someone there who sends them on their way if they get too much out of hand.

The matter of so-called leatheries, bodgies or whatever they may be termed is much overrated and, I feel, too extensively publicised by the Press in this and every other State. Most of them are harmless kids who are out for a good time, and when they are treated properly and put on the right track, they are not a trouble to the community. However, as I say, the publicity given to their efforts and activities encourages rather than discourages youth of a particular type to band together; and in some circumstances many undesirable occurrences take place where otherwise the youth could be quite easily handled.

I feel there should be the greatest condemnation of the people who write up this sensationalism in the Press by the members of this or any other House. Members will agree with me that the sensationalism being attached to the youth of the community is most undesirable and in that regard there is a type of journalism that could be well done away with altogether.

For the past few months part of my area—Bentley—has received quite a lot of publicity. Again the Press is a little at fault in, very often, taking elongated photographs of mere puddles and making them look a lot worse than they are. However, there have been many difficulties, particularly in Bentley, which have now, due to the good graces of the Canning Road Board and the Minister for Works, been overcome; at least, for the time being. I have had small flooding troubles in the Belmont Park road district, and within the means of the road board the problems have been effectively overcome.

Most road districts find that their finances are very limited, and the temporary measures that some of them have adopted, have seriously drained the revenues of particular wards. Consequently, the Government will have to provide some overall scheme to help them, both financially and in the general planning of the draining of those areas. What I do object to is a local authority of the size of the City of Perth appearing to be a law unto itself. I have never heard the City of Perth spoken well of by one member of Parliament since I have been in the House.

That authority seems to neglect its responsibilities almost entirely. If it can push its drainage responsibilities on to the Government it is in great haste to do so. We

have seen, particularly in the last few months how it has neglected people in the Victoria Park ward, to the detriment of those ratepayers. I take strong exception to the city council's attitude in this matter. It is not even interested enough to join with the local members to do anything in a practical manner whereas other local authorities are only too willing to come alongside and join in protesting to the authorities that can help.

In this regard the Perth City Council is to be condemned for its attitude. If it is prepared to continue in this way, I feel it is high time that some of its authority was usurped. Not only has it been at fault in regard to drainage matters in the Carlisle-Victoria Park area, but in the construction of roads in the areas which I represent. A glaring instance is Tuckett-st., Carlisle, where a house had been built on every lot. The city council, however, was not prepared to press on with the road but was going ahead, less than a quarter of a mile away, with the building of roads through swamps—roads that were not of any great service to the ratepayers of the district.

The council seems to be completely out of touch with the requirements of the district and is not interested when such matters are brought to its notice. Indeed, its attitude in general is quite objectionable. The Government departments, whether State or Federal, are generally at least sympathetic when members make representations to them, and, in the main, the local authorities are, too; but the city council is not interested. Should a flooding occur in the Floreat Park area it would have any God's quantity of pumps and equipment out there tomorrow, but the flooding happened in the Victoria Park ward and because the council claims to have spent £55,000 there in the last 25 years—when we work it out, that would amount to the provision of drainage sumps at the corners of the street—it considers its obligation is completed; but it is not. It is obligatory on the council to do something for the ratepayers of that district just as it is for it to do something for the ratepayers in the centre of the city.

Mr. Court: Who have you approached at the city council?

Mr. JAMIESON: The city engineer, or the city councillors themselves. They are not at all receptive to any overtures made by members. The hon. member might not appreciate that, not having part of the city council within the boundaries of his electorate.

Mr. Court: I have some of it.

Mr. JAMIESON: Maybe half of the university grounds, or something like that. However, the area would be very small and the hon. member would probably not

appreciate, like other members who represent city council areas, the attitude of these would-be plutocrats in the council. I have not heard of any members, on either side of the House, doing anything but complain about that attitude.

Mr. Court: I have done something other than complain; I have taken exception to things they have done.

Mr. JAMIESON: If the hon. member has done something about some of their regulations, he will probably be in their black books, too. If something happened in the Perth City Council area represented by the member for Nedlands, we might see him rising to his feet and severely castigating some of the people in the council about their attitude.

Mr. Court: What are the ward members on the Perth City Council doing about this? That is, the ward members for the Victoria Park ward?

Mr. JAMIESON: They cannot do much because the numbers are loaded against them and, consequently, they are not as effective as they could be. The attitude always is that the engineer or somebody else has said that such-and-such a thing cannot be done. But engineers on other authorities do carry out the work without any trouble. Had it not been for the good graces of the Minister for Works, some of the people in my district, in the Victoria Park-Carlisle area, would be living in the centre of scummy pools. That is most undesirable and indeed would have been most damaging to health, as members would see if they visited the area.

Mr. Court: Have you had a talk to the Lord Mayor about this?

Mr. JAMIESON: I would do more than talk to the Lord Mayor. We will ignore him for the time being; I have my opinion about Lord Mayors.

Mr. Court: I think it would be a courtesy to have a talk to him about it.

Mr. JAMIESON: I would now like to discuss another subject which I have mentioned in this House before, and it is in regard to some of the agricultural products of this State. Unfortunately, the Country Party, which, in effect, represents the agriculturists of this State, does not in the main seem to be comprised of imaginative beings. I know they have some practical ideas and, of course, they know a lot about their products and the production of them. Last night we heard the member for Darling Range tell us of the troubles they have and what can and cannot be done. But where their imagination ceases to be sufficiently vivid is in attempting to do something concrete about obtaining markets for their products. They go so far as to grow good products—nobody could deny that—but that is where they start and finish.

It is unreal that we should have agricultural products that we cannot quit. It is true that today we are getting rid of more wheat, perhaps through the assistance of Nature in causing frosts in France which, in turn, are destroying the crops. But, all in all, we are not obtaining the regular markets which we should be getting for our products. This year, for instance, the people of the Swan were left with a considerable quantity of export grapes on hand. As members know, I have had files laid on the Table of the House in regard to this subject, the reason being that I wanted to check what the various trade commissioners were doing about pushing the sale of our products. A perusal of every file has proved what I thought in the first place—that they are not pushing them at all; they are merely checking them. They say that the products arrived in such-and-such a condition; or they were transferred to another boat and shipped off somewhere else.

Mr. Perkins: You would not know of course, that we have an organisation of our own, quite apart from the trade commissioners.

Mr. JAMIESON: I might tell the hon. member that his organisation is not functioning as effectively as it ought to be.

Mr. Perkins: You tell us what you know about a portion of it, but from your remarks it is obvious that you do not know anything about it.

Mr. JAMIESON: If it were functioning effectively, there would not be all this trouble. The hon. member does not know very much about his organisation otherwise he would be pushing it to get some better marketing facilities for the products that are produced. Do not let us stop at wheat and wool; I am referring to agricultural products in general and it does not matter whether it be apples or anything else. Perhaps the hon. member knows plenty about wheat and wool, but after that he is just as much in the dark as any other member here as regards the provision of markets.

Mr. Perkins: You do not know anything about it at all.

Mr. JAMIESON: The hon. member's organisation is not doing the job that it should be doing.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I think you had better stick to the Perth City Council. You know more about that.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am suggesting, as I have done before, that we should have a trade commission operating in the countries that are fairly close to us—I refer to South-East Asia. I sincerely hope that in the near future the Government will see its way clear to send the Minister for Agriculture to investigate personally the conditions which apply there, in an endeavour

to find out why the markets are not available to us when the people of New Zealand seem to have no trouble in trading with these countries. New Zealand, despite its greater distance from these countries, trades effectively with them and we should be able to do likewise.

There is another aspect of agriculture that I would like to mention. Some parliamentarians in the British House of Commons are putting up a case to have Australian wines used in the dining-room in their Parliament House. Those who know anything about the wine industry—and I presume the member for Roe would know plenty about that, too—

Mr. Owen: Do you?

Mr. JAMIESON: No, but I know enough about it to realise that we have accumulated huge stocks of wines and that over the past few years the manufacturers have been unable to use all the crop in the production of wine, for the simple reason that they are unable to quit the product. Of course, this is brought about mainly by excise duties both in Australia and in the countries to which the wine is exported. At one time Britain was one of our big markets for wines but the demand there has fallen away, due mainly to excise duties and, of course, the manufacturers there are making a good deal of their own wine from pulp imported from the south of France and Spain.

I should imagine—although I do not know much about winemaking—that wine made from pulp would not be as good as the product made from the pure grape. In this regard I suggest that overtures should be made to the Commonwealth Government to help the winemaking industry in Australia by abolishing excise duty on exported wines and be asked to approach the Government of Great Britain to have the excise duties in that country lowered. I think that would be a fair proposition and, although the Commonwealth Government might lose some revenue as a result of it, I think our overseas trade balance would benefit. According to some Opposition members, I was getting out of my depth previously so now I shall return to metropolitan area problems.

Mr. Owen: To your swamps and puddles in Victoria Park.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am just about to deal with swamps.

Hon. D. Brand: And surplus water.

Mr. JAMIESON: I would like to mention one particular housing area in my electorate. In this regard I feel that the attitude of the Minister and of the State Housing Commission to this area is a very poor and paltry one. I refer to a settlement known as Maniana. The houses there were built quickly to relieve the housing shortage, but they were not as nice as the

people would have liked them to be. Probably the Minister has his ideas about this settlement, but I have my own. Anyone reading the papers would be able to see that something unsatisfactory is going on out there and all the riff-raff element who do not seem to be able to fit in with any other Housing Commission settlement are being loaded on to Maniana. Consequently, the decent people who are living there are worrying about it because of the name the place is getting.

One has only to pick up the paper to see where Joe Soap, or somebody else, has been arrested for doing something wrong and the address given is Maniana. So far as I am concerned, that is a most unsatisfactory position. This afternoon I asked some questions of the Minister in regard to rentals but unfortunately he was unable to give me answers at this juncture. I was dealing with rentals of the 2- and 3-bedroom houses and the comparative rentals of the 2- and 3-bedroom orthodox houses owned by the commission.

The Minister for Transport: They would be 5s. and 8s. a week cheaper.

Mr. JAMIESON: That is not very much. The rent for the two-bedroom houses is about £2 18s. a week and for the three-bedroom houses over £3 a week at Maniana. The fact that they are 5s. and 8s. a week cheaper is of little comfort to the people living there. They are accommodation of sorts. I will say that; they keep the rain off, but they are not nice houses that people can develop and make into decent units. This applies particularly to the duplex houses; they leave a lot to be desired. I have made a number of representations to the Minister to have fences erected between the duplex places, at the front. But the policy of the Housing Commission is not to do this work. The commission went so far as to take out an estimate of the cost and it was about £2,000. Surely to goodness, for the sake of convenience and for the sake of peace, front fences could be provided between these duplex houses! The commission saw fit to build fences at the back and it is of no use the Minister or anybody else telling me that they can grow ti-tree hedges because that will just not work out.

On one side there is a family with children and no garden and on the other side there is a garden and no children. So a fight ensues. The person without any children puts in a barbed wire fence and the man with the children comes to him and says, "My children have been spragged on a barbed wire fence." So an argument develops, and the fence comes down again. It is only reasonable that if effective fences could be provided it would at least help to solve one problem.

Hon. D. Brand: Was not a warning issued about Maniana that that is where slums would start?

Mr. JAMIESON: No, I will not agree that it is a slum area.

Hon. D. Brand: I did not say that.

The Minister for Transport: Bad luck; it was a bad guess.

Mr. JAMIESON: The area could be made into a fairly decent settlement but at present the Minister or anybody else could go out there and he would find not one person who was happy about living in Maniana, for the simple reason that it lacks various amenities which the Housing Commission is providing for other people. Because one person's application does not happen to come up at the proper time, it is not right that he should be placed in a house of a lower standard than that granted to some other applicant whose application comes up for consideration in the following week. To offset that, the Minister must make certain concessions and effect certain improvements to these homes even although it is at further cost to the commission.

For example, he must make some provision to install a heating appliance in the main living room. In these houses this is a large room and although they are generally fitted with an insulated wood stove, as the name implies, it is completely insulated and whatever heat leaves the stove goes up the chimney. Whilst on the subject of stoves, I understand that one of the technical officers designed a hood-cap for them when the houses were first built but the result was that these large living rooms became so smoked that the walls appeared to be the same colour as the jarrah panelling around this Chamber.

These houses have been erected for approximately only two years and to prevent the walls from being smoked these hoods should have been tested and proved before they were fitted. The commission is now taking steps to replace them with the orthodox type of hood but this work, together with the cost of renovating the rooms, will mean the expenditure of a great deal of money. Members will admit that nothing looks worse than badly smoked walls in a living room which contains nice new furniture and floor coverings.

Mr. Nalder: And yet the Government is allowing those conditions to exist.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Government is correcting them now. Unfortunately, it is not so much the fault of the Government as that of the technical officers who designed these hoods. It should be their duty to test and prove any of these appliances before they are installed in any of the commission's homes.

I will now say a few words about the Betting Control Board in this State. We have heard a great deal about its operations from time to time. In fact, the latest information I have received is that

contained in a screed sent to me today by the Western Australian Trotting Association. In that letter the association refers to turnover tax and the fact that it will be completely unfinancial within a short time if the Government does not take steps to improve the financial position of the association. That may be true, or it may not be.

Perhaps the most unfortunate feature about the control of betting in this State is that the system was started about six years too late. I would like to have seen it in operation when there was full employment and when the workers had a few extra shillings to spare to have a bet in the s. p. shops. However, when people become unemployed, the first thing they must do is to clamp down on their excess spending. Therefore, when there is a fair section of unemployed in existence one can appreciate that a controlled betting system cannot be given a true test.

In my opinion, the trotting and racing associations should be entitled to some coverage and perhaps be granted a larger proportion of the betting turnover. Their net income in the last year before the operation of this system would give the Government at least something to go on. I am certain that the Government has something in mind along those lines and later in the session we may see a provision brought forward that will make everyone in the racing industry a great deal happier than they are today. However, I will not dwell on the troubles of the racing and trotting clubs but will speak on the Betting Control Board itself.

We debated fully the Bill which was brought forward to appoint this board. Upon the Bill becoming an Act there followed a full set of regulations, some of which we agreed to, some discarded and some were amended. During the debate on the Bill I suggested that there was one thing that should not be allowed when these betting shops were registered and that was that they should not be screened from the public gaze, especially when both men and women were entitled to enter them. My reason for that was quite simple, and it is just as simple today. As the Act provides that no female employee shall be permitted in any of these betting shops behind the counter, it is only natural that women are loth to enter them to make a bet when there are so many men present, some of whom may be an undesirable type.

Therefore, these shops should be completely open to the public gaze so that the women who enter them may have a feeling of some security. What aggravated the position in this regard was that the Betting Control Board issued instructions on this matter but it did not see fit to gazette a regulation. The instruction that was issued was made a condition on the licence granted. In my opinion if we had wished that the interior of these establishments

should be screened from public view we would have provided for that in the Bill in the first place. The board is being granted too much power if it is allowed to state such conditions in regard to the issuing of a licence.

If the proprietors of these betting shops are desirous of erecting screens to prevent the wind from entering the shops they should make sure that the windows of their establishments are quite clear so that the public on the street outside may see through them. The position at present is that the windows of all these shops are required to be painted and they have not only gone to that trouble, but also they have screened the entrance.

It is about time the Betting Control Board forgot that regulation altogether and got back to where it started to ensure that the entrances to these shops are left free and open, thus preventing them from becoming undesirable establishments as they are by screening them off from the public gaze.

I hope the Minister will certainly take heed of my remarks and will have a word or two with the members of the Betting Control Board and tell them exactly where they stand in regard to this position.

Recently, several members of this House and of the Perth City Council respectively had a few words to say regarding Heirisson Island. During his speech on the Address-in-reply, the member for South Perth suggested that it would be a most desirable spot for a botanical garden and I quite agree. In the meantime, however, it seems that such development will not take place for many years. I suggest that along the southern section of the island, which appears to come within the boundary of the South Perth Municipal Council—although still under the control of the Minister for Lands—a fence should be erected so that kangaroos, emus and other fauna can be let loose on it so that a small reserve may be created. It would be quite an attraction for tourists to watch emus or kangaroos moving about that island. At present it is being put to no purpose although there are quite a few natural shrubs and acacias growing there.

In addition, a few shelter sheds could be erected for the animals that could be placed on this section of the island where, with very little feeding required, they would give the public an opportunity to see some of the fauna of this State. As I have said, it does appear to me that this island will not be developed for some years but if, as I have suggested, a fence were constructed on the southern part of that island, the Government, through the National Parks Board, could make available a very pleasant reserve at which people could pause with their children and watch emus and kangaroos in their natural state. I know that the member for Roe does not care very much for kangaroos; but there are many people in the city who do not

get the opportunity to see them and do not have the same objection to them as has the hon. member.

The hospital charges in this State have interested me for quite some time. A stage has now been reached where the position is quite farcical. For example, a person who is involved in an accident and is badly injured is taken to hospital and on his discharge he receives a bill for a considerable amount which, invariably, he cannot pay. If the circumstances warrant it he can, however, have this charge waived by making representations to the proper authority. In effect, the Government finally has to meet the cost of his hospital charges. In the first place it is quite stupid to charge people for hospital expenses which they are in no position to pay. It is time we adopted a more realistic approach to hospital and medical benefits. There is no doubt the system which is operated at present by the Commonwealth Government is quite inadequate.

Therefore, I think it should be the responsibility of this State, for the benefit of its own people, to introduce a hospital and medical benefits scheme of its own through either the State Government Insurance Office or some other governmental authority so that those people who are unable to meet their hospital and medical expenses can be fully covered. This should be done even if it means placing on the statute book once again a measure to impose a hospital tax so that everyone in this State would have a fair chance of meeting his hospital expenses when he or she was involved in an accident or a severe illness.

At present there are approximately five or six hospital benefits institutions registered in this State. As with most forms of insurance, these organisations are actuarially sound, and to my mind, anything that is actuarially sound generally makes some sort of profit. It may not be much, but it is still a profit. I want to point out that although the Hospitals Benefit Fund of Western Australia has not been established for very long, it has built up sufficient assets to enable it to move into new premises and carry out extensive renovations. I have no grudge against it because of that, but if this organisation in such a short time has been able to make such advances, then I am quite sure that if all these hospital benefits societies were amalgamated into one body under the State Government Insurance Office or some other authority, this would greatly assist to relieve people of the burden of meeting excessive hospital and medical expenses.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £19,000,000.

BILLS (23)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
- 2, Corneal and Tissue Grafting.
- 3, Local Government.
Introduced by the Minister for Health.
- 4, Criminal Code Amendment.
- 5, Licensing Act Amendment.
- 6, Electoral Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 7, Constitution Acts Amendment.
- 8, Evidence Act Amendment.
- 9, Jury Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Justice.
- 10, State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment.
- 11, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment.
- 12, Factories and Shops Act Amendment.
- 13, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Labour).
- 14, Wheat Marketing Act Continuance.
- 15, Agriculture Protection Board Act Amendment.
- 16, Abattoirs Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.
- 17, Bills of Sale Act Amendment.
- 18, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.
- 19, Gas Undertakings Act Amendment Bill.
- 20, Municipality of Fremantle Act Amendment.
Introduced by Hon. J. B. Sleeman.
- 21, Child Welfare Act Amendment.
Introduced by Mr. Nalder (for Mr. Ackland).
- 22, Electoral Act Amendment (No. 2).
Introduced by Mr. Ross Hutchinson.
- 23, Geraldton Sailors and Soldiers' Memorial Institute Act Amendment.
Introduced by Mr. Sewell.

House adjourned at 5.52 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 28th August, 1956.

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

MOTION—URGENCY.*Unemployment Situation.*

MR. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from the member for Greenough (Hon. D. Brand):—

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I desire your permission to move for the adjournment of the House today to discuss the gravity of the unemployment situation in Western Australia.

The continued Press publicity indicates the growing danger of the problem in this State, with consequent industrial uneasiness, and in order to provide an opportunity for all members to discuss this urgent matter, I sincerely trust that you will agree to the request.

Such suggestions as "picketing" by meetings of unemployed highlight the need of immediate action.