

When I originally brought this forward I had in mind those people who were buying houses in anticipation of there being a lifting of controls which would have meant that they could get possession on 28 days' notice. They were not paying deflated prices as suggested by the member for Guildford-Midland; they were paying the full price on the assumption that they could get possession after the 30th April on 28 days' notice.

We should encourage people who are prepared to save and buy their own houses. There has been a degree of sympathy in Fremantle, according to newspaper reports, on rents and tenancy problems for people wanting to get houses for themselves or near relatives. I support the amendment as it appears in the measure and not as moved by the member for Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I trust my observations will influence the member for Fremantle. To-day a person can purchase a house and on the same day give 28 days' notice only.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We all know that, unfortunately.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: What is proposed here is a substantial improvement on that. The position at the moment is even worse than that from the point of view of the member for Fremantle. A person can step off a ship at Fremantle this morning, buy a house the same morning and then give 28 days' notice.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We ought not to be very proud of that.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am not.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Then you should do something about it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is the law at the moment. Under this proposal, that person would have to be resident in the Commonwealth for two years, own his house for three months and then give three months' notice. Surely that is an advance on the present position. If we endeavour to go too far in the eyes of some people, then there is a greater prospect of losing everything.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 17—Section 20 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: This seems to be one of the vital clauses of the Bill because it starts to reinstate everything in the Act that existed before the 30th April. The Minister may care to explain his intentions and what he hopes to effect by this provision. As I understand it, the clause gives the right to recover possession in certain cases as outlined by Section 20.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Section 20 is, of course, one of those damaging sections which put the skids under the rents

and tenancies Act as we know it. I am certain the member for Mt. Lawley appreciates that the Government is by no means enamoured of the present situation and that, within reason, it is endeavouring to get back to a state of affairs where so many people will not be evicted at the same time thereby making it impossible for the State to do anything to help them, because of the wild scramble of the people to help themselves. For that reason, it is necessary here and in other parts for the Committee to take steps which will overcome the more obnoxious sections of the existing Act.

Clause put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 6th July, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

As to Cost.

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Chief Secretary:

What was the total expenditure for maintaining the Legislative Assembly in the financial years ended the 30th June,

1951, 1952 and 1953, including cost of printing, salaries, parliamentary allowances, and any other expenses associated with running that Chamber?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Year ended the 30th June, 1953—
£123,897;

Year ended the 30th June, 1952—
£112,706;

Year ended the 30th June, 1951—
£96,902.

STATE CABINET.

As to Cost.

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Chief Secretary:

What was the cost for 1951, 1952 and 1953 of maintaining the Cabinet including allowances, motorcars, and any other privileges?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Year ended the 30th June, 1953—
£21,345;

Year ended the 30th June, 1952—
£21,439;

Year ended the 30th June, 1951—
£18,989.

FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

As to Royalties and Claims.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many landowners have applied to the Forests Department for payment of their timber royalties in respect of timber removed from their properties during the period from the 1st May, 1953, to the 30th April, 1954?

(2) What is the total amount involved?

(3) To what extent have these claims been met?

(4) If the claims have not been satisfied in full, when is it expected that this will be done?

(5) Have any applications for the payment of royalties been received in respect of timber removed since the 1st May this year?

(6) If any such claims have been received, how many are there and what is the total amount involved?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Application forms for refunds of timber royalties were printed and distributed to forestry officers only during June. Forms have been posted to landowners who made written inquiries earlier. So far only three claims have been submitted in proper form.

(2) £255.

(3) and (4) The claims were received only on the 28th June, 1954, and are being dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

(5) No.

(6) Answered by No. 5.

SISAL IMPORTS.

As to Value and Use.

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

(1) What was the total quantity of sisal imported into Western Australia in 1952 and 1953?

(2) What was the source of this supply?

(3) What was its value?

(4) For what purposes is sisal used in Western Australia?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1), (2) and (3): This information is not available through Government sources. The State and Commonwealth Statisticians have figures bulking together the import of manila hemp, sisal and other fibres.

(4) Principally the manufacture and fixing of plasterboard, and the manufacture of rope.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

As to Cost of Members' Railway Fares.

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

(1) Is the amount of £5,910 for railway fares for Legislative Council members, mentioned in the Minister's reply to Hon. R. F. Hutchison last week, factual or guess-work?

(2) How was the amount arrived at?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) This is factual, computed in accordance with the schedule in operation.

(2) (a) Free passes £5,625

(b) Sleeping berths 196

(c) Travel on Commonwealth railway 89

£5,910

HOSPITAL BENEFITS SCHEME.

As to Payments, Metropolitan and Country Areas.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

What amount of money has been collected by the Government hospitals from the hospital benefits scheme, since the scheme was initiated last July, in—

(a) the metropolitan area?

(b) the country?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The question is framed in such a way that I am not sure what the hon. member desires. However, I shall give the information I think he is seeking.

Hospital benefits (8s.):

	£
Metropolitan area	170,806
Elsewhere	226,344
Hospital benefits (4s.), fund benefit and patients' payments:—	
Metropolitan area	426,091
Elsewhere	437,069
Grand total	1,260,310

It is not possible to say how much of the 4s. represents fund benefits and patients' payments.

PRUDENTIAL ASSURANCE COMPANY BUILDING.

As to Government Applications for Floor Space.

Hon. L. C. DIVER asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it a fact that certain Government departments have made forward application for all surplus floor space in the new Prudential Assurance Co.'s building?

(2) If the answer is "Yes," will the Minister state which departments are interested in this floor space, also the area applied for?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) No State department has made any such application.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

LOAN FUNDS.

As to Amount Received from the Council.

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

What was the total amount of loan money received by the Western Australian Government through the Loan Council for the years 1951, 1952, and 1953?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Year.	Allocation for Works.	Allocation for Commonwealth-State Housing.	Semi-Governmental Borrowings.	Total.
	£	£	£	£
1951-52	16,500,000	3,483,000	19,983,000
1952-53	15,815,000	2,000,000	3,141,000	21,856,000
1953-54	14,000,000	3,750,000	2,502,000	20,252,000

MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT

To Disallow Overwidth Vehicles and Loads Regulations.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South) [4.45]: The motion of which I have given notice reads—

That regulation 203F made under the Traffic Act, 1919-1953, published in the "Government Gazette" on the

23rd April, 1954, and laid on the Table of the House on the 22nd June, 1954, be and is hereby disallowed.

I direct attention to the fact that the motion will need to be amended because a subsequent regulation has been promulgated. Under Standing Order 97, I propose to amend the motion to read as follows:—

That regulation 203F made under the Traffic Act, 1919-1953, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 23rd April, 1954, and a sub-regulation thereto, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 21st May, 1954, and laid on the Table of the House on the 22nd June, 1954, be and are hereby disallowed.

The regulations deal with applications for permits by farmers to travel their machinery along roads from one property to another. Regulation 203F reads—

Where the Minister has, in writing, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, notified a local authority outside the metropolitan area as to the special circumstances and conditions under which a person shall receive his permission to drive, use or tow, within the district of that local authority, a vehicle having, together with its load, if any, a greater overall width than eight feet, the local authority shall, on the application of the person, issue to him a permit to drive, use or tow the vehicle subject to those circumstances and conditions which shall be set out in the permit, and the permit shall constitute the permission of the Minister within the meaning of the proviso to Section 46A of the Act.

Point of Order.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: On a point of order, under Standing Order 102, would it not be out of order for this discussion to be continued without the hon. member's having obtained consent of the House to the amendment he has indicated?

The President: Standing Order 97 reads—

After a notice of motion has been given, the terms thereof may not be materially altered. A member may deliver at the Table an amended notice on any day prior to that on which he intends to proceed with such motion. By leave of the Council, a member may withdraw any notice of motion standing in his name when it is called on by the President.

I do not consider that the hon. member has materially altered the terms of the motion of which he gave notice, and therefore it is not necessary to ask the leave of the Council to amend it.

Debate Resumed.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Sub-regulation (3) reads—

A person shall not drive, use or tow, or employ a person to drive, use or tow, on a road a vehicle, having together with its load, if any, a greater overall width than eight feet, unless he is a holder of a permit issued in accordance with the provisions of Section 46A of the Act and of this regulation.

My reason for moving to disallow these regulations is that I can see no purpose at all in them; and I trust that when I have finished speaking, members will agree that there is no reason why they should remain in force. The regulations do not give any protection to either the person obtaining the permit or other users of the road.

The fact that the farmer has obtained a permit from the local authority does not absolve him from any liability should he be involved in an accident whilst moving his vehicle along a road. It is beyond my comprehension why it was ever considered necessary to bring these regulations into force. If the road over which the vehicle is being moved is damaged in the process, the person concerned can be dealt with under the adequate provisions of the Road Districts Act, so there is no justification for these regulations on that score.

I want members to realise that, as the position stands at present, if a farmer wishes to move an implement from his homestead on one side of the road to property on the opposite side, or perhaps a few miles along the road, he has first to obtain a permit from the local authority. The farmer may live perhaps 60 miles from the office of the local authority but, although he desires only to move his combine or other implement across the road, he has to travel to the office of the local authority in order to obtain a written permit. I think it will be agreed that that is unnecessary and inconvenient to both the farmer and the local authority. Should the farmer take the responsibility of moving his vehicle without first securing the permit, he is liable to a penalty of £20.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: On what grounds would he be refused the permit?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I have not been able to find out. I do not know that a farmer has ever been refused a permit under these regulations, but why should it be necessary for him to secure a permit when it serves absolutely no purpose?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: He at present requires the permit to take a machine from one paddock to another across the road.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Yes; but I should mention that the legislation has been amended so that the permit, once obtained, lasts for six months. I leave it to the House to judge whether these regulations are necessary, and I hope the motion will be agreed to. I appeal to the Minister to do away with the necessity for the obtaining of these permits. I point out that, if the motion is agreed to, it will be necessary for the Act to be amended because, if we simply disallow these regulations, the farmer, instead of having to obtain a permit from the local authority, will have to make application to the Commissioner of Police. Why should we continue to be saddled with these regulations which, in my opinion and in the opinion of those who must comply with them, are absolutely unnecessary.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What protection is afforded by the permit? Do the police or local authority take any precautions on the road?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: None whatever. No protection is given; and, should an accident occur, under the Traffic Act the responsibility remains with the farmer concerned. I would not mind if these regulations were of benefit to any body or persons. But I can see no virtue either in the regulations or in Section 46A. If we disallow the regulations, we will revert to the position which existed under the provisions of Section 46A before it was amended. That section reads:—

No vehicle having a greater overall width, including the load, than eight feet, shall be licensed, driven, used or towed on any road. For the purpose of this section 'vehicle' includes any implement.

A person who drives a vehicle contrary to the provisions of this section commits an offence.

Penalty—Twenty Pounds.

A person who employs or permits a person to drive a vehicle contrary to the provisions of this Act commits an offence.

Penalty—Twenty Pounds.

Provided that, with the permission of the Minister given on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, and under such special circumstances and conditions as may be set out in the permit, a vehicle having a greater overall width, including the load, than eight feet may be licensed, driven, used or towed on any road.

Who has policed, and who is going to police this farcical position? Because of inconvenience and loss of time to the farmer, this law is being broken more than it is being observed. The farmers and controlling authorities consider such regulations irksome and unnecessary.

I make an earnest appeal to the Chief Secretary, particularly in his capacity as Minister for Local Government, to consider an amendment to the Traffic Act with a view to repealing that section. I also ask the House to agree to the motion on the lines that I have set out.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [5.2]: I hope the House will agree to the motion. As Mr. Thomson has said, one of the regulations was gazetted in April and another in May, both of which were tabled on the same day. When the House agreed to Mr. Thomson's amendment to extend the motion—

The Chief Secretary: It did not.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Well, silence gives consent! If the second regulation had not been included in the motion, the regulation that was tabled in May would still have stood, and it is necessary that both should be disallowed. A similar regulation, No. 38, appeared under the old Act of 1919-35 and even in regulations that were gazetted up to 1936, which were enforceable by the Commissioner of Police. It read—

38. (a) No vehicle having a greater overall width, including the load, than 7 feet 6 inches shall be licensed or driven on any road.

So members will see that this is not an entirely new regulation, but, I am sorry to say, one that has been with us for many years. However, it has never been complied with, simply because of its impracticability.

One would need to understand the composition of thousands of farms in this State to realise how impracticable it is to comply with these regulations as now framed. The vast majority of wheat farms are made up of two or more locations, and invariably a farmer has to convey his farming implements over a public road when moving them from one section of his farm to another.

As Mr. Thomson pointed out, it would therefore be necessary, if a farmer was carrying out large farming operations, to make application to his local authority, even if he needed only to cross the road which, in many instances, would mean only a distance of not one mile, because he would be obliged to take out a permit once every six months. Members can realise that local authorities are not very happy about these regulations being enforced, that is, if the law were complied with. If it were, many farmers would have to travel long distances to obtain their permits.

I understand that the regulations have been framed with the object of trying to prevent accidents, but I consider that there would be more accidents as a result of the farmer obtaining his permit from the local road board office than there would be by conveying farming implements across a road. I understand the Chief Secretary

intends to make some suggestion to amend the Act to allow the width of any agricultural machinery that has to be towed without a permit to be 10 feet instead of 8 feet. However, that is only toying with the job when one considers that on the average wheat farm today the smallest machine is over 10 feet wide. Many of them are 18 feet wide and in some instances they are of even greater width.

Therefore, such a suggestion would not solve the problem and members will realise that there is no merit in these regulations. I have been associated with the agricultural industry during the period when the old Act was in force and since it was amended in recent years, and never in the whole of my experience—and I was a member of a road board for 13 years and attended biennial conferences—have I heard of a local authority asking for regulations such as these. At one conference I attended, a resolution was carried requesting relief to be given from the provisions of the old regulation.

It is something that is not desired by the people in the country and I cannot see that the regulations are achieving any good whatsoever. When the Chief Secretary is replying, I would like him to tell us what exactly is their purpose, because all practical men can see no merit in them. Should any person damage the surface of a road by driving a farming implement along it, he is already liable under the Road Districts Act.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: But these days all such vehicles are rubber-tyred, are they not?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Yes; but such provisions are already made under the Road Districts Act. Therefore, I can see no reason why agricultural machinery should be included under the Traffic Act. Where such Act states that "vehicle" includes any implement," I consider that that could be amended by the Chief Secretary to read, "vehicle" excludes any agricultural implement." That would adequately overcome the difficulty.

Not for a moment do we wish to interfere in any way with the provisions of the Act that apply to overwidth vehicles that travel along a highway, because we realise that they could be a danger when carrying loads such as pressed hay, wool or chaff, along any road. However, it is a different question altogether when it comes to conveying agricultural implements over a road from one section of a farmer's property to another. All we ask is that the Parliamentary Draftsman make a realistic approach to this problem and in any amendment proposed to the Act, exclude a vehicle that is being drawn from one part of a farming property to another. I support the motion and I trust that members will agree to the disallowance of these regulations.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [5.13]: This is such a small matter that I might as well dispose of it now and be done with it. Both members who have spoken to the motion have an entirely wrong conception of what the regulations mean. They spoke of an amendment to the Act, but these regulations have nothing to do with the Act.

Hon. L. C. Diver: We have asked you to amend the Act.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: These regulations have nothing to do with the Act. Later on members will have an opportunity to speak on an amendment to the Act if they so desire. These regulations cover all vehicles, but the members who have spoken say, "We must exclude all agricultural machinery." Do they mean to say that agricultural machinery of a width of 18 feet or over should be allowed to travel along any road without a permit, but that any other vehicle more than 10 feet wide must have a permit? There have been accidents as a result of farming machinery being towed behind a vehicle along a road, but I am not going into that phase.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: But farmers are not going to drive farming implements through a town!

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: That does not matter. If such vehicles are excluded from coming under the provisions of the Act, they can be taken anywhere. But that is not the point at issue. All these regulations do is to give a concession to the people in the country. We had requests from folk in various parts of the State for something to be done on these lines. What is the present position? The Act makes it compulsory for farmers in this State to write to the Commissioner of Police in Perth if they require permits to take these machines along the road.

Hon. L. C. Diver: How many have done it?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Wait a minute! Let me tell the story! That is what has to be done. They have to write to the Commissioner of Police in Perth if they wish to take a machine along the road. But, in order to make it easier for the farming areas, these regulations were framed so that power could be delegated from the Commissioner of Police to the local authority and people in the country would be saved the necessity of having to write direct to the commissioner.

Hon. L. C. Diver: We want that out as well.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: That will not be achieved by defeating the regulation. The passing of the motion will mean that everybody will have to write to the Commissioner of Police instead of being able to go to the local authority. Members have

not studied the position and have not understood the meaning of the regulation; that is all that is wrong. The regulations are not wrong, but the construction placed upon them by members is incorrect.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: No.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the simple story. The Act says that the Minister, on the recommendation of the commissioner, is the only person who can issue permits.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Why is it necessary?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Never mind about that! That is the Act. Members can argue whether it is necessary, when an amending Bill is being considered.

Hon. L. C. Diver: How many permits have been issued in 20 years?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: There are dozens every week, for various purposes. I am telling the hon. member what the Act states. It provides that the Minister, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, shall issue permits.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: We already know that; we knew it before.

Hon. L. C. Diver: We know that.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Then why is this motion before the House? Does the hon. member want farmers to have to write to the Commissioner of Police? Does he want that to be done?

Hon. L. C. Diver: What have they done in the last 20 years?

Hon. L. Craig: Broken the law.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: They can still break the law, if that is what has been done. I am telling members what the law is. Do they want that to continue?

Hon. L. C. Diver: No.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: All right! In that case, the hon. member must allow the regulations to stand.

Hon. L. C. Diver: No.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Members have the wrong impression of the whole matter. When we received a request from the country people, we took the matter up with the Commissioner of Police, with a view to trying to ease their burden. The commissioner said he would go as far as delegating his authority for vehicles up to 10ft., but would go no further. So we eased the regulations to that extent and gave power to local authorities to issue permits, instead of people having to write to the commissioner. Under the regulation, a permit can be given by the local authorities in respect of vehicles up to 10ft.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: How could you alter the Act, if it is provided that the Commissioner of Police has to do it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We have not done so. The Minister, on the recommendation of the commissioner, issues the permits, and the commissioner agreed to the local authorities being allowed to provide a permit for a vehicle up to 10ft.

Hon. H. Hearn: Hence the regulation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. We would not go farther than that. So, if the regulation is defeated, then, in respect of every vehicle, irrespective of its width, which a farmer desires to take along the road, he must write to the Commissioner of Police for a permit. On the other hand, if the regulation is allowed to stand, any vehicle up to 10 ft. can be given a permit by the local authority.

Hon. H. K. Watson: As heretofore.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. That is all there is in the regulation. This is something we have done to help country people. If they do not want it, I am not fussy. But I want members to know the true position. Let them study the regulation for themselves; they need not believe me. If this regulation is thrown out, all applications will have to go to the Commissioner of Police; if it is retained, then application can be made to local authorities for vehicles up to 10 ft. I think that is plain enough to understand, and that is all that is in the regulation. The other points raised are covered by the Act, and this regulation has nothing to do with them.

Later on, members will have an opportunity to say something about the Act, because it is our intention, if Parliament will agree, to hand the powers over to local authorities altogether. But that is a story for later on. The question at the moment is: Do members want farmers to have to write to the commissioner, or do they desire to give them some easement? If they want the situation to be made easier, they should let the regulation stand; if not, then they will carry Mr. Thomson's motion.

Hon. L. C. Diver: It means exactly nothing.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If it means nothing, throw it out.

Hon. L. C. Diver: That is what we intend to do.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Very well. But do not blame me if there are squeals from people in the country.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the 30th June.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.21]: I take this opportunity, my first, of congratulating you, Mr. President, upon your

election to the high office you occupy. I wish you a very successful term. I have no doubt that, given the opportunity by members, you will carry out your duties successfully and to the credit of this Chamber and yourself. I offer you my support and my best behaviour in this House.

I congratulate new members on their winning seats in this House, and wish them well during their sojourn here. I would like to offer them what little advice I can give them as a result of the limited knowledge I have gained in my four years here. I recall the great assistance which older members of the House gave me when I first entered this Chamber, and if I can help any of the new members in any problems they have, I will be glad to do so.

I intend briefly to touch on the speech made by Mrs. Hutchison. At the outset, I congratulate her on her composure on the occasion on which she spoke. I do not say that I entirely agree with her remarks, because I do not. We are on opposite sides, and I take a different view of many of the matters upon which she spoke. I do not think she intends to go ahead with her threat to abolish this House.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I do.

Hon. A. R. JONES: For one who proposes to do that, I feel that the hon. member looks very comfortable in her seat. Nevertheless, time will tell. I consider that the longer the hon. member is here, the more she will appreciate the need for this place. Particularly will that be so if she is here long enough—and I trust she will be—to witness a change of Government. Under our Constitution, a change of Government is possible every three years, and even oftener; and I have always believed that it is as well to have a House composed, like this one, of 30 members not all of whom are newcomers. With every change of Government, at least 20 are experienced members capable of watching the legislation which is submitted by another place. This is truly a House of review, elected by people who have a stake in this country, and who, in most instances, have worked jolly hard for it.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Only about a 15 per cent. vote.

Hon. H. Hearn: Is that your average?

Hon. G. Bennetts: No.

Hon. A. R. JONES: The figures recorded at the last election proved that the hon. member was quite wrong in her earlier contention that Labour could never gain a majority in this House. I think Mr. Griffith pointed that out. The hon. member was elected on the present franchise, and it is possible that more members of her party will be elected under that franchise. I am not going to monkey with it, because I think it is only right that a person owning property in this State should have a little say as to how that property should be looked after.

Hon. C. H. Henning: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. Bennetts: Do you not think his wife should have it, too?

Hon. A. R. JONES: It is possible in nearly all instances for the wife to have a vote. Both husband and wife can have a vote if they so desire.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That is not right.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I said it was the case in nearly all instances.

Hon. G. Bennetts: No.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Very few.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I am not going to debate that at present. I have no doubt that during the session we shall have an opportunity of discussing the matter fully, and I will certainly put up a better argument on that occasion.

I wonder why this session has been called so early. I have given the matter some thought, and feel that possibly it was to avoid the rush that has been customary at the end of the session in previous years.

Hon. H. Hearn: You are an optimist!

Hon. A. R. JONES: Possibly the idea is to help country members, who have asked many times that there be two sessions, so that they would be able to be in their districts at the busy times of the year, from the point of view of meeting as many of their electors as possible and showing an interest in their constituencies, especially during September, October, and November when shows and field days are held, at which it is their duty to be present.

I trust that this departure from the custom of meeting late in July and remaining in session until nearly Christmas will be carried even further, and that we shall meet earlier still—say, in May—and sit during May, June, and July, with another session at a different period so that there will be a let-up between sessions and members will not have to meet for one long period.

The suggestion has been made that the earlier session this year was made necessary because of the acute shortage of housing, and owing to the rents and tenancies legislation having been thrown out by this Chamber some months ago. That may be true; but I do not think it can be, because there is no great evidence of a housing shortage, or of a crisis having occurred as a result of the rents and tenancies measure being defeated. I have not seen anybody's furniture and other belongings out on the footpath, as was predicted by many Labour members. When we debated the subject previously, it was said that people would be put out on the footpath.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You are not where you can see them. I will show you them.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I get around a fair bit.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You are too far removed from it; that is what is wrong.

Hon. A. R. JONES: That interjection makes me smile, because I have a tenant who is 12 months behind with his rent, and I have not thrown him out on the footpath.

Hon. G. Bennetts: You are an exception.

The Minister for the North-West: There is no footpath where you are, is there?

Hon. A. R. JONES: I feel that the action we took some months ago was the one that should have been adopted all over Australia, and should be taken at this present time. It is all very well for members of the Labour Party to say, "Other States still have controls. Western Australia is the only State without rents and tenancies control," but I say, "Good on us for giving a lead." The war has been over now for nine years and that is too long for people, who have worked hard during their lifetime to amass something for their old age, to be denied the benefits that should accrue from those savings. We are all aware that no matter how we legislate, there will still be some people—tenants and landlords—who are obnoxious to society. Unfortunately that is a state of affairs that will go on until the end of time. I venture to say that we could assess the bad tenants at 5 per cent. of the whole, and the bad landlords at possibly the same figure.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: We always legislate for the minority not the majority.

Hon. A. R. JONES: That is bad legislation, and I would hate to think that I had legislated for the minority. We should legislate to the best of our ability for the greatest good of the greatest number. I am surprised at the hon. member's interjection.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: We have legislation to protect us against murderers and thieves and they are in the minority.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. R. JONES: We can put the bad tenants and bad landlords at 5 per cent. of the total; and surely, after having had protection for nine years and knowing from the debates in this House and various newspaper articles that at some time in the near future rents and tenancies legislation would be dropped, we could expect them to have done something for themselves. I know I would have made provision for myself somehow. It is all very well for Labour members to say, "What opportunity has the man on the basic wage to do something for himself?" I say that everyone, whether on the basic wage or a larger income, has the opportunity to put a roof over his head, if he so desires.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What rot! Be realistic!

Hon. A. R. JONES: If the hon. member would like to take the time and come with me, I could show her people who have

gone to the country. They have not hung around the city waiting for the Government to build homes for them. They have established themselves on the land. Mr. Lavery has two sons, but they are not hanging around the city and waiting for the Government to do something for them. They are out working and doing something for themselves. There are opportunities in this State, and I would like the hon. member to travel around the country and see for herself how people can establish themselves and put up a little bit of a humpy rather than go to the Government for aid, or ask for protection by legislation whereby they can stay in a comfortable house and deprive someone else of an income. That has been happening.

Only recently one of the famous architects of Western Australia told me it did not pay him to build himself a house as he was renting one cheaper than he could build it because the rent was less than the interest would be on £6,000 or £7,000. If that is not a frank admission, I do not know what is. Now that the lid is off, as members of the Labour Party would say, his rent has been raised and he is going to build himself a home. But he accepted the protection of an Act of Parliament and deprived someone of a decent income on his life's savings for a number of years.

I feel that has been the position in many cases. People were not going to build for themselves while they could rent a home for 30s. a week or less, as it would cost them that much and more in interest. We will have a Bill on this subject before the House before very long and I trust I will have some more to say then; but I feel that the Government, in bringing this measure forward and making it an excuse for an early sitting of Parliament, has a very lame excuse, because the Government did little to alleviate the position. In fact, it did nothing in the way of providing for an emergency.

When the special session was held, I referred to the fact that the Government did not even believe its own story because it had done nothing to try to assist the position—if there was a crisis. At page 126 of "Hansard" for that session I said—

Another reason for my speaking to this Bill is that I feel the Government has not been one little bit concerned. I am convinced that the Government itself does not believe that there is likely to be a crisis, or it would have made some attempt to meet that crisis. We have ample proof of this in a reply which the Minister gave to questions that were asked by Mr. Simpson. If, on the other hand, the Government believed that there was going to be a crisis, the answers to the questions indicate that the Govern-

ment was grossly negligent. On the 7th April, Mr. Simpson asked the following question:—

What steps, if any, has the Government taken to provide accommodation, emergency or otherwise, for possible evictees?

The Minister replied:

The Government has increased the house building programme to the utmost to provide additional permanent homes for those in need. Although the previous Government arranged for the erection of 237 small cottages for purchase by evictees and 150 small temporary rental flats, owing to the great dissatisfaction expressed by the occupants of this type of emergency accommodation it is not the intention of the present Government to proceed with the erection of emergency housing.

An answer such as that would indicate that the Government did not expect a crisis; but if it did, it was grossly negligent in not providing additional facilities.

I still hold the same opinion because the Government has done nothing further, even though it said a second time there was going to be chaos. I do not think the Government believes there is going to be a crisis.

The Minister for the North-West: That is your opinion.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: There is a crisis.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I think there will be a settling-down period for, perhaps three months, while people are shifting from one lot of accommodation to another; and some people, no doubt, will be worried. Why should they not be worried if they have not made any attempt to get a roof over their heads in the last eight or nine years, or even six years, when they knew that they might possibly receive an eviction order at some time? I do not believe a landlord would want to put out good tenants. I believe that the only ones being evicted are the bad tenants or those people who are occupying houses that the owner wants for his own accommodation or for a near relative.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You have a lot to learn.

Hon. A. R. JONES: As I said earlier, I believe that 5 per cent. of the tenants and landlords would be bad—sharks as I might say.

I was glad to hear during the Governor's Speech that the railways had shown quite a considerable improvement. No doubt they will go on improving as rollingstock and diesel-electric locomotives become available. We hope they will show an improvement because many millions of pounds have been poured into them. I attacked

the administration of the railway service last year and was severely reprimanded by members of the Labour Party and by some union leaders for things I did not say and I am going to defend myself a little, while saying there is still room for improvement.

Last year many questions with regard to railways were asked by members of this House and another place, but I do not for a moment feel that we were given strictly true replies. Whether it was the intention of those framing the answers to mislead the House, I do not know. I will exonerate the Ministers because they are asked so many questions that they could not possibly check all the answers. They have to rely on their departmental heads.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: They could not tell a lie, anyway.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I believe that is so. I do, however, criticise the Ministers to this extent, that when something is pointed out to them as not being the whole story or possibly not true, they should investigate the matter and give this House or another place a reasonably true reply. An instance that comes to my mind occurred on the 24th September, 1953, when the Minister for Railways was asked—

What staff was employed at the railway station at Toodyay for the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

The reply was "Three." In the last report from the Railways Commission, we find that for the period mentioned in the question there were seven employees at the Toodyay station, and that at the end of June, 1953, there were eight.

So I believe that someone has tried to mislead this House, or another place, in stating in reply to the question that there were three employees. At that time there were seven employees, because the report says so, and later there were eight. That is one instance that the Minister could take up with the departmental heads and find out why we were given such misleading information.

I point out, too, that there is an apparent need for the administrative staff to watch their departments more closely because this House knows, as a result of questions I asked, that when trains run to Piawaning, which is approximately 95 miles north of Perth, to pick up their loads, the engine and the van, because there are no facilities for men to camp in the railway barracks at Piawaning, have to run on to Miling, a further 25 or 30 miles. That went on for some time. I pointed out to the Minister where I thought there was a definite need for some check to be kept on the administrative officers, and I asked the following question:—

Is it a fact that owing to lack of facilities in the Piawaning railway-men's barracks, crews operating trains to that siding have had to run an

additional 25 miles to Miling so that they could be housed at night? If such is the case, will he inform the House—

- (a) What circumstances caused this state of affairs;
- (b) If the trains so run set down or pick up any goods between Piawaning and Miling?

The Chief Secretary replied—

Yes.

(a) Owing to heavy traffic on the Wongan Hills line, the equipment was transferred temporarily to Wongan Hills barracks on the 31st October, 1953, to relieve the position at that centre. It was returned on the 2nd February, 1954.

That seems a ridiculous situation. To keep both barracks open, all that is necessary is four beds, four mattresses and a few sets of sheets and pillows. Yet for three months of the year, two trains a week had to run from Piawaning to Miling, a distance of 30 miles, so that the men could be housed.

That is a situation that requires investigation and it would not be tolerated in private enterprise. I ask the Minister to look more closely into the position and see that that sort of thing does not happen again. The Minister's answer to the second part of the question was—

(b) Yes, although the main purpose of the running was brought about by the absence of barracks facilities at Piawaning.

I have made inquiries from the shopkeepers who meet every train that goes through that small country town, and they have advised me that the trains have never set down any goods; the only parcels that are set down are those destined for the gangs at Bindi Bindi. So it is wrong for the Minister to say that the trains set down or pick up goods between Piawaning and Miling.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It would be cheaper to pay their hotel expenses at Wongan Hills.

Hon. A. R. JONES: It would. There is one other aspect which struck me rather forcibly. While freight increases have been made in the country districts, nothing has been done to ensure that the people in the metropolitan area carry more of the burden of railway losses. At the moment, the country people are forced, because of high freights, to carry the largest portion of that burden. In some instances, the freights on commodities used by the farming community have been increased by as much as 500 or 600 per cent. Yet, on perusing the latest report of the Railway Department, I find that the average earnings per passenger mile in the country were 1.88d. for 1952 and 1.85d. for 1953; in the metropolitan area the suburban earnings were .94d. in 1952 and .95d. in 1953.

Even though the 1953 earnings were a little better than those in 1952, they were only half the average earnings per passenger mile in the country. So I believe it is time the Government did the courageous thing and increased fares in the metropolitan area. In that way the metropolitan population would be bearing a greater proportion of the burden than they are doing at the moment. The present situation is just too silly for words.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Were they raised the previous year?

Hon. A. R. JONES: Yes, but for some unknown reason, fares were reduced. In my view it was a vote-catching idea, for as soon as the Government came into power, it reduced fares in an effort to boost railway earnings. But the Government soon found that the people did not want to use the railways, unless they were forced to do so, and the earnings were not increased. Therefore, fares were again raised. I repeat it is time that this Government faced up to a little criticism and increased fares in the metropolitan area in an effort to overcome the railway deficit. Even if it meant only a few extra thousand pounds, it would help the country people to that extent.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They might catch the bus then.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I do not think so. I was severely criticised for references I made in this House to those who work in the Midland Junction Railway Workshops. Members of the Labour Party did not think I would ever say what I did say; one Minister in another place told me that he had "gone right off me" after he read what Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Webb had to say about me. I have been looking for the report that appeared in the Press but I have not been able to find it.

However, in one of his addresses to a meeting at Midland Junction, Mr. Chamberlain said that I was one of the worst types because I blamed the men at the Midland Junction workshops for not doing an honest day's work. He said that I criticised their workmanship and added that these men were in demand when they left the workshops and went into private industry. Mr. Webb also claimed that they could get a job anywhere. I believe that. These men are trained to do a job, and I am sure that, after having served their time at the Midland Junction workshops, they become good tradesmen.

But I would like to draw the attention of members to what I did say and if members will bear with me I will read a short passage of the speech I made at the time. I was talking of a man who had obtained employment at the Midland Junction workshops and my speech reads—

He said that was the only time the men hurried during the whole of the day. Some of the men are to be seen crossing the railway bridge when the

whistle blows. I have watched that myself. Such conduct shows some inefficiency in the handling of the men. I am not going to blame them, because I suppose I would do the same if I had an opportunity; but such things are proof of inefficiency.

By those remarks I did not belittle the men in the Midland Junction workshops. Right from the start I said I criticised the inefficiency in the handling of the men.

I was criticising the departmental heads; yet I have heard criticism of my utterances from members of the Labour Party. If we feel it necessary to criticise, we should do so, so long as what we have to say is true. It is strange that although I was criticised by members of the Labour Party and prominent members of various unions in this State, I received no less than a dozen letters from people who were working in the workshops or had worked there. These people told me that I had not been severe enough in my criticism.

Where there is smoke there is fire; apparently the cap fitted, and those fellows wore it. In my opinion, there is still plenty of room for improvement in the administration of the Midland Junction workshops. I did say, during the course of my speech, that it was possible for the men to have a bet at the workshops; that there was a wireless available as well and that the men could have a bet if Wednesday race meetings were being held. I was criticised for that, but one of the people who communicated with me told me that there is a wireless at the workshops and that there is somebody there who will take a bet. So I was not far wrong with my criticism.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: But that happens in most of the big industries in this State.

Hon. H. Hearn: That is wrong.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It happens in a lot of the big ones.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I suppose a person could have a bet here if he wanted one.

The Minister for the North-West: It would not happen in the furniture trade, would it?

Hon. H. Hearn: It would not.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I now wish to refer to the number of accidents in the railways. A number have occurred over the last two or three years and as yet I have not been able to ascertain the departmental procedure in such cases. We see in the Press photographs of trucks telescoped and lying on their sides and engines, also lying on their sides, with steam hissing from them. The report in the Press is that "such and such an accident will be investigated." Yet rarely do we see a report of that investigation. I have never seen a full report in the Press, but recently I saw an article which stated that the driver of the second engine involved in a

certain accident had been fined £5 and that his union had appealed against the penalty.

So I would like the Minister to study the reports of some of the more severe accidents and present the reports to us. He should also let us know what action has been taken against those responsible. In many cases nobody could be blamed because accidents do happen; but recently we read of a train having passed a home signal and ploughed into another train. In such cases as that, somebody is to blame and we should be given the details. If some information is not given to us, I shall keep on asking questions in the House.

Then again, I was pleased to read in the Governor's Speech that extensions will be made to country water supplies and that there is every hope that this year greater milages will be laid down than has been possible over the last couple of years. The Premier has just returned from the Premiers' Conference in the East and I believe has all the money he needs for this year. Therefore we are hopeful that the country areas—

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You do not believe that!

Hon. A. R. JONES: —will receive a greater proportion of the money available than they have been allowed over past years. We all know that a big amount of money was required for Kwinana and for providing a water supply to the industrial area and the town of Medina as well. A large sum has been spent in this direction, and there should not be a need for any great expenditure in the future. I am hopeful that the water schemes already under way will be proceeded with as quickly as possible. While I am concerned with the State as a whole, I hope that the northern areas, which include the electorates of Greenough, Geraldton and Moore, which are represented by Mr. Logan, Mr. Simpson, and myself, will not be neglected and will receive their due share of whatever money is available to provide water supplies for the towns and farming areas.

Our immediate aim is to try to interest the Government in the need for a comprehensive water scheme for these rural electorates. It would be a wonderful opportunity for the Government to effect decentralisation. We have each Government in turn saying that it believes in the principle of decentralisation; each one says that it will work towards that end, but none of the Governments—not even the one I supported—has done very much towards achieving that end.

It might not be possible to do it in a big way, but if we took water to the out-back districts—to towns along the Mullewa-Morawa line—it would enable small businesses, such as plumbing and joinery, to be established in the country. This in turn would take some of the population into the rural areas and would decrease the

costs in some ways, of the building and supplying of plumbing requisites, because they would be made on the job.

It would serve to build up small towns into decent communities, where they could enjoy better facilities because of the number of people that would be settled in those areas. Morawa, for instance, is a thriving town with a population of about 300 people and if we could entice the type of person I have mentioned, by means of a decent reticulated water scheme, we would double the stock-carrying capacity of the district. Farmers would then be able to draw water for their stock, and would have an assured water supply.

The districts south of Morawa are quite capable of producing double the stock they produce at the moment if they were given more water. But farmers are limited to the amount of water that runs into the dams and so on, and because of the economics involved, they will not over-stock themselves. If they build up a good line of sheep, they find that in bad times they lose the stock. With sheep as costly as they are today, it is a tremendous outlay for them, and particularly is that so if they sell out stock because of the drought conditions I have mentioned, and have to accept a lesser price than they paid for their sheep when conditions were flush. With an adequate water supply and a sufficient supply of electricity, we could bring about the decentralisation which we all desire. Water and electricity go hand in hand, and fortunately it takes less to transmit electricity than to provide water. So there is the possibility of electricity being supplied to those areas.

The Minister for the North-West: Where will you get the water?

Hon. A. R. JONES: I do not know.

The Chief Secretary: You mean you are not a water diviner.

Hon. A. R. JONES: That is so. But I do believe that there are sources available. One source that has been investigated is Gingin Brook. The figures I received recently indicate that during the winter and spring months the flow is 17,000,000 gallons a day and during the summer months the mean flow is 3,500,000 gallons a day. It is good quality water, and I would not say it is beyond the powers of the engineers today, with all the machinery and mechanism at their disposal, to pump water from the area I have mentioned.

For the information of the House I would point out that we are holding a meeting this Friday, and all interested parties will get together at Carnamah to discuss the water problem. We will have the services of one of the engineers to tell us what he can of investigations that have been made as to the supply and origin of water. I believe these people have looked in many places, and I understand a further search is necessary. I am convinced we can find

water in the northern areas to supplement the supply from the Gingin Brook and by a grid system coupled up and harnessed to furnish the necessary supply.

As I have said before, it would be possible to double the stock-carrying capacity. There would be more men and families engaged in farming, and that would be a great help to the townships. Apart from this there would be more small businesses such as joinery and plumbing opening up, and these would lead to a thriving community of possibly 1,000 people. It is not hard to imagine that life in a community of 1,000 people would be more enjoyable than in a community of 300, because there would be more facilities available in the larger community than would exist in one of small numbers.

Accordingly I am very hopeful that the northern section of the State will receive more consideration from the present Government than it has done in the past. Money is to be made available to the Government, and there is also the possibility that the British Government will find the necessary finance for ventures such as this, because, without doubt, it would raise the productive capacity of the areas referred to. This would particularly apply as it relates to the supply of meat, and that is one commodity that the British Empire requires.

In the Governor's opening address reference was also made to the question of roads, and the progress that had been made in that direction over the last 12 months. I am very pleased to learn that 400 miles of bitumen road has been laid. I am hopeful that many more miles will be put down this year, and that sufficient money will be made available to the Government, because of the promise of the Commonwealth Government to introduce an all-round tax of so much a gallon on petrol produced in order to make more money available for the construction of roads.

I understand that this year the amount will be £25,000,000 as against £18,000,000 in past years. It would seem that from now on we can look forward to greater amounts of money being made available for the purpose of road construction. At the present moment local authorities have no chance whatever of building their roads up to the standard necessary to carry heavy loading and the fast moving traffic we have today.

Many of us have had experience on road boards, and some of us may be members today, so we all know what a job it is for local authorities to maintain a gravel, or earth, type of road at the present time. For example, we might have just sufficient rain to permit a binding and allow the grading of a road, but after the work has been done and the road has been graded to our satisfaction we find that in no time

at all it is again corrugated and needs further attention. It is a waste of time during the dry months of the year to have graders going around stirring up the loose dry gravel, because the more it is stirred up the more dust it drives, and the more it is pushed on to the side of the road.

It is absurd to suggest that roads pushed up with the natural gravel will withstand the wear to which they are subjected from heavy trucks and so on. I believe that before long both the State and the Commonwealth Governments will have to face up to surfacing of feeder roads into our towns, as well as the main roads leading from one end of the country to the other. The cost of the equipment necessary to maintain these roads today can be well imagined, because I believe the graders required to cut down the corrugations and make a road would cost in the vicinity of £8,000 to £9,000.

A road board with a fairly large area to maintain would find it necessary to employ at least two graders. For instance, the Moora Road Board has two graders; the Wongan Hills-Ballidu Road Board also has two graders, as has the Dalwallinu Road Board. Even though they keep those graders constantly going, it is not possible to keep their roads up to the desired standard. A fortnight after they have been graded the roads are again corrugated and unfit for traffic.

It is, of course, necessary to maintain those roads and keep them at a good standard and, in my opinion, the only way to do so is to dress them with a bitumen surface. I do not think there is any need for the expensive foundation work that is carried out on main roads to extend to feeder roads, because they have been down and traffic has passed over them for possibly 20 to 40 years. Accordingly, if they are not well settled down now I do not know when they will be.

But we find that if the Main Roads Department decides to surface a road it rips the old road up, puts gravel on, wets it, rolls it, and so on. That may be desirable on a road that is being attended to for the first time, but in my opinion it is not desirable or necessary on a road that has been traversed for upwards of 30 years. In such cases all that is necessary is to give it a top-dressing of gravel, and give it a wetting and rolling prior to putting on a bitumen surface. I have suggested to one of the Ministers that he might take it up with the main road authorities and have experimental work carried out in one or two districts in order to see what the outcome will be. I feel we can top-dress roads with the first dressing, let them settle down for a period and then top-dress them with bitumen. That would be much cheaper than the practice at the present time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Before tea, I was commenting on roads and their formation. I shall round off by suggesting that with more money being made available, as we trust will be the case under the new arrangement outlined by the Commonwealth the Government would have sufficient funds to allocate £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 per annum for road construction in Western Australia. If that should eventuate, then instead of the Main Roads Department constructing the roads as it does at present, we should let a contract for a sum ranging from £1,000,000 to £1,500,000 per annum for the construction of roads. By so doing, we would induce contractors from overseas—from America, England or elsewhere—to come here. By our providing a contract of a sufficient amount, they would be induced to come into the country for at least 12 months, or, better still, two or three years.

It occurs to me that it would be a good idea for the Premiers to ask the Commonwealth Government to formulate a two-year or three-year plan for that purpose. That would enable the States to know how much money would be available for spending on roads. It seems to me that if we are going to get anywhere, we must have a plan. We read that America, Russia, Germany, and Japan have plans ranging from five to 15 years. Surely it is not beyond the bounds of possibility for us to formulate a plan extending for three years.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Why go out of the State to get the building contractors? Have we not the people in this country capable of making roads, without having to import them?

Hon. A. R. JONES: I am not suggesting for one moment that we must go out of the State; but I feel sure that if we were to let a contract of £1,500,000, it would interest people outside the State. We would then get competition and value for money so spent. Under the present set-up, I feel that with the Main Roads Department doing the work, we are not getting value for money. The need for more roads is very great, and this particularly applies when one travels through the northern and agricultural districts along the feeder and main roads. If those roads are not top-dressed with bitumen, the local authorities will not be able to cope with the necessary maintenance to keep them in good condition.

It is an urgent need to build miles upon miles of roads as cheaply and as quickly as possible. The only method by which it can be done is for us to let a contract of sufficient size. I do not mind whether the contract is let inside or outside the Commonwealth. I believe this to be the only method of getting roads built quickly. We could then maintain the Main Roads Department for essential repairs. I believe that department would be fully occupied carrying out such work.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You are not suggesting that the work carried out by the Main Roads Department is below standard?

Hon. A. R. JONES: On the contrary, I believe the work it performs is very good. Sometimes in some circumstances I consider it is much too good, when I look at the quantity that has to be built against the quantity that is actually built. At times I feel that the department makes not so important roads too good, if that is possible. I am therefore very pleased to support the requests of Mr. Barker, the Minister for the North-West, and Mr. Willesee, more so now than last year, because since then I have travelled through the North country, though admittedly only from port to port, and looking at as many places as possible in that time. I now have a greater appreciation of their needs in the North.

I would like to record my view on the State Shipping Service and what it means to the North-West. Previously I considered that this service was just another Government utility which lost money every year, like the railways; that it was possibly necessary; and that the day might arrive when there would be sufficient trade on the coast to enable it to return a profit to the Government. Having seen that part of the State, I am thoroughly convinced that the State Shipping Service means more and is more necessary to the North-West than are the railways to the southern areas.

If the railway system breaks down, it is possible to put on a fleet of trucks as an alternative means of transport; but if the shipping service should break down, there would be very little hope of serving the North-West, at any rate during the wet season. We know the North-West experiences a wet season, and during that time transport by road is not possible for a number of months in some districts, and for weeks in others. For these reasons I shall support the Minister in whatever recommendation he may make for placing more ships on the north run.

I was pleased to learn that the Government recently bought two additional ships from the Commonwealth Government. I hope they will prove a good bargain. This State has great need for additional ships, as I, with others, saw only recently. One thing which struck me as rather unfortunate was that ships called in at Darwin at intervals of about three weeks, to find when they got there that the lumpers were not prepared to work beyond daylight hours. This necessitated ships being delayed three to four days instead of two days. The Government should express its disapproval of this practice.

I believe that Darwin freight is a payable freight and is a trade which should be fostered, provided it does not interfere with service to our State ports; and while

it may be desirable to hold the trade from the business angle for the State, I ask the Minister to consider dropping Darwin while ships are short to supply a service to our own ports. But if the Government considers it necessary and advantageous to carry up to 1,500 tons to Darwin every three weeks it should at least have an understanding with the lumpers at that port for expeditious handling of cargo.

In his Speech, the Governor said that education was receiving the consideration which it deserved. He also said that classrooms were being built as fast as possible. I believe they are. The Minister for Education over the last four or five years has had one of the hardest ministries to administer. It must be said to the credit of Mr. Watts that when he was the Minister he did an excellent job. I believe the Minister who succeeded him took over a smooth working administration. A good set-up had been organised whereby schools were built as fast as was possible. In the teachers' college we had a set up under which trainees were admitted in such great numbers that at present we have more trainee teachers than ever before.

I stress the need of the country areas, particularly the electorates of Moore, Greenough, and Geraldton, for facilities for higher education. Right from Northam to Geraldton there is not one high school or junior high school. With such a large district, and with such a scattered population, it is time the department gave further consideration to the building of a high school and junior high schools.

The Minister for the North-West: There is one at New Norcia.

Hon. A. R. JONES: That is a private college and not a high school. While it serves a good purpose, it is not a Government concern and we have no control over it. On previous occasions I have outlined why we should set up junior high schools and high schools at larger centres. It is because I believe that if young people are sent away from their own districts the continuity of their lives will be broken. Perhaps they will be lost to those districts altogether. We have to watch that aspect. Even though it might cost the State a little more money it would be profitable in other ways. To build junior high schools at, say, places such as at Wongan Hills, Carnamah, Morawa, or anywhere else where the population is sufficient to warrant such schools.

To my mind, if a child is taken away from its environment, and its continuity of friendship with its playmates is broken, there is less chance of its being brought back to its own district when it reaches school leaving age, at which age it should return. Usually a young person of that age from a country district will look for a job in Perth because of having had a taste of city life. I stress the importance of this

point particularly in regard to families where there are three or four boys brought up on a farm.

If high schools were established as I have suggested, those boys could live in their own district, attend school there, and grow up to an age when their parents might buy them a farm, or they might acquire land in another part of the district for development. This would be for the good of the district and the State and would to a large extent discourage the possibility of country boys going to the city. For that reason I ask the Government to give greater consideration to the matter of providing high schools in country districts.

The requirements of a town at the moment are that it must have 300 children attending primary school, which should provide 50 pupils a year for post-primary classes before a high school can be provided. A step to break this down is now taking place. Provided a town can supply accommodation for 25 children from surrounding schools the department will give it a teacher for a class of post-graduate children. I trust that this will be the forerunner of better educational facilities being provided in our northern districts.

Two other items mentioned in the Governor's Speech were price control and workers' compensation. I need not dwell on the subject of price control beyond saying once again that I feel it is unnecessary to control prices. In lots of instances, prices have come down since control was abolished. Some have increased, but the increases have not been so great as the decreases. It has been suggested from the Government side that the basic wage has suffered to the extent of 6s. 6d. per week because the Arbitration Court did not grant an increase in accordance with the "C" series index. That is not correct. Had we adhered firmly to the "C" series index, there would not have been anything like the basic wage that is payable at present. The basic wage has been loaded and has been permitted to reach the present proportions. In my opinion, the wage-earner should at least play his part in trying to bring about settled conditions and continue the stability that has been attained.

I feel concern about the suggestion that the price of meat should be controlled again. The price of meat was controlled previously, and for the best cuts the consumer had to pay through the nose. There was also a good deal of black-marketing. At this season of the year, meat is always dear, and this state of affairs will continue until we get more people settled in the country and producing meat. I dare say that if control were again imposed, there would be an outlay of £60,000 or £70,000 a year to administer it.

Mention has been made of workers' compensation. I am hopeful that the Government is bringing down legislation only to consider the schedule of payments that we

in this House rejected last year. I dare say that the proposition put up by Dr. Hislop on that occasion was not fully appreciated. It seems to me that his proposal represented an advancement, and probably it is with the idea of revising the schedule that the Government is considering the bringing down of legislation this session. Anyhow, I hope that is so, because I feel that we were very generous in allowing what was granted last year in the matter of compensation rates. It is becoming more and more apparent to me that, no matter what is done for the workers, they are not satisfied.

I do not claim to be an authority on economics, but I shall endeavour to explain my meaning in as few words as possible. Everyone in the community should do something towards bringing about stability and continuing the stability that has been attained. Let me point out the present trend as it appears to me. If people are going to expect as much as possible for doing as little as possible, we are likely to bring about a very serious state of affairs. We all have a part to play in keeping conditions as stable as they are. Industry must do its best in order to reduce costs, and if all members of the community would give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, it would help in that direction.

We must not lose sight of the fact that Western Australia is a primary-producing country, and I feel that over the years we have gone too far towards fostering secondary industries and have not given the requisite thought to our primary industries. The result is that we have men leaving the primary industries in order to take employment in the secondary industries. They cannot be blamed for so doing; they cannot be blamed for seeking higher wages or for taking an opportunity to live near the city; but if one section of industry offers a worker a greater remuneration, what will be the result?

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Do you want men to work for half wages?

Hon. A. R. JONES: If the hon. member went to my district and made investigations for himself, he would find that I never wanted anyone to work for half pay. I always offered a man fair remuneration and incentive pay for the work he was prepared to do and earned the reputation of being the largest wage payer in that area.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: If you paid them well, they would not want to come to the city.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I am suggesting that the Government, by fostering secondary industries and thus encouraging of the employment of thousands of people, is doing the wrong thing, because many of those people are leaving the primary-producing industries. We in Western Australia have not sufficient numbers to enable us to carry a lot of secondary industries. As our population increases, so our secondary

industries must grow, but we must be able to raise our primary products at a sufficiently cheap rate to enable them to be sold overseas on a competitive market. If we cannot do that, the result will be serious. At the moment, the only primary products being raised at a profit are wool, meat, honey and rice.

The Minister for the North-West: What about wheat?

Hon. A. R. JONES: That is not being produced at a profit.

The Minister for the North-West: Then how do men carry on share-farming?

Hon. A. R. JONES: The wheat industry is about on the balance. A good farmer in a good area, and with favourable conditions, can produce at a profit; but a man in an area not so good, and with the seasons against him, must produce at a loss.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: That is on account of high taxation.

Hon. A. R. JONES: It is not on account of taxation. Barley is being produced at a loss, oats at a loss; butter, cheese and milk products, eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables also at a loss. Thus, we have many commodities of primary production being produced at a loss. Why are people leaving the primary industries? I fully believe that the reason is that those industries have the competition of the wages paid by secondary industries. We cannot compete in the world's markets today with most of our primary products, and we can compete with very little of the products of our secondary industries. In fact, I cannot name offhand any product that the secondary industries sent away and were able to sell readily overseas on a competitive basis. Possibly there are some in short supply, but they are very few.

It rather takes the gilt off the secondary industries when we know that a subsidy of £240 is being paid on every tractor produced at the Chamberlain factory. If we are going to continue to keep an industry going along those lines, we shall eventually kill the primary industries. A header manufactured in South Australia costs £1,800, while one manufactured in Germany—a better job all round—landed in this country free of duty costs £1,640. Therefore, it seems wrong that we should be fostering secondary industries in this way when we are unable to put our primary products on the market. To do so appears to me to be plain nonsense. We ought to forget for the time being the fostering of a lot of secondary industries and put the money they absorb into the farming industry. If we neglect to do that, I am afraid we shall head for a severe recession if not a depression such as we had before and let us hope that that does not happen.

Every one of us must realise that if the price of wool falls by 2s. per lb. our whole economy will crash because it is only wool that is preserving our state of buoyancy. If we desire to trade with other countries and sell them our wool, we must be prepared to buy goods from them in return. I understand that last year Japan took from us wool—together with a few other quite small items—to the value of £78,000,000, while we purchased from that country only £4,000,000 worth of goods. That is a most lopsided arrangement, and while I do not suggest that we should give Japan any special consideration, if we are to accept her as a friendly nation we should deal with her as we would expect other nations to deal with us. If Japan is to buy such a great quantity of our wool we should trade with her freely and give the Japanese the chance to become our neighbours and friends.

Although I have no special qualifications in economics it is not hard for me to sum up the position and conclude that if we are to sell Japan £78,000,000 worth of wool per year and buy from her only £4,000,000 worth of goods, she cannot continue very long to trade with us. Should the stage be reached where Japan could no longer buy our wool we would have to go elsewhere for our markets. We would have to go further afield in those circumstances, and I am convinced that we should give the Japanese the opportunity of trading with us on fair terms in order that they may reach a decent way of thinking and living in their own country.

It has been said that we should ban the importation of many Japanese - manufactured articles into this country. Why should we prevent her sending here things that she can produce well and cheaply and sell to us at a reasonable price, simply to allow someone in this country to make the same article and sell it on the local market at double the price of the Japanese product?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Another good instance is that of the sugar industry in Australia, which is prosperous only because of the tariff which has kept sugar from other parts of the world from coming into Australia.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I would point out that at present we, in Australia, pay 9d. per lb. for sugar which can be bought on the English market for about 6d. per lb. Is that not a false set-up from an economic point of view?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is the position at present, but what about the years gone by?

Hon. A. R. JONES: Sugar has had protection for many years. Butter, cheese and every other primary product one can mention will be in the same position if we continue along our present lines of thought. We must get our costs down instead of fostering secondary industries to build at

an enhanced price in this country things that can be bought much cheaper elsewhere, if we are to trade more freely, as we should, with countries such as England, Germany and Japan.

I turn now to a subject on which I have harped for the last four years, and on which I shall harp as long as I remain a member of this House. I refer to the necessity for raising the status of the Department of Agriculture. I think Mr. Logan mentioned this matter in the course of his speech; and in the Press this morning I read that the Farmers' Union is going to put forward a proposition in the hope that the Government will raise the status of the department. Does it not seem wrong that, although we are essentially a primary-producing State, our Department of Agriculture is one of the smallest of our departments, and is granted something less than £1,000,000 per year with which to do all the work that is required of it?

If we wish to develop this huge State, and if the department is to do all the experimental work required, we must realise that funds considerably in excess of £1,000,000 will have to be made available for the purpose. We are asking a handful of men to solve our problems and to do it quickly, but we are not prepared even to pay them decent wages in return for their labours and the long period of study they had to undergo in order to qualify themselves for their jobs. We do not pay them nearly sufficient to keep them happy in their work or to entice qualified officers to come here from other States.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The department should adopt the New Zealand policy of having specialists for every industry.

Hon. A. R. JONES: That is a sound idea, and I hope the present Government will do something along those lines. Its predecessor did something in that direction, but not enough. I wish to impress upon the Ministers in this House the necessity, when in Cabinet, for talking about the Department of Agriculture in order that its status may be raised, and in order that it may be housed in a decent building so that its employees may say with pride, "This is where I work. It is one of the biggest departments in Western Australia." I repeat that if we are to develop our State as fully and as quickly as we should we must be prepared to spend millions on the Department of Agriculture. Huge sums of money must be used for soil conservation alone; and if we do not agree to that expenditure soon, we will have to spend more than double the amount in years to come, as is illustrated in China and America, where the authorities are now forced to spend hundreds of millions of pounds to regenerate the country of the dust bowls, which has been allowed to erode under the influences of

wind and water. That will be our experience if we do not spend sufficient money now.

Surely we should offer more inducement to young lads particularly those in country areas—for they are the type we want, they having grown up with the soil until it is in their blood, as the saying is—to take on agricultural science or veterinary science as a profession! I believe there was a scheme operating some years ago under which a young person could go to the university and study and be employed by the Department of Agriculture when the university was in recess. Some such scheme could well be brought into being again; and if that were done, it would give a lad or girl of the right type the opportunity of learning during the university term and going into the field as an employee of the Department of Agriculture during the recess.

In that way students would be able to find some of the money to pay for their training and this would aid them in becoming useful citizens of the State by the time they had taken their degrees. If something of that nature were done, or if scholarships were offered, I feel sure we would get the right class of student and more of them. Up until the present we have had the spectacle of men born, reared and qualified in Western Australia receiving offers from the other States and going away. Surely we can profit by our past mistakes and remedy the position! I trust the present Government will do more in this regard than did its predecessor.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It will.

Hon. A. R. JONES: There has been no evidence of that in the last 12 months, but I hope the next 12 months will make a better showing. I again impress on the Minister for the North-West the fact that he should, when in Cabinet, hammer away at the necessity of expanding our Department of Agriculture—

The Minister for the North-West: Do you suggest erecting a huge building to house the department?

Hon. A. R. JONES: That department certainly requires better accommodation than it now has. If one desires to visit one section it is necessary to go down Adelaide Terrace. For another section one must go to St. George's Terrace, and for yet another to Shenton Park. That sort of thing just does not make sense.

The Minister for the North-West: I thought it would have been better to put more men in the field.

Hon. A. R. JONES: It is not right to have officers sent from Perth to country areas during the week and returning to the city for the week-ends. We should build houses for them in the country so that they can remain in the areas where they are working as there is a terrific cost involved when men go to a country

centre to do their work and return to Perth every week-end. Wherever possible, such officers should be housed where they work. That, of course, does not apply to the specialists who may spend a week in one district before moving on to another. However, there have been instances of an officer working in one district and travelling backwards and forwards to it from Perth for perhaps 12 months.

I wish now to speak of the North-West, and I think it must be pleasing to Mr. Barker to know that he has at least one more convert to his way of thinking on that subject.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Thank you!

Hon. A. R. JONES: I, together with many others, some of whom have not been to the North-West, do not fully understand its problems. I do not profess to understand them all but I do understand a great deal more about them now than I did six months ago, before I made a trip to that part of the State. I believe every member should go there, either on an organised tour or as an individual, in order to become familiar with the facts. If all members made the trip to the North-West they would, on their return, enter this House with a better knowledge of what is required in that part of the State. This is a problem that I do not consider I can solve, but we should offer some incentive to people to populate that great area and get it working.

The first thing we should offer is good roads. Whilst it may not be possible to construct an all-weather road for the North-West, it is possible to improve those already existing. The Fitzroy Crossing is one I can mention because it was out of service for so long after its flooding this year. That crossing was covered with slime and mud for a long time, and it was only recently that this was cleared away and traffic was able to pass.

That is just one problem; and the only way that traffic will be able to move along with more certainty is by the raising of the levels of the roads over rivers—unfortunately only by very expensive methods—and allowing the water to run under, as was done at the Ord River crossing. Good roads are essential in the North; and if we could afford, say, £1,000,000 a year for the next few years, it would be money well spent, and I am sure it would result in more people settling in those parts.

The next essential is the conservation of water wherever it can be impounded. One of the water supply schemes which has been investigated by the Water Supply Department is at Margaret River and we inspected the plans very thoroughly. We were told that a dam can be built across the Margaret River for £300,000, and the amount of water that can be impounded is 105,000,000 gallons, which is five times greater than the capacity of Canning dam.

One can easily visualise the vast areas that could be irrigated from such a water supply. Such projects are possible and must be undertaken before we can populate that part of our State.

The Minister for the North-West: Where is that dam situated?

Hon. A. R. JONES: On the Margaret River.

The Minister for the North-West: Whereabouts?

Hon. A. R. JONES: I cannot remember the name. We were shown the location at Derby and went into the matter very thoroughly with the engineer.

The Minister for the North-West: It is about 280 miles from Derby.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Yes, that is about its location. I believe that there are tributaries, other than the Fitzroy River itself, which could be treated in a similar manner. If such developmental work could be done and the station areas subdivided, each to have an area that could be flooded for the growing of pastures and fodder, we could increase the North-West stock-carrying capacity and with it ensure a considerable population increase by those means alone. That is only one suggestion I had in mind to put to the powers that be, but many more uses for the land could be found if sufficient water were impounded and enough money expended. I make these suggestions in an endeavour to help those members who submit arguments for the development of the North. With them, I consider that if we do not do something with it we do not deserve to hold it. Another place we visited was the Ord River crossing experimental station where I saw something that astounded me in the way of sugar cane growing.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I told you about that before.

Hon. A. R. JONES: The hon. member might have done so, but I could not comprehend at the time. I have seen it for myself now, and I believe the hon. member and every member of this House should also see it, and then they would believe it. It is considered that the yield this year will be 60 tons to the acre. Experts in the sugar-growing industry consider that no better sugar cane can be grown anywhere else in Australia. Unfortunately, however, sugar is one of the commodities that is over-produced in many countries, although only to the extent that many nations cannot afford to buy it. I understand that thousands of people in Asia have never tasted sugar. If we could raise their standard of living, by some means, possibly we could have another potential customer for the products of a sugar-growing industry.

The Minister for the North-West: There are many people in Australia who have never tasted it either.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Yes; that is possible. To illustrate the maxim that we must populate or perish, I would like to mention that we were taken out and shown the coastal plain which follows the coast about 20 to 30 miles inland from Darwin. This area comprises approximately 2,000,000 acres. The soil is the richest and blackest I have ever seen. It has a rainfall of 60 inches in the wet season, and is under water varying in depth from 6in to 2ft. for about four months of the year.

One man in the area has been conducting rice-growing experiments and has been very successful. Unfortunately, one of the few cyclones they had had flattened the crop down to the water level, and they were unable to harvest. It was estimated, however, that they were good crops and would yield one ton of rice to the acre. We were also told that there would be no need for terracing or grading, as a good type of rice would grow vigorously in from 6in. to 2ft. of water. From what I saw, I would suggest that rice could be grown successfully over an area of 2,000,000 acres, and I was also told that cattle could be fattened in that area sufficient to keep a meatworks going. It would therefore be possible to keep a large section of our Asian friends supplied with rice and make them happy. I suggest that if we did that we would not have so many enemies in our near north.

We were also told that in 1883 some Chinese wanted a concession to grow rice in this area, but they were refused. So for approximately 65 years we have denied somebody the right to grow what is to them a staple diet, and a means of livelihood. Such action does not show in good light our White Australia Policy or in conjunction of our professed Christian way of life. If, by keeping them out of our country, we deny people the right to grow rice and produce the wherewithal to keep them alive it is surely not in keeping with our ideas of Christianity. Unless we encourage our own people to grow rice in the northern parts of Australia or permit other people to do so, we do not deserve to hold this part of our Commonwealth.

In conclusion I suggest that the criticisms I have made be taken in the spirit in which they are offered. Now is the time for us, as members of Parliament, to give a lead to our people. Whilst we are on the crest of the wave at present, if we do not watch ourselves we will be engulfed with it and will cease to enjoy the prosperity we are enjoying now. Anything that we can do to give a lead we should do.

I am duty bound to go into the country areas and tell the people that, to survive and remain prosperous, it is essential for us to reduce the cost of production in order that we may compete on the world market. It is the duty of every member,

whether he belongs to the Liberal, Labour or any other party, to tell the people that they must do an honest day's work and not expect more than it is worth. If we do not inculcate these ideals we will be in dire straits in the next few years. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [8.25]: I, too, take this opportunity of congratulating you, Sir, on the great honour that has been bestowed upon you in being elected President of the Legislative Council. I am sure the choice that members have made is a wise one, and that you will carry out your duties with dignity, according to the high position that you hold, and that the traditions of this House will be upheld.

I would also like to congratulate and welcome to this House all the new members, particularly Mrs. Hutchison, who is, of course, the first woman to be elected to this Chamber. I have no doubt that each and every one of the new members will make a valuable contribution to the debates and the deliberations of this House, and I can assure them that they will receive, as I did, all the help and advice that is possible to be given by the older members; and whilst some of us are politically opposed there exists outside the Chamber a fine spirit of comradeship, regardless of the party to which we belong.

Since my election to this House, I have done my best to paint a picture of the potential wealth and the immense possibilities of the North Province. With the help of my colleagues in this Chamber and in another place, I have tried to make advocacy of the settlement and development of the North the major part of my work. I realised from the beginning that all my plans for such work could not be put into operation over-night, but that to see the accomplishment of all my ideas along those lines would indeed constitute a life's work.

Tonight I do not intend to repeat myself by describing the potential wealth of the North. I have done that on other occasions in this House, and I am sure that if any of the new members are interested in the development of our State they will find in "Hansard" what I have previously said.

I congratulate the Minister for the North-West for putting into operation work which has been long overdue in the North, and I think it is the first real developmental work that has been done in those parts for many years. I refer to the survey and exploration of 20,000,000 acres of little-known country in the North-East Kimberleys. Surveys have been conducted for dam sites, and boring has been carried out to bedrock, and undoubtedly this is valuable work towards development in the North.

Excellent work has also been done in the gauging of rivers. I consider this is a great contribution, and the real beginning of the work that I have been advocating since I have been in this House. Things are beginning to move quickly in the North, and the Government is going to be hard pressed to keep up with developments; for, as I forecast here two years ago, the black swan of Western Australia has laid an egg at Exmouth Gulf, without a shell, and a double yolker.

I have no hesitation in saying that the discovery of oil will become one of the greatest economic contributions to this State in our time—and not only to the State, but to the whole of Australia. For it will mean, on our present-day standards of economics, a saving to the Commonwealth Government of hundreds of millions of pounds in overseas credits. I have no fear of contradiction in saying that in the not far distant future oil will be found in the Kimberleys, and millions of pounds will be needed to keep pace with developments.

Surely it is time that the Federal Government realised its responsibilities towards the North-West and the Kimberleys. Surely it is time it co-operated with the State Government and declared its intentions in respect of the development of the North. The pastoral industry, the mining companies, the master pearlers, the oil men, and the beef industry need to know the intentions of the State and Federal Governments covering taxation, land tenure, public works, transport, and communications. Farmers want to know if land will be made available for tropical agriculture. Experimental stations in the North have proved beyond doubt that there is a great future there for the growing of crops such as rice, sugar, and vegetable oils. But we need water conservation and lots of other things that will cost money.

If the Commonwealth Government can make up its mind to assist in this great national project financially, and get together with the State Government in laying down a policy for the future development of the North-West and the Kimberleys, the pastoralists, mining companies, agriculturists, oil men, and hosts of others who are looking to the North for investment, will at least know where they are going. There are two reasons why the Commonwealth Government cannot ignore the development of the North-West and the Kimberleys. The main reason, to my way of thinking—and I think this ties up with what Mr. Jones has said—is defence.

Since the discovery of oil will benefit the whole of Australia, surely the Commonwealth Government should realise that that discovery places on its shoulders a large share of the responsibility for the development of that country. I have discussed this problem with several Federal members, and they all agreed it is a

national problem. Yet Mr. Menzies refuses to recognise any responsibility whatever, and still treats this as the Cinderella State. Now that we have discovered oil and Cinderella is beginning to grow up, I wonder what would happen if she suddenly decided to disown the rest of the family!

However, if for no other reason than that of defence, the Federal Government should face its responsibility towards the development of the North-West and the Kimberleys. Any good Australian, with all due regard to the world, cannot help being alarmed at what is happening in South-East Asia today. The North Province covers 530,000 square miles—one-sixth of the Commonwealth—with a coastline of approximately 2,000 miles; and yet, in that vast stretch of country, there are only just over 7,000 people. Off our northern shores there are hundreds of millions of people with an ideology and way of life that do not fit into our democratic scheme of things. Millions of pounds have been spent each year on defence; yet, where it is vitally needed, nothing has been done.

I believe the greatest barrier of defence is population and development of the country. If we are to exploit the natural resources to the benefit of ourselves and the rest of the world, we have got to realise that Australia is in the southern hemisphere. We have to learn to live alongside the people of South-East Asia and build up a system under which we can trade freely one with the other. If the people of South-East Asia need meat, rice, sugar, or any commodity we can supply, we should see that they get those things, and should trade freely with them. Once we are prepared to do that, thus enabling us to live side by side with them so that we may share in each other's prosperity then, and only then, in my opinion will we have nothing to fear from South-East Asia.

The North—with its oil, uranium, tin, rare metals, asbestos, beef, wool, mutton, and a host of other commodities—together with the Kimberleys, one of the richest potential rice and sugar areas in the world, constitutes one of the richest plums in the southern hemisphere, and we must wake up and realise the urgent need for the defence of our northern shores. I have heard that part of the country described as the back door to Australia. Being a representative of the North, I beg to differ. But whatever door it is, that door is wide open and defenceless.

The Federal Labour Party made no bones about the matter during the recent Federal election campaign, but freely admitted that the Federal Government had a responsibility towards the defence and development of our great North-West. Ever since I have been in this House I have pleaded for some major action to be taken in that direction. I have asked every member to support me, no matter what Party he belonged to. This is an urgent and vital

matter; and we, as representatives of the people of Western Australia, must on their behalf urge the Federal Government to realise its responsibility, for time is no longer on our side. China, Japan, and all the other countries of South-East Asia are overflowing with population and, in the future, must be looking for room to expand.

Will the rest of the world allow us to keep this country if we do not develop it? Have we any moral right to retain this huge stretch of land with a population of only 7,000? Quite recently in our local papers I read that a prominent man from overseas had said he had noted the undeveloped and sparsely populated areas of Australia, and reminded us that today there were still 100,000,000 people in the world who could not get enough to eat.

I believe the emergency is with us today. But if it were not to come in our time, but in our children's children's time, I still consider that the responsibility is ours. It is not untrue to say that the North is only partially developed. We have to live safely alongside the people of South-East Asia, and to do so we must alter the existing state of affairs in the North. We must fill those vast, open spaces with population, and exploit the natural resources of the country to the fullest extent. Surely that is a good reason why the Federal Government should realise its responsibility to assist the State Government.

Then there is the discovery of oil, the greatest contribution to the economy of Australia in our time. Everyone in Australia must benefit as that industry develops. No matter whether he has shares in the company or not; or whether he has money invested in real estate; or whether he only has labour to sell, he will benefit. Already we find that the vultures are in Exmouth Gulf clamouring for their share in our oil. I agree that everyone should share in this national asset; but without Federal aid the State Government will be hard pressed to keep pace with the development of public utilities as this industry grows.

The oil companies are spending millions of pounds in the search for oil. Surely the Federal Government must realise that it, too, will share in the prosperity and should therefore share in providing the facilities needed to keep pace with development. The State Shipping Service is doing a great job, but we need more ships urgently. Most of the jetties along the coast are rotting and literally falling to pieces. The facilities for handling cargo are non-existent or inadequate. We need railway waggons and more sheds to store the goods coming in and out of the North.

While a fair amount of work has been done on the roads, much still remains to be done. We have not yet a sealed road to Carnarvon and the main roads plant in the North is dilapidated and antiquated. As regards communications, it is still not

possible to hold a conversation with Perth from anywhere north of Carnarvon. All these things require money; and events are moving so rapidly in the North as to impose a severe strain on State finances. As the Federal Government is to share in our prosperity, let it come forward and share financially with the State Government the responsibility of developing the State.

I know that millions of pounds will be required to finance this great project; but to say that money cannot be found is rot. During the depression, money could be found for nothing; and when war was declared, millions of pounds were conjured out of thin air.

Hon. L. A. Logan: By taxation. If taxation were increased today, you would growl.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: In 1945, Mr. John Curtin said that never again in our time, and at no future time, would want of money interfere with or retard in any way the development of our land so long as men and materials were available. I think the same words were repeated by Mr. Chifley. Those men knew that when finance was needed to save Australia from the ravages of war, money was found freely; and today, in a world of such an uncertain future—where development should play a big part in the defence of Australia—finance, men, and materials should be made available. And the Federal Government should bear its full share of the burden.

I suggest that the State Government should get authority from the Commonwealth to raise loans exclusively for the development of the North-West and the Kimberleys. It would have to be backed up by a Commonwealth guarantee. I further suggest that we should set up a department of the North-West and should appoint an administrator-engineer for the North-West and one for the Kimberleys, each to be directly responsible to the Minister. Departments should be established on the spot to ensure that any loans raised would be spent wisely and only on developmental and reproductive works. I believe that a department of the North-West such as I have mentioned is vital to the correct administration of a territory where distances are so great and conditions are so entirely different from those existing in the south.

Once again I ask for the full support of this House and I request that everyone make some contribution towards bringing this matter before the Federal Government. It is a subject that is beyond political party bias. To my way of thinking, it is a national problem. I believe the bulk of the finance to develop the North-West and the Kimberleys should come from private enterprise. If we had the capital, I think we could immediately step up the population in those areas. The only

way we can get both capital and labour to live and work in these remote places is to give some incentive.

In the North-West and the Kimberleys there are many fields of development in which capital can be invested. There is mining, for instance. Some development of mining has already taken place. We have the asbestos mine at Wittenoom Gorge, and the iron ore at Yampi Sound, and now we have the discovery of oil. In the field of mining, the surface has been barely scratched.

Then there is the pastoral industry. If incentives were given to both capital and labour in this industry, it could be expanded so that it could support a population of, say 25,000 to 30,000. With irrigation and the growing of fodder crops for the finishing off of beef cattle, and with the growing of rice, sugar, vegetable oils, and possibly cotton and a host of tropical fruits, these areas could also support a further increase in population. This would necessitate a considerable amount of finance being found directly by the Government for the damming of rivers for irrigation systems.

There could be a considerable industry in the raising of pigs, and in the growing of corn crops and sorghum. In addition, with the processing of waste from sugar crops for feed, and the introduction of bacon factories, a greater population could be carried. The exploitation of the marine life off our coast would also lead to prosperity and population in the North, particularly if appropriate facilities such as packing and processing factories were established. Some work has already been done on these lines. I refer to the two whaling stations operating in the North. The pearling industry could also be expanded if the appropriate incentives were offered both to master pearlers and the workers in the industry.

The population figures of the North-West and the Kimberleys show that after 80 years of settlement there are just over 7,000 people in this vast area. We might well ask what are the deterrents and what is keeping capital out of this country, which has so many avenues of rich, natural resources to be exploited. Some people say that the climatic conditions are against the white man in the tropical and semi-tropical areas. Well, I have lived in the North and have seen the fine type of children that can be raised there. I venture to say that the climatic conditions are no deterrent whatsoever. Almost next door to the North, in Queensland, we have proof of that. There we have the development and colonisation of a tropical agricultural area; and here I refer to the sugar industry in that State.

This industry is one of the bulwarks of Australia. It supports a population of many thousands, and the capital value can be counted in millions in farms, mills, refineries, distilleries, and chemical plants

and their associated enterprises. This is a fair example of the adaptation of the white population to tropical and semi-tropical countries. The climate in Queensland is the same as we have in the North-West and the Kimberleys, so I am sure we can wipe out climatic conditions as a deterrent to capital and, ultimately, population going to the North.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: We hear a lot about the privations and the conditions there.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I will tell the hon. member something about them if he will keep quiet for a few minutes. The main deterrents to capital being invested are the exceptionally high costs of transport and the lack of communications. It is not human to expect labour to go to these remote areas which are in their developmental stage, and where living conditions are not to be compared with those in the south. The cost of living there is much higher than it is here, and amenities are almost non-existent.

People will not go there unless they are given some real incentive. It is also not reasonable to expect capital to be invested in the North unless some reasonable incentive is offered. No one can be expected to start a new venture where transport costs are excessive and where public utilities and communications practically do not exist. We would not invest capital in remote areas when we could get a better return for our money in the metropolitan area.

The Chief Secretary: Many are investing in oil.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: This brings me to the case which we, the people of the North, have presented to the Commonwealth Government over a period of years. It is an old, old story; but we have to keep plugging away, as Mr. Jones says, until we get something done. I believe that to provide some incentive to capital and labour, the Commonwealth Government should give freedom from taxation to all salary and wage earners and to all business enterprises, no matter what industry they are operating, north of the 26th parallel, for a period of 20 years.

Member: Including parliamentarians?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes; parliamentarians, too. Members will know after hearing me and seeing me work so hard in this House that if anyone is worthy of it, it is yours truly.

The Chief Secretary: They all work below the 26th parallel.

Hon. A. R. Jones: You do not mean complete freedom from taxation?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes. I will explain it in detail as I go along. There should be a proviso added that all the money involved in this freedom from taxation is to be reinvested in the property or business enterprise at the discretion of

the owner or company concerned. I believe that would remedy many of our defects.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: What do you mean by "all the money"? Do you mean all the profits?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I mean that all the money refunded by way of taxation to business people, companies, and the like, should be reinvested at their discretion in their properties. That would help to develop the country. At the beginning of the 20-year period the amount would be between £500,000 and £750,000—a mere flea-bite to the Commonwealth Government. But as the years progressed, we could expect the returns from the industries concerned—pastoral, mining and pearling—to be much greater than the original £750,000. In addition, the industries would be further expanded and developed and consequently would be carrying many thousands more people.

This case has been put before the Commonwealth Government on several occasions, but to no avail. However, like the stone-breaker who chipped away at the bottom of a mountain in the belief that if he kept chipping away long enough the mountain would break down and fall, I am of the opinion that if we keep plugging away at this matter, we will get somewhere. So once again I ask the Government to put our case before the Federal Government, particularly in view of the facts I have stated regarding the urgency of populating the North as an aid to defence.

At this juncture I would like to make reference to the four Japanese fishing boats seen off the North-West coast in February of this year by the captain of the "Charon." These boats were found to be fishing for tuna. Also, there were Japanese pearling boats operating off our coast. I understand that this year the pearling boats have been licensed in Australia. But why do we allow these strangers to come here and take our natural wealth from under our very noses, as it were? Surely if these people can come from a distant land and go back there and show a good return on their operations, there must be people in Australia who can do the same thing and make a good living at it!

The tendency the world over is to establish a demarcation line of territorial waters to protect the fishing rights of the various countries. This tendency has become more intense day by day. A Bill to establish nine miles as the limit of Panamanian territorial waters has been introduced into the legislature of that country. Several South American countries objected to the U.S. tuna boats operating off their shores. They recently proclaimed waters up to 200 miles, and the U.S. fishermen left without any opposition whatever.

Surely we should be able to establish a demarcation line for our territorial waters for the protection and control of the marine life around our coast! We have much to protect, particularly with respect to the pearling industry. Tuna fishing could also be a great industry. Big schools of tuna await exploitation off the North-West coast. Surely we are not going to stand by and watch the wealth from our marine life being transferred into foreign coffers! Many varieties of tuna exist off the North-West coast such as the northern blue-fin tuna, yellow-fin tuna, mackerel tuna, and two or three others.

There are assured markets throughout the world for this product. Canned tuna can be sold freely in the United Kingdom, and our tuna in the round can be sold in America. There is also no duty on raw tuna going into the United States, so that, unlike other primary products, this presents no selling problem. I believe that to establish the industry in Western Australia the Fisheries Department would have to do much in the way of research work, and perhaps the Government would have to help by providing cold storage facilities and so on.

As I have already said, the Commonwealth Government has licensed foreign boats to fish for pearl shell in Australian water. This gives us some control over them. The areas are divided into zones and these boats are allowed to fish so much shell in Zone A and then they are transferred to other zones. Whilst this does give us some control, pearl shell is an entirely different proposition to fish that swim freely in the water. Pearl shell is fixed to the reef or land under the sea, and all the land in the sea, up to 80 metres, is considered by international law to be part of Australia. That being the case, these fishermen are actually taking something from our land. Why should these Japanese boats fish anywhere near the continental shelf?

I admit that Japanese divers are the finest divers for pearl shell anywhere in the world. Over 30 of these divers have been allowed into Australia and are operating out of Broome. I freely admit that they have given new life to the industry, but so far the Commonwealth Government has not permitted any more to be brought into Australia. Yet the Government has given a licence to a great fleet of ships to fish right on the continental shelf! With 30 more divers at Broome, we could bring the pearling fleet back to what it was in the old days and really put the industry back on its feet. So I ask the Government to do all it can on behalf of the master pearlers of Broome and try to get 30 extra divers for this work.

I would now like to discuss the beef industry in the Kimberleys. The drought in that country has broken and this has

been an excellent season. Now we can turn to the task of building up our beef industry in the Kimberleys. The long-term outlook for beef supplies in Western Australia is not good. For years we have taken the beef industry for granted, and now that our secondary industries in this State are expanding, and the population is growing every day, we have to take stock of the situation.

The position of the meat market today was hammered by Mr. Jones. As he said, what happens to the meat market is of great importance to us all because meat is one of the major items in the "C" Series index and, in my opinion, is playing a big part in retarding the basic wage. Britain cannot get sufficient supplies, so it is obvious that there is a bright outlook for the beef industry. We are assured of a high price for our beef cattle for many years to come, and I believe that the State Government will have to form a plan to develop the beef industry. Also, pastoralists in the North-West must help in this direction.

I believe that they have learned many lessons from the drought, and what people said could not happen in the Kimberleys and the North-West has happened. It has made pastoralists realise that they must plan their properties on different lines, and work on those lines has been started on several stations. At Gogo Station, 16 bores have been put down and 400 miles of fencing erected, 160 miles of it quite recently. A trial irrigation scheme for growing fodder was started last year and 1½ acres were sown with Sudan grass. The first watering took place on the 10th October and the grass was cut on the 10th November. At that time it was 6ft. high and yielded 180 bales, each bale weighing 80 lb. It was cut again on the 12th December and yielded 140 bales.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Would grass 6ft. high be nutritious?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is most unusual.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: It was cut again on the 20th January, and yielded 100 bales. That was a total of 420 bales of fodder weighing 80 lbs. a bale, and over a period of only three months.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Over what area?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Over 1½ acres. The manager, Mr. Millard, can vouch for these figures and would not hesitate to tell anyone about it. He would even write a letter to the Press if anyone doubted his word or wanted to be convinced. This shows what can be done in the Kimberleys and, as I did last year, I ask the Government to make big changes regarding land tenure and to give pastoralists liberal treatment in respect of private ownership of land. I believe the day we step from pastoral leases to private ownership of

land in the North then, and only then, will real development begin. After all, there is not much incentive for a pastoralist who holds 1,000,000 acres of land but does not know whether he will own it tomorrow, or when his lease expires. Such a person has no incentive to develop his property; but if he is given a fair proportion of it freehold, he will really develop it. I have been told that there is plenty of land adjacent to Perth held by private enterprise.

The Minister for the North-West: They have it until 1982.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I agree; but we must break the stranglehold that they have upon that land. If we can get the co-operation of members of both Houses, we can give the Government the power to break that stranglehold.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That would be a breach of faith, would it not?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Does not the hon. member think we have a responsibility to our country, to the State, and to the rest of the world? Are we going to allow these people to hold that country in an undeveloped condition? Have I not pointed out previously the dangers of permitting that? Surely I have got the idea into the hon. member's skull! If not, I must be slipping.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is morally wrong.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: That is nothing compared with the safety of Australia.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You have no principles.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: My principles are honourable.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: And so are mine.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Let us give these people the right to a reasonable amount of land, and let them hold it as freehold country. They would really begin to develop it then; but so long as they have only pastoral leases, they will do nothing about it.

The Government has much work to do yet in regard to conservation of water, such as the damming of rivers; and, of course, this would open the way for tropical agriculture. In that regard, I think it is sufficient to say that the Ord River experimental station continues to yield good results in the growing of rice, sugar and vegetable oils. When the production figures for this year's rice crop at Livaringa on the Fitzroy River are known, many people who were sceptical of this project will get a pleasant surprise.

What was done at Gogo can be done elsewhere; and if the Government lays down a concrete plan for the rebuilding and expanding of the beef industry in

the Kimberleys, and obtains the co-operation of pastoralists, I see no reason why we should not build up a beef industry in Western Australia which will at least provide sufficient beef for our growing population. I do not think we can, in our time, build up a huge export trade, but in any case we will be hard-pressed to keep pace with beef supplies for our own growing population. I hope the Government will bear this in mind and see what can be done about placing the beef industry on a sounder and more solid basis.

That brings me to the sheep and wool industry. In most cases, the sheep areas have enjoyed a good season, and around Port Hedland and Roebourne they have had the first good season for many years. However, the sheep numbers everywhere are at a low ebb. What is really wanted in this country is a good rain man who can assure pastoralists of a good fall of rain every year. I have not found him yet. There was one chap in the Kimberleys who had a good rain stone, but he buried it and then died last year. Nobody has found it since.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Can't you do it?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: No. I have not learnt the rain corroboree, and it is impossible to get a good rain man. Therefore I think we will have to look in other directions to overcome this problem in the arid areas of the North-West. The returns from wool have been very high and so have the payments in taxation. Under the circumstances, many improvements have been made, but one of the greatest worries to the pastoralist in the sheep country is the menace from dogs and foxes. The Agriculture Protection Board is doing all it can with the finances at its disposal. Government doggers were responsible for 25 per cent. of all scalps handed in. Much good work has been done with aerial baiting, but the No. 1 enemy to pastoralists and agriculturists throughout the State is the fox.

It may be news to some people, and I was amazed when I read it, that in the 1952-53 season, 51,211 fox scalps were handed in throughout the State and, in addition, a large number of scalps were not handed in. Of that number, 44,602 came from agricultural areas and the others from pastoral areas. A sum of £10,242 was paid out in scalp money. I think most of it was paid to farmers, who would have killed the foxes anyway to protect their own interests. I am of opinion that the money could have been spent in a better way. It was a large sum and, in my opinion, could have been spent on a subsidy for poisoning.

We could appoint two or three experts to instruct farmers in the wholesale destruction of vermin and some of the money used to pay for scalps could be spent on

scientific research in this direction. There has been an alarming increase in the number of foxes from the south to the farthest point in the North-West, and it must be obvious that the present method of destruction is not satisfactory. We should be willing and able to try some other methods, and instead of paying the farmers £10,000 odd a year for doing something that they would do in any case, we should do something along the lines I suggested.

The wool industry needs lots of public utilities, but I will speak of that phase as I come to it in turn. That brings me to the Carnarvon banana industry and water supplies. I think the Government and particularly the Minister for the North-West is to be commended for sending the Government Geologist, Mr. Ellis, to the North recently to carry out a geological survey of the Gascoyne River basin. At the conclusion of his work Mr. Ellis recommended putting clay lenses across the river sands to impede the flow of the water to the sea. I hope the Government will look into this very closely from every angle and, if necessary, will seek further advice to see what can be done about it.

I would also like the Government to make further investigations into the possibility of installing a dam at Rocky Pool, 28 miles up the river. I am not sure, but I believe the Minister has something in hand at present. I hope we get good results from his efforts. Water is the lifeblood of the banana industry; and it is quite possible that, in the near future, water from the Gascoyne River will be drawn on for other purposes. Supplies will be required for the oilfields and the towns that will be springing up as the result of the discovery of oil. The only logical source of supply of water is the Gascoyne River. Accordingly I would ask the Government to do everything in its power to ensure a continuous supply of water for the banana planters, whose very living depends on this essential commodity.

While speaking of the banana planters, I would like to refer to their having to cart their produce by road to Geraldton. Here again I would plead for a sealed road to Northampton. I see no reason why this should not be provided. All the roads around the metropolitan area are sealed roads. There is a sealed road from Perth to Kalgoorlie; there is one to Bunbury; and there is another to Geraldton. Wherever one goes around the metropolitan area one finds these roads. Accordingly why should not there be a sealed road to Carnarvon?

In the past the North-West and the Kimberleys, owing to their large area, have been responsible for the State being allocated a large share of main road funds. But the North has never received its just due in this regard. I would like to bring this forcibly to the notice of the Government and ask that something be done

about it. I realise that the Government has not been in office very long, and I hope that this year we will get a lot of work done on our main roads in the North.

There is great activity taking place in the mining industry in the North around Port Hedland and Marble Bar. There has been a considerable increase in the number of applications to work columbite, tantalite, and beryl. The Blue Spec mine is in full operation. Tantalite has been worked at Wodgina, and I would ask the Government, if possible, to have a Government geologist stationed at Marble Bar; his services are urgently needed. The district has been surveyed geologically, but that was done long ago. In those days columbite, beryl and other metals now used in the manufacture of jet engines, were of no value. Now, however, they have to be regarded in a different light altogether. At present if a sample of ore has to be identified it must be sent to Perth, which often causes long delay.

While speaking on the subject of a geologist, I do not think there would be any harm in mentioning the fact that our highly skilled and qualified public servants are not given the consideration they deserve. That applies to the men engaged in the Department of Agriculture, the Mines Department, and the Commonwealth Departments. Wherever we have had qualified men, they have left us wholesale. The Northern Territory and the other States are taking them from us because we do not value their services highly enough. This matter should be given close consideration. If we expect to get the best men in science and the best experts in agriculture and mining, we should realise their value and try to pay them the best salaries possible, instead of losing them to the other States and the Commonwealth Government.

I would also ask the Government to keep a close watch on leases granted for mining in the North, and to see that the Act is carried out to the letter. I am afraid many leases are taken up in the North, and the people who have them merely sit on them in the hope that they will get something out of them by doing nothing.

The work on manganese brought great prosperity to the district around Port Hedland, Marble Bar, and Nullagine, but I am informed that no further licences are to be issued for export. I see no reason for this. We have abundant supplies of manganese in the North, and I was told this evening that there are large supplies at Laverton, and that if the Government sent out geologists to test the extent of our supplies it would be found that we have plenty for our own uses. We could be exporting it now when it is at a high price. If nothing is done about it we will be in the ridiculous position of working the manganese ore and exporting it and perhaps having to give a subsidy to make it

pay. The Port Hedland district was very prosperous when we were shipping manganese, and the Minister should do all he can to see that the Commonwealth issues further licences for its export.

With the influx of people into the North because of the discovery and search for oil, and because of the activity around Port Hedland in relation to mining, and the possibility of the oilfield being put into production, I think the State will have to give close consideration to educational facilities in the North-West and the Kimberleys. At present the Carnarvon school is taxed to its utmost, though I think something is being done about that—or will be done in the near future. The other towns along the coast are also taxed to the maximum; and I would like to support my colleague in another place, the member for Gascoyne, in his application to the Government to provide a hostel to accommodate children who live in the outback, in order to give them the opportunity of living in Carnarvon and receiving the higher education obtainable there.

The accommodation for married schoolteachers farther north of Carnarvon needs much improvement. I appreciate the strain that has been put on the Department of Education with our vast expanding population throughout the State; but I think the department must realise that in the remote areas in the North, where there are few or no amenities and nothing but work offered to the married schoolteachers, first-class accommodation should be one of the major considerations. Some of the places in the North are nothing but shacks; those that once were houses are now falling to pieces. Renovations have been carried out but things are hopeless. What is required is new accommodation.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Is it due to bad tenants or white ants?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: It is due to time and lack of attention. Mr. Jones had something to say about main roads, and I would like to add to his remarks. I realise that much work has been done on main roads over the last few years, but there is still much to be done in the North. The engineer in charge of main roads in the North has done an excellent job, particularly when one considers the vast distances he has to cover and the limited equipment at his disposal.

There should be two distinct divisions in the North; one in the North-West and one in the Kimberleys. For even with junior engineers under him, the present engineer has a thankless and impossible task to perform. He has huge distances to cover and he cannot be everywhere at once. That is obvious. The conditions in the North cannot be compared with those in other parts of the State. The bashing that the men and the machinery have to take is terrific. With the exception of one or

two plants working on roads for the oilfields, most of the machinery in the North is dilapidated, and there are no decent facilities for repair work.

There is a workshop at Wyndham but the next shop is 700 miles away. The consequence is that when the machines in the North break down, the men sit around looking at them, and literally thousands of pounds are being thrown down the drain. At the end of the year we are told that we have been given £19,000 here and £13,000 there. But nothing has been done. I read in the papers that the North-West was getting its turn; that there were huge plants and machinery working at different parts of the North-West. I do not know where they are working, except perhaps on the oilfields and at Wyndham.

I agree that the oilfields must be given consideration and that they must have roads because of the money that has been spent. But I do not think this should be done to the detriment of the roads already established in the North. They are going to pieces. As Mr. Jones has pointed out, a fortnight of heavy traffic will rip and tear a road and corrugate it. If machinery is not constantly working on those roads they are soon in a state of disrepair.

No incentive is given to skilled operators of machinery to induce them to work in the North. If bulldozers or grader-drivers work in the North for a private company—and several of them work on aerodromes today—they are the best skilled operators, because they are offered a few pounds over the basic wage. I know that the Government is bound by red tape, and that the Main Roads Department is tied hand and foot. But would not it be to our advantage to pay these men who are willing to work up in the North under hard conditions, and to offer them a few pounds more, rather than have mediocre operators with the natural consequence of the machines lying idle half the time, and money being thrown down the drain?

I was pleased to find that some work had been done on the road between Port Hedland and Broome. Members will recall that I asked about it last year. The road has been made at least reasonably usable this year. But there is another section of the Great North Road which I would bring to the notice of the Government; it has not been touched, to my knowledge, since the old days of the camel. This stretch is between Fitzroy Crossing and Hall's Creek, a distance of 250 miles. I think it is one of the roughest stretches of road that the Redex cars will have to traverse.

Over these roads are carried each year many hundreds of tons of supplies for several stations, from Hall's Creek to Gordon's Downs and right over the border, yet this stretch of road has not been maintained. So I ask the Main Roads

Department to put this work on its priority list. If the department feels that I have been too severe, then I am sorry; but it is time that it woke up and gave service to the people in the North. I am not exaggerating when I say that thousands of pounds have been wasted in the North where workmen have sat idle watching plant and machinery which had broken down.

One plant which broke down on the Fitzroy-rd. could not be repaired, and I could not get another to clear the Fitzroy Crossing. After the department in Perth had been wired, the job was done by the Civil Aviation Department. Another plant on the Wallal-rd. broke down and the gang could do nothing else but sit and watch. Another bulldozer was working on the road to Mt. Anderson, and while the parts were on order, the men merely sat down and watched the plant. Yet another plant working from Wallal to Carnarvon broke down and the men had to wait.

We appreciate that this State should do all it can for the oil companies up there; but we must also take into account that those companies have more money than the Government. Are the people of the North expected to see their roads torn to pieces and corrugated while the oil companies get everything they require from the Government? Why let thousands of pounds worth of work on roads be wasted through lack of maintenance? I agree with Mr. Jones that the real way is to surface the roads with bitumen. Having a gravel surface, the roads must be graded and bulldozed every month, and by this means thousands of pounds are wasted.

The Minister for the North-West: What do you think the men could do when plants break down, besides sitting and looking?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: What else can they do? The department should realise that it is losing money by not getting repairs effected immediately. The Government should give consideration to a mobile repair plant. The foreman of the Main Roads Department in the North-West, who covers a district of about 400 miles, has a 12-ton steel body truck to run around in. He is ordered about by an engineer who has just left school and who does not know a spade from a shovel. If I have been harsh to the Main Roads Department, I meant to be.

His Excellency referred to workers' homes in the North. The housing shortage is very acute there. I admit that since the present Government took office some houses have been built, and we have been assisted in other directions. Quite a lot has been done as regards water supplies for towns. Tanks have been built; extra storage facilities have been erected; and in one place a new bore has been put down. Loans have been made to local authorities for electric plant. On the whole, people

in the North are very satisfied with what this Government has done; but there is no harm in requesting more when we know that there is so much which is urgently needed.

Houses are urgently wanted in Carnarvon. In Port Hedland the shortage is shocking and that town deserves priority over all other districts. To my knowledge, from 20 to 25 families are living in tents and shacks, and under most appalling conditions right on the edge of a marsh. They are respectable families and do everything they can under the circumstances. Now that workers' homes are being erected, these people should be given the first consideration.

Government officers stationed in the North, such as those attached to the Public Works and the Agriculture Departments, should be supplied with homes. In some cases that has been done. In Derby a house has been erected for the agricultural officers, and also one for the Public Works officer; but this is the exception rather than the rule. I would request the Agriculture Department to take note of the stock inspector who is stationed there. The house provided for him is really shocking. It was one I occupied when I held that position. I could not believe my own eyes when I saw it was still being used. It is rented by the department as an office and measures 8ft. by 10ft. with an 8ft. verandah. The department has made no effort to provide accommodation for this man, who holds an important position.

The Minister for the North-West: When you were in that office, did you make any requests?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I made many requests, but the Government considered this was not its responsibility. In those days there was no member of Parliament to take up the matter. It is only since the present Minister for the North-West entered Parliament, and the rest of the Labour members followed, that the people in the south became aware of those living in the North. Nothing was done as long as the pastoralist kept his million acres. It is wrong to say that accommodation should not go with the office. If a man has to live and work there with his wife and family, then he deserves to have accommodation provided. The stock officer in the North has an important job. He has to contend with pleuro, tick, and buffalo fly. If these pests should spread to the south they would play havoc with the herds here. The least the department can do is to supply that officer with a home at a reasonable rental.

I hope that Wyndham will receive its quota of new homes. Three or four were built there recently. If the remainder of the houses are still occupied they should all be renewed. I would inquire whether

the Government has made any plans to supply the town with electricity? The population is still using kerosene lamps. I understand that electricity can be made available from the meatworks and I would ask the Minister to look into this phase. It may cost something, but it is an amenity well worth paying for. In the far North the population is paying 1s. 10d. a unit for electricity.

Speaking of high charges, I would ask the Government to investigate the recent revaluation of properties made in the North-West. I do not know whether the officer who made the revaluation is competent. Even with the discovery of oil, the valuation he made of some properties was ridiculous. In one instance, a home which could not be insured for £250 was valued at £1,000. That was at Derby. Another property insured for £700 was valued at £2,500. The officer did not even enter that house.

Hon. L. Craig: Could a person buy that house for £2,500?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: No, because one look would be sufficient to scare off any buyer. One would not keep bullocks in it.

Hon. L. Craig: I have good bullocks.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I know; and we have good people in the North also. I would like to tell members that people in the North are the salt of the earth. Water rates have also gone up out of all proportion. In one instance, a person paying £3 10s. for water rates had to pay £15 under the new rating.

Hon. L. A. Logan: That is what your Government has done.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: It does not matter which Government did it. That is an injustice. I do not believe it was the present Government. Steps were taken in this matter before it came into office, and we cannot blame the present Government for it. If people are required to work and live in the North, they should be given decent facilities and greater consideration.

With regard to valuations, if the houses had actually appreciated that much there would be no injustice; but in actual fact, their values have increased by no more than one-eighth of the amount originally paid. I ask the Government to go into the question of over-rating of properties and increased water charges. As a result of these increases a burden has been placed on the people of the North.

Regarding Derby, I would ask the Government to consider the urgent need for a courthouse. That town has grown out of all knowledge in the past four years. Fifty-four houses have been built—some by the Commonwealth, some by the State, and many by the people themselves. One thing can be said of the people of the

North, and that is that they help themselves in every respect. Years ago, when Derby was a smaller town, a courthouse was considered a necessity; but as time went on, and perhaps the wrong Government came into office the building fell down through neglect.

Recently a new house for the engineer has been built on the courthouse block. Members might think that we do not need a courthouse there, but can a court be conducted with any dignity or prestige when it is held in an office measuring about 8ft. x 6ft. We have a drifting population in the North and some of the people passing through are tough characters. When the magistrate sits at the table, if there are any spectators, they are in a position to look over his shoulder, and so he has no privacy. How can there be any dignity in a court like that? Surely a court is one place where dignity should be maintained. I ask the Government to give attention to this matter and see whether something cannot be done about it. There is ample land alongside the police station where a courthouse could be built.

Before starting to speak I was threatened with murder in several degrees, even bloody murder, if I spoke at too great a length, so I suppose I shall have to draw my horns in.

The Minister for the North-West: Who said that?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I cannot tell the Minister, but he might inquire of the Chief Secretary. The Government should bring before the notice of the Commonwealth Minister for Social Services the position of the old-age pensioners in the North-West and the Kimberleys. The old-age pensioner in the North receives an allowance equal to that paid to the pensioner in the south. A worker employed above the 26th parallel receives a district allowance and taxation concession on account of the high cost of living. Is it not logical then to claim that, as extra allowances are paid to the worker on account of the high cost of living over and above the basic wage, the old-age pensioner, who is suffering similar disabilities, should receive a larger amount than the pensioner in the south?

It is idle to argue that the old-age pensioner could come south and live there. After a man has put in a lifetime of work and service in the North, suffering the heat and other conditions, he does not find it easy to live in the south. At the present time I am suffering severely from the cold weather and would like to be back in the North-West. The old people who come south do not live more than six or 12 months and it is time something was done for them. I hope the Government will get into touch with the appropriate Minister with a view to getting the pension for those people increased.

The Government ought to make representations to the Commonwealth for a wireless station for the North-West. This is an amenity enjoyed by people in almost every part of Australia. Almost everybody in the North has a wireless set and pays the licence fee, but the reception is shocking. It is almost impossible to get Perth in order to hear the news and the market report. The only news we get up there is that from Radio Australia. Every member from the North understands the position and is with me when I ask that consideration be given to this matter.

Another point I should like to bring before the notice of the Government is that residents in country areas suffer certain disadvantages and live under conditions that are not comparable with those prevailing in the metropolitan area. There are certain hospital and medical services that are not obtainable in country towns and are to be had only in the metropolitan area. Certain types of treatment are highly specialised. This treatment is not available in the bush and the consequence is that a patient has to be brought to the metropolitan area.

Many such patients who come to Perth are treated as outpatients. I refer to such cases as the refitting of appliances for limbs, cases for post-polio treatment and the like. Such cases have to be sent to the metropolitan area for special treatment. This applies not only to the North-West and the Kimberleys, but also to the Goldfields and agricultural areas, and it imposes upon people, particularly the children, a very heavy burden.

During the year I asked the Minister whether it would not be possible to have a hostel established in Perth especially for the accommodation of people from the bush requiring highly specialised treatment. I believe that at present some accommodation is provided for children at the Lady Lawley Cottage for spastic and crippled children, but only a limited number can be admitted. There is a real necessity for such a hostel in Perth, and I consider this a worthy request to make to the Government. The Minister earlier in the year could not see any possibility of establishing such a hostel in the near future, but I hope that the matter will receive consideration.

While speaking on medical matters, I should like to express support for Dr. Hislop, who stressed the urgent need for the establishment of a medical school in this State. I believe he will have the backing of every member because the need is urgent. When, as Dr. Hislop told us, Adelaide will be unable to take more students and its own students may have to go further afield for their training, I cannot see our men returning to Western Australia. Therefore, in order to maintain a continuous supply of highly qualified doctors, we should support the proposal for a medical school.

In conclusion, I hope that what I have said has not fallen on deaf ears, particularly the first portion of my speech in which I expressed some alarm and asked for the support of members. I asked for it sincerely, and I hope all members will support the representatives of the North in having those matters I mentioned brought to the notice of the Federal Government in order that it might realise its responsibilities to the North.

I was pleased to hear Mr. Jones say that I had converted him. He is No. 1. In another place, the member for Moore, Mr. Ackland, has also promised his support to the fullest extent. He has gone so far as to place a notice of motion on the paper asking for a committee to be appointed consisting of the leaders of the three parties in that House. I think that is a good idea. I am not sure that he did not steal it from me, because we had many conversations on the boat when travelling to the North. He has seen the North and has realised what could be done there. Although the two members were there for only a brief time, they were viewing the North with the eyes of agriculturists, and they now willingly offer their support. I trust that we shall have the assistance of every member, not only in this House, but also in another place because, if we do not develop and populate the North, we are not likely to hold it much longer.

On motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.