

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 10th November, 1955.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Bunbury power station, details of completion	1680
Old Coast-rd., financial assistance to local authorities	1680
Railways, (a) authority to promote standard gauges	1681
(b) fire hazard precautions	1681
Timber, future requirements and Government plans	1681
Annual Estimates, 1955-56, Com. of Supply, general debate	1689
Speakers on financial policy—	
Mr. Yates	1689
Mr. May	1697
Bills : Land Act Amendment, 1r.	1681
Marking of Eggs Act Amendment, 1r.	1681
Education Act Amendment, 3r.	1681
Traffic Act Amendment, 3r.	1681
Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation), Message, 2r., Com., report	1681
Supply (No. 2), £16,000,000, Com. of Supply	1682
Adjournment	1704

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

QUESTIONS.

BUNBURY POWER STATION.

Details of Completion.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) When will the power station at Bunbury be first commissioned?

(2) When will the power station at Bunbury be completed?

(3) Has the completion of the Bunbury power station been slowed down from what was originally planned? If so—

(a) how long has it been put back;

(b) why?

(4) Are the tasks of the Public Works Department and the State Electricity Commission keeping pace with the contractors (i.e., Riley Dodds Pty. Ltd. and Parsons Turbines) in the Bunbury power station project? If not, why not?

(5) How many employees (from all branches of the project) from the Bunbury power station have been retrenched in the last three months?

(6) Are there sufficient funds available for the retention of all present personnel working on the Bunbury power station project?

(7) If not, what is the anticipated retrenchment?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is planned to bring No. 1 machine on load for the winter of 1957.

(2) Present planning for the three machines ordered is that the last machine will be completed in 1959.

(3) No. The whole project is so well ahead of schedule that it is anticipated that the retrenchments will not affect the original planned date for completion.

(4) Yes. It is pleasing to report that this work is well ahead.

(5) Thirty-six.

(6) Not at present.

(7) Every effort will be made to keep the number of retrenchments to a minimum.

OLD COAST ROAD.

Financial Assistance to Local Authorities.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What funds were made available to each local authority between Mandurah and Bunbury for improvements to the Old Coast-rd.?

(2) What amount was spent by each local authority on the Old Coast-rd. during the years 1949-50, 1950-51, 1951-52, 1952-53, 1953-54?

(3) What is the amount of funds made available and spent so far this year by each local authority in the Old Coast-rd. area?

(4) What funds are to be made available for the remainder of this financial year to these local authorities for that purpose?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Petrol moneys made available and expended by each local authority are as tabulated.

	1949-50	1950-51	1951-52	1952-53	1953-54
	£	£	£	£	£
Mandurah—					
Available	600	1,329	1,200	200	1,850
Expended	600	1,329	1,200	200	1,450
Drakesbrook—					
Available .....	...	...	...	...	...
Expended .....	...	...	...	...	...
Harvey—					
Available .....	...	500	...	...	...
Expended .....	...	500	...	...	...
Bunbury—					
Available .....	...	...	...	...	...
Expended .....	...	...	...	...	...

(3) Current years petrol moneys made available to and spent by each local authority to the 31st October are—

	Available.	Spent.
	£	£
Mandurah	2,000	—
Drakebrook	2,250	695
Harvey	3,700	—
Bunbury	—	—

(4) Mandurah, nil; Drakesbrook, £1,500; Harvey, nil; Bunbury, nil. It has not yet been determined whether these funds will be expended by departmental day labour or the local authority.

RAILWAYS.*(a) Authority to Promote Standard Gauges.*

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways:

Is any Federal or State authority in existence for the purpose of promoting standard railway gauges?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

No. This matter depends largely on Federal Government policy. The latest discussions concerning this State were between Railway Commissioners.

(b) Fire Hazard Precautions.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware of the severe fire hazard, caused by seasonal conditions, that exists in the country districts?

(2) What action has he taken to stop the possibility of any fires being started by locomotives?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Where practicable the precautions of previous years are being intensified. These precautions will be nullified, however, if adjoining landowners are not alive to their responsibilities.

TIMBER.*Future Requirements and Government Plans.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Has he seen the article headed "Forestry and Timber in the Economy of Western Australia" in the September and October, 1955, issues of the "Commerce-Industrial and Mining Review"?

(2) If so, does he agree with the figures quoted in "Table 7—Future Requirements—Western Australia" especially those in respect of estimated production and deficit, 1980?

(3) Do Government and departmental plans provide for—

(a) overtaking the deficit and avoiding large imports;

(b) increased proportionate use of softwoods to bring Western Australia more into line with Commonwealth and world proportions;

(c) use of substitute materials;

(d) greater use of timber at present regarded as waste and unusable?

(4) If the answer to No. (3) is "Yes," what is proposed to overcome the problems set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) of No. (3)?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The figures were prepared by the Forests Department and I have every reason to believe them to be correct within the limits of accuracy possible in such forecasts.

(3) Yes.

(4) The Forests Department's plans provide for:

(a) Increasing the area of dedicated State forests to the maximum possible.

(b) Increasing the planting of pine, especially the faster growing *pinus radiata*, within the limits of available funds.

(c) Better utilisation of timber already available, in the forest, including the use of species such as *marri* for purposes to which it is suited.

(d) Increasing the yield of the natural forests through protection and silvicultural improvement work.

BILL (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Land Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

2, Marketing of Eggs Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Education Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

2, Traffic Act Amendment.

Returned to the Council with an amendment.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT (FUNDS APPROPRIATION).*Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [2.26] in moving the second reading said: This Bill relates to accountancy procedure and is similar in its provisions to a number of other Acts which have been passed from time to time.

Hon. D. Brand: Is it different in any way?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will give me just two minutes—

Mr. Heal: He will find out.

Hon. D. Brand: I thought that if it was not different, there would be no need to say any more about it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is most impatient; I had completed only one sentence.

Hon. D. Brand: I am still entitled to an answer to my question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The question will be answered when I come to that point.

Hon. D. Brand: Good.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The provisions of this Bill are similar to those in a number of Acts which have been passed from time to time by the Parliament of Western Australia—Nos. 34 of 1941, 12 of 1942, 9 of 1943, 6 of 1944, 19 of 1947, 50 of 1950 and 10 of 1951.

Prior to 1941, the Commonwealth Grants Commission held the view that a sum should have been appropriated from the funds available to the Main Roads Department from the metropolitan traffic fees in order to finance the servicing of loans raised for main roads. Because the State did not get into line with other States in that regard, it was penalised in its grant. That state of affairs could not be allowed to continue, and so in 1941 a Bill was passed authorising the appropriation from the 22½ per cent. of metropolitan traffic fees of a sum up to a maximum of £70,000 per annum for the purpose of servicing loans in connection with main roads.

The Act under which that appropriation is at present being made expires on the 31st December this year. So it is necessary, if this appropriation is to be continued legally, for a similar enactment to be made, giving that authority. That is the purpose of the Bill now before the House. It provides for the full period of the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act, plus six months, the six months being necessary to provide the time for payment to be legally made during the period that the Commonwealth will be giving consideration to a further enactment.

So in principle, there is no difference between this and the previous Bills that have been enacted for this purpose. If any, the difference relates only to the periods and the years covered by the enactment. I do not know if there is any more to be said. This is an extremely essential Bill. It has to be passed by the 31st December otherwise the State will not have the authority to make this appropriation. The £70,000 maximum still remains and unless the State is to be subjected to penalties by the Grants Commission—as it most certainly will do if we do not continue to make these appropriations—the House must pass the Bill.

I suggest, therefore, that this is the only course open to us. It is a desirable course. It is fair and reasonable that the department should find the moneys for servicing the loans raised for main roads and that that money should not come from Consolidated Revenue. The Bill will make

it possible to transfer from the 22½ per cent. obtained from the metropolitan traffic fees an amount not exceeding £70,000 to be paid into Consolidated Revenue for the purpose outlined. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [2.33]: I do not know whether I should apologise to the Minister for Works for making my query so early in his speech. My aim was to extract from him the information whether this Bill was different in detail to the one I introduced in 1951. Evidently, from his explanation, it is not. I think that the House will readily agree that because this legislation has been on the statute book for many years; because it was brought to this House in the first place as a result of action by the Grants Commission—that body having penalised this State to the extent of some £50,000 or £60,000 in previous years—I feel that members will readily support the action of the Minister in bringing this Bill forward. Obviously, it is only fair and proper that the money available from licence fees should service the loans which were raised in past years, through the Public Works Department, for expenditure on roads. I do not think that there is any more I can say, except that I will support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £16,000,000.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the previous day, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: When progress was reported, the Treasurer had moved—

That there be granted to Her Majesty on account of services for the year ending the 30th June, 1956, a sum not exceeding £16,000,000.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [2.37]: I do not suppose that for many years such a degree of importance has attached to a Supply Bill. The situation here in the Chamber in regard to the passing of the Supply Bill is becoming more and more important every day, not only from the Government's angle, but also from the angle of members.

The Minister for Housing: I do not think you need worry about that.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am not worrying any more than most other people I can see in front of me. On occasions in this Chamber the Supply Bill has been a means of

bringing to this Assembly certain grudges and complaints laid by members. Whilst there are many that I might express now, I prefer to say only a word or two about the extremely prolific season the State is enjoying at present. In the electorate I represent the season that is being enjoyed is considered to be the best for many years. We can look forward to a bumper harvest of cereal grains that are being produced in the area. I am told that from as far north as Mullewa, wheat crops and oat crops in particular are being stripped to the extent of 19 and 20 bags to the acre.

Mr. May: In making that statement, do not go too far east of your electorate.

Hon. D. BRAND: The member for Collicie, being interested to some minor extent in the Greenough district, suggests that it is not such a bright outlook east of the Wongan line as it is for the property he is interested in.

Hon. L. Thorn: He is a big farmer out that way, is he not?

Mr. May: Very big! Almost as big as you!

Hon. D. BRAND: From Northam up to the Wongan line, and from the metropolitan area along the Midland line, farmers are enjoying a very happy season—that is, those who are established and settled on the heavier land. I would make particular mention of the fact that there is a group of farmers settled west of the Midland line who are not in such a happy position. These farmers have taken up light land and have been encouraged to do so by the enthusiasm of many people, including politicians—and I do not exclude myself—and through the experience of Mr. Eric Smart, who is a very successful light-land farmer. We all used what influence we had to get that land settled.

Quite a number of people have gone out with an amount of capital which a few years ago would have been considered ample to establish a farm, but I regret to say that a large percentage of those farmers are finding it difficult to carry on from year to year. We did have a deputation to the Minister for Agriculture last year, and he was good enough to assist to some extent through the Rural & Industries Bank in order to help those farmers to raise sufficient capital to enable them to carry on. The point I make, however, is that, as a result of a very wet season, some of those farmers have not been able to produce sufficient to arrange for the next season.

It would appear to me that these people—a new set of pioneers, as it were—are going to do the necessary work in respect of those farms only to be forced off them eventually. There will come in another set of farmers who will be fortunate enough to walk in and benefit from the work that has been done, and probably be encouraged by a handsome writing-off of the

costs already incurred. They would get away to a good start. I urge on the Government of the day, and its successors, to formulate a plan whereby these people, who do the pioneering work, will be given financial assistance to settle the country, and reap the advantage of the work they put in.

This country has a great future, but it will prove a very difficult proposition because it is not possible to obtain an immediate return from the light land. Since the price of wheat has depreciated, and since wool has not been selling at such high values as formerly, a number of more-established farmers have recognised this to be true. It is known that over a number of years the fertility of light land can be built up to enable it to carry grasses and pastures on which stock can be run. I also think that ultimately a fat lamb industry could be established there. We will see it happen in our generation, but I fear there will be many corpses on the road to the final establishment and success of this industry. If such is the case, I should think that the natural port and centre through which such industry could be established and run is Geraldton.

Apart from a word or two from the member for Geraldton, I have not heard very much said in this Chamber with respect to the potential production of this area north of Perth. I feel that greater emphasis should be placed on the build-up of Geraldton, as one of our northern provincial towns, and the fact should be recognised that the harbour facilities must be improved, even though it will involve a very large capital cost. I am aware of that fact. I am not being critical of the Minister for Works, because the matter was thoroughly investigated during the three years I was Minister, and a very large capital cost will be incurred if any improvement to the depth of the harbour is to be achieved.

Nevertheless, all the area I represent, and that represented by the member for Geraldton and, to some extent by the member for Moore, can be served by Geraldton if more emphasis is placed on providing amenities, facilities and services there. As a result of the surfacing of the road through to Ajana, and, I hope, ultimately to Carnarvon, Geraldton will be able to serve that region, and the area round Northampton. Because of that, I am sure we shall see more intense culture and closer settlement. I am sure the future of the new settlers on this light land, both north and south of Geraldton, can be assured if the Government of the day is prepared to help them along.

If assistance is to be forthcoming, do not let it be too late. For instance, if super is to be provided, it should be done through some special department of the Rural & Industries Bank in time for the farmers concerned to plan their operations,

and we should give them every encouragement to carry on, because I am sure there is a great potential in this land which is situated in an assured rainfall area but which, unfortunately, costs quite a lot to establish.

As one travels through these districts and, indeed, through any part of the State, one cannot but be attracted by the fact that in a very short time we shall be faced with a great fire hazard in Western Australia. As a result of one of the best seasons we have had, the roads are lined with grass and there is prolific growth everywhere. We are not fire-conscious and are not accustomed to great fires such as those experienced in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. So we are not as careful as we should be. We should learn from the experience of people in the Eastern States that a fire could sweep from one end of the Midlands to the other—if I might refer to my own electorate. Not a great deal has been done to provide equipment and the like to cope with this danger. There is a voluntary organisation and a very efficient one, but from my place in this Chamber I would urge more care.

I deprecate the indiscriminate throwing away of matches and lighting of fires, because it is plain that wholesale destruction can be brought about in a few days, and any advantage we might have gained as a result of this good season can be destroyed.

Mr. Nalder: That matter should be emphasised to the Minister for Railways.

Hon. D. BRAND: The member for Kattanning reminds me that I need to emphasise it to the Minister for Railways, who, however, has had many reminders in Parliament and no doubt is fully aware of the hazards. His departmental officers should personally become conscious of the great dangers of fires. However, he can do more by introducing diesel engines and so avoid the danger which emanates from steam engines using Collie coal.

Mr. Nalder: Some of the worst fires experienced in the State have been caused by steam locomotives.

Hon. D. BRAND: Many suggestions can be put forward, but they serve only to indicate that in this State, as a result of the agricultural development taking place, the very intensive culture and the heavier grass that is grown as a result of scientific application in agricultural pursuits, every effort should be made by the authorities and private individuals to avoid bringing about a condition where a fire could be started and so set the whole countryside alight.

There is another matter to which I wish to refer. In yesterday's "Daily News" there was an article headed "Benevolent Bandits." It is a full page article and refers to the machines known as "one-armed bandits". Anyone reading the

article must be struck by the fact that here is a growing danger and menace to the people, no matter how benevolent the machine might appear to be.

No matter whether the machine be installed at the Royal Perth Golf Club or at the Fremantle Workers' Club, one cannot help but recognise that in this situation something similar to illegal betting will be developed; that finally, because the matter is too heavy politically and too difficult to face up to, and because of vested interests, it will be legalised and the people will be able to use these machines without hindrance. I am giving my personal views on this matter. I do not know what the political party I represent will do about these machines in the event of it becoming the Government. All I say is that we should face up to the situation and do something regarding the problem.

The Minister for Housing: Like you did with s.p. betting, fiddle for six years and do nothing.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You set out to increase illegal betting for all it is worth. Your Government has encouraged it.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Minister for Housing said that we, as a Government, fiddled around with illegal betting. If we fiddled it was because so many other States are fiddling for the same reason. Anyone reading the figures relating to legalised s.p. betting in this State will be aware that there has been no fiddling on this question. In fact, so great progress has been made that some of the folks who supported legalised s.p. betting have become somewhat alarmed.

The Minister for Housing: You are not game to advocate the abolition of legalised betting.

Hon. D. BRAND: That could be readily expected from the Minister. He wants me to say that we will advocate the abolition of legalised betting.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Government is doing everything to increase the revenue from it.

Hon. D. BRAND: I want to get back to the topic I was discussing, the one-armed bandits. Whether the Minister for Housing says that the legalising of s.p. shops is solving the problem, or whether what he says proves to be correct or not, does not matter one iota; only experience and time will tell. I say again that here in Western Australia for many years, Labour Governments as well as Liberal Governments could not face up to the legalising of s.p. bookmakers because it was a social problem on which the people were divided. The encouragement of betting and gambling is not good for any nation or community, even though it might be the way of least resistance. I would urge the authorities to give some consideration as to where we are going

with the one-armed bandit machines. I am not speaking on behalf of the Licensed Victuallers' Association in this regard.

Mr. Moir: Not much!

Hon. D. BRAND: The hon. member is quite wrong. If members of that association were to get licences for those machines, the problem would not be solved. I am not the slightest bit interested whether members of the Licensed Victuallers' Association are given the licences for these machines on their premises. I am only asking where we, as a people, are going in respect of this question. We know they are illegal gambling devices. We know that in the U.S.A., according to the article in the "Daily News"—and I imagine the writer, Dan O'Sullivan, has gone into the question thoroughly—these machines were banned three or four years ago. That must have been done as a result of experience.

The Minister for Housing: Because they were privately owned.

Hon. D. BRAND: Whether they are privately or Government owned does not make any difference to the principle as to whether these gambling machines should be legalised or not. I issue a warning here that the numbers will grow and grow, and ultimately they will be legalised for use in places where they should not be legalised. The encouragement of gambling should be avoided. The Government emphasised when it introduced the Betting Control Bill that the measure was to control betting and not to encourage it. It is on that basis that I ask that some thought be given as to what is happening in regard to these machines. If it is intended to legalise them, then go ahead and have them legalised. If they are to be banned, then this is the time to do it before they become too great a vested interest.

The Minister for Housing: I think you are being a spoil sport!

Hon. D. BRAND: I am no spoil sport. There are many healthy sports and pastimes which even the Minister can promote other than the use of gambling machines in clubs in which they are installed as means of making money.

One other point I wish to raise is in respect of the bridge over the Narrows. We have heard a great deal about the actual siting of the bridge. We have read where Mr. Godfrey has returned to this State, and that he interviewed certain consultants who will be coming out to this State to look at the site and advise the Minister. I think that line of action was a very good step to take. I would like to know when the consultants are coming and when the Minister will be in a position to make a start with the construction. He well knows, as does any motorist who crosses the Causeway during peak hours, that something must be done to "get things

cracking" if we are to avoid a complete congestion there of traffic coming into and going out of the city.

The Minister for Works: Two months ago "The West Australian" stated that there was no urgency.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am not a bit interested in what "The West Australian" has to say on this matter. I believe that time is the essence of the contract.

The Minister for Works: So do I.

Hon. D. BRAND: Neither the present nor any past Government can be blamed for the present situation of traffic congestion. I feel that every investigation should be made as to ways and means of increasing the capacity of the Causeway during peak hours by a better dispersal at both ends.

When I was Minister for Works, I was told that the capacity of the Causeway could be increased by the establishment of a clover-leaf system. Since then the present Minister has indicated that an expenditure of £500,000 would be involved in the alteration. Consequently I am asking, "What next?" There must be some way of relieving the situation. We know that there is a limit to the time in which the Narrows bridge can be completed, and I would urge the Minister to set specialists to work to see whether some of the existing congestion cannot be relieved. There is considerable delay in crossing the Causeway now.

The Treasurer: Do you think that vehicles should be permitted to park in Adelaide Terrace?

Hon. D. BRAND: I certainly do not, and rigid action could be taken about that. I would go further and allow vehicles, if they must park, to use the grassed area along Adelaide Terrace in order to facilitate the flow of traffic. There are physical limitations at present and some improvement must be sought. This might entail much expenditure, but a four-year's hold-up of traffic dispersal at the Causeway would be serious.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: How long does it take to get across the Causeway at peak periods?

Hon. D. BRAND: I should not like to say, but a hold-up occurs from time to time. I might be able to cross at 10 miles an hour tonight, whereas tomorrow night there might be a hold-up causing considerable delay. This shows how fine the margin is in respect to the clearance of traffic from the city at peak hours. I believe that we should treat this matter as urgent.

Mr. Brady: Would you have buses take passengers to suburban stations to ease the position?

Hon. D. BRAND: We should get right down to a consideration of all the questions involved and ascertain whether ways and

means can be devised whereby the bridge could be more advantageously used. If the Minister has his experts at work on this problem, he would say so. I am reminding the people of the situation that exists and of the difficulties of the problems that could arise before the bridge over the Narrows is completed, bearing in mind that we must have a road access and lots of other structures completed within that time.

Mr. Oldfield: Would you encourage people to use public transport instead of their own motorcars?

Hon. D. BRAND: That is one of many questions which could be considered. If the hon. member has suggestions for conveying people to the railway stations or for any other method of relieving the existing congestion, the Premier and the Minister for Works will be only too glad to hear of them. Any proposal that will have the effect of relieving the situation will be welcome.

Mr. YATES: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	20
A tie	0

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Ross McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Brady	Mr. Molr
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Perkins	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Styants
Mr. Watts	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Mann	Mr. Kelly

The CHAIRMAN: The voting being equal, I give my vote with the noes.

Motion thus negatived.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont) [3.8]: I wish to raise a matter that has been discussed during the last fortnight, and that is the anomaly—a great word in this Chamber—between the situation in the House today and that of 1950 when two members resigned to contest a Federal election. This brought into play the

wording of the Electoral Act, which indicates that when a vacancy occurs in this Chamber during the session a resolution is passed to bring about an election. On the other hand, when a vacancy occurs during the recess, the matter is left, under certain conditions, to the Speaker or President to order an election or defer it.

As a result of our experience, I think it is time to consider whether there should not be some change of method in order to bring about uniformity. As I see the position, either the McLarty-Watts Government did the wrong thing—in my opinion, it did the right thing—or the position today is utterly anomalous. This is a Parliament elected to run the affairs of the country normally for three years. I liken it to a British county council. Politics here are very petty and paltry; there is scarcely any transcendent difference between the parties. Of course, there are certain definite principles on which we differ and we have hard fights about them, but in the main this Parliament resembles a huge county council meeting endeavouring to develop the State.

When a Government is returned to office for three years, as was the McLarty-Watts Government in 1950, it did what I think was a very wise thing. Two members were required to fill the places of those who had resigned, and the Government closed the House in September, which was two or three months earlier than usual.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why did it close down Parliament?

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: I do not know whether I am going to be trapped by interjections. I want to be absolutely fair in my own conscience, because I played a part in what occurred then. Amongst other things, I wish to justify myself. The House was closed down rather early for a sensible reason; two members wanted to go to the Federal Parliament, which was quite in order, but under the Constitution they could not do so except under certain conditions. What they wanted to do could be done only by closing down the House in September.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And the Government was in a minority.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: Not then, but later those two members went to the Federal Parliament so that for five months our Government, which was the Government of the day, quite correctly continued to govern till the end of its term and did a very good job. Technically it would not have had the numbers if the House had met; but it was not going to meet. If that was the right thing to do, and I think it was, there should be some similar way in which when a vacancy occurs while the House is sitting, it should be able to deal with the situation without disrupting the whole of Parliament, and

without, as on this occasion, bringing here a splendid member who will have only a month's life after all his work in connection with the election. It is not fair to him, and it is not fair to Parliament.

Under the idea that I envisage, if the hon. member came here in February, as member for Bunbury, he would be here for three years and then he would feel he was doing something for himself after all the work he had put in and the money he had spent; in addition to the party efforts that had been made. All the things that have happened recently, such as disruption and the difficulties confronting the Government and the Opposition, are due to something which could not have been envisaged before it arose. We should do something to make the situation, when a member loses his seat or dies or otherwise goes out during recess, the same as when the same thing occurs while we are sitting.

This matter should receive the attention of the heads of both sides of the House. When Sir Anthony Eden was here two or three years ago, he addressed us in this Chamber and he said, "Our parliamentary system is not able to be worked by other nations. It is only we British who are able to work the situation in a practical way when difficulties occur."

Mr. Brady: Do you think the Tasmanian system is satisfactory?

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: I am not very keen on proportional representation, which is one of the features in that State. In many parts of the world proportional representation has led to a disruption in the sense that a really clear picture of what the people want is not shown. A sort of blurred situation arises in which there are too many parties. The fact that it has worked in Tasmania is, perhaps, fortunate for that State. In Germany and France it has in practice become somewhat of a mirage by allowing a huge number of minority parties.

It should be possible for this Parliament to devise a method whereby when an election has been fairly fought and there is a three-year term to run—in view of the cost of elections and the cost to members, and because of the uncertainty of political life, I think it should be a five-year term; there is a model for that in Great Britain and other places, such as Alberta—in which the Government may develop the State, the Parliament shall carry on for its full term, if a vacancy occurs during the last two or three months of its period. That is what happens if there is a vacancy during the recess, and the Speaker of the day so determines.

If it was sensible for me, as Speaker in 1950 to leave two seats vacant for five months—that was stretching things a long way—then it was not wise for this Parliament to force an election on the

people of Bunbury and bring into Parliament this splendid new member, whom we all welcome, when he will have only about a month's verbal existence before the show will all be on again. I urge this Chamber, not in any political sense or in the way of trying to justify myself beyond the fact that I did something which seemed to save money to the State, to make absolutely certain that the experience we have had in the two instances to which I have referred, may be averted in the future by amending the Electoral Act, the Standing Orders or by some other means.

The leaders on both sides of the Chamber should get together and arrange for what should happen in the future. A Parliament should run its term, and only if a vacancy occurs at some intermediate or early stage should there be a need for an election; there should be no election in the last month or two of the term. What I have been saying has nothing to do with the Loan Bill which, as such, has been dealt with by our Deputy Leader, and I am quite sure that the general matters of the Loan Bill are straight-forward. When we come to the Loan Estimates, I will make any remarks I wish to make on the different items when they are under discussion.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [3.17]: I thank the member for Claremont for his useful comments on the situation in the House. I wish to bring before his notice the arrangement in Tasmania, as I gather from his comment in an interjection that he is not aware of it. Recently the Constitution or the Electoral Act of that State was amended—I am not sure what the legal machinery was—so that now, when there is an even number on each side of the House, certain provisions shall prevail. The amendments are to the effect that the Government in power, not having been defeated, shall remain in power; but that the Opposition shall be given the opportunity of appointing from its own ranks a Speaker, and if it fails in that duty or desires not to appoint a Speaker from its ranks, the Government may then appoint a Speaker who would be a non-constituency person—he would be either a member from within their own ranks, in which case a by-election would be held for his seat, or some outside person.

So, the Government would still maintain its numbers in the House. The provision appears to me to be very similar to our current situation, and I have illustrated it rather crudely for that purpose. I fancy that the type of situation that we have here could occur on a number of occasions, and it would be useful to have some thoughts directed to a solution of the matter. My own comment on the situation that occurred earlier when the Government of the day hurried into recess and left itself with a minority number of members during a fairly long period, is

that though such a position could be accepted under stress, and there was no necessity to hold by-elections, there was at least a moral requirement that the two electorates that were unrepresented should have had some form of representation.

To my mind the situation there requires a fairly early election, the deciding point being the length of time between the arising of the situation and the election because if we are—I am inclined to agree with the member for Claremont that we are—something in the nature of a development council and not properly a political government, it is one of our first requirements that the people in a district should have direct access to the various departments of government through a local member. However, the argument is purely a technical one and, as I believe the member for Claremont feels; not of very great importance, particularly now it has passed.

I wish now to make some comments on a matter that I would have dealt with during the debate on the factories and shops legislation had that debate continued. It is possibly more appropriate to make the comments at this stage, however, than it would have been during the debate on that other measure, because I will deal with a subject that is relevant only indirectly to the other measure which I have mentioned. I refer to the need for a greater drive for industrial safety.

The regulations covering safety in industry are at present administered by three different bodies and through three different departments. Some of the machinery regulations are under the Mining Act, some under the Factories and Shops Act and others under the Timber Industry Regulation Act. It is possible for an inspector in a factory to see some potential danger and be unable to do anything about it because the machine or process concerned is subject to a different kind of regulation under which he is not an inspector. That is a situation which is completely silly and, in fact, I would say it is plain, straight stupid.

I advocate now, as I have in the past, the establishment of a department or sub-department of safety. I fancy that it should be an industrial department although one could envisage a department of safety applying itself also to road safety, safety in the home and all the various safety factors which are part of our very dangerous lives. As a starting point, we could have a sub-department of the industrial section and the inspectors appointed under that authority should have power to act against any potential breach of the safety regulations. It would, of course, involve some connection with safety in regard to health hazards in industry and one department might need inspectors trained in two or three branches

of inspection, but I feel that it is necessary that we take steps before very long to rationalise this situation.

For my part, I know that many hazards exist unnecessarily, some of them due to workmen in certain industries and on some machines failing to use the guards provided because those guards are in the way of what they want to do and make the carrying out of the job more awkward. Those men maintain that they are skilled tradesmen and know what they are doing, but accidents still occur. Guards are taken off machines, people work without goggles, or without gloves when they should wear them, and those are the occasions upon which accidents happen. That sort of thing is quite common and I believe part of the trouble lies in the fact that those using the machines are not properly educated by the people in charge of them.

It is a statutory requirement of foremen, overseers and managers that they ensure that the machines which come under their care are in safe condition and if any machine which should have a guard on it has not one, that is the responsibility not only of the man working it but also of the foreman in charge, the manager of the shop and of all ranks upwards to, and, to my mind, including, the managing director. It should be considered a grave breach of discipline to remove safety guards or work without goggles where they are required, and so on.

The only way of removing the hazard is to educate the operatives in the necessity for these precautions and that requires that those with managerial responsibility should know the job and be capable of illustrating and teaching it. Any person who cannot manage his own works and ensure safety should be replaced by someone who can. As one of our military leaders used to keep telling us, there are no bad troops but only bad officers. I would say there are no unsafe workmen but only unsafe managers, and I wish to emphasise that point.

With regard to the Causeway, which was mentioned by the member for Greenough, I wonder if people realise the wastage due to unnecessary accidents. We all know how long it took, how much money was required and how many men were needed to complete the Causeway. The job took years and years and a great deal of manpower and time were required to finish it, yet the total is not as great as that lost to the community through the deaths of ten young men. Between now and the end of the year it is practically certain that about ten young men, in their teens or twenties, will be killed and the loss to the State of production through those ten deaths—due either to industrial or road accidents—will be equal to the manpower and time required to build the

Causeway. If we can think of each avoidable accident as representing one-tenth of the manpower and time required for building the Causeway, we will realise how essential it is that accidents should not be allowed to take place. It is important that we should do something and do it more quickly in order to reduce our accidents. We must remember that although the road accident is the one that gets the biggest publicity, other accidents are equally avoidable, equally as painful, equally as fatal, and in greater numbers.

Mr. YATES: I move—

That progress be reported.

Question put.

The CHAIRMAN: The noes have it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Divide.

The Minister for Housing: There were no voices.

The CHAIRMAN: I will put the question again.

Question put and passed.

Progress reported.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1955-56.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 8th November on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £7,453;

MR. YATES (South Perth) [3.32]: The annual report submitted by the Commissioner of Police for the year ended the 30th June, 1955, contains some interesting comments as regards the lack of building in which to house the officers and administrative staff of the Police Department. This is a problem that has confronted the Government for many years. Each year I have spoken in this Chamber on the need for improving the facilities of the Police Department, not only in the metropolitan area but also in country districts.

On page 4 of his report, the Acting Commissioner of Police says—

Extensive additions are contemplated at the Victoria Park police station, where the huge growth of population has rendered the present accommodation quite inadequate.

We all know that. As a matter of fact, last year, as a result of approaches, the Minister wrote me a letter stating that it was the Government's intention to commence, almost immediately, extensive additions to the Victoria Park police station and also to zone the metropolitan district in a manner similar to the zoning system in operation in Sydney. Victoria Park and other districts south of the river would be in a complete and separate zone. He also mentioned that these additions were long overdue. What is the Government doing about it?

Since that time, the position of the Traffic Branch, where motorists apply for traffic registration and drivers licences, has become chaotic. One has only to go to the office of the Traffic Branch in James-st. to see the chaos that exists, particularly during lunch-hour periods. It is nothing unusual to see a queue stretching from the counter to the door, and sometimes beyond it. That is brought about partly by lack of facilities but mainly because there has been no increase in staff to keep up with the ever-increasing demand for traffic registrations and the need for rooms in which to discuss traffic problems generally.

The whole set-up of the Traffic Branch in James-st. is entirely wrong; it is archaic and outmoded and how on earth we, in this modern age, can put up with such deplorable conditions is beyond my comprehension. We expect the men of the Police Force to work under disgusting conditions—especially the officers in the Traffic Branch—in buildings that have been erected in some cases, for nearly three-quarters of a century. I do not know when the old houses that have been renovated and are now in use were built; I would say a hundred years ago. In the heart of our city, these old homes are being used for the headquarters of a modern, up-to-date Traffic Branch of the Police Department.

On page 5 of his report, the acting commissioner goes on—

The building position remains particularly acute at the Perth Traffic Office, in spite of it having been extended during the previous year by the renting of a building in Hay-st. West for the road patrol.

Another old house, not far from Parliament House! So we have a splitting up of the Traffic Branch and it is being housed in old homes and buildings. An overall central control is most vital for this section of the department. The acting commissioner goes on—

With the continuing increase in motor-vehicles on the roads, this branch has outgrown even this expanded accommodation and the position is expected to suffer more deterioration rapidly.

That might be one of the reasons why we have had an all-time high in the number of resignations from the Police Force. There were 50 resignations last year, and that meant that a lot of money, which was spent on training these men to be efficient officers, was lost.

Mr. Court: Would that be directly connected with the use of these old premises?

Mr. YATES: I said that I thought it would be partly responsible for some of the resignations because some of the men

have resigned from the departments housed in those buildings. The acting commissioner continues—

The Crown Law Department continues to press for the return to it of the upstairs portion of the Perth police court building as court work is expanding rapidly, but no alternative accommodation is available for our Criminal Investigation Branch, which is housed there.

So the Crown Law Department is hammering at the Police Force to return portion of the police court buildings. Eight years ago in this House I and the member for Mt. Lawley stressed the need for further police court accommodation to augment the cramped conditions under which our magistrates are forced to operate. The position today is exactly the same as it was eight years ago, with the exception of interior alterations and the taking over of the police barracks, which was a retrograde step. The barracks had to be taken over to supply urgent accommodation for our ever-expanding Police Force.

But what is the Government doing about it? Not a thing! From year to year, through question and answer, we are informed that the position is being investigated. The same reply was given in the time of our Government—the position was being investigated. It was admitted that further accommodation should be provided for the Police Court, the Traffic Branch and also, in fact, for all sections of the Police Force. We are facing the same problem all over the State. In some of the country areas, police quarters are beyond conception and little has been done over the years to alleviate the position. As the years go on, of course, the buildings deteriorate, and it is not always possible to keep them up to date.

In this era, more than 10 years after the cessation of hostilities, when we have had our fair share of loan moneys; our fair share of prosperity; very little unemployment and are now in the position of having plenty of materials and a large number of surplus building tradesmen, it is time for us to embark on a building programme for the rejuvenation of our Police Force accommodation. We should give members of that force modern facilities and other amenities that are urgently required. By doing that we will not only retain the men, but make the force more attractive for them in the future.

The Government has failed to make provision for modern police buildings, new police courts, additional accommodation, new magisterial appointments; all of which will be required for further police work. It has also failed to make provision for additional accommodation for the Crown Law Department in connection

with its police work. We have the Crown Law Department and the Police Department both clamouring for additional, modern and up-to-date facilities so that, on the one hand, the police can do a reasonable and adequate job in the prevention of crime; so that they can be given the benefit of modern facilities which will enable young police cadets to be trained in all phases of police work and so that, in turn, they can be sent out to country centres better equipped than they are in the existing circumstances.

I hope that whoever is in office in future will do something about the position and make every endeavour to place our police administration and police buildings on a modern footing. There is another phase of police activities about which I am not very satisfied. I refer to the work performed by members of the Liquor Branch. Recently, information has been brought to me by some people regarding raids on their premises by certain officers of that branch. These people own a roadside eating-house which is open day and night.

At week-ends they provide music for the benefit of their patrons. The proprietor of this business married not so very long ago. I received an invitation to his wedding and I attended the reception at the premises to which I am referring. Within a couple of weeks of the marriage, the wife, who knew very little about the business, was, during the evening, assisting in conducting it. A dance was in progress and the tables were well filled with patrons.

Two young men came in and asked this lady if she could sell them two bottles of beer. She said, "We do not sell beer on these premises." They said, "We are two young men from the country and it is too late to buy a bottle of beer in the city." She replied, "We do not sell beer here." This conversation continued for well over half an hour. Finally the woman went to her husband and explained the position and he said, "No, we do not sell liquor on this place and have never done so since I have been here."

She went back and told the two men what her husband had said, but they still insisted that they would like a drink. She returned to her husband and told him what they had said and he replied, "You can give them two bottles from my own refrigerator and they can have them for nothing." These proceedings were spread over about 1½ hours and the two men in question were members of the Police Liquor Branch. They were under the guise of two young men from the country. They entered these premises under false pretences and for 1½ hours pestered that woman and her husband to sell them liquor.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.5 p.m.

Mr. YATES: The afternoon tea suspension broke my train of thought but I shall endeavour to continue from where I left off. I was referring to the police officers of the Liquor Branch trying to make a kill on certain premises. After the length of time that these two young men badgered the proprietor and his wife to obtain beer, saying they had come a long distance from the country, and being so insistent all that time, finally the proprietor told his wife to give them the two bottles of beer which he had placed in the refrigerator for himself.

That was done, and the two men received a bill at the end of the meal and went out. Within half an hour the police come back with a warrant and from what I have been told by the proprietor, they were not particularly nice. They searched the place, but all they could find in the refrigerator was a partly-used bottle of spirits and no other liquor.

Hon. L. Thorn: Did the proprietor charge those two men for the beer?

Mr. YATES: When the account was inspected at the request of the proprietor it was found that nothing had been added for the two bottles of beer supplied. It was a straight-out gift. I know the proprietor. He came out from Holland two or three years ago and is making a very fine citizen of this State. I would say that the action of the police officers of the Liquor Branch in going to the premises and badgering the proprietor for one and a half hours to make him break the law was despicable in the extreme. If all that our police officers can do is to make people break the law, it is time the commissioner, the Minister or this House of Parliament altered the set-up in the Police Force. The proprietor was eventually taken to court and fined £10 for supplying beer to the men concerned.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: He could have pleaded not guilty.

Mr. YATES: It is not permissible to give beer away in those places.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I think you can give away as much as you like.

Mr. YATES: That is the story I have been told, and I have checked it with several witnesses and believe it, irrespective of the police evidence. I did not attend the court and do not know what the evidence was. It may be proved that I am wrong, but I do not think so. Those people are reputable, as are the witnesses I saw. I know from personal observation, and from the fact that, some weeks before, I saw a police sergeant in connection with certain matters in the same area, and he gave those people a clean bill. The police had been attending to their premises for some time and were quite satisfied they were not dealing in liquor at any time.

But the moment the man was married and his wife came into the establishment, these two men came in purporting to be visitors from the country, and used all sorts of tricks to obtain liquor and make a kill. If such tactics are going to be adopted in the detection of crime, it is time the system was altered. It is not fair for such men to approach law-abiding citizens in that way. Naturally they have the right to enter premises and attempt to secure liquor in order to try to get a conviction. That must happen, I admit.

However, after they have been refused once or twice, and it is apparent that no liquor is sold, they should not stay for an indefinite time and wear people down until it is given to them—not sold—and then be able to obtain a conviction on top of that. I would like the Minister to make full investigation into the allegations made to me, and if they are proved true, to see that a new system is adopted by members of the liquor detection branch when they go out on these so-called raids.

In his speech, the member for Greenough mentioned the traffic problem in Adelaide Terrace. That is a matter to which I referred by way of a question in this House last year, when I asked whether the Minister for Police would have the position investigated with the Perth City Council to see whether Adelaide Terrace could be widened by the removal of 6ft. of pathway from each side of the highway. The reply from the Minister was that he did not deal with such matters, which were the province of the Chief Secretary, who would be informed, and I would be subsequently advised of his reply. I did not receive any reply and do not know what transpired. I am not aware whether or not the Government approached the Perth City Council.

I think that is the answer to our Adelaide Terrace problem. I have been down there on many occasions. I pass through every day, of course; but I have stood at the corner of Bennett-st. and Plain-st. for a period of up to one hour at certain times of the day during certain days of the week.

Hon. D. Brand: If parking were restricted during peak hours, it would be a first step.

Mr. YATES: Yes. I suggested that that should be done previously. During the time I stood there for a full hour, 20 people came from one direction or the other, and never at any time were there more than two people on the footpath together. I should say that would continue throughout the day. The existing footpath is about 12 ft. to 14 ft. wide, and about 4 ft. 6 in. is paved with granolithic slabs. That is all that is required for a footpath today. These wide footpaths were made years ago when most of the populace walked; they did not have motor-vehicles.

The Treasurer: And most of the mothers used very big prams.

Mr. YATES: Yes; and there were plenty of them, and footpaths were crowded.

Mr. Heal: Do you know the reason why the trees have been pulled up?

Mr. YATES: It may have been for that purpose. I have an idea it was. However, I have not been informed. I asked for the information, but it was not supplied.

Hon. D. Brand: They were removed because they were dying and creating a danger.

The Treasurer: One of them fell on a motorcar a few weeks ago.

Mr. YATES: They are all coming out on one side. If the council has in mind the widening of the road, it is doing an excellent job for the free movement of traffic, because the existing 4 ft. 6 in. or 5 ft. slab pavement is wide enough to cater for those requiring to walk up and down the terrace. If the rest of the footpaths were removed, there would be a valuable addition to the existing road, which would be more than sufficient to allow two lanes of traffic on each side of the highway.

Mr. Heal: Would it not create a bottleneck at the Causeway end?

Mr. YATES: No. Once slow-moving vehicles get to the Causeway they start to speed up to go around the circus. At odd times it might cause a slowing up; but in the overall scheme, the traffic would get away more quickly from the city, and the queuing up that takes place at 5 o'clock as far as Bennett-st. would be dispensed with.

Mr. O'Brien: Between Victoria-avenue and Plain-st.?

Mr. YATES: Yes. We have no need to worry about St. George's Terrace. It is wide enough to cater for all the traffic Adelaide Terrace can give it. In the mornings the bottleneck is at the Perth end. With the ever-increasing number of vehicles banking up, the traffic, after getting to Hill-st. is considerably slowed down, and vehicles find it most difficult to get to their destination.

To overcome that, I suggest that all heavy vehicles coming up Adelaide Terrace, before reaching the city, should have to use certain side streets, so that as the city was reached there would be only motorcars going along the highway, other vehicles proceeding to their destination along the side streets. In the overall position with regard to safety, it is very important that our highways, especially the entrance streets, should be of sufficient width to provide for an even flow of traffic so that there is no congestion at any peak period to cause traffic jams and, eventually, accidents.

As mentioned by the member for Greenough, the position on the Causeway is most acute. We have that bottleneck and the jamming up at the other end. Although the widening of Adelaide Terrace would relieve the position somewhat, it would not relieve it as far as the width of the Causeway is concerned. The only way to overcome the difficulty is to hasten the building of the bridge across the Narrows. By that means the traffic over the Causeway would be cut by at least one-third. The Fremantle, South Perth and Como traffic would all pass over the new bridge, and so alleviate the position in the city and over the Causeway itself.

Mr. May: Do you not think that Riverside Drive could be used to a much greater extent?

Mr. YATES: It is being used more extensively now, and when the council finishes the second road it is building at the end of the Causeway, a lot more traffic will use Riverside Drive. Although it is supposed to be clear of traffic, there is an odd vehicle parked on the drive which makes it most dangerous when oncoming buses and motorists have to pass stationary vehicles.

Mr. May: That applies in the terrace, too.

Mr. YATES: Yes, but that is much wider than Riverside Drive.

Mr. May: There is much more traffic along it.

Mr. YATES: Riverside Drive is wide enough for only two vehicles, but Adelaide Terrace is wide enough for two lanes of traffic on each side. If we prohibited vehicles from parking, even now we could have two lanes of traffic, though it would be quite a squeeze. But with a widening of the terrace the freedom of movement would be greater. It would be accelerated because of the extra width allowed each vehicle proceeding down Adelaide Terrace into the city.

I move on now to the report of the Government Tramways and Ferries Department, one of the most interesting reports submitted to the Chamber this year. It has a story to tell even in connection with traffic, because it indicates that more people than ever are using their own vehicles. At page 5 it states—

Compared with the year ending the 30th June, 1949 8,242,859 less passengers were conveyed, despite an increase in the mileage run of 589,159 miles, due to provision of new and extended services. This loss is accounted for by the vast increase in the use made of private motorcars and taxi cabs. Motorcars now licensed in the metropolitan area number 55,152, an increase during the year of 7,889, whilst motor cycles number 9,605. Taxi cabs increased by two during the

year, and now number 568. Since the year 1946, there have been 35,652 new registrations of private motor-vehicles, which will serve to illustrate the decline in the dependency on public transport, particularly in the evenings and weekends and public holidays. It is during these periods that patronage offering has been substantially reduced.

In view of those facts, can it be wondered that the department suffered a deficit this year? It will suffer much more in the years ahead if we do not tackle this problem. The department finished the year with a deficit of £188,615, and it was the first time since 1950 that earnings were insufficient to meet working expenses. This fact indicates that a revision of fares is warranted.

How can we meet this problem and make these passenger vehicles more attractive to the travelling public? Mention is made in this report of one idea, although it does not show how the position will be affected. Between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., but particularly 8.30 a.m. to 9 a.m., many thousands of schoolchildren use the trams and buses to the exclusion of workers who are going to their places of employment. In many instances, the workers stand and the children sit down. All of them do not stand to give the seat to a worker, and a worker would not ask for the seat of a child of 14 or 15 because he would probably get a rude reply.

Trams and buses and trolley-buses are being used extensively during the peak period by schoolchildren attending metropolitan schools. We should consider revising the school hours. There is no reason why they should not start at 9.30 a.m. The last of the workers would have left home by 8.30, and the kiddies could leave at 8.50 and reach school by 9.30. In this way, there would be an easing off of the congestion; there would be more room for patrons who pay more in the way of fares, and they would have a more comfortable ride.

Mr. Norton: What would happen when the schoolchildren were returning home?

Mr. YATES: They could finish half-an-hour later than at present, and that would not affect the overall position of peak period traffic in the evening. Even if it did, the children's lunch-hour could be curtailed by a quarter-of-an-hour and the school closing time could be fixed for a quarter-of-an-hour earlier. It is not the evening so much as the morning traffic that affects the influx of both types of passengers to the city.

Another interesting fact is the explanation why we are drifting behind and that is because the tramcars and trolley-buses are costing so much to operate. It costs the department 7.99d. per mile to run a tram, 5.68d. to run a trolley-bus, and 2.52d. to run a motor bus, so the sooner we get rid of the trams, the better it will

be for relieving traffic congestion, the easier will be the flow of traffic through the main arteries of the city, and the better will be the financial position of the Tramways Department.

According to the report, the Government ferries showed a loss, but it was a reduced loss. There was an improvement for the year of £3,037. The total loss on the ferries was £5,766. The ferries are used in two ways. There are the daily runs to Mends-st., South Perth, and the return to Barrack-st., and there are also the charters for trips down the river. The service from Barrack-st. to Mends-st. has not paid, and under existing conditions will not pay unless there is a substantial increase in fares. The charter trips have shown a profit, and I suggest that a further profit could be made with the ferries if the river and the trips were made more attractive.

In the Eastern States, wherever there is a harbour or a river, pleasure craft use the waterway to the full. In Sydney there are trips on the harbour by day and night, the vessels being chartered by various parties. On many occasions, these craft have orchestras on board, and patrons are prepared to pay a moderate fee to enjoy the fresh air and the river.

When I was in Brisbane recently, I took a trip from Brisbane 12 miles upstream in a river craft, a large vessel that held 400 or 500 people. On board were a piano, and loud speaker equipment and an orchestra, as well as five or six topline artists to entertain the patrons. When the boat reached its destination, there was a dance ashore free of charge to the patrons, who, after three-quarters of an hour of dancing, rejoined the vessel and returned to Brisbane. The charge was 4s. per head, and these trips pay handsomely. They are made night after night and on Saturday afternoons and on Sundays. There are other trips from Brisbane, and full use is made of the waterway.

The Swan River is three times as attractive as the Brisbane River. In fact, it is one of the most attractive rivers in Australia, having plenty of stopping places and points of interest for patrons. If we had modern vessels that could hold several hundred people, I am sure that a handsome profit could be made from pleasure trips on various runs. I have witnessed conclusive proof that it could be done. Our present ferry system is restricted and vessels are employed of a type never intended to be used for pleasure purposes. They are straight-out carriers of passengers from one point to another and they offer very little comfort. In fact they are not big enough to carry large numbers of people and supply an orchestra, etc. So, in planning the future of our ferry system on the Swan River, we could incorporate vessels of a different sort.

Several years ago I was a member of a committee appointed by the Government to investigate the future of the ferries. The committee recommended to the Government that it spend many thousands of pounds in the purchase of new vessels of a larger type, and that the vessels be suitable for charter purposes as well as ferry use. Had those vessels been purchased when the committee made the recommendation we would today have on the Swan River one of the finest runs for pleasure purposes that could be found in the Commonwealth. A new run to Applecross could be instituted; and Point Walter could be reopened and once more come alive. Trips could be run to Claremont and around the bays in that locality.

There is no end to the number of places to which the ferries could run in order to make the passengers very happy. I can remember that 30 years ago we had two large river vessels—one was the "Zephyr" and the other the "Westralia". The "Westralia" was quite a large vessel—a two funnel job—and she carried more passengers than do the present boats.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That was a long while ago.

Mr. YATES: Yes. I even have snaps of these boats that I took as a lad. In those days the Swan River was very popular, and on Saturday afternoons and Sundays it was a mass of white sails. Not only did those two large vessels operate, but several smaller ones, too. There was a run to Applecross with a stopping place at the Narrows where passengers could disembark. The trip also went on to Point Walter. We had a good ferry service on the river. If that was the position 30 years ago with a much smaller population than now, look at the opportunities today.

The "Westralia" was as big as the Manly ferries. In fact, I think that many years ago she was shipped to Sydney and used there as a ferry; she might still be operating there for all I know. After she went away, she was replaced, but much later, by the "Emerald", but there was no comparison between the two. The Ferries Department is under the control of the Tramways Department of which Mr. Napier is the general manager. We have the ferries organisation at the foot of Barrack-st., where the shore engineer and the staff are located. All we need is the finance from the Government—and it could be made available by special loan moneys to institute on the river modern ferries of a type which could be large enough to go outside to the islands, and we would bring back the pre-glory to the river; we would make it the popular spot that it used to be and that it should be today.

Very few people take an interest in the river now, compared with the numbers years ago. This is mainly because of outside attractions. We have let the river go

without doing much about it in the way of publicity or of giving the people what they want. The Ferries Department could make a full investigation and decide on the type of ferry it would require. This report proves that by the present restricted use of the ferries a profit is being made from the charters. If more suitable vessels were available, we would make the Swan River an attractive place for our own people as well as visitors.

If people in other parts knew of the delights of the Swan, they would come here just as people go to Sydney to see the harbour and its famous bridge. We will have over our river a bridge just as famous as that over the harbour, but somewhat smaller. I was interested to read in the Press the report of the inquiry into the Egg Board. No doubt the report interested the member for Dale because on occasions he has a little to do with the egg industry. I am certain he would be more interested in the report than would any other member.

Mr. May: He knows now who gets the profits.

Mr. YATES: Yes. After reading the report, I wondered whether the size of the board was too unwieldy. I made investigations in regard to many other Government boards—we have 60 of them—and I found that the most successful was the Milk Board which handles one of the most difficult commodities that we have to deal with, mostly because it is so perishable. Milk lasts only a short space of time before it becomes unfit for use. Eggs do not last very long, but they last much longer than milk does, and they are generally crated away in cool storage for considerable periods. These two boards would be the most comparable because they both handle perishable produce, and both types of produce are essential in the scheme of things. They have to be handled carefully, expeditiously and with a great deal of accuracy in connection with health.

Many members criticised the production and distribution of milk some years ago; before the commencement of the Milk Board. Even after the constitution of the board was proclaimed there was much criticism from within the House and outside, but I think experience has proved that the Milk Board, with all its early difficulties, has been the most successful of all our boards because it has handled milk to the entire satisfaction of the general public for several years, and it has cleaned up the disgraceful conditions which, at the time it was constituted, were operating in various dairies both in the metropolitan area and in the country.

I saw photographs in one of the annual reports showing comparisons of how milk was produced prior to and also after the

establishment of the board. The earlier pictures showed tin sheds with holes in the walls, mud 2 ft. deep, decayed timber lying around and a dirty old cow going in to be milked. On the next page the photographs showed the same property with modern sheds, no mud, granolithic floors and everything hygienic. It was a revelation to see the change that had been created because of the activities of the Milk Board.

This board is conducted by very few people; I think there are three on it. So successful has it been that I have not, for years, heard of anyone desiring a change in its complement. If it is the intention of the Government to do anything about the report of the egg inquiry, I suggest that the Egg Board could be reconstituted to bring it into line with the Milk Board. We would then have a board consisting of a minimum number of men who could be selected for their knowledge of the industry the same as are the members of the Milk Board. If that were done we would once again have harmony in the egg industry.

Of course, this will not come about overnight; it will take a long time for us to get stability in the industry because the marketing of eggs, I admit, is much different from the marketing of milk. Milk is a commodity used entirely within the State and mainly in the metropolitan area while eggs are used not only here but also at times are shipped overseas for consumption by people outside of Australia. The handling of both commodities would require no extra effort and it would be no harder to market eggs than it is for the Milk Board to market milk. A system similar to that adopted by the Milk Board, with the number of depots and distributors cut down to the minimum and working to a required standard, could be arranged in the set-up of the new egg board, and the whole of that body's activities could be revised and reviewed.

The marketing system would also have to be changed but I am certain that it would be a mistake to dispense with the Egg Board altogether as there is need for it from both the producers' and the retailers' points of view. It was mentioned in the report that the retailer got most out of the industry and that opinion was arrived at after a long and careful investigation, so we know what should be done in that direction; the margins should be altered.

We must give the industry a fillip because, instead of the production of the poultry-breeders and egg producers in this State expanding, there has been a shrinkage, mainly due to the higher costs of production, including the high cost of bran and pollard, together with a lack of sympathy on the part of Governments and others who should be more interested

in the industry owing to their close connection with it. Due to these and other factors the egg-producing industry has had a hard row to hoe in the past few years and owing to those difficulties it has become increasingly hard to expand it.

The setting up of a new egg board comprised of men of courage and vision and with the full support of those engaged in the industry would, I am certain, mean that instead of slipping back, this branch of our production would go forward and eventually we would have an egg board comparable with the Milk Board and doing as good a job for the community as that body has done. I commend to the Government the thought that full consideration should be given to the report of Mr. Smith—a very fine report, too—as it is a comprehensive document covering over 90 foolscap pages and dealing with every angle of the industry.

In that report Mr. Smith touched on the retailing side and mentioned also the export section of the industry. Viewed as a whole, this is as comprehensive a report as this Chamber has ever received as the result of an investigation, so let us not drop it. Having received that excellent report, let us implement its recommendations as soon as possible in order to get the industry back on to a sound footing and establish confidence between the producer, the retailer and the board—confidence which is so urgently required if we are to keep the industry on its feet.

I desire next to deal with the National Safety Council and, as a representative of my party on that council, I wish to inform members that recently we had the annual convention of the National Road Safety Council. The convention was held in Perth and delegates from all over the Commonwealth attended. For the benefit of those who did not witness the procession held during Safety Week, I would point out that visitors from the other States of Australia recognised this as the best procession of its kind ever produced anywhere in the Commonwealth and agreed that the lessons which it put before the public were some of the best yet seen.

The whole procession was carefully thought out and new angles of safety were stressed. It illustrated safety problems from childhood upwards. So important was that procession considered to be that it was filmed and portions of the film were shown in practically every theatre in Australia. Only yesterday morning one or two members of this Chamber, together with members of the National Safety Council and members of the Police Force, witnessed a complete showing of this film. The idea of producing the film was to bring home to the general public the further need for the people to become safety-minded.

We have been battling for many years on these committees and in all fairness to the Minister for Transport—unfortunately he is not present at the moment—I say he ranks as one of the best Ministers for Transport in Australia owing to his interest in national safety. He has given more personal attention to the need for safety measures by those using the roads than has any other Minister in the Commonwealth. That is entirely due to his own individual efforts and not so much those of the Government, although he has had its full support in this regard.

For a Minister to devote as much time as he has given to national safety should bring home to the people of Western Australia the need for ensuring greater safety on our roads. If a Minister of the Crown can give a lead—he has no doubt set a very high standard which it will be difficult to follow—surely the general public should fall into line better than they have! We often hear it said that the money spent by the National Safety Council is wasted, but that is far from the truth. Very few people know in full the activities of that council and the ramifications of its many projects. The National Safety Council has been responsible in this State for the marking of our highways, and any insurance company will bear witness that the white line down the centre of a highway cuts the accident rate greatly because motorists automatically keep to the correct side of that white line.

The council has been responsible also for various crosswalks that are in evidence and for the wigwag warning signals placed on dangerous corners. The first such signal in Western Australia was installed at Fremantle near the old Melville camp on the road to Rockingham and immediately the accident rate there dropped sharply. Motorists automatically slow up when they see the flashing orange lights and consequently there are far fewer accidents. Since then we have placed a similar signal in Northam, and others elsewhere in the State.

Mr. Oldfield: The one at Northam is wasted, in its present position.

Mr. YATES: Such signals are not wasted anywhere if they save a single life, and the member for Maylands would not know whether they saved lives or not. These lights are placed in position after reports and recommendations from the traffic authorities. We provide them once those authorities tell us what is the best place. The signal installed at Northam has done a good job as previously there were many accidents at that corner and the accident rate there was reduced as soon as the wigwag signal was installed.

We have also a system for co-ordinating the ideas of the various traffic authorities throughout the State, and we have been responsible for the older types of vehicle being removed from the roads.

When driving along it was a common thing to pass some old vehicle with a rear wheel wobbling, the front wheels out of line or a ragged mudguard—all of which tend to cause accidents and injure people. The National Safety Council was responsible for the trainee driving scheme in our high schools, the first of its kind in Australia, if not in the world. So successful has that scheme been that we are hard pressed to keep up with it, and that is sufficient proof that our instructional work is bearing fruit.

We have been partly responsible for instruction in the schools. During the last 20 years the population of the State has increased enormously and the number of children attending our schools has quadrupled. At present we have three or four times the number of cars that were on the road 20 years ago, and yet the accident rate among schoolchildren has been reduced considerably because of the instruction given in schools. Children today are more traffic-conscious than adults.

The Treasurer: That is a very effective method of achieving road safety.

Mr. YATES: Yes, it has been most effective; and because of the effectiveness of that policy the National Safety Council is striving to extend its teaching methods to every school in the State. At present the council receives from the Commonwealth Government a small annual grant of approximately £10,000 and, as a result, we are not able to do all that is required, or all that we would like to do to give a further impetus to teaching people ways and means of overcoming this problem of the toll of the road.

The number of deaths from road accidents in Australia each year is greater than the deaths of our soldiers in any one year in World War II. That is something to think about. The number of deaths on our roads, in times of peace, is greater than it was when the country was at war.

Mr. Oldfield: Has the National Safety Council given thought to the idea of providing spoon-drains and humps to force motorists to slow down?

Mr. YATES: All these problems have been discussed by the National Safety Council and its members have investigated various ways of preventing speeding. From experience we have found that if humps and spoon-drains are made, particularly in the country districts, instead of slowing all motorists down, it slows down only those who know that the humps and spoon-drains are there. Those who do not know about them have an accident when they strike them at a high speed.

Mr. Oldfield: What about in the metropolitan area?

Mr. YATES: It is not a practical proposition to build humps and spoon-drains in the metropolitan area because of the density of the traffic. Most metropolitan

traffic flows reasonably slowly and the humps and spoon-drains would not be of much assistance.

One of our greatest worries is the level-crossing. The National Safety Council has investigated the position from every angle and there is only one answer to it—the installation of a subway at each of our crossings. We will never entirely prevent accidents at level-crossings while we have one vehicle travelling on a fixed line and weighing heavier than a vehicle travelling on a road. The heavier vehicle always causes damage to the lighter one. Although the driver of a train is conscious of his responsibilities, he knows, in his own heart, that he will not be hurt if his vehicle is involved in an accident. Rarely has an engine driver been hurt in an accident. It is psychological, but the feeling is there.

In some cases an engine driver might not approach a crossing with the same degree of caution as a motorist. The average motorist does display considerable caution at level-crossings and that is evidenced by the fact that thousands of motorists travel across them but there are only a few accidents. But the moment an accident occurs, there is usually loss of life because of the terrific weight and power of the heavier vehicle. There are infinitely more accidents on the roads, between motor-vehicles, than there are at level-crossings between motor-vehicles and trains. We overlook that fact because in most cases accidents between motor-vehicles are only minor, whereas in nine cases out of 10 an accident at a railway crossing means the death of the motorist. As I said, the only way to overcome the problem is to build subways at our level-crossings; but who is going to foot the bill?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: In New Zealand they have overhead bridges.

Mr. YATES: That is another solution to the problem, but most authorities to-day prefer subways to overhead bridges. There is an overhead bridge at Maylands and it has been in use for 50 years or more. Recently it was remodelled and extended, but I do not know of one death that has occurred, as a result of an accident, on that bridge. Motorists travel over it at a moderate speed and there is no possibility of their coming into contact with a train. If we could build a few more subways at our most dangerous railway crossings or other danger-spots, we would prevent many deaths on the road. However, if we built subways for nearly all of our crossings but left only one or two unprovided for, we would still have accidents. So long as it is possible for an accident to occur, there will always be accidents. There is always the human element to contend with.

It is even possible that a member of the National Safety Council will be killed at a railway-crossing. However careful he

might be at most times, he may be careless once, and that is the time when an accident happens. We have to be on guard at all times, not only in regard to our own safety, but also in regard to the safety of others. That is why the National Safety Council inaugurated the safety school for motor cyclists.

Mr. Brady: Can you tell us why they did not adopt the idea of using booms, such as they have in Europe, instead of flashing signals?

Mr. YATES: I think it is much the same as the idea of having a narrow railway gauge in Western Australia and a wider one in the Eastern States. It has been built and it is hard to change people's ideas. We had a boom at one of the level-crossings in Claremont.

Mr. Brady: They are used on all the highways in Europe.

Mr. YATES: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member's time has expired.

MR. MAY (Collie) [4.56]: When I spoke on the Address-in-reply I think I said that I would not speak then about the coal industry in this State but intimated that I would defer my comments on it until a later stage of the session. In what time is available this afternoon, I shall devote my remarks to the coal industry in this State and the many problems associated with it. Like other industries at present, the coal industry in this State is going through troublous times. The position has become difficult entirely due to the change of circumstances brought about by scientific research. This work is going on all the time and alternative methods are always being discovered.

We have a crisis in the wheat industry and we had one in the dairying industry; and the fact that there is one in the coal-mining industry at present makes it no different from many others in the State. We possess a great natural asset in the coal seams at Collie. Various estimates have been made from time to time and it would appear that no correct estimate can be given as to the amount of coal still available. Two years ago it was thought that we still had 200,000,000 tons of coal at Collie, but since that time, as a result of boring, another field has been discovered, and in some places the seam is 40 to 45 ft. thick. When the earlier estimates were made nobody had any idea that such a coal seam existed; certainly not in a place removed from well-known areas. So this State has a wonderful asset and one which can be used for the benefit of the State if it is properly dealt with.

It is very easy for members to extol the virtues of the new diesel engines and sweepingly state that we should have more of them, but I challenge any member to tell the people of this State that he is in favour of a complete change-over from

coal to oil fuel, having regard to the enormous asset that the State possesses at Collie. This evening the member for Greenough referred to the fire hazard. I want to make it clear that of all the fires that occur during the summer months, many of them have no relation to coal. Those that have been caused as a result of coal being used in the railway engines have been due, in the main, to the neglect of people who own land alongside the railway lines. I know that many of such people take no precautions whatsoever against fire.

Hon. D. Brand: What about the useless firebreaks of the Railway Department?

Mr. MAY: I am talking about the farmers at the moment, those who own large tracts of land which have not been fully developed and who make no effort to protect it from fire.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Even so, where full precautions have been taken, with the assistance of strong easterly winds, sparks have been carried hundreds of yards. As a result, I have seen fires break out in the middle of a field.

Mr. MAY: In answer to that, I can inform the Leader of the Opposition that the master type of spark arrester on railway engines has never allowed a spark to escape.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They escape all right.

Mr. MAY: However, all engines have not been fitted with master spark arresters. The latest figures I have show that about 12 or 13 engines have been fitted with this type of spark arrester. It would be far cheaper for the Railway Department to fit all engines with these spark arresters than it would be to scrap the whole of the asset that the State possesses at Collie. I am sure members will agree with me when I say that, because, after all is said and done, if we intend to exploit the large coal reserves at Collie, definite steps should be taken to ensure that the coal won is used. We should not throw our hands in the air and say, "The days of coal are finished; let us change to oil."

I challenge any member of Parliament to get on a platform in this State and tell the people that we are going to scrap our coal assets and use foreign oil. I do not think there would be one member prepared to do that and I do not think that he should, either. I maintain that this valuable coal asset, if properly developed, can be of benefit to the State for many years to come, not only for use as a fuel but also, if scientific research were properly conducted into its many qualities, I am sure that we would find that it has many more uses.

As with other industries, the coal industry at the moment is passing through troublesome times as it has done in the

past. I can remember when the whistles at the mines in Collie used to blow every morning for the purpose of informing the men that there was no work available because no orders had been placed for coal. I can remember when only two shifts a week were worked because there was no demand for Collie coal. However, since that time, coal production has reached 1,000,000 tons a year. This is despite the fact that years ago it was anticipated by many people that Collie coal had had its day because at the time there was no market for it.

Yet, many years later, the demand has proved so great that production has been stepped up to a total of 1,000,000 tons a year. So, despite the fact that oil constitutes a keen rival of coal as a fuel, it would be very unwise to forsake the asset that the State has at Collie. Since the days when the miners were working only two shifts a week, co-operation between the mining companies and the men has brought about an expansion of Collie coal production until, as I have already mentioned, it has reached the figure of 1,000,000 tons a year.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And the greatly increased demand for oil could easily send the price of oil up.

Mr. MAY: Yes, that is so. I think it will be found, too, that oil has its limitations. The people were very excited a few months ago when the announcement was made that oil had been discovered in this State. However, its production in commercial quantities has not yet been realised. Nevertheless I sincerely hope that those who are trying to discover oil in this State will be successful in their efforts. But even if oil is found in Western Australia in commercial quantities, I think that there will still be a need and use for the coal that is in such abundance in the Collie area.

Since World War II there has been a change in the method of producing coal. Till that time the system used was known as the pick-and-shovel method. So far as it went, it was a very good means of producing coal, but the demand for the product became so great and urgent that it was necessary to find other quicker, and possibly cheaper, methods of coal production. As a result, after World War II, everybody sought to produce coal by means of mechanisation. But mechanisation has not been a great success, or very satisfactory, as far as Collie is concerned. I guarantee that with the same old miners who were working before World War II and employing the pick-and-shovel method, more coal would be produced far quicker and cheaper than it is being produced by mechanisation.

Mr. McCulloch: And cleaner coal, too.

Mr. MAY: I thank the hon. member for that interjection, because that is a point on which I wish to touch. In the days when

men were producing coal by the pick-and-shovel method, if a man was found filling dirty coal, he was immediately penalised. The man's name was placed on a slate and he was warned. If it occurred again, he was stood down. In the early days of mechanisation when it consisted mostly of bulldozing coal into a heap and putting it direct into railway wagons, a lot more than slate and stone went in. A great deal of rock and foreign matter was included, because it was scooped up and it was not treated in the same manner as it was by the men with picks and shovels.

In consequence, over the years, and since mechanisation started, coal has become unpopular with many consumers. This is not because the quality is not there; that is not so at all. It is due to the fact that so much foreign matter is intermingled with the coal, and the companies and those responsible have failed to separate the coal from the dirt. It has all gone in as coal and has been sold at the top price. As a result, many consumers have become dissatisfied and have looked for alternative fuels.

The change-over from the old method to mechanisation has produced many problems. Most of the mines at Collie have been in operation for the last 30, 40 or 50 years. Members can well imagine the difficulties involved in trying to fit new and up-to-date machinery into mines which had been opened up by the pick-and-shovel method. That is what was done and it is there, I feel, that the people responsible for the mechanisation of the mines fell down on their job. The machinery was bought in most instances with money supplied by the State, and it was paid for with very valuable and scarce dollars. It was brought to Collie from America and England, and some of that machinery has never been used. It cannot be used because they tried to push it into mines that were never opened up along the lines intended for that kind of production.

Mr. Brady: Who bought that machinery?

Mr. MAY: As far as I know, the company bought it with money provided by the State.

Mr. Wild: Has not the coal mining engineer any say?

Mr. MAY: I will come to the problem of the coal mining engineer later. I would say that the other mechanised mines at Collie have been costly indeed. It would have paid us over and over again to have completely disregarded the old mines and opened up new ones in which to fit the machinery that was brought to the district to produce coal. Three or four years ago, I complained in this Chamber that all the machinery was lying on the surface and round the various mines at

Collie. It was still in the cases in which it had arrived. What happened? The result was that it was all taken down below, and out of sight. I could take members to a coal mine today and show them machinery that has never been used, and if they stuck their fingers into it they would go through because of the rust. All this machinery was bought with hard-earned dollars paid for by this State under agreement.

Mr. McCulloch: Paid for by the workers.

Mr. MAY: We have a most peculiar set-up in this State so far as the coal companies are concerned; I do not think members would find a similar set-up anywhere else. The Governments of this State have provided money to coal companies to help them to develop their mines and supply Government instrumentalities with coal. These private companies have produced this coal with money provided by the State and are now selling it to Government instrumentalities at a profit. As I have said, it has been produced with money provided by the Government. I dare say members on that side of the Chamber would call that private enterprise; I have another name for it. I do not think that any other company would expect to receive such conditions. I know it can be said that the money will be repaid.

Mr. Wild: It is being repaid by some companies, is it not?

Mr. MAY: I will give credit to the companies that are keeping up their payments.

Mr. Wild: Are they all keeping up their payments? You know one company that is not.

Mr. MAY: Nor is it that company's fault. There is a reason for that.

Mr. Wild: The company that you do not like is repaying the money.

Mr. MAY: I have no bias against any company because, as far as I am concerned, they are all on the same footing, and I would say good luck to the company that is repaying the money to the Government. But it is doing it at the expense of the other two companies, and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. Wild: They are producing coal.

Mr. MAY: If the hon. member wants the whole story, I will tell him why that particular company is paying its way. It is because that company put the acid on his Government for 70 per cent. of the orders. Is not that right?

Hon. D. Brand: No.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member says it is not right!

Mr. Wild: That would not be much worse than the Government's assistance to Chamberlain Industries.

Mr. MAY: In fairness to the Government at the time I say that the requirements allocated to the company were reduced to 60 per cent. Where three companies operate in one area in the same industry, why should one company be allocated 60 per cent. of Government orders, and the other two 20 per cent. each.

Mr. Wild: The reason may be that one is more efficient.

Mr. MAY: Now we can understand why the company on a 20 per cent. allocation could not meet its commitments.

Hon. D. Brand: Could the other companies have supplied more than 20 per cent. at the time?

Mr. MAY: Of course they could, by adopting the same method as the principal company, which was using the open cut method.

Hon. D. Brand: The other companies could do so now, but not when the agreement was made.

Mr. MAY: They could have at that time.

Hon. D. Brand: Did not Western Mining Co. make any profit this year?

Mr. MAY: I do not know what the profit was, but the company owes the Government a fair amount of money. Of all the companies operating in Collie, in my opinion Western Collieries is the only one which has set about producing coal on the right mechanical basis. I hold no brief for any of the companies and, as far as I am concerned, they are all on the same footing. When I am told that one company is meeting its commitments to the Government, which is perfectly true, I am nevertheless aware that it is done only at the expense of the other two companies.

Mr. Wild: In the meantime the State is getting the coal.

Mr. MAY: We always got the coal.

The Treasurer: Coal at any price is the policy of the member for Dale.

Mr. Wild: Perhaps the Treasurer would like the same conditions as those found in England. I bet he would enjoy them over there.

Mr. MAY: When the member for Dale finishes his speech I shall try to finish mine. In regard to the continuity of coal supplies, nowhere else in the world has there been a better record than in Western Australia.

Mr. Wild: Who is arguing about that?

Mr. MAY: The hon. member was.

Mr. Wild: Not about that point.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member said the miners could not keep up the supplies.

Hon. D. Brand: The companies came to the aid of the State when it was in desperate need of coal a few years ago.

Mr. MAY: The Collie miners have always kept up the coal supply to meet the requirements of the State, and to such an extent that there is over-production today.

Hon. D. Brand: You cannot deny that there was a coal shortage in 1949 and 1950.

Mr. MAY: That was not brought about because the miners were not working.

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

Mr. MAY: The hon. member insinuated that, and I wanted to squash that insinuation before it developed further.

Hon. D. Brand: That is a figment of your imagination.

Mr. MAY: The Collie miner has always supplied the requirements of the State.

Mr. Bovell: The Collie miners have a good record.

Mr. MAY: I thank the hon. member for that admission. I would have expected a remark like that from the member for Mt. Lawley.

The Treasurer: It is marvellous how the members for the South-West stick together.

Mr. MAY: Over the last few years one company has been working on the cost-plus system. There is nothing wrong with the cost part of that system, but there is a great deal wrong with the plus part.

Mr. Wild: What is the alternative system?

Mr. MAY: The best system is where a coalmining company puts its own capital into coal production. Then it would be entitled to retain whatever profits it made, and it would not be under any obligation to repay to the Government any loans out of the profits. I want to see the type of company that puts in its own money, develops a mine and makes a profit without any assistance from the State.

Mr. Wild: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAY: Such a situation will not arise until each company is placed on the same footing in regard to Government orders, and where no undue advantage is given to any one company. Some members opposite know what I mean. The introduction of the cost-plus system to supply the coal requirements of the State has been a shocking tragedy.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Who was responsible originally for adopting that system?

Mr. MAY: The previous Government had a lot to do with it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not think that my Government had anything to do with it.

Mr. MAY: I think it did.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It was long before that, during the limitations of dividends.

Mr. MAY: It certainly had to do with the question of one company being allocated 60 per cent. of the State's requirements. The hon. member would not argue against that.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I would. It was in operation long before that.

Mr. MAY: I can tell the hon. member when it came into operation. It was when the agreement was made on the 24th December, 1952.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What was the date of the agreement before that?

Mr. MAY: Before that there was no agreement.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: There was an understanding.

Mr. MAY: There was no agreement or understanding.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Yes, there was. Why did the company always get the same proportion before?

Mr. MAY: Because it had a complete monopoly. It was the only coalmining company in existence.

The Treasurer: The member for Mt. Lawley knows that very well. No one knows it better.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I know the whole situation.

Mr. MAY: Of course he does. If his memory is short, I can refresh it in regard to the company's agreement which was drawn up by the previous Government.

The Minister for Mines: The member for Mt. Lawley does not want to know that.

Mr. MAY: There was a special agreement.

The Minister for Mines: A disastrous one.

Mr. MAY: The company asked for 70 per cent. of the State's requirements, but through the representation of the Railway Department and the State Electricity Commission, the allocation was reduced to 60 per cent. What encouragement is there for any company to produce coal in this State when such agreements can be made in regard to the requirements of the State? The men working in the industry know what has been going on under the cost-plus system. They have continually asked for an inquiry to be made as to why certain expenditure has been incurred by the companies, and by that I am not excluding any company. We have always been told that an inquiry will not produce any results. I want to state that public money has been sunk in the mines and a public inquiry should be made into coalmining affairs.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Some of the money was spent for the benefit of the miners.

Mr. MAY: Most of it went down the drain.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The Collie miners are a little better off than most other workers in this State.

Mr. MAY: Since when?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: At present and when the previous Government was in office when a royalty of 1d. a ton was given to miners and a £40,000 building was erected.

Mr. MAY: The previous Government made a proposal that miners should get 1d. a ton royalty.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The proposal put forward and supported by the Government at the time was to give the miners some advantage, which they deserved, but which very few other unionists had enjoyed.

Mr. MAY: It was done for a purpose. The previous Government proposed an amenities fund to be set up to be fed by a royalty on coal of 1d. per ton. That is perfectly true. At the time I said in this House that 1d. was not enough.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I remember that.

Mr. MAY: I advocated 2d. per ton. Finally it was agreed that 1½d. per ton royalty should be imposed. Throughout all the years that the coalmining industry has been in existence in Collie, that was the only occasion when miners have received any benefit, apart from their wages, from the millions of tons of coal produced in that district.

Mr. Wild: It was done while the Liberal Government was in office.

Mr. MAY: Yes. Marvellous!

Mr. Wild: After 25 years of Labour government.

Mr. MAY: I am big enough to acknowledge it.

Mr. Wild: Thank you!

Mr. MAY: Whoever was responsible for bringing it in, we are very grateful for it. The sum of 1½d. per ton royalty to provide amenities at Collie for the miners is little enough in return for the millions of tons of coal that have been produced and the wonderful profits that must have been made out of the industry since it was started.

I would ask members what money built the Collie power house in the first place. The member for Mt. Lawley should know something about that. I know where the money came from, and so does he. I know where the money came from to start many other concerns in the metropolitan area, too. The profits were never shown properly against the coal produced in Collie. The money was utilised in the manner I have mentioned, for the construction of the Collie power house and to start smaller industries in the metropolitan area.

If one inquires of any Collie company today, one will be told that it is working on an overdraft. One company had a monopoly of the coal trade for years and

years, but it will tell one that today it is working on an overdraft. I could tell members the reason, and I could state where the money has gone. That is why the men in the industry demand an inquiry as to the manner in which the money provided by the State has been spent.

Mr. Wild: What have you done with your Government in the past three years?

Mr. MAY: I repeatedly asked in this House for an inquiry during the time the hon. member's Government was in office.

Mr. Wild: You have had three years to hold an inquiry.

Mr. MAY: It is too late now. The money has gone.

Mr. Wild: It is certainly too late, with only six weeks to go.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member's Government refused to take a grip of the situation. It said, "We will overcome the difficulty by appointing a State Coal Mining Engineer." I think his salary this year will be about £2,700; and, in view of the little authority he has, I would say that that money is going down the drain.

Hon. L. Thorn: He gets nearly as much as we do.

Mr. MAY: He has not the power. When he was appointed, he was never given the power to take action whenever he saw that the industry was being run in the wrong direction.

Mr. Wild: Could you not see that he was given more power?

Mr. MAY: Did I not bring the matter under notice time and again in this Chamber? But nothing happened. I am not reflecting on the man concerned, but I say that it was simply madness to appoint an engineer at that salary without giving him the necessary authority to deal with the situation as he found it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do not you think the Government is entitled to be given advice?

Mr. MAY: Yes; and I think it should act on the advice when it receives it. In the case of the previous Government, that was not done.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I have not noticed that your Government has done very much.

Mr. MAY: Never mind about the Government! I would say that this cost-plus system that was introduced—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not like it.

Mr. MAY:—almost wrecked the industry. Surely to goodness there should be some supervision over this business, whereby customers in this State would be able to receive the type of coal they were paying for! We have the coal, and the companies could be made to produce it and give

it to consumers in its natural state as it appears in the seam at Collie. I do not blame the consumers of coal in this State for their attitude, in view of the way in which they have been treated. The blame lies with those people who are being paid by the State to see that the coal produced at Collie is produced as cleanly as possible and is of the right quality.

The supply of such coal would create a greater demand for it. I have been round to consumers in the metropolitan area, and I have asked, "Why are you against Collie coal?" They have shown me a sample, and I have been disgusted with it. The companies will say that they are going to install picking belts. In fact, they have done so. They say, "We will put men on each side of the belt to pick off the foreign matter which is mixed with the coal." But the method adopted is to overload the picking belt to blazes, and the men are not in the race to pick out the foreign matter which has become involved. As a consequence, it goes into the railway trucks and so to the consumers, and there we have the tragedy.

I have been looking forward to the time when I will be able to arouse somebody's interest. Most members will recall that year after year I have spoken about the futility of open-cut coal. Did anybody take any notice of me? Not a scrap! Mine was a voice crying in the wilderness. Today the situation has caught up with us and the consumer says, "I am going to have something different from this." I do not blame him, if we are going to persist in producing coal of such quality as is being produced even now. The time has arrived for somebody to take a grip of the situation, and I say that those responsible for production should produce coal and coal only.

We have plenty of good coal at Collie. All that is needed is a proper method of production, and then everybody who desired to use coal would be perfectly happy with what he got. There is urgent need for an inquiry into the way in which public money has been spent on this industry. The miners in Collie will not be satisfied until something has been done to bring to book those responsible for the waste of money which this State could ill afford to lose.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You have a coal mining engineer, and the companies have coal mining engineers. Who else can advise the Government?

Mr. MAY: If the Leader of the Opposition had been in his seat and listened to what I said earlier, he would know my opinion of the situation so far as the State Coal Mining Engineer is concerned—and I am not reflecting on the man.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Who are you to get advice from? That is where you should get it.

Mr. MAY: Of course! That is what he was appointed for; but he was not given the necessary authority.

Hon. D. Brand: Has he had it since?

Mr. MAY: He cannot take action as he should be able to do when he sees what is occurring in regard to the production of coal. He has no authority. Many a time I have said that if he had not the authority it should be given to him; and that if he had the authority and was not using it, he should be sacked. I think members will find that that appeared in "Hansard" on several occasions, year after year. No action was taken. Nothing at all was done. Consequently we have got into the present pickle and we have to try to get out of it.

There is only one way to get out of it and that is by taking steps to ensure that the good coal at Collie is produced and supplied to consumers without any foreign matter. It is not right that consumers should be required to pay 72s. per ton for coal containing 25 per cent. of foreign matter that will not burn. Is it any wonder they turn to an alternative fuel? Not at all. We have really been encouraging them to do so by allowing what has been going on since the early days of World War II.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is it a fact that they get 25 per cent. of foreign matter in the coal?

Mr. MAY: Not now, but in the early days of the Stockton open-cut, there was 3ft. of slate or stone on top of the immature coal and that was being supplied as coal. No effort was made to separate it. To the everlasting credit of the present Minister for Mines, the company was told that it must shift the 3ft. of slate from the top of the seam before the coal was put into the trucks. That state of affairs had existed for years and the company was receiving 72s. per ton for the stuff that was not coal and had no possibility of ever being used as such. This practice, at any rate, has been stopped.

Nevertheless, the open-cut method will never be a success because the coal from the open-cuts is immature, is too near the surface and disintegrates too quickly, and the fact of its being mechanically loaded permits foreign matter to become intermingled with the coal, and it all goes in as coal. That sort of thing is doing the Collie coal trade tremendous injury. I have ridden on a locomotive from Perth to Merredin and watched the firing and seen the stuff that was shovelled into the furnace. When the engine stopped for cleaning, that stuff came out of the furnace just as it went in. There was no chance of burning it. People complained about trains running late. Is it any wonder that they ran late? To my mind, it is a wonder that they ran at all, owing to the stuff that was issued to the enginemmen as coal.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is not there screening of the coal?

Mr. MAY: I told members a little while ago that the companies had been compelled to install screens and chain-belts. Men were stationed on each side of the chain-belt to pick out the foreign matter, but the coal came down so quickly that the picking belt became overloaded and the men were not in the race to deal with it. That was another method adopted to get rid of this stuff. There are some fine stories that I could tell about the Collie coal industry. I have seen coal from the Stockton open-cut loaded into motor trucks, run to the railway siding and tipped into the railway trucks without ever having gone over a screen.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Did they have screens at that time?

Mr. MAY: Yes, the Stockton mine had screens at that time. I ask once again that somebody be delegated to take a grip of the coal industry. Apart from the welfare of the industry, it should be done in the interests of the State. In the coal at Collie, we have an enormous asset worth millions of pounds, and unless it is properly handled, it will not be worth a farthing to the State and the position will be calamitous.

Men to the number of 1,300 or 1,400 have made their homes in Collie; many of them have bought their homes and look after them and are relying upon the industry for a livelihood. The future of industry is precarious. I believe that if someone took the situation in hand and assured present and prospective consumers that every precaution would be taken to ensure their receiving coal of a quality to which they are entitled and for which they pay, the situation could be held and this wonderful asset could be made of real value to the State.

I have already said that the miners have made their homes at Collie. I do not believe that any Government, regardless of its political complexion, would desire to see our coal industry sink to the stage reached by the Big Bell mine. Miners had their homes at Big Bell, and the situation deteriorated to the point where they had to leave the district, with the consequence that very few people are living there at present.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Those are not comparable circumstances.

Mr. MAY: The same thing could happen at Collie.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Big Bell was a goldmine, not a coalmine.

Mr. MAY: But the very thing that happened at Big Bell could happen at Collie, and that is what I am complaining of. Someone must take a grip of the situation at Collie. I hold no brief for any particular Government; all of them are to blame and all should get the same gun. If we mend our ways and supply consumers with the quality of coal they want

—not anything that the companies think fit to send—we shall be able to maintain our coal trade.

The people of Collie over the years have given the State a very good go. I do not think that any Government has had reason to complain of being short of coal as a result of the miners not attending to their work.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: How much further could Collie coal be used for domestic purposes.

Mr. MAY: That trade should be capable of considerable extension. As a matter of fact, one company during the past winter opened depots in the metropolitan area and made coal available to the people for domestic purposes.

Hon. D. Brand: Is there anything in the statement of the member for Maylands that plastic industries could be established on the by-products of Collie coal?

Mr. MAY: I do not know; I was not aware that he was connected with the coalmining industry, but I would be happy to find that he is. We have a wonderful asset in our coal deposits, and quality coal could be made available, not only to consumers in the State but also possibly to consumers elsewhere. First of all, however, somebody must be vested with the responsibility of ensuring that the coal is produced along the right lines and supplied according to the requirements of customers. If that were done, I would have no fear for the industry, and would not be afraid of its going under as some people have suggested that it might do.

Personally I am not afraid of the competition of oil fuel. Consumers in the State are generally State-minded; they consider the needs of the State first and foremost and believe, as I do, that whatever we can provide within the State should be made use of. All I am asking this afternoon is that something be done to equalise the trade for each company operating in the industry, and that some system of supervision be instituted whereby customers will be supplied with quality coal in accordance with the price they pay for it. On that note I conclude my remarks.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): Before moving the adjournment of the House, I would like to say it is the view of the Government that, with reasonable co-operation from all members, the session could be ended not later than the 25th November. I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.53 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 15th November, 1955.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Question: Child Welfare Department, tabling of Hicks report	1704
Bills: Administration Act Amendment, 3r.	1704
Fertilisers Act Amendment, 2r.	1704
Trustees Act Amendment, (No. 1), 2r., Com., report	1706
Education Act Amendment, 1r.	1711
Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation), 1r.	1711
Traffic Act Amendment, Assembly's Amendment	1711
Prices Control, 2r.	1711
State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, 2r., defeated	1721
Bank Holidays Act Amendment, 2r.	1728
Adjournment, special	1785

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

QUESTION.

CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

Tabling of Hicks Report.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

Will he, tomorrow, lay on the Table of the House Mr. Hicks's report on the Child Welfare Department?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

I am sorry that I cannot oblige the hon. member as we do not wish to table the report. But I think arrangements can be made to make it available to members should they desire to read it. I will make inquiries along those lines. In the meantime, I think I can guarantee that it will be made available.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—FERTILISERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: Since the Act was passed in 1928, considerable knowledge has been gained, and the fertiliser legislation, which was once adequate is now out of date.

If the Bill is passed it is proposed that the amendments will not become effective until a day appointed by proclamation. This is to enable dealers in fertilisers to