

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 27th September, 1949.

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QUESTIONS.

"NARROWS" BRIDGE.

As to Construction and Alternative Proposal.

Mr. YATES asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to proceed with the construction of a bridge across the "Narrows"?

(2) If the answer is in the negative, will he consider investigating the proposal that a causeway be constructed from Barrack-street, Perth, to Mend-street, South Perth?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The new causeway was designed to provide the most economical and efficient crossing for traffic requirements for some years to come from the Belmont, Victoria Park and South Perth areas.

(2) Detailed investigations into the future requirements and possible location of further river crossings downstream from the causeway cannot be put in hand, owing to shortage of staff, until the new causeway is nearing completion.

PRICES CONTROL.

(a) As to Overcharging on Eastern Goldfields.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Attorney-General:

(1) In view of the fact that overcharging for commodities is still taking place on the Eastern Goldfields, particularly in regard to meat, will he give consideration to the immediate establishment of a branch of the Prices Control Branch in Kalgoorlie similar to that which operated when the control of prices was under the Commonwealth Government?

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Tuberculosis (Commonwealth and State Arrangement).
- 2, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.

(2) Will he arrange that the official prices of meat allowed by the Prices Control Branch on the Eastern Goldfields be immediately published in "The Kalgoorlie Miner"?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) From time to time investigations are taking place on the Eastern Goldfields by officers, especially sent for that purpose, and this method is considered to be more effectual than having particular officers stationed in the district, when traders would become aware of their identity. It is, therefore, not intended to establish a branch office.

(2) Yes.

(b) *As to Appointment of Commission.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Premier:

(1) Does the Government intend to introduce legislation this session to establish a Prices Commission in accordance with the motion carried in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday last?

(2) If not, what is the reason?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) No legislation is proposed.

(2) Western Australia has an advisory committee as decided by Parliament only last year, which has rendered valuable service. To this committee appeals by any party against decisions of the Prices Commissioner may be made. In a review of the services rendered by the advisory committee dated the 29th August, 1949, the Public Service Commissioner stated that Mr. Court, the chairman of the committee, had examined in detail all submissions received and in the nine months ended the 30th June last had aggregated 400 hours of investigation during office hours in addition to considerable unrecorded time out of office hours. Moreover the committee had in that period held 15 formal meetings. On this committee there is a consumers' representative.

COAL MINE WORKERS PENSIONS FUND.

As to Benefits.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

With reference to the statement contained in "Hansard," No. 8, page 817, dated the 2nd August, 1949, made by the Minister for

Mines in relation to the Coal Mine Workers Pensions Fund, which statement reads as follows:—

The Act provides that when a mine worker or a dependant is also eligible for a Commonwealth Social Service pension, the rate of pension paid under the Act shall be the maximum that will not interfere with the payment of the full Commonwealth Social Service pension,

will he say if this means that a retired coal-miner and his wife, receiving a full Commonwealth Social Service pension, is also eligible to receive the full permissible income of 30s. each weekly from the Coal Mine Workers Pensions Fund?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

A retired mine-worker and his wife are jointly entitled to receive from the Coal Mine Workers Pensions Fund a pension of £4 10s. per week, less any amounts payable to both persons as Commonwealth Social Service pension. Therefore, if both were entitled to the maximum Social Service pension (£2 2s. 6d. per week), the coal miner's pension would be reduced to 5s. per week. A person with wife alone as dependant cannot receive by way of coal miner's pension and Social Service pension combined, more than £4 10s. per week.

In accordance with Section 14 of the Act, in a case where the amount determined after deducting the Social Service pension would, if paid, result in a reduction of the Social Service pensions because of the Commonwealth means test, the coal miner's pension must be further reduced to the appropriate amount which would enable the persons concerned to receive the maximum amount of Social Service pensions for which they would be eligible if a coal miner's pension were not paid. This applies in certain instances where reduced Social Service pensions are payable because of income and/or property.

The amending Bill of which the member for Collie has obtained the adjournment will, if passed, repeal Section 14 and thus enable a married mine worker to receive £4 10s. per week in the aggregate of the two pensions irrespective of the means test, but that amount is subject to reduction if the earnings are in excess of £2 10s. per week. A married pensioner will then be able to receive by way of coal miner's pension, Social Service pension and earnings a maximum of £7 per week.

HOSPITALS.

As to Construction of Regional Buildings.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Health:

In view of the fact that the Deputy Premier in his policy speech said, "Not a brick has been laid for any regional hospital," will he inform the House how many bricks have been laid in the construction of regional hospitals since the 1st April, 1947?

The MINISTER replied:

Upon the present Government coming into power it was found necessary, owing to the condition of the hospitals in the metropolitan area and in the country, to effect urgent renovations and additions. Much hospital work has been completed, including the first section of the Royal Perth Hospital.

A large amount of hospital work is now in progress, the estimated cost of which amounts to £1,420,227, including the estimated cost of £660,000 for the second section of the Royal Perth Hospital.

This work is considered to have a higher priority than the regional hospitals.

COMMONWEALTH HEALTH LABORATORY, KALGOORLIE.

As to Appointment of Chief Medical Officer.

Mr. OLIVER asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Can he inform the House who is responsible for the appointment of the Chief Medical Officer of the Commonwealth Health Laboratory at Kalgoorlie?

(2) What are the necessary credentials, if any, required by the successful applicant for the position?

(3) Does he consider that the Chief Medical Officer in charge of the Commonwealth Health Laboratory at Kalgoorlie is suitable to hold such a responsible position?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Commonwealth Director General of Health.

(2) The person appointed must be a legally qualified medical practitioner.

(3) Yes, in the absence of any evidence that the present occupant is unsuitable. The position is now occupied temporarily pending the appointment of a suitable permanent officer.

PETROL.

(a) As to Emergency Arrangements.

Mr. BRADY (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

Will he make some emergency arrangements with the oil companies to tide over businessmen who are unable to carry on their normal trade owing to petrol not being available?

The MINISTER replied:

I can only say that I will make inquiries as to whether it can be done. If so, I will try to arrange it.

(b) As to Reduction of State Quota.

Mr. SHEARN (without notice) asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) In regard to liquid fuel supplies, has the Minister any knowledge of an alleged intention of, if not established action by, the Commonwealth Government to reduce monthly quotas for this State currently and to the end of May, 1950, by approximately 2,000,000 gallons, which in effect is about eight per cent. less than the quotas would have been if rationing had continued?

(2) If this is so, would it not reveal that this State is to be denied some 200,000 gallons and that no allowance has been made for unavoidable increased consumption resulting from the need for the use of auxiliary power plants—

(a) during the period of the miners' strike;

(b) now, because of further breakdown at the power house, and

(c) that no provision is being made for the natural increase in the number of vehicles and power units?

(3) Would not recovery of hoarded stocks and diversion of these to legitimate consumption enable such a position as outlined in questions (1) and (2) above to be eased, if not entirely remedied?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Prime Minister has stated that the quota fixed for the year for all States cannot be exceeded and that monthly sales for the remainder of the year must be reduced to make good the overselling during June and July which, in the case of Western Australia, is said to have amounted to 1,775,000 gallons.

(2) (a) It is understood that the Prime Minister has agreed to a special allowance because of the coal strike, but in the case of Western Australia this does not amount to very much.

(b) Representations have already been made to the Prime Minister for a special allowance to cover the power breakdown.

(c) Provision for natural increase in the number of vehicles and power units was made in fixing the yearly quota.

(3) It should have the effect of easing the position.

(c) As to Motor License Fees.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the petrol position, will he see that the registration fees of motor vehicles are reduced in order to compensate for the lower mileage they will be able to travel?

The PREMIER replied:

As the hon. member is aware, the Minister for Transport is attending a conference in Melbourne today to deal with the liquid fuel position. I think it quite likely that an agreement will be arrived at in Melbourne whereby rationing of some kind will be undertaken either by the Commonwealth or by the States and, until the position arises as suggested by the hon. member, I do not intend to take any action.

(d) As to Quantities Distributed.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

Can this House be provided officially, from the Government, with figures which indicate the quantities of petrol distributed by the oil companies on a weekly basis prior to rationing being relinquished; on a weekly basis from the time rationing was relinquished until it was imposed by the companies in their distribution; and as at the present time?

The MINISTER replied:

I cannot say whether the information can be obtained or not. It can be asked for and, if given, of course made available. So far as I know there is no power of compulsion at this juncture. If the hon. mem-

ber would be good enough to put down in writing what he wants to know I will endeavour to obtain the information for him.

LAND SALES CONTROL.

(a) As to Department's Operations.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is he aware that as late as the 21st September, 1949, the Land Sales Control Department was sending back replies dealing with the price of land sales?

(2) Will he say whether the department was in order in doing that on that date?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) I am not aware of it but I will have inquiries made.

(b) As to Authority of Department.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

Is the Land Sales Department in order in placing values on land sales at the present time?

The MINISTER replied:

I will ascertain that information and supply it to the hon. member.

**MATERNITY HOSPITAL,
FREMANTLE.**

As to Purchase of Property.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

In view of the statement which he made last week that the Government was definitely purchasing a property known as Hudson's in Mary-street, Fremantle, for a maternity hospital, and in view of the fact that the auction sale this afternoon has been temporarily postponed, has the Government purchased this property or does it intend to purchase it?

The MINISTER replied:

I think the hon. member is inaccurate in saying that the Government had decided to purchase the house in question.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The Minister told me that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not remember having told the hon. member that. I think that what I did say was that the matter was under consideration. It is still under consideration.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Does the Minister deny coming to my seat and telling me, "We have the hospital that we were after and are definitely purchasing the Hudson property." He cannot put that over me. He has a convenient memory. I want the Minister to answer yes or no.

The Minister for Health: If the hon. member listens to idle chatter on occasions in the House, then he is very apt to hear the wrong thing.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If the conversation which the Minister had with me in this House, not outside, is idle chatter, then he is the person responsible for such idle chatter. He definitely came to me and told me that the Government had got the property it wanted for a maternity hospital. He said, "We have got Hudson's property." The Government would not have got it unless it had put up a fight for it.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Ministerial Portfolio.

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Premier:

In the interests of the housebuilding programme, will he assure the House and the public that there is no substance in the suggestion that the portfolio of Housing, when relinquished by the present Minister, will be allotted to the member for Subiaco?

The PREMIER replied:

I do not feel that I am called upon to make any announcement in that regard at present.

(b) As to Position of Displaced Persons.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government given consideration to the question of displaced persons purchasing or renting houses in this State to the detriment of Western Australian families?

(2) If not, will he have consideration given to the position in the near future?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) Displaced persons have the ordinary rights of citizens.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You would not think that if you went to the Housing Commission.

The PREMIER: The Federal Minister for Immigration, Hon. A. A. Calwell, has repeatedly tried to make that point clear. As far as I know, the position in regard to the allotment of houses is that there is a waiting list and a priority list, and I understand the Housing Commission is not departing from that list unless exceptional circumstances arise.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I was referring not to Commonwealth-State rental homes, but to private houses which were being purchased and rented by displaced families to the detriment of Western Australian families. If the Government has not yet given consideration to the matter, will the Premier give an assurance that it will be considered?

The PREMIER: Yes. Consideration will be given to the position.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Reticulation in Avon Electorate.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Works:

Is it a fact that his department has stated on several occasions that until such time as the retaining wall at Mundaring Weir is raised, thereby increasing the capacity of that reservoir, the supplies of additional water to the north-eastern areas of the Avon electorate, particularly to concessional users, will be strictly limited?

The MINISTER replied: Yes, that is the nature of the statement which has been made.

(b) As to Swimming Pool, Nungarin Camp.

Mr. CORNELL: In view of the Minister's reply, will he give a reason for the department agreeing to supply water for a swimming pool at the military camp at Nungarin which, when completed, will be filled twice a week, each fill requiring 150,000 gallons?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not recall that the Public Works Department has engaged in any such work, but I will be glad to have the necessary inquiries made and give the hon. member a reply when I receive a report.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The PREMIER: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Companies Act Amendment Bill (No. 2), and the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill to be read a third time at this sitting.

I have discussed this matter with the Leader of the Opposition, and I understand he does not offer any objection. Members will recall that the only amendments moved to the Companies Act were by the member for North-East Fremantle, who had two amendments carried. The member for Leederville moved to delete a clause in the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, and that also was agreed to. That was the only alteration made to the Bill.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Attorney General rang me this morning in connection with this motion, and I have since spoken to the Premier. I have no objection, nor have other members on this side, to this course being taken because the Government obviously wishes to finish the business of the House this week, and we desire that this legislation should be given consideration, or as much consideration as is usually given, by the Legislative Council. I remind the Premier, however, that again, as has happened many times this session, he will obtain his absolute majority to carry the motion from this side of the House. I draw his attention to that because it is something which is far too easily forgotten.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House, and there is an absolute majority present. I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

BILLS (2)—REPORTS.

- 1, Companies Act Amendment (No. 2).
 - 2, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2).
- Adopted.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Companies Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 2, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2).

Transmitted to the Council.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1949-50.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 22nd September; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £151,250 (partly considered):

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [2.57]: I want to deal with the Loan Estimates, particularly the items in connection with the replacement of certain plant in the Government Railways. I would have liked to discuss other features of railway management, or mismanagement, but unfortunately we were not given an opportunity of dealing with the Railway Estimates, as was customary prior to last year. I believe the programme of works in the Loan Estimates will not be carried out. I think one would be quite safe in saying that only a small proportion of it will be dealt with. I say that because if one gives consideration to the work that was provided for in last year's Estimates, where the amount was considerably less than is suggested for the coming 12 months, and sees the small percentage that was accomplished, one would be very optimistic to think that the schedule of works in this loan programme will be carried out. It might look all right on paper to say that a record Loan programme is provided for, but there is a very large gap between providing for the work to be done and having it accomplished. I will be agreeably surprised if anything but a small proportion—I would say 50 per cent. as the maximum—of the intended work is carried out.

I want to deal mainly with the locomotive position, the rollingstock and the Ways and Works maintenance which are provided for in the Loan programme. My reason for so doing is because I believe that there are many members who have entered this Chamber in recent years, and particularly in the last three years, who believe the oft repeated statement that the railways were handed over to the present Government in a dilapidated condition, and that it was the neglect by previous Labour administrations that brought about that condition of affairs. Although the volumes on my desk may look formidable I intend to touch upon the question only briefly.

Firstly I propose to deal with the Commissioner's reports, starting from the year 1930. I believe it was from 1930 that the first serious deterioration in the condition of our railway working plant commenced. I do not intend to blame the Government of that day entirely because it was forced into the position owing to dictation by financial interests outside Australia. Not only was the policy of the Government of Western Australia dictated by international financial experts, but that applied to the Commonwealth Government as well as all other State Governments. The financial expert, Sir Otto Neimeyer, came to Australia for that purpose. As I said I do not intend to blame the Government of that day but merely state in passing that owing to lack of finance the serious deterioration in our railways commenced then. That applied not only to the plant but also to the maintenance.

I will deal first with the Commissioner's report for 1930-31 and that was about the time this State was feeling the effects of the depression. On page 1278 of the bound volume No. 3 of the Votes and Proceedings for 1930-31, we find that the sum set aside for the maintenance of Ways and Works in 1930 was £576,723 compared with an expenditure of £800,784 for the previous year. That state of affairs was forced upon the Government of the day because it was not permitted to obtain the money, or raise it, for the purpose of maintaining the Ways and Works in a proper condition. In 12 months the sum set aside had been reduced by a quarter of a million pounds. Then on page 1281, in the same report and dealing with the question of economies, the Commissioner states—

The continued financial stringency of the State and the reduced traffic handled during the past 12 months has necessitated the exploration of every avenue to effect economies in working costs to improve the railway position, and the success attained is shown by the manner in which the working expenses have been reduced. Wherever possible staff have been dispensed with owing to the decreased business, while maintenance has been reduced to a minimum.

That was after the first year of the administration of the Mitchell Government. The Commissioner goes on to say—

As already stated, this means heavier charges in future years to bring the permanent way, rollingstock, etc., up to the required standard; but in the existing circumstances no other course could be justified.

I quite agree with the Commissioner that at that time no other course was open to him for the simple reason that the financial policy of this State had been laid down by international financiers and the money was not available for the Commissioner to carry on with the maintenance of the railways. It is significant that he said, "Maintenance has been reduced to a minimum." It had been reduced from £800,000 odd to £500,000 odd in the course of 12 months. He also said—

It has been decided to lay aside approximately 10 per cent. of the engine and wagon stock until such time as business warrants its return to traffic, and this is being done as the stock comes in for repairs, etc.

Then on page 1282, of the same volume, dealing with locomotive stock, he says—

In the interests of economy and in anticipation of a reduced traffic offering next year a number of locomotives have been laid aside.

It would not have mattered so much about the laying aside of the locomotives if the staff in the Midland Junction workshops had not been substantially reduced. Consequently the repairs and maintenance on the locomotives were not attended to. Then we go on to the Commissioner's report for the next year when the position was becoming progressively worse. On page 389 of the Votes and Proceedings for 1932, in which volume the Commissioner's report for the year ended the 30th June, 1932, is contained, we find that the expenditure on maintenance for Ways and Works had dropped to almost 50 per cent. of what it was two years before. In 1930 the expenditure was £800,784 and in 1932 the sum spent had dropped to £470,544. On page 392 of the same volume, dealing with the question of economies, the Commissioner said—

The economies introduced last year and mentioned in paragraph 14 of 1931 report were continued throughout the 12 months. With the reduction in the traffic offering for transportation, the surplus staff were dispensed with, the average number employed throughout the year being 929 less.

The important part about it was that many of those men were mechanics in the Midland Junction Workshops, and under ordinary circumstances they would have been retained for the purpose of keeping the locomotives and rollingstock in good order. He goes on to say—

Maintenance was further curtailed in the way of postponement of repairs to rollingstock, re-sleeping, etc., which means that

future years' earnings will be mulet to make up the leeway. However, the whole of the system has been kept up to standard commensurate with the traffic offering and depressed times.

That is a sad state of affairs. The Commissioner said that he had given a warning that the cutting down of maintenance on the plant of the department would have to be made good, and the earnings in future years would be called upon to make up for the lack of maintenance that had been taking place over the previous 12 months. On page 392, dealing with the question of locomotive stock, the Commissioner stated—

No additional locomotives were added to the stock, and owing to the state of the finances only such repairs as were absolutely necessary to keep traffic moving were undertaken. Fourteen additional locomotives of the older types were laid aside during the year, making in all 36 stowed.

Every effort has been made to obtain the best possible mileage from locomotives before sending them to the Midland Junction workshops, and 58 performed an average of over 123,000 miles before being stopped for overhaul at Shops.

The Minister for Works: Will you tell me again the year to which you are referring?

Mr. STYANTS: This is the 1932 report. I claim that 1930 was the first year in which there was a serious deterioration in the condition of the locomotive stock, Ways and Works generally and the rollingstock of the railways. The Commissioner said that no additional locomotives were added to the stock.

It is easy to be wise after the event, but at that time unemployment was rife and we had something like 5,000 men in Blackboy Hill camp on a sustenance of about 5s. a week. Married men were being sent all over the country and none of them on full-time employment. There were many thousands drawing Government rations yet we find, at that period, that no additional stock—not one engine—was added to the stock of the Railway Department. Not only do we find that to be the position, but we also find that the locomotives in use were being compelled to run excessive mileages without maintenance being carried out. This was done to show a better financial position.

A distance of 123,000 miles is something extraordinary for a locomotive to run without an overhaul. It is usually considered that round about 80,000 miles is sufficient

for an engine to run before it is brought in for a thorough overhaul and heavy repairs. That necessitates something like three years' running. Therefore it will be seen that when a Labour Government was not in office, ample labour being available and the services of thousands of men being dispensed with, not one locomotive was added to the stock. In addition the locomotives that were kept in use were running abnormal and excessive mileages for the purpose of avoiding their being brought in for maintenance. The Commissioner said—

During the year the condition of the engine frames on the older classes of "E" and "F" locomotives has given cause for anxiety, evidently due to age and the heavy duty now imposed on them with the larger cylinders and superheating, and special vigilance is being exercised to detect defects. It will be necessary shortly to renew the main frames for some of the "E," "F," "L" and "C" classes.

The engines were being allowed to deteriorate because the necessary maintenance was not being carried out. Consequently, during the war years insufficient maintenance was being undertaken and the department found itself in a deplorable position. The carriage, wagon and brakevan stock and the boilers were in much the same condition. Parliament's attention was drawn to this fact by the Commissioner of Railways even as early as 1930 and 1932. Serious deterioration took place in re-sleeping of the permanent way and we were, as a result, having quite a large number of derailments. The number of sleepers being used at that time on the permanent way was scores of thousands below the average normally used and consequently the permanent way was becoming extremely unsafe. On page 394 of the Commissioner's report for 1932, and dealing with the question of re-sleeping, he says this:—

The number of sleepers placed in the road during the year totalled 228,747, a decrease of 34,892 when compared with the immediately preceding 12 months.

That was only a matter of 34,892 sleepers for the immediate preceding year which, of course, was the depression year and the number had been considerably reduced. We find that in 1929, on ordinary maintenance, there were 339,923 sleepers used and in 1932 the number had dropped to 212,873. On special re-sleeping in 1929 there had been 16,546 used, and no special re-sleeping at all had been done in 1932. So we find that the total number of sleepers used in 1929,

a normal working year and before the depression was making itself felt, was 356,469, and in 1932, a matter of only three years later, for two years of which Sir James Mitchell was in office, the number had been reduced to 228,747. So we get some idea, from studying these reports, of when the deterioration started.

In the Commissioner's report of 1933 we find the same depressing story of men being put out of employment, of further lack of maintenance and of the total absence of any additions to the plant of the working railways such as were made in the two previous years. On the maintenance of Ways and Works £800,000 was spent in 1930, which was a normal working year, but in 1933 the figure had dropped to £493,000; a reduction of almost 40 per cent. In fact, it had dropped by 40 per cent. in two years and in the latter part of 1933 a slight increase was shown. Dealing with the question of economies in the 1933 report the Commissioner said:—

During the year every avenue of economy was exploited with a view to the reduction of expenditure, but at the same time the safety of the line was not neglected nor the maintenance of sufficient rollingstock to cope with the traffic offering. However, it became apparent towards the end of the financial year that the policy of postponement of maintenance of track and rolling stock, up to full standard, would have to be abandoned and an effort made to overtake belated repairs, etc.

So we find that the railways had suffered from a lack of maintenance for a period of three years, but at last the Commissioner had to call a halt in that policy. That accounted for the increase of £30,000 expended in that year compared with the low figures revealed in the report for the preceding year, which was a record for the lack of maintenance. Under the same heading of "Economies," the Commissioner further says:—

A commencement was made in the last three months, and the work is being proceeded with gradually until the arrears have been overcome. It is naturally a slow process in view of the scarcity of funds, but it is hoped that in four or five years the system will be up to the required standard.

It will be realised that the four or five years commencing from that time brought us up to about the start of the second world war when we neither had the money, the materials nor the time available to expend on maintenance or additions to the working

stock of the Railway Department. Dealing with the question of "Workshops" on page 495 of the 1933 report the Commissioner says:—

Owing to the imperative need for reduction in working expenses, the workshops staff was considerably curtailed, and in consequence great difficulty was experienced in coping with all necessary maintenance requirements.

Is there anything more candid than that, Mr. Chairman? He said that owing to the necessity for making economies the workshops staff, even in 1933, had to be reduced to a standard where he found great difficulty in coping with all necessary maintenance requirements. So I think there is not the slightest question that the deterioration and the lack of additional new stock to the Railway Department took place principally in the period from 1930-33 when, through no fault of the Government itself but through the financial policy forced upon it, it was unable to keep up the maintenance or make any additions to the railway working plant.

Re-sleeping is dealt with on page 496 of the Commissioner's report for 1933, where it says that there had been a still greater fall in the number of sleepers that were being put into the line compared with the very small number that were put in during the previous two years. We find that the number of sleepers used in ordinary maintenance for the year ended the 30th June, 1929, was 339,923 but in 1933 the number had dropped to 165,986. So from that we can easily realise how it was that the railways, particularly the permanent way, the rollingstock and the locomotives, got into such bad condition during those three years.

I want to quote briefly from the reports of the following years to show that an effort was made by Labour administration to rectify the position that had been accruing during all those years of starvation of the railways. In the Commissioner's report for 1934, 12 months after the Labour Government had taken over, we find that the expenditure on maintenance of Ways and Works had increased in that year by £58,939. We find on page 405 of the Commissioner's report for that year that he stated there were no serious complaints about the condition of the rollingstock, but again there was a warning issued by the Commissioner that principally because of the lack of mainten-

ance during the previous years and the increasing age of the locomotives something would have to be done to rectify the position. On page 407 of the same report, under the heading of "Belated Repairs," he says—

In May, 1933, my predecessor brought under notice the necessity for the overtaking of arrears in maintenance, which had accrued following on the postponement of all possible maintenance work for the three previous years, and details of such arrears were submitted to you, together with the approximate cost £509,000—which would have to be expended in the next four years to bring the asset up to the usual standard.

In the opinion of the Commissioner for Railways, the Railway Department's plant had been allowed to slip into such condition that it would take, even under the comparatively cheap costs operating at that time, £509,000 to get it back to what it was prior to the commencement of the starvation maintenance policy. That was the estimate: £509,000 in 1934. It will be seen that the Government of the day heeded the warning by the Commissioner of Railways and it placed £100,000 out of Consolidated Revenue at his disposal to endeavour to overcome the chaotic conditions in which the railway plant had been placed during those three years. In the 1935 report by the Commissioner of Railways we find that there had been a further increase in the amount of money provided for maintenance of Ways and Works. On page 319 of the report for that year, on the locomotive position then, he said—

One hundred and ninety-six locomotives passed through the Workshops, of which 116 received general overhauls (including 7 conversions), 5 were rebuilt, 29 received heavy repairs and 46 light repairs. The above figures include the general overhaul of an engine belonging to the State Saw Mills, and light repairs to an engine the property of Bunning Bros. Details of the repairs are shown in Appendix "E."

Seven engines were converted from saturated to superheated steam.

Improvements and modifications to various classes of engines were brought into operation during the year and these will make for more efficient working.

Broken frames in the older locomotives are still a matter of concern, five new frames having been fitted.

As previously reported, a large number of our existing engines are nearing the end of their useful life and their continuance in service does not make for economical working.

A number of replacements are urgently necessary at the present time, and further expenditure in this direction must be anticipated in the near future.

That was in 1935. It will be seen that 196 locomotives had passed through the workshops and the number of employees in the shops had increased considerably. So it is idle for the Government, for political purposes, to make the statement that it was during the 14 years when the Labour Government was in office—to which they refer so often—the railways were allowed to get into such a deplorable condition. The position regarding the wagon and brakevan stock showed a general improvement, but I shall not quote the figures. The position at the workshops indicated great activity, a greater number of men being employed, and the boiler position was receiving attention and was gradually being improved.

According to the Commissioner's report of 1938, the maintenance of Ways and Works had still further improved. In 1934, the amount expended was £552,000 and in 1935, £643,000, and a still further amount was provided to maintain the Ways and Works Branch. Thus, the amount was increased from £489,000, which was one of the low-expenditure years between 1930 and 1933, to £643,000 in 1938. In other words, there was an increase in the vicinity of 40 per cent. The locomotive stock is dealt with on page 843 of the report, as follows—

The number of stowed engines was reduced by reconditioning a "T" class for service, but the remaining 10 are in such a condition that the question of scrapping them cannot be much longer deferred.

The locomotives passing through the Workshops numbered 189 for the 12 months, of which 103 received general overhauls (including two conversions), 6 were rebuilt, 31 given heavy repairs and 49 received light repairs only. Conversions from saturated to superheated steam were carried out in five instances.

Steady progress was made with the construction of the new "P" class locomotives—the "River" class—and extremely satisfactory reports have been received in regard to those already in service. The new locomotives are being allotted names, in addition to numbers, the choice of names being confined to those prominent rivers of this State, and the three engines in commission on the 30th June were designated in order of issue the "Ashburton," "Avon" and "Blackwood."

This shows that, apart from an additional couple of hundred thousand pounds made available for the maintenance of Ways and Works, the then Labour Government had put in hand a programme for the construction of locomotives. In 1936 or 1937, the then Premier, Mr. Willecock, decided that £100,000 should be made available out of Consolidated Revenue annually towards making good some of the £509,000 which the Commissioner estimated would be necessary to put the railways in reasonable working condition, because of the three years of starvation of maintenance during 1930 to 1933. The position as regards the wagon and brakevan stock also showed a slight improvement.

The report of the Commissioner for 1939 shows that the maintenance of Ways and Works had increased from £489,000 in 1933 to £667,000 in that year. The condition of the locomotive stock is dealt with on page 622. It is stated that the construction of the balance of 10 "P" class engines was completed. They had been completed in 12 months, which is in striking contrast to the performance of the present Government which, in the last 12 months, has not built one locomotive at the Midland Junction Workshops. I shall suggest a possible reason for that presently. The report states—

Included in the total stock of 429 are 10 engines which have been stowed for some years. These have been closely inspected and it is beyond question that at least eight will not again be put into service. Steps are in hand for their demolition, and any suitable parts recovered will be set aside for further use. The condemned engines are nearly 40 years old and will be replaced by new 4-8-2 type class "S" locomotives, which have been designed in our drawing office.

During the 14 years of Labour administration, of which we have heard so much, these "S" class locomotives were completed at the Midland Junction Workshops in addition to quite a number of "DF" and "DD" engines for suburban use. Thus it is clear that there was a serious deterioration of maintenance and rollingstock during the years 1930 to 1933, and that an honest and commendable attempt was made, with considerable success, to remedy the position between 1933 and 1939.

But for the outbreak of war in 1939, I feel sure that the policy of maintaining the condition of rollingstock and the Ways and

Works Branch would have been continued. It has been said repeatedly—here, on the hustings and in every nook and corner—that the condition of the railways when handed over to the present Government in 1947 was deplorable. I say that there could be nothing further from the truth, and the reports of the Commissioner for 1946, 1947 and 1948 amply bear out my contention. The report for 1947 stated that the work actually performed was greater than in the preceding year. The train mileage run in 1946-47 was 6,727,963, which was the highest since the inception of railways in Western Australia.

If the locomotive stock was in such a deplorable condition, I put it to members, as reasonable people: How could a record mileage have been run in that year? It has to be admitted that during the war period, because of shortage of staff at the workshops—many of our skilled artisans were away with the Armed Forces—desirable additions had not been made to the stock, but it would have been an absolute impossibility for a record amount of work to be done and a record mileage to be run if the state of the rollingstock in the shape of freight and passenger vehicles had been as has been represented to us and to the people of the State. The ton mileage of goods and rollingstock in that year was the highest since 1939—365,778,450 ton miles. So not only was the train mileage a record in the year in which the present Government took over from the Labour Party, but there was also a record of freight which was the highest since 1939.

The Government knows what brought about the necessity to use road transport to such an extent for the conveyance of the wheat harvest to the coast in the last two years. In the years up to the cessation of hostilities, the transport of wheat from the hinterland was spread over the whole of the year, but because of the shortage of shipping and the fact that advantage had to be taken of shipping space when it was available, a policy of bringing the wheat down in a limited period was decided upon. The great bulk of it was shifted during a period of two or three months and consequently even if the locomotives had been in first-class order, they would have been unable to shift the wheat tonnage concentrated into two or three months and attend to the requirements of other sections of the com-

munity. That is mainly why the present Government found it necessary to use road transport to such an extent to bring wheat down to the coast.

I shall deal now with the latest report made available to us—that for 1948. The train mileage run in 1947-48—two years after the present Government took office—was the highest since the inception of railways in 1881. In the previous year, despite the claim by the Government that the condition of the rollingstock and permanent way was deplorable, the first year was a record up to that time, and the train mileage in the second year was the highest since the inception of railways in 1881. If anyone can tell me how a record in mileage could be established with locomotives in the deplorable condition that has been represented, then I know little or nothing about locomotive work.

Had the locomotives been in such a deplorable condition, one would have expected to find a tremendous drop in the mileage. The mileage figures, I believe, include those run by diesel coaches. These figures did not increase during those years because the diesel coaches were being used almost to their maximum capacity. The general complaint about the locomotive position made so frequently inside and outside the House by supporters of the Government is, therefore, totally unjustified.

The Premier: Not only by the Government but also by Commissioners of Railways.

Mr. STYANTS: The report of the Commissioner shows that in 1948 a record train mileage was run and that would not have been possible had not the locomotives been available.

The Premier: About 110 out of action at once!

Mr. STYANTS: There has always been a large number out of service. I want to deal with that aspect and with the altered policy of not building any at Midland Junction and not repairing others that should never have been taken out of the service.

The Minister for Works: What is the equipment at Midland Junction like, in your view? Is it still fit for the building of engines?

Mr. STYANTS: Engines are not being built there at all.

The Minister for Works: I know. Is the equipment fit for that purpose?

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. The equipment is capable of building the same number of locomotives now as pre-war. It would still be possible, if there were concentration on the building of new locomotives, to construct the average 10 to 14 that were constructed pre-war.

The Premier: What about the repairing of existing locomotives?

Mr. STYANTS: What happened was that a lot of engines were put out of commission—and this is in the report of the Commissioner; it is not hearsay—and it was decided not to go on with construction work but to repair many of the engines declared to be unfit for use and put them back into service again.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4 p.m.

Mr. Brady called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. STYANTS: I was saying that I did not think the general complaint against the condition of locomotives and the number of locomotives was at all justified because of the fact that record train mileages had been run by those locomotives in the two years immediately after this Government took office. In the 1948 report of the Commissioner of Railways appears this observation:—

The burden placed on locomotive stock during the war was accentuated by inadequate maintenance due to priority being given to the manufacture of munitions, etc.

That undoubtedly was the case. Probably 50 per cent. of our mechanics were away with the Armed Forces and priorities were given to many things. I think that the railway management of that time did a truly wonderful job in maintaining the service to the public which it did. To be able, in those conditions, to run a train mileage which was a record since the inception of the railways in 1881 was indeed a very meritorious performance. I want now to deal with the statement which has been issued, of comparative results of working for the last five years, and to connect this with the proposal to spend something over £1,000,000 on new locomotives.

The Premier: How much?

Mr. STYANTS: Something over £1,000,000 for 35 "PR" locomotives.

The Minister for Works: And "W" locomotives.

Mr. STYANTS: I think the Minister will find that the cost of 35 "PR" locomotives will absorb over £1,000,000. Those manufactured in the Midland Junction Workshops pre-war cost something over £9,000 each and those imported cost slightly over £10,000. But I think the Premier, or the Minister for Railways, informed us that the locomotives to be built will cost something over £30,000 each. So I am dealing with the question of the 35 "PR" engines.

The Premier: The 35 "PR" locomotives!

Mr. STYANTS: Yes.

The Premier: At a total estimated cost of £1,164,584.

Mr. STYANTS: That is my recollection of it.

The Premier: Then there is the purchase of 40 "W" locomotives at a cost of £1,561,700.

Mr. STYANTS: It gives an idea of the enormous increase in the cost of locomotive manufacture, when we realise that it has gone from £10,000 to over £30,000. I will deal now with certain items set out in this five-year comparison of railway results to show that nearly 50 per cent. of the goods hauled by the railways have been hauled at a loss for every ton shifted, and that the greater the tonnage shifted, the greater is the loss incurred by the department. The Government will have to give consideration to making this large group of people, who are all in affluent circumstances, pay at least the cost of hauling their produce.

I will deal first with the figures set out in Appendix "H" of this report of comparative results. For hay, straw and chaff it is shown that in 1948-49 the total tonnage hauled was 31,371 tons, the average haul was about 150 miles and the total earnings were £31,500. The earnings per ton mile were 1.60d. We have the report of the Commissioner of Railways that the average cost of haulage on the railways is 3.06d. per ton mile, and the average earnings per ton mile for all classes of commodities is 2.15d. The cost, as I have stated, is 3.06d. and, though there might be a slight varia-

tion in cost for certain commodities, owing to their compactness, I am taking the figures shown by the Commissioner himself for the purposes of this comparison. According to the figures in the Commissioner's report, I find that 31,371 tons of hay, straw and chaff were hauled at a cost of £59,000, the loss being £27,449 and the loss per ton on a 150-mile haul was 17s. 6d. That shows that the loss on every ton of hay, straw or chaff hauled was 17s. 6d. over an average haul of 150 miles. Hay, straw and chaff amounted to only 1.15 per cent. of the total goods hauled by the railways.

I come next to wheat, which constituted a much greater percentage of the total freight carried. Wheat carried amounted to 18.63 per cent. of the total freight hauled by the railways. Appendix "H" of the report shows that 509,786 tons of wheat were carried, the average haul being 136.93 miles. The total earnings were £373,795 and the earnings per ton mile 1.29d. From that we can imagine the enormous loss incurred by the department in hauling wheat. For each ton of wheat hauled an average distance of 146 miles, the Railway Department made a loss of 19s. The earnings from shifting the 509,000 odd tons of wheat were £373,795 and the cost of earning that amount was £859,000, the loss being £485,000 last year. In spite of that, we find payable passenger trains from Kalgoorlie—in the shape of the main express—being curtailed, according to the advice the Chief Traffic Manager's office gave me, in order to provide locomotive power to bring down the 288,000 tons of wheat which at that time still remained in the country districts of the State.

I will deal now with the alarming position existing with regard to fertilisers. Quoting again from Appendix "H" of the report I find that 233,815 tons of fertilisers were hauled last year, the average haul being 146.07 miles. The total earnings were £83,865 and the earnings per mile 59d. per ton, the cost being 3.06d. Therefore, fertilisers, which constituted 8.54 per cent. of the total tonnage hauled by our railways showed a loss, on the average haul of 146 miles, of 29s. 4d. per ton. The earnings were £83,865, and to earn that sum the cost was £422,865. Therefore, the loss on the haulage of fertilisers was £339,000.

With regard to grain and special grain class other than wheat, chaff, etc., we find that the tonnage hauled was 195,046, the average distance of haul being 129.76 miles. The total earnings were £147,637 and the earnings per mile 1.40d., as against a general cost of haulage of 3.06d. Again, if we make further calculations we find that with respect to the grain and special grain class other than wheat, chaff, etc., which is 7.13 per cent. of the total average haulage by the railways, the system loses 17s. 4d. per ton on every ton hauled the average distance of 136 miles. Thus it would appear that to earn £147,637 it cost £317,637, showing a total loss of £170,000 on the deal.

Another item is closely related to those I have discussed and it comes under the heading of "Miscellaneous, including minerals and ores." I find that the bulk of the haulage under this heading consists of pyrites from Norseman, which commodity is used in the manufacture of fertilisers. Therefore, when I refer to minerals and ores, I do not want members to think that the item refers mainly to ore hauled to State batteries or elsewhere for the purposes of prospectors and miners. We find that under this heading 226,985 tons were hauled, the average haul being 167 miles, and on this undertaking the earnings amounted to £140,710, or .89d. per ton per mile. Is it any wonder that the railways are losing £2,500,000? In the aggregate the percentages for these high class items of the description I have mentioned, show that the haulage involved is 44.74 per cent. or almost half of the total haulage of the railways. We find that the earnings amounted to £736,000 and the expenditure involved £2,126,000, disclosing a loss of £1,349,000.

In the circumstances, members can readily understand why the railways have lost the vast amount disclosed in the financial returns. This is something to which any Government must necessarily give serious consideration. The freight rates imposed on the commodities I have mentioned were fixed when the primary producers were having a particularly bad time and had to accept a price for their products that was by no means payable. In fact, in those days it was difficult to get buyers for their produce at any price at all. During the last few years the primary producers have been on

the crest of the wave of prosperity and have enjoyed famine prices for their products. While I would not be a strong advocate of their being made to pay over and above what it is actually costing the State today, I do not think it would be unreasonable to compel them to pay at least the cost of haulage of goods in respect of which they have been receiving such high prices. If we compare freight rates with those coming under the heading of "C" class, comprising the principal commodities used in an average household, we will find what injustice is being done.

Under the heading of "C" class goods, the average earning per ton mile is almost 4d., which, of course, pays and provides the railways with a profit, which is in contradistinction to the .59 per ton mile received on account of fertilisers, 1.9d. for wheat and 1.6d. for hay, straw and chaff. I certainly think there is a case to be made out if the taxpayers of the State are to find in the immediate future something like £2,300,000 for the purpose of securing new locomotives and other rollingstock to haul goods in order to provide the primary producers with a better service than they have enjoyed in the past. There is also a good case to be made out for requesting the primary producers to pay at least the cost price in connection with those services.

The Minister for Housing: The cost of hauling super. and pyrites is less than the cost of hauling small goods.

Mr. STYANTS: If the Minister had been present to hear the commencement of my comparison he would have heard me state that when I made out these estimates I took the average earnings as set out by the Commissioner of Railways at 2.15d. and the cost 3.06d. per ton mile, but that in connection with certain commodities, because of their compactness, the cost of haulage would be less than 3.06d. I pointed out that nevertheless it would not be reduced to anything like the amount which would be represented by the cost of the haulage of those commodities. On the five principal commodities affecting primary production, the railways are losing £1,349,000 on haulage and the percentage haulage of those five classes to the total haulage of the department is 43.74.

I would like to have discussed some other features in connection with the railway management, but there is one to which I shall revert. I have in mind the number of engines withdrawn from traffic three or four years ago. The Commissioner has now decided—I do not refer to the present Commissioner, but am dealing with the Commissioner's report for last year—to endeavour to put a large number of those locomotives back on the road and to discontinue the policy of building new engines. In arriving at that determination he was possibly influenced by the fact that in the near future we shall be taking delivery of locomotives ordered three years ago and also some "W" class engines for light railway haulage early next year. From answers to questions asked by myself and other members during the course of the present session, I find that during the year before last at the Midland Junction Workshops five locomotives were built while last year not one was constructed, although the capacity of the plant there is the same now as it was pre-war. On the other hand, according to the Commissioner's statement, the department has decided to recondition a number of the locomotives that were withdrawn from traffic during the last three or four years.

Thus the question presents itself whether those locomotives were in such a condition that they should have been taken off traffic, in which case a vast amount of capital represented in those engines may have been lying idle on back roads at Midland Junction for that extended period. It is either that or it is a question of whether they were in such a condition that they should have been taken off traffic seeing that they can now be reconditioned and put back on traffic. The very fact that these engines are now capable of being reconditioned and brought to a state that will enable them to be put back on traffic, with an anticipated reasonable performance in service, is an indication either that the original policy was wrong and the department should have gone on building new locomotives, or that it was entirely wrong to have taken those engines off the track years ago if they can now be reconditioned and put back on traffic.

✓The Minister for Works: Have you a personal view as to which is the right way.

Mr. STYANTS: No. I have not the information nor the materials at my disposal to enable me to form a reasoned opinion on the problem. But it must be one or the other.

The Minister for Works: One thing is certain. Reconditioning them would serve to retard the programme and delay the building of new locomotives.

Mr. STYANTS: But there should be a happy medium. Before the war and particularly during the disastrous three years from 1930 to 1933 when locomotives were allowed to deteriorate to such a poor condition, when Ways and Works maintenance, re-sleeping and everything else associated with the railways was allowed to lapse into a deplorable condition, it was not possible to build a number of locomotives.

From 1933 to 1939 they built 14 or 15 "PP" class engines, five "S" class and a number of other class engines. Thus it would have then been possible, as I think it is possible now, to have adopted a happy medium by which a certain number of locomotives could have been constructed and a certain number reconditioned. We have to admit—I have drawn the attention of members to the fact on many occasions during the last 10 or 12 years—that the average economic life of a locomotive is 30 years. Many of our engines are over 50 years of age and most of them are over 30 years.

Recognising the span of the economically workable life of an engine, we have to agree that our locomotives are getting too old; and that is why it might have been a better proposition to build new engines than to endeavour to patch up the existing ones. Nevertheless the department has decided on its policy. With the policy of regeneration and the arrival of a number of new locomotives, we should improve the position in the future so that our ordinary haulage requirements and tractive power should be fairly adequately met, particularly in view of the fact that, as will be seen if members refer to the Commissioner's reports for 1946-47 and 1947-48, record mileages were run by the existing rolling-stock compared with what was recorded for any year from the inception of the department in 1881.

If the locomotives were in such a state that they could run record train mileages, then it is hard to imagine they were in the

deplorable condition claimed by the present Government when it took office. If they are in that condition, then it is due, in my humble opinion, to lack of proper maintenance during the past two years. Possibly, too, the department has been running the wheels off the engines to cover the additional train mileage required, without the necessary maintenance being undertaken.

MR. MURRAY (Bunbury) [4.30]: Some remarks I shall have to pass could well have been made on the debate on the General Estimates, but owing to the verbal marathons that took place when these were discussed, I refrained from adding my contribution. My view is that progress in Western Australia will be governed by the availability of electrical and water supply, plus population. This Government, as well as previous Governments, can be commended in some degree for the work that has been done to supply water and electricity. It is pleasing to note the amount set aside in the Loan Estimates for the coming year for these purposes. My regret is that no provision seems to be made for an examination of proposals for hydro-electric power. I know the view is generally taken that hydro-electric power cannot be developed economically unless there are snow-clad hills and large areas of water to call on. But in Western Australia we have two waterways of which some examination should be made and I think the expense would be justified. One is the Murray River which flows through Pinjarra; the other is Ellis Creek, a waterway which flows through Nannup. Ellis Creek could serve a double purpose; it could be used for providing electricity and also for irrigation.

The Murray River presents a bigger problem, as much of the water that enters it from feeder streams from the lake country is salt. That problem would have to be examined before a decision was reached as to whether the water, after being used for the generation of electricity, could be made available for irrigation. However, if that difficulty could be overcome, then the area between Waroona and Serpentine could be irrigated very economically. Unfortunately, the Premier is not in his place at the moment, but I point out there is a large

area of fertile land which could be developed and which would add handsomely to the State's economy.

Members who have watched the expansion of irrigation in the South-West will readily appreciate just what this additional area would mean to our overall economy. At this stage, may I interpose that I have cause for concern over the fact that the State has not received a just share of the added value of the holdings in those areas? Amenities and public utilities have been provided at huge capital cost, but landholders are prone to accept these as a due, without recognising the State's right to a share in the unearned increment.

If projects such as these are to be undertaken by the State then those who benefit by them must be prepared to pay a reasonable amount for them. In case it might be assumed that I am merely suggesting the farmer should pay for water and so on, that is not so, as many other facilities are provided throughout the State and people who receive the benefit of the resultant unearned increment should undoubtedly pay for these privileges. Recently, I asked a question of the Minister for Forests, as follows:—

What was the area and purchase price of land North-East of Pindalup purchased from Hedges' estate to maintain production at the Holyoake State Mill?

That land was sold by the State to Mr. Hedges, before the Forests Act was passed, at about 4s. 2d. an acre. Members can work out for themselves what the total price was. The area in question is 5,454 acres and the price which the Government paid for it was £79,083, roughly, £14 6s. an acre. There is some justification probably for the Government again taking over the land and making it a State forest, which I presume has been done, because it is part of a large tract of good jarrah country lying in the centre of the jarrah belt of that part of the State. It is questionable whether the same action should not be taken in other areas of the South-West. This is not the only area which Mr. Hedges purchased for about 4s. 2d. per acre. Over a long period of years he drew royalties amounting to an enormous sum; but he was never compelled to fence one acre of the land. This is an instance which proves that it is not only the farmer who benefits from the unearned increment on account of facilities provided by the State.

I notice that the Government has given some indication in the Loan Estimates that it realises the Bunbury-Perth line is very much overloaded. From the Premier's statement, it would appear that it is the Government's intention to overcome the difficulty by partial duplication, plus electrification of the system. From discussions I have had with railway people I think that the difficulty will to a large degree be overcome by remedying some of the faults between Bunbury and Perth. But we have a greater problem than the haulage between Perth and Bunbury. We have the problem of the haulage of our coal supplies, if we develop the coalmines at Collie as we visualise today. There is the South Fremantle power station, the Geraldton power scheme, which expects to use coal if it does not use oil, and there is the supply for the whole of the Goldfields.

A company has been set up which expects to take 300,000 tons of coal a year for use on the Goldfields. I would say that the South Fremantle power scheme will require another 300,000 tons. What Geraldton expects to take I do not know, but those huge quantities of coal cannot be hauled over the present line between Collie and Perth. Apparently no consideration has been given to the question of shipping coal from Bunbury direct to South Fremantle for the power house there, and to Esperance for the Goldfields. It seems natural to me that it would be better to utilise the short run to Bunbury for the carriage of this huge quantity of coal than to try to haul it over the Perth-Bunbury line, and thence to the Goldfields. Of course, the Goldfields supply would go via Collie-Narrogin, but that line is also congested and there is the difficulty in connection with the supply of trucks.

If the coal were shipped, it would mean supplying tipping coal trucks, which are comparatively easy to handle. It would also mean a shuttle service between Bunbury and Collie. Something will have to be done to increase the traffic on that line; it may be necessary to lay a new line altogether via Wellington Mills to Bunbury. Such a line would be justified if it were intended to ship coal to the various destinations I have mentioned, but otherwise it would not be justified. If it be suggested that the Railway Commissioners have too much on

their hands at present in dealing with the rehabilitation of the present system to permit of their giving consideration to new lines, I still maintain that the coal required for the South Fremantle power station, the Goldfields and Geraldton could be shipped from Bunbury and, if necessary, a road could be constructed along the route I have suggested for road haulage and in preparation for the railway line at some future date.

In regard to the congestion on the Bunbury-Perth line and in Bunbury itself, as well as between Picton and Bunbury, I would recommend the Minister for Works to send, with his compliments, a copy of Col. Tydeman's report to the Minister for Railways and the three new Commissioners, although probably he had better defer doing so until the diagrams are attached to it. It is unfortunate that the report on harbour development does not contain diagrams, because laymen would experience some difficulty in understanding to what the Colonel refers. He is scathing in his criticism of the shunting facilities provided in that area.

Any comment of mine on these Loan Estimates would be incomplete unless I mentioned the Bunbury Harbour development scheme. I regret that so much delay occurred in making available Col. Tydeman's report not only to the House but also to those persons who wish to comment on it. I have sighted it and therefore can comment on it to some degree; but it is unfair for members to be given a report such as that today and then be expected to comment on it at once. The report is of some length.

The Minister for Works: The state of affairs at the Government Printing Works has been the cause of the delay.

Mr. MURRAY: I am sorry I cannot agree with the Minister. I again stress that the report does not contain the diagrams, as these are essential to a complete understanding of certain sections of the report.

The Minister for Works: In future issues the diagrams will of course be supplied.

Mr. MURRAY: I am particularly pleased about one part of the report and I would say that the member for Northam would also be pleased with it. Col. Tydeman's report is a complete vindication of

Mr. Stephenson Young's plan for the initial stages of the Bunbury Harbour scheme. In only one small way has Col. Tydeman departed from Mr. Stephenson Young's plan, and that is with respect to the position of the dam in the estuary, whether it should be at Mill Point or nearer to the harbour. On the whole, I think Stephenson Young can be proud that Tydeman, who has had worldwide experience, and who examined this problem in all its ramifications, has backed him up in every shape and form. It is pleasing to note that, according to the Tydeman report, the secondary stage can, if industrial progress warrants it, be developed immediately, in connection with the work that has already been done. While Tydeman mentioned such industries as charcoal-iron, chemicals and the like, I regret that he made no mention of Brasserts.

I am also sorry that the Minister did not say, when he was dealing with Brasserts the other night, that, while it is not definite that that firm has chosen Bunbury as the site of its future operations if it decides to come to Western Australia, it is well known that any heavy industry must have a port base, and that Bunbury was the port which Brasserts examined. Brasserts' idea was to use Collie coal.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Did not they inspect Albany?

Mr. MURRAY: Not to my knowledge. Getting back to the Tydeman report and its late arrival, the Minister and the Government should realise that the Bunbury people are still unconvinced as to what the Government is doing in this connection. Harbour development is one of the most unspectacular things that any Government can undertake. That applies more to Bunbury than to other places, because the main job there at the moment is to dump stone into the sea. Once it goes in, there is very little to be seen by anybody. Many weeks of tireless effort can be spent in trying to fill up the sea. So, the sooner due publicity is given to the Tydeman report, and people know what the Government intends to do, the better for the Government and the State generally.

In connection with education, I see that a considerable amount of money is to be spent on buildings, etc. I regretted, long before I came into Parliament, that edu-

cation was more or less a Cinderella portfolio in all Governments. There was never any money to spend on education over and above what was needed for teachers' salaries. Fortunately, this position was changed when the previous Government chose the member for North-East Fremantle to be Minister for Education. But I would say that even he suffered through a shortage of money. A Minister cannot do much unless he has some finance. Now that the portfolio has been handed to a senior Minister, I hope the State can look forward to education taking its rightful place in the Government's spending. It is one of our most important portfolios, and it is good to see that it is in the hands of a senior Minister. There is, however, a lot of leeway to be made up and many difficulties to be faced. There will be competition between housing, public works generally and education. While there is leeway to be made up, we can feel some sense of satisfaction in the progress that has been made so far. Housing is also covered in the Loan Estimates.

In congratulating the Government on the appointment of a full-time chairman of the Housing Commission, I must say it is long delayed. Still, better late than never. The appointment of a full-time chairman will not of itself overcome the present serious position. Unless there is full realisation by local authorities—they are the bugbears in many cases—sawmillers, brick manufacturers, contractors, building trades employees, and employers generally, of this period of national emergency, the position will not improve. Unless these people get down to a proper approach to the question, I fail to see how any Government can overcome the problem. In my view, one of the greatest tragedies of the housing position is the lack of humanity which emanates from the State Housing Commission itself. Whether it is due to the fact that all members of the State Housing Commission—I do not mean just the seven members of the Commission but all the employees, too—are comfortably housed and therefore have no housing problem and so do not know what it is to suffer this way, I am aware that they do not know when a hardship case is a hardship and when it is not. If a person who lives for two years in a camp on the foreshore, with a wife

and four children in a 10 x 12 tent is not a hardship case, then I do not know what is.

Coupled with the question of housing is that of decentralisation. I am satisfied that both the Government and the Opposition are sincere in their suggestion that decentralisation is the only policy under which Western Australia can progress. But what I do say, in regard to the present Government, is that it has failed to give any lead to the Housing Commission in this respect. In Bunbury, where industrial development is expected, and from where the State Electricity Commission is fanning out, and the harbour works are in progress, no provision is made to house the people concerned in those undertakings. The State Housing Commission certainly started with a programme to provide houses for the local people, but there is no special provision for the added development which could come with industrial expansion. I saw where the Housing Commission was commencing to build houses in Albany for the married people employed in connection with the trawlers. It is also known that at Collie a person can get a permit just on application. There is a live house-building programme at that centre. Some 35 houses are being provided for the Ricena works which are not yet established. But in a place like Bunbury, where it is expected that huge development will take place, nothing has been done to provide housing to meet that development.

I asked some questions last week, and the answers bore out a statement I had made several times. The Premier and the Minister will say that more houses are being built in Bunbury than in any other country town. That may be so with respect to Commonwealth-State rental homes, but those homes are not the whole problem. For every such house built in Bunbury, I would say that at least two private permits have been lost. If nothing further is done by this Government to provide for proposed industrial development, we shall find that in places like Bunbury the needs of the local people will be badly retarded by the influx of key personnel. In my view, the Housing Commission should adopt a far more courageous policy for country districts. We shall otherwise find them embarrassed because of an ever-

growing rush to the metropolitan area, which is not good for the State, and it will not solve our problem.

We have heard a lot during this session, both in the House and outside—and there is no doubt this question has some bearing on the State expenditure position and on loan expenditure—of the 40-hour week. Personally, I am rather tired—and I think numbers of others are, too—of hearing the continual harping on the 40-hour week. We must realise that whatever has been said about the introduction of the 40-hour week being premature, it has been written into our economy by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court and any groaning or complaining about it will not help the position one iota. There are many things in our cost of living today that have little or no relation to the vexed problem of the 40-hour week. Take the cost of cattle and sheep on the hoof! The cost of those two animals on the hoof has very little bearing on the 40-hour week.

The other evening—about a fortnight ago—the member for North-East Fremantle suggested increasing the royalty on timber production in Western Australia; and the Minister agreed it should be done. I am with the member for North-East Fremantle in the view that there is room for an increase in royalties as long as we realise the effect it will have on all classes of buildings. Just an all-round increase in royalties will not help the position which was then under discussion—that was in connection with over-sea export of timber. If the royalty is increased by 5s. it will mean an extra 15s. per load in the square for housebuilding and the like. Timber has already been increased in price and that increase was blamed on to the 40-hour week. I wonder, if an increase in royalties is granted, whether that increased price will be blamed on the 40-hour week too. I noticed in answer to a question in another place, that Whittaker's have obtained a timber concession in the Toodyay district. The royalty is fixed at £1 1s. 3d. per load, cutting jarrah and wandoo. Unless that timber is of exceptionally good quality, before an axe is put into the tree it will cost the consumers and the housebuilders £3 per load in the square.

I believe that the time has come for a full examination into the cause of the vicious spiral of rising costs. A fact-finding

examination is necessary so that the Government and the public can be satisfied that there is some real justification for our present ever-rising price structure. Many things affect the rising costs and until some examination of the position is made and a public statement issued I do not think anybody will be satisfied that the present high prices, in many cases, are justified.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Apparently the Government is quite satisfied with the position.

Mr. MURRAY: Members will appreciate that this large-scale works programme, visualised by the Loan expenditure, cannot successfully be undertaken without increased production. Towards that end, I suggest that the Government, in conjunction with private enterprise, should examine the question of profit-sharing, incentive payments and the system of co-partnership in industry with a view to encouraging increased production. Unless something is done along those lines we will not be able successfully to combat the ever-growing tendency towards socialisation.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Don't you believe in socialisation?

Mr. MURRAY: No, I do not. The employers of Australia have a big slice of the responsibility in this matter. Sound employer and employee relationships can only come about by mutual trust and mutual good-fellowship when all men take the trouble to understand one another. Only when foremen and managers are chosen on their ability to handle their fellow human beings, will we reach the road to increased production.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [5.5]: The estimated Loan expenditure for the current financial year is more than £12,000,000. That is certainly a very large sum of money for a State like Western Australia, with its small population, to spend in one financial year. Last year the total expenditure was only £3,818,000. It will be seen therefore that it is proposed to spend this financial year nearly four times as much Loan money as the Government was able to expend last year. It is well known that the ability of the Government to expend Loan money is governed to a very large extent by the availability of labour and materials. The labour position

has been improving, fairly slowly, over the last twelve months, mainly due to the policy of the Commonwealth Government, supported by State Governments, in bringing to Australia migrants from other countries of the world. I read in "The West Australian" about two weeks ago, where a spokesman for the Commonwealth Employment Service in this State said that unskilled labour was now practically unlimited.

The Premier: Do you think that is so?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have not found it to be so.

The Premier: Neither have I.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: And, I doubt very much whether it is so. However, the statement was made publicly. I do not know whether the Premier, or any of his Ministers, have checked the position with the Commonwealth Employment Service in Perth. If they have not done so, then I suggest that they have an early check made because we do not want a situation to develop in Western Australia where the volume of unskilled labour forthcoming is greater than the existing number of jobs for such labour, and greater than the number of jobs likely to be made available from year to year. If such a position were allowed to develop it would not only be bad for the migrants, and any dependents they might have—and it would also give Australia, including this State, a very bad advertisement in the countries from which those people came—but it would create a difficult situation for our own unskilled workers who might find the competition for unskilled jobs so severe as to render many of them unemployed.

The Premier: I do not think we have reached that position yet; not by a long way.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not think so either, but an official statement was given to and published in "The West Australian" newspaper only 10 days ago. The statement claimed that the supply of unskilled labour now available in this State was practically unlimited. I am anxious that the Premier himself, or through one of his Ministers, should have an early check made in connection with that statement.

The Minister for Works: Under whose authority was the announcement made?

The Premier: The Commonwealth.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I understand that the Premier considers much more loan money will be expended this financial year than was actually expended during the last financial year, the reason being that the Government will have to meet very heavy overseas commitments covering large scale purchases being made abroad in connection with several State undertakings, particularly the Railway Department and the State Electricity Commission. In addition, this State will, during this financial year, purchase a great deal of other goods from other countries, including Japan. Some of the goods to be purchased from other countries of the world are those which before the war were manufactured in sufficient quantity within Australia to meet the full Australian demands. In my opinion it is extremely unfortunate that Australian industries, which met demands in full before the war, are not in a position today to do the same thing.

In his speech the member for Bunbury referred to the vexed discussions which arise as a result of the introduction and operation, within Australia, of the 40-hour week. He told us that there is a tendency on the part of many public men, and others, to blame every disability and every economic ill existing within Australia on to the operation of the 40-hour week. I think there is a lot in the contention he put forward. Nevertheless, there is room for serious thought and consideration in the situation which has arisen in Australia since the war. Western Australia is not the only State that is importing on a large scale goods from other countries. On examination I think it would be found that all Australian States, and the Commonwealth Government, are doing the same thing. To the extent to which goods are being imported into Australia—where before the war those goods were manufactured in full and supplied within Australia—the Australian industries are suffering and our ability to absorb migrants into profitable production is also suffering.

I think we are suffering in production in Australian industries as a result of a legacy which remains from the war period. During that period the cost-plus system of production was introduced into many industries in Australia and the Commonwealth Government purchased great quantities of

war requirements on that basis. Every member probably knows that not every industrialist in Australia played the game towards Australia during the period when that system was operating. I know, of my own experience, that several manufacturers took undue advantage of the situation and made a welter of the fact that it was easy to obtain money from the Commonwealth Government by the cost-plus system of production by "plussing-up" every conceivable item of cost which they were capable of inventing.

I think the example set by unpatriotic and bad employers during those years had a bad effect on employees in factories and workshops. They saw clearly what was going on. They knew that the Commonwealth Government and the people of Australia were being exploited and workers developed an outlook which was a very bad one, taking the long-range view, and some of them at any rate followed the lead of the employers to whom I have referred. After the war ended all too many employers developed a practice of trying to avoid the paying of as much taxation as they would have had to pay had they worked their industries to the fullest extent necessary to meet the demands for the products which their industries were manufacturing.

Here, too, every member of the Committee might know from experience of industries which slackened off production deliberately during the last three months or so of each financial year. That was done not because there were no orders for the goods available, but because the manufacturers concerned were anxious to keep down to the lowest possible figure the amount of taxation which they would be called upon to pay to the Commonwealth Government. That was going slow in the worst sense of the term. It was equally as bad as any action on the part of an industrialist or worker to do less than a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. It was as bad as the staging of a strike by workers in industry, because it had the same detrimental effect upon the nation's production and it kept in existence for a much longer period than was necessary an acute shortage of essential goods required by Governments and by the community generally within Australia.

The workers employed in the industries where these manufacturers did those things knew why production was being retarded

by their employers, and it was only natural that the workers should adopt an outlook and a state of mind which were detrimental, to some extent, to the rate of production of the commodities under review. When those things take place they make an extremely deep impression upon the minds of those who see them and upon the minds of those associated with them. Those impressions are so deep as to cause them to remain for a very long period. I think it cannot be emphasised too much that wealth production can come only from human effort. Scientists and inventors have developed marvellous machines with the passing of the years and those machines have greatly aided the production of goods, but no scientist or inventor has yet been able to create or bring into existence a machine which will make it unnecessary for human beings to work any more.

There is still great necessity for human labour and people generally can only expect to have and enjoy a reasonable standard of living if the required amount of human effort is put into the production of those goods necessary to give people that standard. As time goes on it is my hope that all those employers who have gone slow with production in recent years for one reason or another, and all workers who might have done the same, will come to realise that that sort of action and that sort of policy have a boomerang effect upon industry generally. I think we are suffering some of the boomerang effect today by the fact that Governments in Australia are now compelled to import from other countries of the world goods which the industries of Australia are capable of producing, and should in fact be producing at this time in greater quantities than is the case.

[Mr. Hill took the Chair.]

The Premier: Is not the shortage of material the main reason there? Take steel products, for instance! Shortage of labour has been, of course, a factor too.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think that shortage of labour has been the greatest single factor because scarcity of labour on the coalfields has been responsible for coal production not being higher. In addition, of course, there have been the industrial troubles on the New South Wales coalfields, and they have played a major part in reducing coal production and thus making it

more difficult for Australian industries to step up the volume of their production. However, I have been dealing briefly with the special aspect of the loss of production in Australian industries, which could have been avoided if the employers concerned had not adopted a very selfish policy of trying to benefit themselves financially irrespective of what the result was to Governments and the community generally.

The Premier: What industries would they be?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There are a number of them. I could, if the Premier desired, mention some manufacturers in this city of Perth, who, in recent years, have slackened off production towards the end of each financial year to avoid the larger amount of taxation to the Commonwealth which they would have had to pay if their production had been kept at full pressure during the whole of the financial year. I am sure, too, the Premier knows some of them. It applies, not only to manufacturers, but also to a number of farmers and pastoralists. It might even apply to at least one Minister on the Treasury bench. When I have heard of these instances of wealthy people slackening off production in the industries which they control to avoid payment of taxation to the Commonwealth, I have come to the conclusion that they have an extremely narrow outlook on Australia as a whole, because by their actions they have placed their own selfish financial position above and beyond the importance of the welfare of Australia as a whole.

I hope that with the passing of time, and with the passing of not very much more of it, Australian industries will reach a greater level of production and will be able to supply more essential requirements of Governments and the community in Australia. It is only by increasing production in that way that we can add to our internal wealth and out of that give people generally a better standard of living. It is only by that way, too, that we can hope profitably to absorb the migrants already here and the additional migrants who will be coming here from year to year. It would be a most regrettable and criminal thing if we were to find in a year or two that the net result of bringing large numbers of migrants to Australia was to establish an unemployed army because industries generally were not able profitably to absorb these people.

I notice an amount of £3,534,529 is provided in these Loan Estimates for the extension of electricity supplies within the State. That is an extremely large sum of money. But I think every penny of it is justified and will be needed if we are to bring our electric power undertakings to the stage that everyone of us would desire to see them reach. It is unfortunate that the machinery which will have to be produced for these undertakings, as with most other State undertakings, is now exceptionally high in price compared with the pre-war level. I think people in the metropolitan area have now come to accept somewhat philosophically the frequent breakdowns which are occurring at the East Perth power house. If they are not, they have not yet done anything very serious to the Minister for Electricity who seems to be accepting the position in an extremely peaceful way. I think there would be some justification for the setting up of a Royal Commission of experts to investigate what has happened at East Perth during the last nine months or a longer period if deemed wise. Break-downs this year have been so frequent as not only to give headaches to ordinary consumers but also to deal very serious blows at industries depending on the East Perth power house for the supply of electrical energy.

The Premier: We are trying to obtain some expert advice outside the State. Do not you think that would serve as well as a Royal Commission?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Premier can get the right sort of expert who is prepared to investigate the whole matter thoroughly, it might meet the situation. During the last Christmas and New Year holidays, the 25,000 kilowatt generator was taken down and subjected to a complete overhaul. When the generator came under load again, everyone expected that it would function satisfactorily for at least 12 months. However, it functioned for only a few days and again broke down completely.

The Minister for Works: That is the uncertainty which we have always to look for.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not prepared to accept the Minister's statement. It was shown clearly that the work of complete overhaul had not been satisfactorily carried out. If the Minister will cast his

mind back to that period, he will recall that he and I had a controversy in "The West Australian" newspaper regarding the matter.

The Minister for Works: Give me the month and year of the breakdown. I want to be sure. We have had so many of them.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Had the Minister listened with any degree of care to what I said a few minutes ago he would have heard my statement that the overhaul took place during the last Christmas and New Year holidays, so obviously I am referring to the period immediately following the completion of that overhaul, which would be in January of this year. The truth about the failure of the authorities properly to carry out that overhaul has never been made public, but first-hand information has been made available to a number of men by employees at the power station.

The Premier: Are they all experts? Are they capable of giving an opinion on such a matter?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: They are capable of knowing when an overhaul or repair job has been properly carried out, and there is no doubt at all that the overhaul during the last Christmas and New Year holidays was carried out in an incomplete, faulty and dangerous fashion. I place the blame for this upon the shoulders of the Government and the responsible authorities. The overhaul was carried out without there being present during the period of overhaul anyone possessed of sufficient expert knowledge and experience to ensure that the job would be fully and expertly done.

The Premier: What about the general manager? He is regarded as one of the most expert men in Australia.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not wish to discuss the qualifications of the present general manager, but I say quite frankly that he is not capable of expertly and thoroughly carrying out the type of overhaul which that 25,000 kilowatt generator was subjected to during the last Christmas and New Year holidays. As a matter of fact, very few experts in Australia are capable of supervising a vital job of that sort. If I remember rightly, Mr. Taylor, during the period he was general manager at the power house always engaged the services of an ex-

pert from the Eastern States to be present to supervise the carrying out of an overhaul of that description.

The Premier: An expert was brought from the Eastern States.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: When?

The Premier: An expert winder was brought over during the Christmas breakdown.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No, the Premier is quite wrong. An expert from Sydney representing Parsons & Co. Ltd. was brought to Perth after the machine had been put back on load and had again broken down.

Mr. Reynolds: After the damage had been done.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There have been breakdowns following the repairs made to the generator on that occasion.

The Minister for Works: What you refer to as a breakdown was not a breakdown. That was taking advantage of the holiday period to make an overhaul. It was no breakdown at all.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It was, and that makes far worse the failure of the Government and the responsible authorities' to get an expert from the Eastern States to supervise the overhaul and ensure that it was carried out in a complete and expert fashion. That overhaul, because it was not expertly done, was responsible for causing within a few days a very serious breakdown in the generator.

The Premier: Why do you say it was not expertly done?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Because there was no-one at the power house at any stage during the whole period of the overhaul sufficiently expert in a practical sense safely to supervise the work.

The Minister for Works: Whose judgment is that? Yours or someone else's. You are making the statement, but that does not necessarily make it correct.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think it is proven completely by the fact that the generator had not been back on load more than a day or so when it completely broke down.

The Minister for Works: That is certainly not fool-proof.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Well, perhaps I can reason with the Deputy Chairman more successfully than with the Minister for Works. If you, Sir, took your motorcar to a garage in Albany for a complete overhaul and two or three weeks afterwards received possession of the car and on your way home to the farm the engine broke down, would not you think it complete proof that the garage people had failed to do the job properly? Most decidedly that is the conclusion at which you would arrive.

Mr. Yates: There might have been another fault in the generator.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If a machine receives a complete overhaul, it should be in a condition to operate successfully for quite a long time. I know there is a possibility of sheer accident causing some damage, but there was no accident at the power house when the generator broke down soon after being put back on load.

Mr. Bovell: Is it not the whole position that the machine has been run threadbare?

Opposition Members: No, no!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Not at all; the thing that is threadbare is the contention put forward by the member for Sussex.

The Premier: The hon. member knows that the Government was told by the chairman of the Electricity Commission that these breakdowns might occur at any time owing to the state of the machinery. What other advice could be taken?

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is what people will be saying about the Premier presently.

Mr. Triat: What is wrong with Mr. Taylor?

The Premier: The machine is old and has been working incessantly and, because of that, it is worn threadbare.

The Minister for Works: It is working every day and you cannot say that of other machines.

Mr. Kelly: What about the engines at the pumping stations? They are working every day.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think that if the Premier investigated the breakdown that occurred in January, he would find that it was due to inexpert work in the rewinding during the overhaul.

The Minister for Works: Who is going to determine that?

Mr. Bovell: The age of an aircraft is calculated by the flying hours and the age of this machine by its working hours.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Premier inquired, he would find that some inexcusable mistakes were made during the overhaul—wires of different weights being put into the generator, thus throwing the machine out of balance. I have yet to be convinced that the Premier does not know the truth of the matter.

The Premier: No?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If he does not know, then the sooner he makes close inquiry and ascertains the truth, the better it will be.

The Premier: I am listening to you with great interest.

The Minister for Lands: What is wrong with the expert tradesmen at the power house if they did not know that the wiring was not right?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I understand that the work of rewinding these machines is so intensely expert as to be outside the scope of the normal tradesman and is a task the doing of which and certainly the supervision of which should be the responsibility of the most expert man in Australia.

The Premier: We have had him over here.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Premier inquired into my statement, I think he would find it to be true.

The Premier: We have had the most expert winder in Australia over here.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I say he was only brought from Sydney after the overhaul had been carried out and after the machine had been put back on load and had completely broken down—when all the damage had been done.

The Premier: And now it has broken down again!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am going to have something to say about that, too. It is possibly significant that the present breakdown in the 25,000 kilowatt generator occurred only a few days after the winter restrictions on the use of electric current had been removed.

The Minister for Lands: Then we got that cold snap. That put the load back.

Mr. Triat: Cold snap!

The Minister for Lands: We did! You know it!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Minister for Lands: It was the coldest night we had had for many years. It was published in the paper. And back went the load!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Northam will proceed.

Mr. May: Whose speech is this?

The Minister for Lands: I am only trying to help the hon. member.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister's speech helps me tremendously.

The Minister for Lands: I am glad of that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Because it proves beyond doubt that those in control of the power station were not giving to the 25,000 kilowatt generator machine the protection it should have been getting.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They left the rug off it on that cold night, I suppose!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The interjection by the Minister for Lands indicates that there is no restriction of any kind on the load which the generator is expected to carry. Surely commonsense and ordinary safety would dictate that there should be some limit to the maximum load placed on the machine! If the machine has been worked hard since the time it was installed in 1938—and undoubtedly it has been—there is an extra responsibility upon those in charge of its operation to ensure that it shall not be overloaded.

The Minister for Works: Did it ever break down before this Government came into power? Did it break down several times, once, or never?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It did not break down often.

The Minister for Works: It became progressively weaker. That is obvious.

The Minister for Education: It broke down three times in 11 months.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If it is getting progressively worse, that is an additional reason why it should be protected in regard to the maximum load it is called upon to carry.

The Minister for Works: Tell me how you would protect it when full reliance has to be placed always upon that one generator!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It could have been protected recently in regard to its maximum load by not removing the winter restrictions. Did the maintenance of those restrictions impose any hardship on anybody? If they did not impose any insufferable hardship during the winter months, then certainly they would not be imposing any hardship now.

The Minister for Works: Apparently you do not know your public!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yet the authorities, two or three weeks ago, decided to remove the winter restrictions when the winter had ended and immediately to impose upon the generator a heavier load which it seems to me, had the effect of overloading the machine again and causing it to break down.

The Minister for Works: Your judgment on that is not necessarily final.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not suggesting it is.

The Minister for Works: No; but you are suggesting that those in charge are inefficient and did the wrong thing when they eased the restrictions.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am suggesting that some protection should be given to the generator in respect of the load that it shall be called upon to carry.

The Minister for Works: When there is no type of protection you can suggest! It has always been treated that way. Full reliance has been placed upon it. Inevitably it must be so.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Inevitably it must not be so. It need not be so.

The Minister for Works: Our judgments differ.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is not a matter of judgment but commonsense. If a machine is capable of carrying only a certain maximum load, that should be the

maximum, and the absolute maximum. When the load it is being called upon to carry rises above that maximum point, there should be restrictions somewhere to ensure that the machine is not overloaded.

Mr. Triat: It is sinking in slowly!

The Minister for Works: You cannot service industry on those lines, either.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is far preferable, and much more profitable to all concerned, to service some industry continuously with power, as far as is possible, than to try to serve more of it by overloading the machine to such an extent that it breaks down and there is no power for any industry at all.

The Minister for Works: If it is on half or threequarter power there is still a liability of its breaking down.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There is less liability of its breaking down when it is carrying a light load rather than a heavy one.

The Minister for Works: It is mathematical to a degree; but still, there is the risk.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am trying to suggest to the Government that it should give serious consideration to the question of laying down the absolute maximum load which the East Perth power house should be called upon to carry, with the idea of trying to safeguard to the limit the power generator there against any risk of a breakdown. There is nothing complicated about that suggestion. It is quite practicable and one which should be acted upon, and which must or certainly should be acted on immediately.

The Attorney General: You would have to take the advice of experts, would you not?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would like to know what the experts were thinking about recently when they decided to remove the winter restrictions on the use of power! Obviously the abolition of those restrictions must have immediately placed a heavier load on the power house. Yet the Premier told us, and the Minister for Works told us, and the member for Sussex told us—and it is true, too—that the 25,000 kilowatt generator has, since 1938, had to do more than a machine of that

kind should be called upon to do. The fact that it has been called upon to do more than it should have is only an additional reason for giving it a reasonable measure of protection now in respect of the maximum load which it shall be required at any time to carry.

I am not trying to have an argument or a row with the Government on this matter; but I am suggesting that it would be wise seriously to consider the question of laying down the absolute maximum load which the 25,000 kilowatt generator shall be called upon to carry at any time.

The Minister for Works: If the protection is necessary now, it would equally have been necessary in the last three years when another Government was in power and another general manager was in charge. But the protection was not then given.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think that if the Minister for Works checks up the load which has been upon the power house, he will find that the demand for electric power has increased very substantially in recent years. In addition, as the machine is getting older, it necessarily needs more nursing and protection. That surely is plain, ordinary commonsense.

The Minister for Works: But it was prone to quite a number of breakdowns.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am quite aware that there were breakdowns before the present Government took office, and I am also aware that when there were serious breakdowns and when overhauls were required, the previous general manager, Mr. Taylor, always took the precaution of bringing to Perth to supervise the overhaul a top expert from Eastern Australia.

The Minister for Housing: I have an idea there is a limit to the draw upon that machine.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There is a physical limit to what the machine can carry.

The Minister for Housing: I think there is an estimated limit of the extent to which they can place power on the machine with safety, which limit has been observed.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Apparently that limit is too high.

The Minister for Housing: That may turn out to be so as a result of experience.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Neither we nor the public have been told the precise reason for the recent breakdown. The only logical conclusion to which we can come is that the removal of the winter restrictions on the use of electricity suddenly increased the load on the machine, with the result that it could not carry that heavier load and broke down.

The Minister for Education: It broke down previously immediately after the winter restrictions were imposed and when it had a lesser load, according to you.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: When was that?

The Minister for Education: Last April or May.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That breakdown was not very serious, if I remember rightly.

The Minister for Education: It lasted 10 days—longer than this one will last, I understand.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We know all about these estimates as to how long things will last!

The Minister for Education: The previous breakdown occurred after the winter restrictions had been imposed.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Would the Deputy Premier tell us now what the load was in May when the generator broke down?

The Minister for Works: Could you have told us straight away when you were Minister and there was a breakdown? Could you have told us without having looked into the matter?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No.

The Minister for Works: Neither can we!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The interjection of the Deputy Premier seemed to suggest the breakdown in May last was not caused by virtue of the fact that the generator was carrying a heavy load. He suggested it broke down when it was carrying a lighter load.

The Minister for Education: Presumably that would be so, if your argument is correct.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Not necessarily. The Minister for Education: Because it is now carrying a heavier load.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not think that is at all logical.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Minister for Lands said that there was a very cold snap.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not think that the Deputy Premier is a bit logical in his contention.

The Minister for Education: I could return the compliment and we would be about square.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The load upon the power house is naturally increased substantially because of winter conditions. It might very well be that when the machine broke down in May, despite the fact that winter restrictions had then been imposed, it was carrying a much heavier load than in the previous six months. So, unless we have figures showing the actual load being carried, we are not able to reach a satisfactory conclusion on that point. We have had an interesting discussion about the East Perth power house, and electricity supplies generally.

[*Mr. Perkins resumed the Chair.*]

The Minister for Works: I wonder what we have learned from it?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We have not learned very much from the Minister for Works about the vital questions upon which we require information.

The Minister for Works: Nor from his predecessor.

The Premier: The main thing is that we are seeking the expert advice you have advocated.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The main thing is that the Premier says expert advice is now always obtained when it is thought necessary. Another important point is that the Government should investigate closely the advisability of stipulating an absolute maximum load for this generator to carry.

Mr. Triat: That should be done while the expert is here.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I hope the South-West power scheme will be pushed ahead with all possible speed. There are the limiting factors of shortage of suitable labour and of the necessary equipment and materials but, despite those disabilities, I am

sure the Government will go ahead with that scheme as fast as possible. The same remarks apply to the partly completed new power station at South Fremantle. I do not know whether the Government has given serious consideration to a suggestion I have made more than once in the last two years, which is that the Government ought seriously to reconsider the extent of the proposed comprehensive water supply scheme for country districts. The original proposal of the previous Government was one to serve 6,000,000 acres of agricultural land in the Great Southern districts, and 6,000,000 acres of agricultural country in the north-eastern agricultural areas. That scheme was not pursued by the present Government which, however, accepted a scheme only half as large; that recommended by a Commonwealth committee which came to this State some three years ago to investigate the larger scheme.

The Minister for Works: But we laid the foundation for an enlargement of the scheme that was accepted.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We had an interesting admission from the member for Beverley the other evening. He said many of the farmers who condemned the original comprehensive scheme and those responsible for putting it forward, were today convinced that in the long run it would have been much better than the amended scheme now being implemented by the present Government. It is true that the last two seasons and the present one have been comparatively dry in the agricultural areas, with the result that many farmers who three years ago thought their dams would always be full, or at least that they would never be dry, have had the painful experience, during the last two winters and the present one, of finding that rain has not fallen heavily enough to put much water in the dams. They have therefore been given furiously to think—I sincerely hope it is true, as the member for Beverley suggested the other evening—that the dams on their own properties are not as reliable a system for obtaining large quantities of water as they previously thought. I have always argued that there is no water supply that can bear comparison with a permanent supply made available by a Government scheme, with the catchment area and reservoirs in an assured heavy-rainfall area.

I hope the present Government, either now or in the very near future, will endeavour to get the Commonwealth Government to co-operate in approving of the original scheme. My interest in this matter is twofold. I am anxious, first of all, that the State should decide to go on with the original comprehensive scheme and thus re-ticulate 6,000,000 to 7,000,000 additional acres of agricultural country compared with the present amended scheme, and I am anxious also that we should get the Commonwealth Government to meet half the cost of the original scheme. That scheme was estimated to cost at least £10,000,000. If the Commonwealth Government could have been prevailed upon to meet half of that cost it would have meant that Western Australia would have had a £10,000,000 water supply scheme for £5,000,000.

Under the amended scheme which is being put into operation the estimated cost is approximately £5,000,000 of which the Commonwealth Government is supplying £2,500,000. If the time comes, in five, six, eight or 10 years, when the State Government thinks it is wise and necessary to double the existing scheme it might be found extremely difficult to get the Commonwealth of that day to come in on a £ for £ basis to extend the scheme as it will then exist. I feel that the last two years or so, this year and possibly next year was and will be the period when the Commonwealth Government will have plenty of money available with which to assist the State in works of this character. We would be foolish to think that we would be able to get a £ for £ payment from the Commonwealth Government for an extension of this scheme in any old year in the future.

No-one can safely look ahead say for five or six years and say that in 1955 the Commonwealth Government will have sufficient money available to help a State like Western Australia to the extent of £2,500,000 to extend the existing water supply scheme. We might then be in a period of tight money just as we are at present in a period of comparatively easy money. Therefore, I think now is the time—the previous part of this year and last year and the year before that was the time—when we should be doing everything within our power to prevail upon the Commonwealth to finance big public works undertakings in Western Australia in co-operation with the State Government.

It will be extremely unfortunate for Western Australia if time is allowed to skip by without an approach of this kind being made and the State is not able of itself to finance a large extension to this scheme which might be found absolutely necessary in five or six years. In my opinion, when this main pipeline reaches from Wellington Dam to Narrogin, Wagin and the other Great Southern towns, farmers will soon be anxious to have their properties connected to the scheme, and when a few farmers do that and reap the benefits from it all the neighbouring farmers will, in turn, be falling over themselves to have their properties linked up in order to ensure that for all time they will have an absolutely assured supply of water for their stock and all their other requirements. So I again suggest to the Government that it should seriously reconsider its attitude in this matter and prepare a new case for submission to the Commonwealth to double the size of the present proposed comprehensive water supply scheme.

There were some other matters I had intended to discuss. One of them was the tremendous damage being done to our main roads and, for all I know, to some of the district roads by the large motor trucks which are carting wheat from country sidings to Fremantle. I do not know whether the Main Roads Department has made any attempt to measure the extent of the damage in terms of pounds, shillings and pence. If it has I would be extremely pleased to have some information from the Minister for Works as to the actual amount of damage which has been done by those wheat trucks to the main roads. The damage is appalling and is becoming worse every day. In fact, it would not be exaggerating very much to say that this traffic is wrecking the main roads and is reducing them to a shocking condition, so much so that in some places today they are absolutely dangerous.

Mr. Brady: Particularly around Guildford.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: So I hope that anything that can be done to reduce that traffic on the roads will be done, and that whatever can be done by the Main Roads Department to get the main roads back into reasonable and also in a safe condition will be done.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [7.30]: I have a few comments to offer on the Loan Estimates. During the debate on the Revenue Estimates, I advocated, amongst other things, that attention be directed to providing water supplies in certain parts of the rural areas by harnessing rock catchments. The Loan Estimates furnish an excellent opportunity to mention the urgency for better facilities in this respect. Great benefit could be derived from undertaking such work, because very little, other than manpower and cement, would be required to place at the disposal of many farmers the water from rock catchments in suitable areas.

I have in mind the fact that the total amount of the Loan Estimates constitutes a record and that because of material shortages, it will be most difficult for the Government to expend the amount of money provided for. A considerable amount of Loan money should be earmarked for the purpose of boring for water in rural areas. The Government policy should provide for a virile approach to the water problem in many districts.

The Premier: Do you mean that we ought to assist farmers to bore for water?

Mr. KELLY: I intend to unfold my ideas as to what the Government should do as regards a boring policy, which I mentioned on the Revenue Estimates and am now topping up. Farmers should be encouraged to help themselves in the matter of boring. We have a number of boring plants owned by the Public Works Department that are hired out to various local governing bodies at a rental that is not very high but nevertheless at a rental that considering the value of the plant, is considerably higher than it should be. Further, the plants are incomplete and may be described as being of rather poor types.

For instance, neither an engine nor any form of bellows or forge is supplied with these plants and few farmers have a suitable engine which, at a moment's notice, can be made available and attached to a boring plant. Those who have suitable engines find it very difficult to attach them to the type of plant that the department is supplying to local authorities. Then again, very few farmers have anything in the way of a suitable forge. Most of them have a forge capable of use for sharpening a pick

or a crowbar or doing other small jobs required on the farm, but when one considers that the boring equipment supplied by the Government and hired to local authorities is capable of boring up to a size of six inches, a major job is entailed in keeping the bits sharpened. These bits frequently require sharpening, and farmers find that, after having left their farm work to undertake the boring, their operations are impeded because of blunt tools.

To get them sharpened necessitates in many instances a long journey to the nearest township or blacksmith's shop. Sometimes two trips and on occasion even three trips have had to be made, totalling as much as 120 miles. When they take a bit to the local blacksmith to be sharpened, they often find that he has quite a number of other jobs on hand and naturally those coming later are set aside and treated on a priority basis. Thus farmers frequently find that, after having taken bits or other portions of the plant requiring attention long distances, they have to make a second or even a third trip before they are available again.

From the point of view of the department, the plants now being loaned to local authorities are quite unsuitable for the type of work they are expected to do. They are certainly incomplete through lack of engine and forge, as I have mentioned, and I claim that with a relatively small outlay these plants could be brought up to a point of efficiency, which would enhance their value to the farmers several hundred per cent.

These Estimates also present a further opportunity to discuss a matter which was touched upon briefly by the member for Beverley a few evenings ago. The hon. member castigated the Government very severely, and particularly some members of it, for their apparent reluctance to implement the findings of the Honorary Royal Commission on the Vermin Act. Members of the present Government, who were then sitting in Opposition, were very loud and insistent in their criticism of the Labour Government of the day for its handling of the vermin problem. The Premier and the Deputy Premier had many uncomplimentary remarks to pass about the Labour Government's approach to this question. The Premier is smiling now, but it is well known to members that both he and the

Minister for Education were members of the honorary Royal Commission and had much to say on the subject. In fact, many suggestions were put into the mouths of witnesses during the taking of the evidence. I think some 200 witnesses were examined over a period of eight months.

The members of the commission proudly boasted that the evidence consisted of 2,074 pages. The commission was definite that the recommendations which it submitted should be implemented by the Government of the day. Today there is a completely changed picture, and I feel it is rather a slight on the commission, which was very thorough and painstaking, that effect has not been given by the Government to its reasonable recommendations. I cannot understand the attitude adopted by the present Government, particularly with its rural leanings, in not implementing at least some of the recommendations which its members were so insistent the previous Government should adopt.

I desire to deal with one other matter and the Loan Estimates afford a useful opportunity. It is the protection of our native flora. Very little mention has been made of it in the past, but it is not yet too late for serious consideration to be given to it. Spring revives in many people a sense of responsibility for our native flora. From a conversation I had with the Minister for Forests I know he is aware of the seriousness of the position that has arisen in regard to the future of our wildflowers. We hear a few protests from time to time by the public deploring the destruction that is taking place and increasing very rapidly, as is, of course, our population. To back up that public opinion, small though it be, we should deal thoroughly with the matter here.

The urge to gather wildflowers is very great, nor is it confined to the young. Many people can look back over the years with pleasure to the many occasions when they have wandered into our beautiful bush and perhaps stolen a few flowers. It really is stealing. I well remember that in 1905, when our population was under 260,000, making excursions into various parts adjacent to the metropolitan area, bent on picking wildflowers. At that time there were many more varieties of wildflowers than we have today. Some are not now existent, while others are hardly so.

The Premier: Such as everlastings.

Mr. KELLY: That is the first on my memory sheet.

The Premier: I think sheep have helped to eat them out.

Mr. KELLY: Undoubtedly, everlastings are a fine stock food. I think the Premier is aware that everlastings form a large part of the diet of many stock in the North-West, where such flowers are abundant in good seasons.

Mr. Hegney: And on the Murchison.

Mr. KELLY: Yes, and in the Gascoyne district as well. If I may divert from my sequence in regard to flora, it is remarkable how in the Gascoyne in a good season the everlastings grow in paddocks which have been spelling. For some distance there will be one type only, pink; then, as if cut off by a knife, one reaches a district where there are only white everlastings, and then in another district only yellow. In 1914, and even as late as 1918, one could witness in good seasons in the Gascoyne area large tracts of these wildflowers. My experiences in my early days are undoubtedly similar to those of many thousands of other people who have picked wildflowers. Picking a few is not harmful so long as the plant itself is not destroyed.

A person who picks a few wildflowers, takes them home and puts them in a vase does very little harm to our bushland. The trouble arises when the plant is pulled up by the roots and destroyed for all time. Such excesses must be carefully guarded against. To police the Act governing wildflowers I quite appreciate would need an army of inspectors, if only the abuses to which I have referred were stopped. A more effective method is to institute a vigorous campaign for public support, coupled with an appeal to schoolchildren through the teaching staffs, in an effort to combat wildflower destruction.

Other aids come to my mind which if they would not completely overcome the difficulty would at least help to lessen it. Publicity should be given to the matter in the Press, particularly during the season when the flowers are abundant, and again by short snappy appeals over the air. They, too, would have a very beneficial effect in helping to reduce these depredations. Finally, business people might

be induced to use some form of sticker on the backs of envelopes, and this also would have a bearing on minimising wildflower destruction. All these methods would be quite effective. They would tend to capture public support, which is what we have to aim for in order to quell this menace to our bushland. We must get the public to be conscious of the great amount of harm that is being done in this direction each year.

We know that the Forests Department has been very active in its policy of fire prevention, and that is playing a very important part in conserving much of our natural flora. Other factors have been responsible for the destruction of our flora, such as the progress of civilisation. There has been an intense building programme since the war ended, and new suburbs are springing up. Every new house erected on the outskirts of the metropolitan area is depriving this State of a certain amount of its floral wealth. That cannot be avoided; but I intend to suggest, before resuming my seat, what I consider should be done in the matter so far as these new suburbs are concerned.

Not only our wildflowers, but also our flowering shrubs in Western Australia are recognised as a very rich heritage that we must preserve; and, even if it is going to cost the State a large amount of money to make certain that this heritage is preserved, it is up to this Parliament to make a decision along those lines. This State contains a high percentage of unique plants. People have come from all parts of the world and, seeing for the first time some of our native shrubs and our attractive wildflowers, have been impressed by the fact that they have found nothing like them anywhere else. The fame of our wildflowers is international and they prove an immense attraction to tourists during the Spring. I have met many people who, entering the State for the first time, have inquired whether they have arrived in the wildflower period, and whether they can be taken to any part of the State where our flowers can be seen. On some occasions it has been possible to grant their request, but at other times there have been very few flowers in bloom.

There are many logical reasons for the very careful preservation of our native flora and the expenditure of quite a large sum

of money for that purpose. Recently the leader of a British delegation of scientists which toured Western Australia—I refer to Sir Edward Salsbury, Director of the Botanic Gardens at Kew, Surrey, England—advocated the establishment of a botanical garden or the reservation of a fairly wide stretch of land for the preservation of our native flora. The State Gardens Board had been investigating this possibility for 18 months and during that period inspected several holdings which it thought would be suitable for the purpose. It approached the Perth City Council for a tract of land at Raebold Hill and also one at Floreat Park. I am very sorry to learn that the board's request was refused. I do not know any reason why that refusal should have been so definite, and it is regrettable that the council did not see fit to agree to the suggestion.

I think the Government should give the fullest assistance to the State Gardens Board in attaining its end. If negotiations for land at Raebold Hill fail, surely there is some other attractive land equally suitable and available. We are fortunate in having King's Park and National Park. Those two reserves will forever perpetuate the memory of the men or Governments responsible for setting them aside for public use. It is not hard to visualise that much of our bushland west of the Darling Range and adjacent to existing suburbs will disappear at a very rapid rate. One suburb sprang up very recently in my own area. I cannot remember its name, but it is just over from Mt. Henry.

The Minister for Housing: Are you referring to Manning Park?

Mr. KELLY: I think that is its name. For years that had been a sanctuary where small boys and many others were able to gather fine specimens of our flora; but it has now practically disappeared. When 1949 ends, so too will vanish the floral attractions of that district. With the progress of building, much land containing an abundance of flora and adjacent to the metropolitan area, will be cleared; and I think, before it is too late, that a special squad of men should be employed gathering seed and transplanting shrubs of all descriptions to King's Park and National Park, if no other natural sanctuary is set aside. The time is fast slipping away when it will be possible to obtain many of the species that today exist.

Quite a number of different types of wild-flowers exist only on the sandy area between the coast and the clay country around Gosnells and other places on that line. The area of flowers is not very great, and the building rate is likely to increase annually. The blocks that are being cleared in the expectation of dwellings being erected upon them in the next ten years or so are very numerous. I think the Minister told us a little while ago that there were somewhere near 18,000 applications for homes. Many people who have bought land on which to erect homes will do a good deal of clearing. So it is important that some attempt be made to have a botanical garden with a lot of the plants that are fast dying out. They should be gathered, particularly at the beginning of next season, when quite young and easily discernible and easy to transplant. If no other site is decided on in the meantime, they should be shifted to King's Park and National Park.

Some country areas could come within this category because they too can boast of having specimens of shrubs and wildflowers unknown not only in other parts of the State but in other parts of the Commonwealth and, I am told, in most parts of the world. Those plants should be protected and preserved. Two road boards which have in the last few months shown themselves through the Press, as being conscious of the position, are Denmark and Kellerberrin. There may be others, but I have not come across them in my reading of the daily papers.

A control board, to work in conjunction with the Forests Department and the State Gardens Board, should be appointed at an early date so that it could get well under way in time for transplanting—towards the end of next winter. That board, with full powers and liberal finance, should be charged with permanent responsibility, because this work should go on for all time if our native flora is to be preserved. It could plan for the future and so protect our native flora. I do commend to the Premier, as well as to the Minister for Forests, the desire of many people to have our wonderful bush-land preserved in some form—if not in its natural state, then by the means I have suggested. I feel that if he carries out that idea he will earn a name in history that will be perpetuated in the same manner as that of the founders of King's Park and National Park.

MR. HILL (Albany) [8.4]: I have taken out a few figures for 1891, and compared them with the present year. The population of this State in the first year of responsible government was 47,000 compared with 530,000 this year. The estimated expenditure was £439,165 as against £23,509,873. The loan expenditure was £1,336,000. Today it is £12,242,247. The loan expenditure per head was £28 10s. as against £23. Many of my friends, and political enemies, have criticised me for advocating the development of the port of Albany. If we go back to Sir John Forrest's first loan expenditure, we find that in that year he voted £150,000 for the port of Fremantle. I feel safe in saying that no expenditure in this State has paid such high dividends as that on the port of Fremantle. The amount spent up to date is about £3,500,000, and, after paying interest, sinking fund and maintenance, the Fremantle Harbour Trust has paid something like three and a half million pounds into Consolidated Revenue.

It would be impossible to say how much the development of the harbour at Fremantle has meant to the growth of Perth and Fremantle, and our agricultural areas. While on the subject of Fremantle, I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating Colonel Tydeman upon his report. I do not think it would be presumptuous for me to pass a few remarks on it. What I like is that Colonel Tydeman proposes, first of all, to modernise the existing berths so that the maximum possible use can be made of them. He then proposes to develop the port progressively, utilising every asset there. Another thing I like about his proposals is that they are not hard and fast, but can be adjusted from time to time as may be necessary.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you like the idea of the up-river extension?

Mr. HILL: I do.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not.

Mr. HILL: I doubt if it would be possible to go further. I would like to give a few figures to show what a wonderful asset we have in the port of Albany. I do not know how many berths could be provided in Princess Royal Harbour—it might be 200. The cost per berth, according to Colonel Tydeman, is about £550,000. At Fremantle, the cost of modernising the

existing berths is £430,000 per berth; for the up-river extensions, 11 berths, £1,130,000 per berth; the seaward extension north, for 10 berths, £1,453,000 per berth; and the seaward extension south, 41 berths, £800,000 per berth. So members can see what a wonderful asset we have at our end of the State. The late Sir David J. Owen, one of the greatest authorities on ports in the world, in his address to the Institute of Transport in 1930 said—

A port is not in itself a means of conveyance of transport, but only a facility for the actual instruments of transport, and ports, in order to be effective, must adapt themselves to the changing means of transport.

It is also interesting to note that in 1900, 769 ships called at Western Australia, and in 1948 only 541. Those figures show what a revolution has taken place in our sea transport. The reduction, all over the world, in the number of ships, has brought about a demand for fewer ports. Western Australia has been taken to task by the Grants Commission for its unscientific and unco-ordinated policy of port development. It stressed the fact that a multiplicity of ports is uneconomical. Every shipping man who gave evidence before the Outports Royal Commission stressed the same point. We are overstocked with ports in Western Australia and with a population of 530,000 are trying to carry about the same number of ports as South Africa, with its population of 11,000,000. One of the few outports that the shipping companies are anxious to see developed is Albany. Eight or nine years ago I paid a visit to the Eastern States. I met the Speaker of the South Australian Parliament—Sir Robert Nicholls—and he greeted me with the words, "My word, you have a great country at the back of Albany. You should be carrying a population of 2,000,000."

On my return to Western Australia I picked up a map of this State on which the Blackwood River was shown as a very black line. My mind followed that line out to the rabbit-proof fence. That line is about half way between Fremantle and Albany and the area bounded by it and the rabbit-proof fence is about the same size as Victoria and there, in about the same position on that area as Melbourne occupies on the map of Victoria, is our finest natural harbour, Albany. The Premier has in his office a much larger map than that. I con-

gratulate him and his Government on the fact that this is the first Government for many years that has set out to give Albany a fair deal. Perhaps members opposite can tell us why Labour Governments have always been out to damn the port of Albany.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is not right.

Mr. HILL: It is right. I remember the day, in 1910, when Lord Kitchener came down to Albany with Sir John Forrest. Sir John said to one of my friends, "You have been neglected here, but there is a change coming." The change, unfortunately for the British Empire, was a change in the Commonwealth Government. There was a swing to Labour in 1910 and that was responsible for Albany today being the most neglected port in the Empire. I know for a fact that Admiral Sir Reginald Henderson wanted Albany for a naval base, and Sir John Forrest always advocated its development along those lines, but the work was abandoned after the expenditure of over £1,000,000. I can remember when I was sitting on the other side of the House—

Mr. Hegney: Do not worry; you will be here again soon.

Mr. HILL: —and a high military officer told me that the Imperial Defence Council in 1928 wanted Albany as a naval port. He showed me where it was intended to mount the guns. Unfortunately there was another swing of the political pendulum and Albany was pushed on one side so that Fremantle could take its place. I well remember the grim days when all that stood between Western Australia and the Japanese was a handful of submarines based on Albany. All the motorboats there at that time were moored in the river just opposite my property and my son was placed in charge of them with orders to destroy them if certain things took place. A naval officer came out to inspect them and, when I said that Albany could easily have been fortified and made a naval base, he said, "It is not what could be here, but what should be here. A naval base here today would be worth millions to us."

I know the Admiralty wanted to develop Albany for a big offensive to the north, but I also know what happened when something like £3,000,000 was wasted at Cockburn Sound. When Admiral Fraser came

here he took one look at it and said, "I will not use that place. One ship sunk in the channel and the position would be hopeless." When in Melbourne he said that he could not understand why they had tried to make Fremantle a naval base while Albany was available. It is interesting to recall that the last naval operation in this State was based on Albany. The ammunition that was stored in this State, for the big offensive that never developed, was later railed to Albany, where it was taken out in an L.S.T. and dumped in the ocean.

Let us consider Albany as an industrial and commercial centre! One can go to the office of the Public Works Department and see there plans of what would have been a beautiful harbour scheme, prepared by the then Chief Engineer, Mr. John Thompson. In 1911 Albany again backed the wrong horse and helped to put the Scaddan-Johnson Government in office. Instead of getting that Thompson scheme, of which the Tyde-man scheme is only an elaboration, the idea was scrapped and three years later we were given the tin-pot jetty that we have at Albany today.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Did you not get Scaddan to represent Albany

Mr. HILL: That was later.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: When he changed his coat?

Mr. HILL: I did not take much interest in politics in those days, and in any case that does not alter the fact that the Scaddan-Johnson Government stabbed Albany in the back. I pay tribute to Mr. Alec Thomson, who in 1911 advocated a reclamation scheme for Albany. The late W. D. Johnson asked him, "What right have you to put your opinions against those of my engineers?" In 1924 Albany again backed the wrong horse. At that time I was on a land development committee that was financed by Sir James Mitchell. I was present when Mr. Troy came to Albany to see the work that was being done. Then they stopped granting any funds and the committee had to go out of existence. The Mitchell Government in 1924 had elaborate plans for developing our hinterland. It proposed the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook Railway, the Manjimup-Mt. Barker Railway and the Pemberton-Denmark Railway.

The Collier Government built the railway from Pemberton to Northcliffe and that from Denmark to Nornalup, but left a gap in the middle. In 1926 Parliament passed a Bill to provide for the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway and the Manjimup-Mt. Barker railway, but those two lines have never been constructed. From 1924 to 1946 the total expenditure on Albany harbour was £175. Albany has suffered disadvantages as a port, from the railway point of view, through absence of back loading. One can read in "The West Australian" of the 25th April, 1929, where the then Minister for Railways, Mr. Willcock, announced that the Government had asked the super. companies to build a super. works at Bunbury, and today we are paying for the blunder. In making that blunder Mr. Willcock overlooked one fact—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you not think the super. works should be at Bunbury?

Mr. HILL: That blunder has cost the State £1,000,000 if it has cost one penny. Anyone can see close on 300 empty trucks going to the South-West on almost any day of the week. I came to Perth on a goods train last night and it was hauling empty trucks as far as Cranbrook. A few years ago we were also to have bulk-handling of wheat at Albany and the then Premier had a committee to inquire into the question. It would have cost £12,000 to put in a temporary bulk-handling installation, but the recommendations of that committee were never implemented. I have been told by railway men that even today it would pay to take the wheat to Albany, in spite of the fact that there is no back loading, owing to the quicker turn-round of trucks as compared with Bunbury. What did the Wise Government propose to do three years ago? The member for Northam came to Albany with drawings of a conglomeration of wharves and tried to tell us that that would make a port. No-one was consulted about the scheme.

Had the Government, at that time, asked me to give my opinion I could have shown the weaknesses of the proposal. When the change of Government took place the first thing I had to do was to see that the State's finest harbour was not spoiled with an unsuitable harbour scheme. The faults of the Hawke harbour scheme are that it did not provide sufficient facilities necessary to en-

able the berthing accommodation to be used effectively. The proposed Hawke scheme would not have made any improvements to the existing accommodation. The present work under construction at Albany is to enable the existing wharves to be used effectively. It is proposed to use the existing jetties as long as possible and those jetties can handle certain classes of cargo as effectively as most costly wharves.

The Hawke harbour scheme was unsuitable because at a port there must be provision for road and rail transport, commerce and industry. The only road approach in that scheme was down York-street, along Stirling-terrace, and up Brunswick-road, which is less than 30ft. wide, then over a hill 140ft. high and down the existing road to Deep-water Jetty. When I drew the attention of the people of Albany to the fact, there was a great outcry. The A.L.P. contacted the then Minister for Works—the member for Northam—and he graciously agreed that a road should be put along the foreshore. The first thing that strikes one on looking at the Tydeman report is the wonderful road approaches and I think I may claim the credit for it. It is a continuation of King-road down by the petrol tanks and then along the foreshore. When the road is completed all the heavy traffic to the port of Albany will completely bypass the town.

The railway yards as proposed in the Hawke scheme were hopelessly inadequate. I was talking to the late Mr. S. J. Hood and I asked him what he thought of the railway facilities in the Hawke harbour scheme. Mr. Hood was the Chief Civil Engineer and he told me he had never seen the details of the scheme. I told him that it was proposed there should be ten berths but no addition to the railway yards.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Would you mind explaining how it is that the scheme of the Labour Government was the Minister's scheme but the scheme of this Government is the engineer's scheme?

Mr. HILL: It was prepared under the direction of the then Minister for Works. Mr. Hood told me that in order effectively to use the existing jetties it would be necessary to double the present railway yards and that it was necessary to have further accommodation down at the half mile. Then there was also need for further room for commerce and industry. In the Hawke harbour scheme—I call it the Hawke scheme

as the member for Northam was the Minister at the time—there was provision for ten berths and 65 acres of reclamation. Col. Tydeman, in his report on Fremantle, stressed the fact that we wanted at least twelve acres per berth and in the first instalment of the Tydeman scheme there is provision for two berths and 65 acres for reclamation. After a further stage of the scheme there are to be 500 acres of reclamation for 22 berths.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why did the mail boats stop going there?

Mr. HILL: It is inevitable because Fremantle is the capital port, but Albany holds the same position on the western part of Australia that Melbourne holds on the eastern part of Australia.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Your friends, the shipping companies, do not want to use it.

Mr. HILL: The member for Fremantle should hide his head in shame because the greed and ambitions of Fremantle have robbed the taxpayers of the Commonwealth of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Then why don't you get your friends, the shipping companies, to use the port?

Mr. HILL: And the Empire has been robbed of a wonderful naval base.

Mr. Fox: Vested interests are responsible.

Mr. HILL: This has all been caused because of the criminal neglect of Albany.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The people you represent are responsible for that.

Mr. HILL: The people I represent had nothing to do with the erection of the super. works at Bunbury. In the economic zone of Albany the people produce approximately 150,000 tons of wheat and utilise at least 100,000 tons of super. The fact that not one ton of that trade has gone through the port of Albany is one of the factors that contributes to the failure of the railways to carry wheat and super.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The last time I was in Albany I could not even get a fish supper!

Mr. HILL: That is the hon. member's look-out. Perhaps he would not be very welcome. As far as the hinterland is concerned, I know from personal experience that that land is capable of carrying a large population. I am confident that the

Government's proposal for land development will be a success and it is the duty of everyone in Australia to support the Government in populating the southern area of the State. If we do not populate it with white people we will not be able to hold this country in the years to come.

MR. BRAND (Greenough) [8.26]: After listening to the member for Albany I feel that I should say a word or two for the other end of the State.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The member for Geraldton does that.

Mr. Rodoreda: What do you mean by "the other end?"

Mr. BRAND: By that I mean the forgotten land that lies between Perth and Geraldton.

Mr. Brady: Port Dennison, for instance?

Mr. BRAND: Yes. When I first came into this Chamber I was advised by the then Premier, the present Leader of the Opposition, that whenever I spoke I should avoid being parochial. I found that that was very sound advice, but whenever I talk about my own electorate I feel that whatever I mention I have something to say about somebody important or something important that is produced in my electorate. The member for Albany has many times mentioned the importance of developing the South-West and the Great Southern. I feel sure that this Chamber is in sympathy and we fully appreciate the need for developing the South-West and Great Southern, and we also realise the ease with which that can be done because it is country which lends itself to closer settlement.

Nevertheless there is also a very definite need to develop the lands which lie north of Perth. The Premier, with his £12,000,000 of Loan money to spend this year, would be well advised to endeavour to develop this country and to do so by providing water. This has been required for many years. However, that is a factor which past Governments, and I include this one, have overlooked. Those Governments have overlooked the importance of such districts as Irwin-Moore, Greenough, and the town which serves those districts—Geraldton. Of course, this Government has had only two and a half years and we are hoping that something will come of the schemes it has in mind.

Mr. Triat: Always optimistic!

Mr. BRAND: In spite of that neglect, these areas have gone ahead and today we find that we have a fairly large population and schools are being built. We have country towns developing and increasing in population, but we have no water to provide reasonable amenities or even to provide security in some of the driest of our summers. I am sure the Minister for Railways would certainly support me inasmuch as during last year so much of his transport and locomotive power was used in carting water to those areas not only for railway requirements but also for the sustenance of the people. I can recall that in the year before last children of Morawa were bringing water in a bottle for drinking purposes over a distance of 30 miles because it was not provided elsewhere. Therefore, although we cannot hope that any great scheme will stretch as far north as the district I represent, I feel justified in asking the Government, whatever its political colour, to launch out immediately and give us dams which are provided from bitumen catchments.

With the modern machinery we have at hand, dams today can be dug within a few days or at most a week. Although many of the areas which serve these sites at present are sandy, we have proved, through experiments at Morawa, that bitumen catchments can provide the extremely necessary amenities and services which only water can give us. Therefore, I trust the Premier will not forget that at every town throughout his northern, north Midlands and Wongan line tour he was asked to take immediate action to provide water catchments for the respective areas. I would remind him that in the few remaining months of this Parliament he should take action and do something to fulfil the promises that he made as to water supplies on the tour.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You do not expect to get anything from his promises, do you?

Mr. BRAND: I did not ask the member for Beverley to concur in that because I really forgot he was here, but nevertheless the Premier realised when he made those promises that water was essential for the development of those areas. I recall that the Leader of the Opposition in speaking of light lands, of which we hear so much these days, referred to them as problem

lands, and I agree with him, but I believe, as with most problems, that if tackled in the right way and handled efficiently and administered well, such lands will prove a great asset in the future development of Western Australia. Our heavier land and that which exists in secure and heavy rainfall districts can be used for closer settlement and greater production per acre.

Over the week-end I was privileged to visit the property of Mr. Steel where there is an experiment taking place with trace elements. On this particular plot the powers that be were experimenting with Wongundy wheat, which is a comparatively new type of grain developed for an area which lies between Mullewa and Mingenew. The result of the first test augurs well for the future, especially as the wheat was grown under experimental conditions. This experiment took place on the black wattle soil, thousands of acres of which lie between Dongara and Gingin. It was extremely interesting to note the remarkable difference between the plots that were sown with super. only and those sown with super. impregnated with zinc and copper sulphate. In fact, past experiments have proved that there is approximately an 80 per cent. increase in actual production.

Although the Dongara area was one of the first to be settled the residents there have never been able to settle on it successfully or fully utilise it because super. only was not a suitable fertiliser for that particular type of soil. I believe that for the development of this land, Western Australia, and in fact, Australia, requires a greater production of phosphate and I believe, as I have heard someone say, that phosphate will probably play a greater part in world affairs and in the fostering of development than oil has played in industry. Although I am not quite sure, I think it was the Attorney General who told me that war would be fought over phosphate in the future because there were such limited world supplies. This land, of which there are many millions of acres, lies west of the Midland railway and if the Government cannot see fit to develop it on the same lines as the land which lies around Esperance and in other southern parts then it should let private enterprise make an effort to develop it.

I believe that if good all-weather roads were thrown out from the Great Northern Highway towards the coast private enterprise would go out there and develop the land. I would remind the Committee and as I have said before on the public platform, that in the great land boom of 1929 and 1930 young men went to places north of Mullewa, and into marginal areas, to develop light land and spent hundreds of thousands of pounds, lost all, and today the country has reverted to its virgin state. Why did they go out there? Simply because they could get there for there were roads for them to travel over. I claim that if roads were thrown out in a westerly direction, to where winter is winter and where there is a 16 in. to 20 in. rainfall or more, those people would still have been there, and instead of our having thousands of acres going back to its virgin state we would have seen thousands of acres of pasture land. I believe that it is in pasture and not in cereal growing that the future of Western Australian agriculture lies.

I do not wish to mention Dongara in a parochial sense because I live there, but it happens to be a port that serves an area right through from Dalwallinu to Mullewa, including centres such as Mt. Magnet and other places north of Geraldton. Geraldton and Dongara are crying out for development as places for the country people to visit and in which to spend their holidays, and I think that some of the £12,000,000 that the Premier will not be able to spend could be well spent in providing amenities at those two seaside towns for those people and their families who come from the Goldfields and the wheatbelt areas, because no-one wants people with children in the metropolitan area on account of the meagre accommodation offering. Therefore whatever Government is in power next year I hope it will consider placing these centres on the same basis as other parts, and develop an organised department to build up a tourist trade not only for those visitors from foreign countries but also to provide amenities for people coming from places around Dongara and Geraldton.

If the Government does propose to do this, I believe it will be money well spent. I trust that the Premier will remember those urgent appeals that were made to him—and as to which he made no promises—and will respond and realise that it is

amenities such as those I have mentioned that will keep the country people on the land. As I may not have another opportunity, I should like to thank members for the co-operation and assistance I have received in the very difficult job of Government Whip, and I would also thank the member for North-East Fremantle for having stood aside for me to say a few words on these Estimates.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.41]: I must endeavour to keep in mind the fact that but 20 minutes remain for this debate, owing to the action of the Government.

The Premier: You can say a lot in 20 minutes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But perhaps not as much as I wish to say. However, I must do my best and endeavour to leave a few minutes for at least one other member who desires to speak. I am obliged to make some reference to a statement by the member for Irwin-Moore a short time ago when he alleged that something I had said was entirely unfounded. He said I had stated that the Government was deserving of censure for the delay that had occurred in signing the agreement with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. regarding the taking over of the bulk wheat facilities, and that this was a matter that should not have been left to the Crown Law Department to arrange. He also said that the Crown Law Department had nothing whatever to do with arranging the agreement.

When the member for Irwin Moore speaks in the House, he frequently says, "These are the facts." But the hon. member was very much astray in this matter. The statement I made that the Crown Law authorities were responsible for the completion of the agreement was one made in the House by the Minister for Lands.

Mr. Ackland: True enough! The agreement was made with the Government committee of which the Under Treasurer was a member. The Crown Law Department only prepared the agreement.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The hon. member should not run away with that idea. In order to ascertain what departments have been engaged in drawing up the agreement, I sought information from the Minister by way of questions. The questions were

asked on Tuesday, the 12th July, and will be found in "Hansard" at page 414, as follows:—

(1) When is it expected that the agreement between Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. and the Government in connection with the taking over by the former of the State's bulk-handling facilities at Bunbury will be completed?

(2) Who is responsible for the long delay of over two years which has taken place in connection with this matter?

(3) What Government departments and officers were consulted in connection with the preparation and completion of the agreement concerning the taking over of the State's bulk-handling facilities at Fremantle?

(4) Has Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. yet made any payment to the Government in connection with the use of the bulk-handling facilities at Fremantle and/or Bunbury?

(5) If payments have been made, what are the amounts and the dates of payment.

The Minister replied:

(1) The draft agreement is at present being considered by the parties concerned and, once this is done, it will only be a matter of final preparation by the Crown Law Department, and signature.

(2) The delay was caused by certain details not being agreed to by both parties, and certain difficulties in connection with the site had to be overcome.

(3) Crown Law Department.

(4) Fremantle—yes; Bunbury—no.

(5) £10,159 4s. 9d.—the 8th July, 1949.

Thus to the question as to the Government departments and officers who were consulted in connection with the preparation and completion of the agreement, the Minister replied, "Crown Law Department."

Mr. Ackland: They were the people who had to draw up the agreement, of course.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That was not the question. If the Minister gives misleading information to the House, am I to be blamed? The question was plain enough, and so was the Minister's answer. Yet the member for Irwin-Moore said the statements I made were entirely unfounded. I simply repeated the information given to the House by the Minister. If the information I gave is unfounded, then the Minister was guilty of having given the House misleading information, so I leave the Minister and the member for Irwin-Moore to argue it out.

It is well to have a record of the way the present Government handles its business. The Minister for Housing some time

ago spoke about perspicacity in decision. Let us take these two agreements as an example. This afternoon, I asked the Minister whether the agreement with regard to the taking over of the facilities at Bunbury had yet been completed. The Minister was unable to answer the question and asked to have it put on the notice paper. That would make the information too late for my purpose, so I took other action, and found that the agreement has not yet been completed. And it is two years since this installation was taken over!

It was taken over on the 1st October, 1947. On the 12th July, 1949, the Minister stated that the draft agreement was at present being considered by the parties concerned and, once this was done, it would only be a matter of final preparation by the Crown Law Department, and signature. That was in July. On the 8th September, because nothing was happening, I asked the Minister a further question and his reply was—

The papers were sent to the Crown Law Department for final preparation of the agreement, but are at present held up pending agreement to a minor amendment to the draft. The matter will be finalised as quickly as possible.

That minor amendment has held the Government up for a further three weeks and there is still no agreement after the expiration of two years. Yet the Government talks about perspicacity in decision. Two years for a simple agreement between two parties for the taking over of State assets and no agreement yet signed!

The story regarding Fremantle is even worse. On the 29th May, 1947—that is, shortly after the Government took office—the Fremantle installation was handed over to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. On the 27th October, 1948, in answer to a question by me reported in "Hansard" at page 1935,—the Minister stated—

Agreement has not yet been finalised because of one minor outstanding amendment, which has been the subject of negotiations between all the parties concerned. A number of departments are involved—the Railway Department, the Agricultural Department, the Crown Law Department, the Fremantle Harbour Trust and the Treasury.

All those departments were involved over this minor amendment!

However, substantial agreement was reached many months ago on the major clauses of the instrument.

On the 25th November, 1948, I asked another question which will be found in "Hansard," vol. 2, page 2746, in reply to which the Minister said that there was still no agreement but that one minor matter only was outstanding. On the 10th December, in the same volume of "Hansard," at page 3463, the Minister said that the agreement had been approved but not finally executed. It was completed on the 27th April, 1949. On the 17th June, an account for £10,159 4s. 9d. in relation to the Fremantle installation was sent to Co-operative Bulk Handling. This amount was paid on the 8th July, notwithstanding that the agreement said it had to be paid not later than 14 days after receipt of demand in writing. Therefore, the agreement was no sooner signed than it was broken; the amount was paid in three weeks after it had been outstanding for two years. And this Government talks about perspicacity in decision! If one wanted to better that procrastination, one would have to go a long way.

The installation at Fremantle was handed over within days of the Government taking office and it took two years to get an agreement as to terms. Shortly afterwards, the Bunbury installation was handed over in the same manner and after two years there was still no agreement. The Minister says there is one minor matter outstanding. Therefore, it takes months and months to adjust a minor matter! This Government which talks of perspicacity in decision! Well, that perspicacity in decision is not in evidence with regard to those agreements. One would expect efficiency in matters of this kind. It might be necessary to give new Ministers a month or two to get the run of their departments; but the departments have permanent heads who are skilled men and there is no excuse for this sort of thing. If private businesses were run in this fashion they would become bankrupt. Just imagine—two years to make a simple agreement of that nature and yet no agreement is completed as to the Bunbury installation! I suppose the real reason for the delay is that Co-operative Bulk Handling is endeavouring to get the installations on its own terms.

The Government's attitude ought to be, "You have asked for these installations. We are prepared to make them available to you

on these terms, and if you are not agreeable to them we will not make the installations available, but will keep them and run them ourselves, as was recommended by the bulk-handling committee." But contrary to the advice of that committee, the Government handed these installations over and is prepared to allow the matter to drag on and on without any agreement whatsoever. Parliament will now soon rise and there will be no opportunity for members to scrutinise the agreements. The Minister promised to table the Bunbury agreement, but we shall not have an opportunity to peruse it. I think those two very plain examples of the way this Government does business ought to be a clear indication to the people of the great lack of efficiency which characterises this Administration.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [8.54]: I feel I should have a few words to say on these Loan Estimates, because the policy of the Government in purchasing locomotives overseas is causing grave concern to the tradesmen at the Midland Junction Workshops. The Government is purchasing 75 locomotives overseas at a cost of £2,500,000, which is half the normal revenue of the railways for one year. Probably the employees at the workshops are not so much concerned about the purchase overseas to alleviate a difficult position with rolling-stock as they are about the fact that probably within a few years many of them will be out of work if this policy is continued. This afternoon the member for Kalgoolie pointed out that not so many years ago nine or ten locomotives were built at the Government workshops. It would now appear that the work which normally was done by our own tradesmen is to be carried out overseas and they will be left simply with repair jobs, which will be hardly sufficient to warrant the retention of 2,000 employees in the workshops.

The Premier: We must get some locomotives somewhere or no-one will be kept going.

MR. BRADY: We must have locomotives for our heavy haulage. The Premier's interjection has given me an opportunity which otherwise I might have missed. According to figures issued by the department, the number of passenger journeys has fallen

from about 18,000,000 in 1945 to 12,979,000 in 1949. That represents a falling off of one-third.

MR. BOVELL: What about the movement of troops during the war? That accounts for it.

MR. BRADY: For the benefit of the member for Sussex, I will take the year 1946, when the war was over. The number of passenger journeys that year was 17,000,000. It fell in 1949 to 12,979,000. That is a clear indication that something ought to be done to provide diesel services and fast-moving rollingstock in the metropolitan area in order to regain for the State the revenue to which the Railway Department is entitled. We must always be mindful of the fact that our railways are a State concern. However, there does not seem to be any definite policy on the part of the Government to give back to the Railway Department the passenger services which it has lost. The Government, instead of buying locomotives overseas, should be concentrating on building diesel coaches and fast-moving rollingstock to cater for the passenger service.

I hope the Government will get away as quickly as possible from its policy of buying locomotives overseas and instead create employment for our local tradesmen. In regard to this purchase overseas, I understand a new class of locomotive is to be introduced. We have already about a dozen classes and this means that we must keep an ample stock of parts in hand to replace those worn out from time to time. The Government would be better advised to concentrate on the classes of locomotives we already have, as these have proved themselves. I think they would return revenue equal to probably the new "W" class. I did not get a chance on the Revenue Estimates to ask the Premier to explain to members how the interest is paid by the department on its capital. On looking through the figures and statements of comparative workings for the past five years, I notice that the interest on the capital invested is working out at 4 per cent. That appears to be a fixed rate for the years 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948 and 1949. Will the Premier indicate to the Committee what the interest charges are, to whom the money is paid and why an effort has not been made to reduce the rate on moneys owing overseas?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Guildford-Midland will kindly resume his seat.

Mr. BRADY: I have not half finished.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot help it. The hon. member must resume his seat.

Mr. BRADY: Well, I—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the member for Guildford-Midland going to obey the Chair? The question is that the Vote stand as printed.

Vote put and passed.

The remaining Votes passed were as follows:—

Vote—Railways and Tramways, £3,379,657.

Vote—Electricity Supply, £3,534,529.

Vote—Harbours and Rivers, £890,197.

Vote—Water Supply and Sewerage, £2,351,123.

Vote—Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, £185,944.

Vote—Development of Agriculture, £847,863.

Vote—Roads and Bridges, Public Buildings, etc., £750,000.

Vote—Sundries, £1,171,384.

Mr. Styants: The axe is down again!

Mr. Marshall: Good old democracy!

Mr. Styants: Liberal and Democratie!

Mr. Marshall: All to save their hides! They will not face the electors.

This concluded the Loan Estimates for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

BILL—APPROPRIATION (No. 2).

Message.

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

First Reading.

In accordance with resolutions adopted in Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, leave given to introduce the Bill, which was read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [9.4] in moving the second reading said: This is the annual Bill introduced after the passing of the

Estimates of Expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the General Loan Fund. A Supply Bill has been passed granting £3,700,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £700,000 from the General Loan Fund, and £300,000 from the Public Account for Advance to Treasurer; and this Bill authorises further Supply up to the total amounts requiring appropriation as shown in Schedule A.

The total estimated expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the present year is £23,509,873; but of this, £5,120,643 is covered by the specific Acts which authorise the expenditure, and the balance—namely, £18,389,230, particulars of which will be found in Schedule B—is appropriated by this Bill. Expenditure from the General Loan Fund is estimated to be £12,262,247, as summarised in Schedule C, and this amount is likewise appropriated. Schedule B sets out the purposes for which the Treasurer may make advances from the Public Account, and also prescribes how and when that account is to be recouped. The sum of £1,000,000 is provided.

Another purpose of the Bill is to confirm the appropriation of expenditure incurred during 1948-49 in excess of the Estimates for that year, and details of the excesses are furnished in Schedules E and F. The Bill also provides for the expenditure of £230,018 from the Reforestation Fund in accordance with the scheme of expenditure which has been laid on the Table of the House and which, under Section 41 of the Forests Act, requires the approval of Parliament. A summary of the proposed expenditure is given in Schedule G. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [9.7]: It is true that this is the Bill which is introduced after the Estimates have been considered and passed by this House. Normally it is passed after the consideration of all the Estimates, usually about the first week in December in each year in each session of this Parliament. On this occasion, however, the Appropriation Bill, which is looked forward to by most Governments because it anticipates the ending of the work of Parliament, is to be passed several months earlier than usual to suit the whim of the Government and the wishes of its supporters. This session, originally framed to suit the pur-

poses of two members sitting on the Government side of the House has, because of their intention to contest Federal seats, been nothing more nor less than farcical. No legislation of consequence has been introduced into this Chamber. The Government has set itself out to avoid at all costs any legislation which could bring to it criticism not only from this side of the House but from its own side also.

Once the Government decided that it must end the session to suit the convenience of two of its members and to end that session either the last week in September or the first week in October, it became necessary not only to muzzle members on this side of the House but also to ensure that members on its own side had no chance whatever of speaking. When members saw to it that they spoke when they had the opportunity to speak, during the limited period allowed by the Premier and it was found that his own members then indulged in criticism it was very obvious how anxious the Premier was to see that no Estimates were introduced if that end could be achieved.

It is a standing disgrace not only to the Premier but to all of those associated with him that from the time the motion was moved in this Chamber to ensure that speeches on the Revenue Estimates would end at a certain time, no Minister, as was forecast, had an opportunity even to give a sketchy analysis of his departments and certainly no opportunity was afforded to criticise his administration. If we take the Budget, on which no time was spent in a wasteful sense, the Premier made no attempt to reply to the criticisms launched by me; no attempt, in spite of "The West Australian" giving some prominence to many of my remarks. He was, of course, hastening to run to cover; to get himself into that little burrow so nicely depicted by "The Sunday Times" not only to avoid criticism by those opposed to him in politics, but to be saved from being castigated and chastened by every member on his own side who had an opportunity of speaking on the Estimates.

The Premier: We do not gag them on this side. They can criticise the Government.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Premier gave them an opportunity to speak only when the time limit was imposed. That was the first that we heard from them. There was then no possibility of even each Minister introducing his Estimates. The Premier knows that it is an absolute disgrace not only to himself, but to his methods of conducting the business of Parliament. That is what we have had to put up with, and as soon as there was an opportunity to speak on vexed problems, such as housing, every member who spoke, criticised the Government. Other matters, have given members opposite anxious moments, so far as parish pump subjects which affect local well-being are concerned, but no opportunity has been given to discuss them. Ministers, such as the Minister in charge of Prices, were anxiously hoping that there would be no chance of criticism being levelled at them either for their administration, or for the methods adopted by the Government to ignore entirely the welfare of the community of Western Australia. No voice could be raised in protest.

Once the Appropriation Bill is passed this House has, for all practical purposes, finished the business of the Government for the session. No matter what happens then, action in connection with the bringing down of regulations or doing the things which have been done during the currency of the Parliamentary sittings will be entirely ignored. There will be no chance whatever of dealing with regulations; no chance, this Parliament not being in session, of dealing with emergency matters. The Government will see that as at the end of this month—as from Friday next—this House will close and will not reassemble until the elections have taken place. This Parliament, being treated so lightly by the Government, will not meet from September this year until July of next year, in the normal course of events. That is an absolute disgrace, and the sort of thing which brings on an institution of this kind comments which are so often not deserved.

On this occasion, however, direct criticism of the strongest kind could be used in condemnation of the Government's attitude. What is it all about? It is to satisfy the Government's miserable ends; to see that there will be no challenge or possibility of challenge so far as its term of office is concerned. That is what it is all about.

The member for Swan and the member for Mt. Marshall must perforce, if they are to be Federal candidates, resign during the next few weeks. The Government, knowing full well that it must prepare for an election anywhere between November and mid-December, timed this session to suit its purposes and to suit two people whose selfish interests have allowed of no thought for either the wellbeing of the Western Australian community, or matters affecting the Western Australian Government.

I wonder whether, Mr. Speaker, you can tell us what is going to happen in regard to the by-elections. It does not matter, while the Government is in office, if both by-elections go against it, but are they going to be held? Is that something, too, in which the interests of the people are to be flouted? Is it something which must wait until a general election? It is not only a travesty upon the principles which have been inherited by this Chamber from the Mother of Parliaments, but it is unjust, unfair, unreasonable, and designed simply to suit the miserable purposes of the present Government. There may be many matters arising out of such problems as the distribution of petrol and the control of prices—the latter has not been faced for one moment by the Government—that are of great moment as affecting the lives of our people. But Parliament will not be called together again by this Government after Friday of this week.

Even if we pre-suppose that the by-elections are held and that at least one of those seats does not return a supporter of the Government, the Government will ignore that. It will not matter to this Government if one of those seats is lost to it; that will not affect its mental make-up or cause it a moment's concern. Its attitude to the public has been one of disdain. I hope there will be an appreciation by the public of just how much this institution of Parliament is being pulled down by the tactics I have mentioned. If we look at what happened to 32 Divisions of the Estimates, we find that Votes exceeding £8,000,000 were passed in one block; were passed without introduction by the Ministers in charge of the respective departments; were passed with no chance whatever being allowed to members who had spoken on the General Estimates, and who

had made short speeches, of criticising specifically the work of the Government. I point out to the Treasurer that all my criticism of his Budget was made in connection with its financial aspects.

I had no opportunity of entering into a criticism, in detail, of the administration of the individual Ministers. I concentrated entirely on the figures presented to the Chamber in an analysis of the Budget. The Votes dealing with departments such as Agriculture, the College of Agriculture, Department of Labour, Factories, Chief Secretary, Registrar and Friendly Societies, Prisons, Observatory, Tourist Bureau, Harbour and Light and Jetties, North-West, Mines, Police, Public Works and Buildings, Crown Law Offices, Licensing, Arbitration Court, Medical, Public Health, Mental Hospitals, Fisheries, Goldfields Water Supply, State Abattoirs and Saleyards, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage. Other Hydraulic Undertakings, Railways, Tramways, Ferries and others went through without introduction or any comment.

No doubt the Premier will get out his pencil and calculate that some members occupied the time of Parliament in speaking for this or that number of hours, but in doing so he will forget entirely his miserable approach in opening this part of the second session of this Parliament so as to avoid an Address-in-reply debate. He will pretend to complain about the time taken up by members who would normally have spoken both on the Address-in-reply debate and on the Estimates—

The Premier: If it had not been for your obstructionist tactics you would have had any amount of time on the Estimates—far more than you have ever required in any previous session.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: That will not bear examination. The Premier, in his synthetic rage, attempts to gloss over what his own sins have brought him to. It is a mere sham for him to say that the business of this House has been obstructed by me in any way.

The Premier: You have done all you could to obstruct the business of the Government.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There has been no way of getting from the Premier or his Ministers any information about many vital matters. I have written letters to Ministers,

but they have remained unanswered over the past six months, and I am not singular in that regard. If the Premier wants to give this side of the House an opportunity of showing the deficiencies and delinquencies of his Government, we have had little opportunity to do so.

The Premier: You have had any amount of opportunity.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There are many more members who wish to speak in the limited time available between now and 11 p.m., so on this occasion I content myself by saying to the Premier that I have wasted not time of the House and have obstructed no measures or motions, but that on occasions when I have spoken I have received scant replies.

The Premier: Can you say as much of many of your supporters?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is simply because the Premier has endeavoured to avoid all criticism from members on either side of the House, that this state of affairs has been brought about.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [9.22]: In a very little while now the Government of the day will have reached the Mecca of its hopes, towards which it has been striving for the last two months—the haven of recess. As has been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, once this measure has been disposed of the Government can be quite independent of Parliament, as it will have all the money it requires to carry on His Majesty's Government from now until the 30th June next. And so, by 11 o'clock tonight, it will have reached the goal towards which it has striven so vigorously for the past couple of months. In a few days it will end this session as a Government that has earned at least one distinction. To my mind it is an unenviable distinction, that of being the first Government in this State since we were granted responsible government—as far as I can discover—to resort to the use of what is now familiarly known as the “gag” or the guillotine. In other words, it is the first Government of this State to deny members of Parliament their rights and privileges for open and fair discussion—

The Premier: You have had very long-winded discussions.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The action of the Government in denying members the Address-in-reply debate has indicated its intention from the beginning. Owing to its bad administration it was afraid to face the criticism that would have been levelled against it during that debate, which would have taken nearly the time that has been taken up during the discussion on the Estimates. The Government itself is entirely to blame for anything untoward that has happened during this session. It is the first Government of this State to deny members the right of legitimate discussion on the business of the country. With all due deference to individual members on the other side of the House, I suggest that the record of this Government is the most barren of any during a period of nearly 60 years, from both a legislative and an administrative point of view.

The housing situation, about which members opposite and particularly members of the present Cabinet made so much noise when on the hustings, is worse today than it was two years and nine months ago. Despite the fact that time after time, during the past year or two glaring anomalies in the housing position have been pointed out to the Government, in matters of house-building confusion has become worse unfounded.

The Premier: Do you remember any time when there was such great activity in the building of houses as there is today—or anything approaching it?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I repeat that the housing position is worse today than when the Premier assumed office in 1947.

The Premier: Does not that apply equally all over the world?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I admit that the housing position is acute not only all over Australia but also in other parts of the world. I would point out, however, that members of Parliament in other parts of the world did not go to the electors with the story that the present Premier told the people in 1947, as to what he would do if placed in charge of the Treasury bench.

The Premier: And we are well on the way to fulfilling all our promises.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What about homes for two-unit families?

Mr. NEEDHAM: No matter how glaring the anomalies that have been exposed on the floor of this House, members have received no satisfaction from the Minister for Housing or from the Housing Commission. I am not reflecting in any way on the officers of the Housing Commission, but am speaking of the Minister for Housing and the Commission itself. I will give one instance of where the attention of the Minister for Housing was directed to a glaring anomaly. I refer to a residence in a northern suburb where a doctor and his wife, a dentist, were given permission to build a house at a cost of about £3,000, although there were only the two of them. The story was that they were to practise their professions of medicine and dentistry. In addition to the house two garages were constructed. What was the answer of the Minister for Housing when that was pointed out?

The Minister for Housing: The building was within the permissible limit of cost and permission for the building of the two garages was granted through a mistake by a subordinate officer.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Leave out the cost of the house altogether. The fact that two people were able to get accommodation in a very commodious house, and with two garages, is definitely not right.

The Minister for Housing: A doctor and a dentist.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Time and time again members have put cases before the Minister of six or seven people living in three rooms—

Mr. May: And in garages.

Mr. NEEDHAM:—and 12 or 14 living in four and five rooms. I brought one case before the Commission where there were four families living in six rooms and only one stove was available for cooking. It was usually 11 o'clock at night before the last of these people had eaten their tea. The excuse about the doctor and his wife was that the second garage was a mistake.

The Minister for Housing: These people are practising their professions there.

Mr. NEEDHAM: When members of the Government benches go before the electors they will have to give an account of their stewardship in regard to housing.

Let me also emphasise the point made by the Leader of the Opposition. What is the cause of this hurry? What is the reason for closing the doors of Parliament months before the usual time? It is simply because the Government has, during the past few months, been forced to depend upon the very uncertain and doubtful majority of the two members of the Independent Party, and because of the fact that two of the Government's own members are seeking election to the Commonwealth Parliament. Consequently those two members must resign from this Parliament a certain period before nomination day. Because of that, the business of this country has to be put to one side, and the doors of Parliament closed so that the Government can escape further criticism and get into the safe harbour of recess.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask members of the Government, what would happen if a Labour Government were in charge today and found itself dependent on two Independents to carry on and two of the Government members desired to resign to contest the Commonwealth elections? What would members of this Government say if a Labour Government gave them only two hours to discuss the Appropriation Bill?

The Premier: On many occasions the Appropriation Bill has gone through without any discussion.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The Press throughout the State would have a lot to say if a Labour Government was closing the doors of Parliament merely to allow two members to nominate for Commonwealth elections. I now wish to refer to the answer I received today in connection with a question on regional hospitals. I asked this question because the Deputy Premier in his Policy Speech said that not a brick had been laid for any regional hospitals. I asked the Minister for Health to inform the House whether any bricks had been laid in the construction of regional hospitals since the 1st April, 1947. The answer I received was as follows:—

Upon the present Government coming into power it was found necessary, owing to the condition of the hospitals in the metropolitan area and in the country, to effect urgent renovations and additions. Much hospital work has been completed, including the first section of the Royal Perth Hospital.

A large amount of hospital work is now in progress, the estimated cost of which amounts to £1,420,227, including the estimated cost of £600,000 for the second section of the Royal Perth Hospital.

This work is considered to have a higher priority than the regional hospitals.

Why did not the Deputy Premier say that at election time? Was not the work mentioned in the answer of the Minister for Health just as urgent then as it is today? Labour members, on that occasion, admitted that hospitals needed renovations and additions, but did they not say that the material and labour were not available because the men had not been returned from the fields of action? Because of that fact, the materials were just not available to do this work. But, the Deputy Premier and his colleagues, notwithstanding that fact, told the people that not a brick had been laid for a regional hospital. Yet the Minister's answer today shows us that no bricks have been laid for any regional hospitals since then, and the position is just as it was when this Government took over. The money used for the additions and renovations to hospitals will be money well spent, but the answer to my question reveals the true position of affairs and shows how much of the promises of members of the Government have been carried out.

We cannot build houses without bricks and more bricks are required if we desire to build more houses. Therefore, if we are to make any progress at all we ought to have more brickyards. I mentioned this matter a few days ago and the reply of the Minister for Housing on that occasion was not very reassuring. We want more bricks and we want more timber. If we are able to obtain additional supplies of bricks and timber I feel sure that house building will be carried on more expeditiously. I understand that the Government has authorised the building of a second State brickworks, but we have had no indications as to when action will be taken.

I would like the Minister to inform the House as to the nature of the report of the officer sent overseas to inquire into these matters. Only yesterday I heard from a very prominent and reputable builder that even if an applicant for a permit to build received his permit today he would have to wait at least nine months before he could obtain a supply of bricks. That does not

augur well for a flip to our house-building programme. If the Government would erect another brickworks and take charge of others, it would help the housing position considerably. I wonder what private enterprise has done so far as brickyards are concerned? I ask the Minister to let us know exactly what was in the report of this officer who was sent overseas and just when the new State Brickworks, authorised by the Government, will come into operation.

Tonight we had a speech from the member for Greenough, the Government Whip, and I was greatly interested in what he had to say. There again, I have seen a rather unusual position. We had the Government Whip whipping the Government, and he was very straightforward in what he had to say about the action of the Government in dealing with the requirements of his electorate.

The Premier: We have every freedom of action on this side.

Mr. NEEDHAM: He was as caustic in his criticism as any member on this side of the House could have been. There is not much doubt that the Government will reach the harbour of safety in recess within a few days, but there is a vast doubt that they will occupy the Treasury bench following the State elections.

MR. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [9.41]: Before the Estimates are finally dealt with, I would like to impress upon the Attorney General the necessity for doing something regarding a matter I have repeatedly raised this session. He should give serious consideration to the appointment of a Royal Commission to "inquire into the supply and sale of meat, including the price to the consumer. I think it is common knowledge that retail butchers are charging in excess of the fixed price for meat.

The Attorney General: That is not happening now.

Mr. HEGNEY: I challenge the Minister to let the House know that that is not the practice. If he will make inquiries from retail butchers, he will find that it is so. It appears that a number of retail butchers definitely contend that they will have to close their shops if they are forced to sell meat at the fixed price; that the margin

of profit would be insufficient, and that they would not be able to carry on. I have made this assertion before, and I repeat it: That retail butchers are selling meat at from 2d. to 5d. per lb. above the price fixed by the Commission. We all know that retail butchers are honest people, but they are now held up to the public as being business people who are dishonest. I understand there is no price ceiling for producers. I would like to know why producers are not limited as to price. I know that the Premier would be greatly disinterested in that direction and also the Minister for Agriculture.

The Premier: Was there any ceiling under Commonwealth control?

Mr. HEGNEY: I doubt if many members on the Government side would be much interested in limiting the price of stock.

The Premier: There was no ceiling under Commonwealth control.

Mr. HEGNEY: There is that interjection again! There was no ceiling under Commonwealth control! "No power to Canberra! Give us control of prices and we will reduce them. They will not do it in Canberra but we will do it our way."

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: "I say to you."

Mr. HEGNEY: I can see the Premier's photograph now when he assured the public, "I tell you now that there will be a reduction in prices and an increase in wages," and now the Premier can smile like a billy-goat in a cabbage garden, but he cannot deny that fact—the very definite statement that prices would be reduced. I am asking why prices are not reduced at the source of supply.

The Attorney General: Margins are reduced, of course.

Mr. HEGNEY: I know! The Prices Commissioner fixes the prices which the retailer is to charge to the consumer. As far as I know, if there is any appeal, the Retailers' Association would make representations, through the Prices Commissioner or the Minister, to the advisory committee. I do not know whether that is the procedure, but I should say it would be. If the Minister is satisfied that the margin is sufficient to enable retailers to sell at a profit, the retailers are not satisfied. And this is the other vital point—I have challenged the Minister before and I repeat

the challenge in the public interest—the public should know that the basic wage is much lower than it should be if the actual price being charged to consumers is supplied to the Statistician who, in turn, would have to reflect the increased price in the cost-of-living index figure, and consequently the basic wage, as declared by the Arbitration Court, would be higher than it is. I challenge the Minister to refute that statement, but to date he has not seen fit to give the House the information to which it is entitled.

I think that in the public interest a Royal Commission should be appointed to investigate all the ramifications of the meat industry. If that were done, the public would feel more satisfied than they are today because they know that between the retail butcher and the consumer there is a certain amount of goodwill and yet retailers definitely contend that they are placed in the position of being forced to break the law to get a sufficient turnover to enable them to carry on. Through the Attorney General, I would like the Government to give the public some indication of what it proposes to do to rectify the position. If the Attorney General does not know, I am sure other Ministers must be aware that the prices charged to consumers are in excess of those fixed by the Prices Commissioner.

The Attorney General: I do not think they are today.

Mr. HEGNEY: In reply to my questions, the Attorney General has admitted previously that that is so.

The Attorney General: Oh no, I have not.

Mr. HEGNEY: I do not propose to quote those admissions now, but on a perusal of the votes and proceedings it will be found that the Attorney General has admitted that.

The Attorney General: I said, "on odd occasions," or words to that effect.

Mr. HEGNEY: That statement can be refuted because the Minister said that a number of charges were pending against retailers of meat.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do not take any notice of the Attorney General.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Minister does not expect me to believe that with the experience in prices administration he has had and with the advantage of the advice of

the inspectors attached to the Prices Branch, he does not know that the charging of excessive prices is rampant. If people are to be charged an increased price for meat, that increase should be reflected in the subsequent adjustment of the basic wage. If the retailers are not receiving a requisite margin of profit, some remedy should be found.

The Attorney General: Are you suggesting decontrol?

Mr. HEGNEY: No; I am suggesting that the Government appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the peculiarities of the industry so that some remedy may be found for the present unsatisfactory position, that something may be done to protect the consuming public and that there may be provided some fair method of controlling retail butchers.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.51]: A little while ago the Premier interjected that Appropriation Bills had often been passed by the Assembly without debate. That is true, but not in circumstances such as those obtaining this year. Members are obliged to take advantage of the time offering, short as it is, on the Appropriation Bill to say those things for which so far insufficient time has been allowed. When the Premier's guillotine motion was before the House to provide for the completion of certain debates at definite times he said—

I feel that there is every justification for the motion. Members will not suffer as a result of it. I hope it will be carried.

Members have suffered as a result of it. If we take the debate on the Loan Estimates, the Premier cannot point to a single instance of a member having occupied an inordinate length of time in speaking. In fact a number of members had no opportunity to speak at all. Those members have suffered from the motion moved by the Premier. He has also said—

I repeat that ample time will be provided under these proposals for members to debate, not only the general Estimates, but the Loan Estimates as well.

The Premier must now acknowledge that ample time was not provided and, therefore, that either he was not telling the truth when he made that statement, or that he had made no attempt to calculate what time was required in order to provide ample opportunity for discussion.

The Premier: More time than usual.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is no answer. The Premier might say that the usual discussion on the Appropriation Bill took about five minutes and that, if he provided 10 minutes, that was more than usual. Of course that is so, but it is no satisfactory answer to the Premier's statement that ample time would be provided to discuss the Loan Estimates to say that more time than usual had been provided. This is an unusual session; there was no Address-in-reply debate.

Mr. Marshall: There have been some unusual happenings, too.

The Premier: Do you think it right that two members should occupy the best part of 10 hours? What would have happened if the motion had not been carried?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What would have happened had the Premier been decent the whole way through?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am speaking of the assurance given by the Premier at the time the motion was being discussed. He was then speaking about the future. He repeated that ample time would be provided for members to debate, not only the General Estimates, but the Loan Estimates as well. The Premier must now acknowledge that ample time was not provided.

The Premier: Hour after hour taken up with points of order!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Not a single minute has been taken up with points of order during the discussion of the Loan Estimates, so the Premier cannot get away with that. There is only one answer, namely, that ample time was not provided and that some members have suffered as a result of the passing of the motion.

The motion limiting the time for debate was passed as part of the pattern that has been followed this session of making the conduct of this House subservient to the interests of the Government Party. Nothing else mattered. Everything else has been determined and conditioned according to the political needs of the two Parties forming the Government. This must be admitted. No argument to the contrary would be of any avail, because an examination of what has taken place would bear out what I have stated. The Premier is seeking to have the Appropria-

tion Bill passed in September. This will mean that at least nine months and probably 10 months will elapse before Parliament meets again.

The Premier: That is not necessary.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is most unusual, and it is idle for the Premier to say it is not necessary. For years, until the emergency in which the Government finds itself arose, the Parliament of this State has not opened the session until the last week in July. A new Government needs several months to prepare its legislative programme, that is, if it intends to have a legislative programme, though that does not worry the present Government much. If the Government is to prepare a legislative programme and elections are held in March or April, it is not possible to call Parliament together much before July.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: When do you think the elections will be held?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Calculating that the elections will take place between the 18th March and the 8th April—my guess is the 8th April though probably the 1st April would be more appropriate—

The Premier: I do not think it has the slightest bearing.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Calculating that that is when the elections will take place, it is unlikely that any Government would be ready to meet Parliament much before July. This means that practically 10 months will elapse without Parliament's sitting. It is fairly certain that some matters of importance requiring Parliamentary attention will arise long before that, but the Government is not concerned about what might happen next month or the month after in the matter of the legislative needs of the country. So long as it can reach the safety of recess it will be satisfied, and the interests of the country, so far as the Government is concerned, can look after themselves.

The member for Beverley quite justly criticised the Government for its failure to introduce legislation to deal with vermin control. When the Labour Party was in office and I had been Minister for Agriculture just a matter of weeks, the present Deputy Premier, who was at that time the Leader of the Opposition, had an urgency motion discussed in the House drawing

attention to the fact that the then Government had taken no action to implement the findings of the Royal Commission on vermin, of which he had been chairman.

A number of members now sitting on the Government side supported the then Leader of the Opposition in that matter. I pointed out that I had not even read the report at that time; far less was I in a position to introduce legislative proposals based upon it. But that did not satisfy the then Leader of the Opposition or his colleagues. They wanted immediate action because the matter was supposed to be of such great urgency. Subsequently, when I introduced a Bill to amend the Act, which gave effect to a few of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, the Leader of the Opposition was very critical because the Labour Government's proposals did not include a proposition for the establishment of mobile units, which were to be financed by levying a tax upon urban as well as rural lands. I strenuously opposed the suggestion. I said I did not agree with it and would not have it included in the Bill. The then Leader of the Opposition was very concerned about that and at the last election made a definite promise to the electors. He said that if he were returned as a member of the Government then the recommendations of the Royal Commission on vermin would be given full effect.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Those were his words.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I knew very well that that was merely an empty promise and I informed the Government so at the first opportunity after the election. But I was then told, "You are in too much of a hurry. Give the Government a chance to put it—"

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Give the Liberals a chance!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —programme into operation." So I raised the matter again the next year.

The Premier: Give the Government another chance!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I raised the matter again the following session but still received no satisfactory reply. This year, when I twitted the Government with the fact that there had been no suggestion of

vermin legislation, the Minister for Education interjected that a Bill was then before Cabinet for consideration. I said, "That does not make any difference. That is as far as it will get." Events have proved that I was right. That Bill got no further than the Cabinet, if it ever got there. So at the end of this session, after the Government has had three complete sessions, there is no sign of the Bill which was so urgent three years ago in order to implement all the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The Bill upon which the promise was made to the electors has not appeared at all.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is only one of many.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It has not appeared because of the impossibility of getting agreement between the Country Party and the Liberal Party on the question of putting a tax on urban as well as rural lands.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is it!

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Mr. Downing is not in favour of it!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What are we to think of Parties which go on the hustings and make a definite promise of that nature, knowing full well that they had no intention of keeping it?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is only one of many.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was a very important one to which attention ought to be drawn. The assurance given early this session that the Bill was before Cabinet for consideration was merely subterfuge, as there was no intention whatever of bringing it in. The legislative programme of the Government this session has been comparatively barren.

The Premier: Too much legislation! We can do with less!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Too much?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But the Government promised this Bill.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Among others.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: As the Government had nothing else it was not prevented from bringing this Bill along, had it been so minded. But the Bill did not get here, and I venture to say that if there is not a

change of Government after the next election, there will still be no agreement on this proposed Vermin Bill. There might be agreement on a Vermin Bill, but it would be a different proposition from that recommended by the Royal Commission. Make no mistake about that!

I was very disappointed when the debate on the Estimates concluded, because I was not given an opportunity to let the people know how this Government is prepared to administer the affairs of State in the interests of its friends, whether such action is against the interests of the State or not. Now that I have the opportunity, I propose to say a few words about the Government's action in allowing Co-operative Bulk Handling to control road transport of wheat. I asked the Minister for Transport to let me have the file, which he kindly did, and therefore the information I now propose to place on record is obtained from the file dealing with the matter. That is necessary in order to get a proper appreciation of what took place, and of how pressure was brought to bear upon the Minister to know what the Transport Board and the Wheat Board thought about the proposition when it was first mooted.

Messrs. Braine and Ackland—I take Mr. Ackland to be the member for Irwin-Moore although the file does not say so—waited on the Minister for Transport on the 10th September, 1948, in connection with this matter. On the 25th November the Minister for Transport wrote to Mr. Braine stating that on further consideration he had decided that he could not grant Co-operative Bulk Handling the control of road transport of wheat and that he had authorised the Transport Board to proceed with arrangements. Mr. Braine was not going to be satisfied with that, so along he went to the Minister for Transport again. The result of the second visit was that the Minister for Transport, after further considering the matter, allowed Co-operative Bulk Handling to take control of road transport of wheat. I propose to read some comments from the file dealing with this matter to show what the result has been. When the proposition was first put to the Transport Board, the chairman asked the transport officer for his opinion. I propose to read excerpts from it. These are taken from the Transport Board file 63/48—

While appreciating the viewpoints enumerated by Co-op. Bulk Handling Ltd. in substantiation of their request to control transport of wheat by road from country sidings to ports, I am of the opinion that where control of road transport of goods is required, beyond the handling capacity of the Railway Department, such control should be exercised by a Government instrumentality, and particularly by one who has been granted specific powers to control transport.

Any fair-minded man would have to agree that that is a proper statement of the position. The minute continues—

The Board could not delegate the required authority to Co-operative Bulk Handling, but a reasonable working compromise can be effected.

This is because the board is being pressed to agree to Co-operative Bulk Handling doing the job.

In order to visualise the nature of the compromise I will deal seriatim with points raised by Co-operative Bulk Handling—

(a) Permits were issued for specific vehicles, and to ensure that only such vehicles were used a written authority was issued to bin attendants not only specifying the particular vehicles to be used but nominating the particular siding from which wheat should be transported. Even with this safeguard bin attendants (employees of Co-operative Bulk Handling) disregarded authorities in some instances and loaded unauthorised vehicles.

(b) (i) (a) and (i) (b)—Inspection of vehicles by Co-operative Bulk Handling.

This is quite acceptable, but I suggest that Co-operative Bulk Handling prepare specifications and plans of type of bodies to be used. Such specifications and plans can be handed to applicants by ourselves with the advice that bodies must be finally approved by Co-operative Bulk Handling.

(i) (c) Such restriction as suggested will deny us the use of the larger type diesel trucks specially designed and built by the world's leading manufacturer for the economic and efficient haulage of goods by road.

These vehicles performed admirably last year, and the objections that such vehicles cannot be weighed at country sidings (where weighbridges are outdated) can be overcome in the same manner that applied last season, but to ensure that loads were not tampered with bins with suitable coverings could easily be designed and used.

(i) (d) and (i) (e) To be embodied in plans and specifications suggested in paragraph (b) (i) (a) and (i) (b).

(ii) Agreed.

(iii) Such authorities were prepared and issued by the Board last year (copy attached).

(b) (iv) Objection: During previous periods of wheat carting it was necessary to restrict road transport to the most economic areas—to concentrate as far as possible vehicle use to

highways capable of carrying the traffic. In several instances it was necessary to convince Co-operative Bulk Handling that particular sidings were to be left to rail transport in order to protect the railways and to protect light roads.

(v) Last year notice-boards at receiving points were used to instruct operators in regard to conditions and rules that arose from time to time.

(vi) I suggest that where non-compliance with rules and conditions is observed Co-operative Bulk Handling should advise the Board and suggest cancellation of authority.

Paragraph 3. I consider that there is need for Co-operative Bulk Handling to employ an officer to check the points enumerated in this paragraph of their letter hereunder.

Paragraph 4. Violation of industrial awards relating to drivers of vehicles is a rarity. Drivers were usually paid wages considerably in excess of those covered under any awards, but unfortunately last year a number of Co-operative Bulk Handling's own employees violated the company's own instructions regarding loading out of hours, with the result that a very lucrative "racket" developed. It is in respect of this matter that I consider that an officer of Co-operative Bulk Handling should be employed to prevent a similar occurrence.

In an endeavour to ensure a minimum of overloading of vehicles we invited the aid of the Police Traffic Department to weigh loaded vehicles as often as possible at Fremantle. Unfortunately the Department was short-staffed and without adequate mobility, but such is not now the case and therefore the abuse of overloading can be considerably reduced.

I believe that the objections to a private company handling in its entirety road transport of wheat will arise from the Australian Wheat Board and the Main Roads Department.

On three occasions this Board has handled the work to the complete satisfaction of the Australian Wheat Board, which, as owners of the wheat, will have the final say regarding the control and organisation of road transport should such be necessary again this season.

That was the report which went to the Minister for Transport and he subsequently allowed Co-operative Bulk Handling to take charge. The file shows that on the 2nd March of this year the Commissioner of Railways complained to the Minister for Transport against the continuation of road transport. When I made that statement in this House a few months ago, the Minister for Railways denied that the Commissioner had ever done such a thing; but I found the letter on the file myself. Section 48, Sub-section (1) (a) and (b) of the State Transport Co-ordination Act reads as follows:—

(1) No person shall drive, or cause or permit any person employed by or under any contractual engagement with him, or subject to his orders, to drive any commercial goods vehicle which is required to be licensed pursuant to this Act—

(a) for any continuous period of more than five and one-half hours; or

(b) for continuous periods amounting in the aggregate to more than eleven hours in respect of any period of twenty-four hours, commencing at midnight;

The Amalgamated Road Transport Union became very concerned because a number of owner-drivers, put on by Co-operative Bulk Handling, were disregarding those provisions to the detriment of regular drivers employed on wages. The union wrote to the Transport Board drawing attention to the matter and asking that action be taken. This is the reply received; and it will show how wrong it is to take away from a Government department the control of transport and hand it over to a private company. The letter is dated the 12th April, 1949. It is from the chairman of the Transport Board to the secretary of the union, and it reads, *inter alia*—

Unfortunately the work of organising this transport carried out by this Board's officers in the past has this year been transferred to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. Thus we have lost the most effective means of controlling the operation of vehicles.

On the same date the chairman of the Transport Board wrote to the manager of Co-operative Bulk Handling, pointing out that the board had no jurisdiction to stipulate the loading or unloading times and therefore it was difficult to regulate the vehicles to meet the requirements of the Act. So the requirements of the Act could not be policed by the Transport Board, the appropriate authority, because the control of the road transport of wheat had been taken out of its hands by this Government and handed to a private company. I would say the same no matter what company it was. In this case it happened to be Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

The Minister for Housing: Which is the farmers' own organisation whose wheat was being carted.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That makes no difference. It was a private company; and Parliament intended that the administration of this Act should be in the hands of the Transport Board. Is the Minister arguing

that his idea is preferable to the idea of Parliament and that any part of the business which should be under the control of the Transport Board is better in the hands of a private company? Is that what he is arguing?

The Minister for Housing: I was saying that the farmers' co-operative company is carting the wheat that the farmers grow.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What difference does that make?

The Minister for Housing: I think it makes a great deal of difference.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does it! If there is any strength in that argument the people who cart grapes that the grape-growers produce should be allowed to control that carting and it should be taken out of the hands of the Transport Board, and the people who produce coal at Collie should be allowed to arrange the cartage of it without reference to the Transport Board. We would thus get into a chaotic state.

The Minister for Housing: A good many people cart what they produce themselves.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If Parliament intended that the people who produce commodities should be in charge of the transport of those commodities, it would have said so by making provision for it in the Act. But Parliament provided that all transport, and its co-ordination, should be under the Transport Board. I have read where the board said that because the transport of wheat had been taken out of its hands, it found it extremely difficult to see that the requirements of the Act, especially Section 48, were being adequately met.

The Minister for Housing: I am not satisfied that the supervision might not have been exercised.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I wish to quote one or two more short references from the file in order to have the position placed on record. On the 18th July of this year there was a minute from the transport officers as follows:—

(a) The direction of wheat trucks was handled by Co-operative Bulk Handling, although our license was held by operators. It was suggested that the next step should be a direct appeal to Co-operative Bulk Handling to direct traffic from the roads concerned on to the main road to Wyalkatchem via Dowerin

and that, should this approach fail, for the road board to secure powers from the Hon. Minister for Local Government to regulate traffic in its own district.

That minute was written because the Wyalkatchem Road Board was complaining that its light roads were being smashed to pieces, and it could make no headway with Co-operative Bulk Handling with regard to a diversion of traffic. When it wrote to the Transport Board, the board had to admit that it had no authority to deal with the matter. That is the situation which the Minister for Housing is defending because he says the farmers grow their own wheat. The Transport Board suggested that the next step should be a direct appeal to Co-operative Bulk Handling to direct traffic from the roads concerned to the main road. Further, the Wyalkatchem Road Board desired to have school bus routes closed against wheat trucks, for obvious reasons. But the Transport Board was powerless to take any action because the matter had been taken out of his hands and given to Co-operative Bulk Handling, a private company. It is pretty hard to justify the giving over of a job, which was meant to be the job of a State department, to the control of a private company, no matter who the company is or what it is doing. I do not think a single argument can be advanced in support of the idea.

The Minister for Housing: Have you looked at Section 3 of the Bulk Handling Act?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, and I am sorry I have not the time to do so because of the action taken by the Minister's Government. The Government has been a long time announcing who is to be manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. This is some more of the perspicacity in decision. Applications were called months ago. It was common talk in the port that a certain gentleman had got the job. I could mention his name if I thought it wise to do so. Weeks went by, and nothing happened. What was the trouble? Were there not enough applicants of sufficient merit? Or is it that after having made the selection someone objected and the Government had not the backbone to go on with the business? It is most remarkable, but we could find a thousand people in Fremantle who could tell us the name of the man who was supposed to have

been selected, and the man who ran second, but there is still no pronouncement about the position. I think there is an obligation on the Government to do something about this, and to make a public statement as to why no appointment is being made. If not, it should call fresh applications. Or is this something else in connection with which the Government wants to get into the safety of recess because it is afraid of criticism if the House is still sitting? It looks mighty like that.

The Minister for Housing: On occasions some time elapses before these things are finalised, in the case of any Government.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is a wise remark because it says absolutely nothing.

The Minister for Housing: It happens often in the experience of all Governments.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister for Housing should not be so foolish as to imagine that I do not know very much about this. I would not say what I am saying if I did not know a little more about it than just hearsay. Would the Minister like me to give the name of the man selected, and why the appointment was held up?

The Minister for Works: It would not be very judicious, would it?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Now we are off on another tack.

The Minister for Lands: As far as I am concerned, I would give you your head. Say what you like. You are on your feet.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Say what I like!

The Minister for Lands: It is your job. If you think you ought to say it, then do so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not think I ought to say it, but I know it all the same.

The Minister for Housing: I do not think you ought to refer to it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Government ought to refer to it. Fancy that from a Minister who talks about perspicacity in decision! Applications were called months ago and a decision made weeks ago, and no announcement yet. What about the chaps who put in for the job? Are they not entitled to know something about it, or are they to be kept in suspense until Parliament rises? We cannot find a single example of perspicacity in decision. But the Government made a mouthful of it because of some

alleged delay by the ex-Minister for Railways regarding a coal contract. Because it was not finalised before this Government came into power, the Minister came in for severe criticism.

The Minister for Housing: That was 15 months old.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The matters that are the subjects of agreements in connection with bulk-handling are two years old, and there is still not one for Bunbury.

The Minister for Housing: I do not know about two years.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Well, add up from the 1st October, 1947, until the 27th September, 1949, because that is exactly the time, and there is still not one for Bunbury. It took almost that time for Fremantle.

The Premier: I see that in 1943 you supported a Government that met on the 5th August, 1943, closed Parliament on the 8th August, 1943, and did not meet again until July, 1944.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Will the Premier be good enough to give the reason why, because he did not protest about it at the time.

The Premier: And you did not, either.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is well known that when one considers any action the circumstances surrounding it must be taken into account.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: There was a war on then.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The circumstances were entirely different, and in no way comparable with those at present.

The Premier: Except that you are in opposition.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does the Premier mean to tell me that if the action taken at that time, which I was supposed to have supported and which the Premier also supported, was inconsiderate, the Opposition of that day would not have raised its voice in protest? The Opposition did not voice any protest because there was nothing to protest about.

The Premier: You did all the business in that time.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Can you, Mr. Speaker, imagine any member of the Government side protesting when the Opposition did not see fit to raise a protest?

The Minister for Works: Will you quote the reason?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The example given by the Premier is of no consequence at all, whereas the action he has taken this session has raised justifiable protest in view of the fact that he announced his intention of giving ample time for discussion. He must have known what time would be required in what should have been the third session of the Parliament.

The Premier: You have had far more time this session than ever before.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: This is not the third session, but the second session of the Parliament.

The Premier: And you have had far more time during this session.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The illustration given by the Premier is of no consequence whatever, and he knows that the two positions are not comparable.

MR. MAY (Collie) [10.31]: I do not think the Premier can accuse me, as he has accused so many other members, of having unnecessarily taken up the time of the House. Rather have I spent the time in a diligent search of the General Estimates, the Departmental Estimates and the Appropriation Bill, endeavouring to find some sign that the Government appreciates the important position reached by the coalmining industry in this State. I have endeavoured to find in the Estimates some indication that the Government intends to provide at Collie technical educational facilities similar, to some extent, to those existing at Kalgoorlie. If such technical education were available on the coalfields, it would enable many of those engaged in the industry to study and keep abreast of the times and prepare themselves for the increasing mechanisation of the industry that must take place in the near future.

At present, when men with certain qualifications are required to take up managerial positions in the mines, it is necessary to get them from outside the industry, solely because the young men born, bred and at present working in the industry, find themselves unable—in spite of their desire to do so—to acquire the necessary knowledge. On this, the last opportunity I shall have during

this session, I appeal to the Government to provide at Collie facilities similar to those at the School of Mines in Kalgoorlie, in order that the young men in the industry may undergo the necessary technical training to qualify them for managerial and executive positions. I do not decry the fact that facilities for such training are provided at Kalgoorlie, but I do not think it can be denied that, in all fairness, similar opportunities should be made available to the men on the Collie coalfields.

It is a crying shame that legislation had to be brought down this session to enable experienced men to be brought into the coal-mining industry from outside, over the heads of those who have spent their lives on the Collie coalfields, but have been prevented, through lack of opportunity for study, from qualifying themselves to fill positions of control in the industry. Even at this late hour, I appeal to the Government to do something in this regard, because the importance of the coalmining industry warrants it. I am asking no more than the importance of the industry deserves. To my personal knowledge, there are at present 11 men at Collie who have studied as far as the available facilities permit them, in an endeavour to obtain manager's certificates. But, solely due to the fact that there is no-one available to take them further in their studies, we are now faced with the position where qualified men have to be brought in from outside the industry.

A school of mines, or its equivalent, is a most urgent need at Collie, in the interests of the whole State, and it is still not too late for the Government, out of the enormous funds available to it over and above what it will be able to spend during the current financial year, to make provision for such an institution.

The Premier: What would you think of a mining section being established at the Technical School at Collie?

Mr. MAY: I do not care what action is taken, provided that the men there are given opportunity to further their studies and obtain their certificates of competence as managers. I ask the Premier to consult the Minister for Mines and, if necessary, to instruct him to take the necessary action in this regard. I would have liked to say much more on this occasion but, in view of

the action of the Government in strangling the opportunity of members to speak fully on matters they desire to bring before the House, I will content myself with hoping that the Premier will grant the request I have made.

Several members rose in their places.

Point of Order.

Mr. Speaker: There are three members who desire to speak and as there are 20 minutes left I ask those three members to take six minutes each. That is my suggestion and I place them in the following order:—The member for Irwin-Moore, the member for Guildford-Midland and the member for Fremantle.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I object to this. It is 20 minutes to 11 and it is impossible to get speakers through in that time. I have been trying to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, and we are being butchered to satisfy the vanity of two members. I refuse to be so butchered either by those two members or by "Butcher" McLarty. I have a right to talk.

Mr. Speaker: Order! Is the hon. member raising a point of order?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Yes. I object, Mr. Speaker, to your saying that the member for Irwin-Moore is to go first, the member for Guildford-Midland second and poor Sleeman is going to be the damned last. What about the member for Kalgoorlie? There are several members who want to speak and yet you, Mr. Speaker, named the member for Irwin-Moore first. There are only 20 minutes left so how can the three of us possibly speak in that time? I tried to catch your eye and I claim the right to speak.

Mr. Speaker: I call on the member for Irwin-Moore.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Then I am going to move, Mr. Speaker, that your ruling be disagreed with. The member for Irwin-Moore was not the first on his feet. Let us have a fair go! The reason you called on the member for Irwin-Moore was so that the Government members could speak and play out time. You must think we are a lot of dumb Doras.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I intend to move that your ruling be disagreed with.

Mr. Speaker: With what ruling do you disagree?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That you, Mr. Speaker, called on the member for Irwin-Moore and he was not on his feet. You deliberately called him so that we would not have a chance to speak. You are as bad as the Minister for Health.

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid I do not understand the hon. member's point. I call on the member for Irwin-Moore to proceed.

Debate Resumed.

MR. ACKLAND (Irwin-Moore) [10.42]: I must admit that I am sorry——

As to Procedure.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member for Irwin-Moore voted for the application of the "gag" and thereby played a part in preventing members on this side from participating in this debate as they would like to do. I would like to know whether you, Sir, think it is in order that a member who voted for the application of the "gag" should come in at this stage and take up part of the small remaining time.

Mr. Speaker: I have already explained that three members rose and I suggested that they take six minutes each.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: There are six or eight on this side of the House who want to speak.

Mr. Ackland: I would have finished my remarks by this time if I had been permitted to continue.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The member for Irwin-Moore only wants to have a go at the member for North-East Fremantle. The Speaker has been deliberately pushing him so as to give him the opportunity.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The member for Irwin-Moore sent a note to the Premier asking him could he speak. It is on the floor at the moment.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: If you, Mr. Speaker, will not uphold my point of order about the question of whether a member who voted for the application of the gag should now be allowed to take up the few precious remaining moments, would you uphold me on a point of decency as to whether it is right and proper for a member who voted for the "gag" to try to use up some of the few remaining minutes?

Mr. Speaker: I cannot give a ruling on a point of decency. The member for Irwin-Moore may proceed.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I want to raise a point of order. The attitude adopted by the member for Irwin-Moore was similar to that of a member seeking to move for an adjournment. It is moved so that he can get up and speak in order to waste the time of the House. It is a disgraceful thing.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think there is a point of order in that.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It definitely is a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Irwin-Moore may proceed.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. ACKLAND: It seemed to me that it was necessary for some reply to be given to the member for North-East Fremantle——

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And you were pushed in to give it.

Mr. ACKLAND: —regarding statements which he has made this evening. I am sorry that I have not come here prepared——

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Without a brief being supplied to you.

Mr. ACKLAND: —with all the necessary information, but I can give it in a sketchy sort of way and I am sure it will refute the statements which the hon. member made.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I quoted from the file.

Mr. ACKLAND: In the first instance, when the Government handed over the management and control of the transfer tower conveyor and shipping gallery at the Fremantle Co-operative Bulk Handling, the Government was only giving to the company what it thought was the company's right.

Point of Order.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker! You said that the member for Irwin-Moore was to speak, then the member for Midland-Guildford and then the member for Fremantle. Would you say how many minutes you are going to allow each one of us to speak?

The Premier: What power has the Speaker to say that?

Mr. Speaker: I only made a suggestion because of the remaining time and the number of members who wanted to speak.

The Premier: The Speaker cannot stop him.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I know he cannot, but he could have stopped pushing the member for Irwin-Moore into it.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. ACKLAND: If I may proceed. The Government only granted to the company something which was correct and was rectifying a mistake made by the previous Administration. Before the company took over the control, the fundamental basis—

Point of Order.

Mr. Rodoreda: On a point of order!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Don't let Irwin-Moore talk. Keep moving points of order and cut him out.

The Premier: From a former Speaker! You are a disgrace to the Chair.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And you are a disgrace to the position you hold.

Mr. Rodoreda: So far as I can find out there is no item on the Loan Estimates which deals with bulk-handling, nor is there anything in the Revenue Estimates. Would you, Mr. Speaker, say that the member for Irwin-Moore is in order in discussing Co-operative Bulk Handling on this Appropriation Bill?

Mr. Speaker: The Appropriation Bill admits general discussion, as do the General Estimates. The member for Irwin-Moore may proceed.

Mr. Rodoreda: That is another new ruling.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. ACKLAND: Before the company took over control the fundamental basis of the agreement was agreed to by the committee which, I believe, was set up by a previous Administration—the Government Bulk Handling Advisory Committee. The Under Treasurer was a member of that committee.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That committee was against it and you know it.

Mr. ACKLAND: That committee was the one that decided the fundamentals and the basis of the agreement which was prepared by the—

As to Extension of Time Limit.

Mr. Hegney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker! I want to know whether, in the circumstances, when 11 o'clock arrives you

will accept a motion that an extension of time be granted to a couple of those members who desire to speak on the Appropriation Bill so ably introduced by the Premier. I would like an assurance that the member for Guildford-Midland, the member for Fremantle and the member for Kimberley will be given at least six minutes each. I know of other members, too, who desire to speak and if this Bill is to be passed by 11 o'clock it will mean that they are going to be sand-bagged and after the member for Irwin-Moore they will not be allowed to speak. That places the House in an impossible position and there ought to be some compromise to enable those members to address the chamber. If that is not done what chance have we of speaking when the guillotine falls at 11 p.m.? I would like an assurance either from you, Mr. Speaker, or from the Premier, that members who desire to speak will be given an opportunity to do so.

Mr. Speaker: That is not a point of order. It is not a question of giving members so much time each. That was a suggestion.

Mr. Hegney: Then perhaps the Premier would give an assurance. If he would do that it would clear the atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Irwin-Moore may proceed.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have already mentioned that the Under Treasurer was a member of that committee. Naturally the preparation of the agreement was handed over to the Crown Law Department to be finalised. I do not think the member for North-East Fremantle for one minute believes in his heart that the legal members of Cabinet should have prepared it as he mentioned when he was speaking a short time ago. Further, the statement of the member for North-East Fremantle that the Government had waited for three years—

As to Member being no Longer Heard.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: On a point of information, Mr. Speaker! Would I be in order in moving that the member for Irwin-Moore be no longer heard?

Mr. Speaker: He is in the middle of a speech.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Would I be in order in moving that motion?

Mr. Speaker: No, the member for Irwin-Moore is in the middle of a speech.

Mr. Brady: Mr. Speaker, you made a suggestion earlier, before the member for Irwin-Moore rose to his feet—

Mr. Speaker: Is this a point of order?

Mr. Brady: Would the member for Irwin-Moore now agree that his six minutes is up so that the members whom you have mentioned can be allowed to speak?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will resume his seat. That is not a point of order. The member for Irwin-Moore will continue.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. ACKLAND: If the Opposition members would only let me get on I would have finished long ago.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You should never have been allowed to get up.

Mr. ACKLAND: The statement by the member for North-East Fremantle that the Government had raised a debit of £10,000 is obviously incorrect. It was raised by the company over two years ago. *In the first 12 months of that agreement there had been a debit raised against the Government of £6,000 to rectify the mistakes in the transfer tower at Fremantle, and even today that payment has not been made, although the company has paid its £10,000.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Not within the time stipulated.

Mr. ACKLAND: It is not the fault of the Government because the company has not yet presented its account for that amount. It is principally the fault of the Railway Department that the agreement was so long delayed. It was asking an exaggerated price for the rent of the land for the erection of sheer legs for the transfer tower and many months passed before that final agreement was made.

There is another matter I want to mention which is in reference to road transport mentioned by the member for North-East Fremantle. In 1935 the Bulk Handling Act became law in this country and it was introduced by a Labour administration.

Mr. May: Six minutes to go!

Mr. ACKLAND: In Section 3 of that Act we find this:—

(1). Subject to this Act the Company is hereby granted the sole right until the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-five, of receiving wheat in bulk at railway stations and sidings where the company has installed country bins under this Act and the sole right to contract or arrange for the handling, transport by rail and delivery of such wheat in bulk in the State subject, however, to the following exception—

Provided that the grower of any wheat crop may transport by rail in bulk not more than ten per cent. of the marketable portion of such crop.

The grower therefore is allowed to handle ten per cent. of the wheat himself. The Government has every right to hand the cartage of that wheat over to the company. Would members of the Opposition say that White Rock Quarries, which has a commodity that they crush, should not be allowed to handle their production?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Does that firm make its own arrangements?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not know what arrangements it makes. This wheat is the property of the farmer.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is a lot of nonsense!

Mr. ACKLAND: The farmer, through his own company, asks that it be delivered to the port of destination and he is right in doing that. There are several features which I would like to have mentioned but it is the Opposition's fault if I have taken more time than that prescribed.

As to Extension of Time Limit.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order! Under Standing Order No. 157 I move—

That the time for the consideration of this debate be extended by one hour from 11 p.m.

Standing Order No. 157 provides—

A debate may be adjourned on motion duly seconded, and without discussion, or by leave being granted to a member then speaking to continue his remarks at a future time either to a later hour of the same day or to any other day.

If you rule that motion out of order I will then move—

That the time be extended to another day.

That is, until tomorrow. I would now like your advice as to whether the time for this debate can be extended to midnight.

Mr. Speaker: That is in direct contradiction to the direction given to the House.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Premier could alter that direction.

Debate Resumed.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [10.56]: At this late hour I do not think it is fair that I should speak and I will therefore concede my time to the member for Fremantle.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [10.57]: We are simply being butchered to enable two members of the Government to resign in order to contest the Federal elections. Before 11 o'clock strikes I want to say to the Minister for Health that if he does not come up to scratch with this property of Mr. Hudson's he will stand branded in the same way as Mr. Hamilton was branded in the last issue of "The Sunday Times."

Mr. May: What did they call Hamilton?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Attorney General said tonight that it was idle chatter. If he wishes to brand himself as an idle chatterer I do not mind because he is the one who is doing all the chattering. I also wish to remind the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping that she published a pamphlet on hospital accommodation and as to what would happen to the newly-weds. I want to know what is going to happen to them now. The Minister for Health has been saying for the past twelve months, "Send them to the King Edward." But the matron of that hospital blows the gaff in yesterday's issue of "The Daily News" in which she says:—

With K.E.M.H. already overcrowded before last week's sudden rush of babies, the nursing and domestic staff have been rushed "off their feet" trying to cope with the work.

In the hospital now are 132 mothers—a record number of patients—and every bit of space is packed with beds.

"The wards are full of mothers. And with more coming in all the time, beds have had to be put in all ward corridors," Matron said. So there is no room in the King Edward Hospital and the Minister for Health knows that and has known it for the past twelve months. He did not wish to give the Fremantle district a fair deal and he used that argument as an excuse. When I presented a petition signed by over 8,000 Fremantle people for hospital accommodation he endeavoured to get the people who said they would

sell their homes to say "No," and that is not idle chatter. When he found they were adamant he said he would hold the motion up for another week until he got "No" for an answer. Then he said that the place under consideration was not suitable and that was not idle chatter either. Now he is trying to evade the next issue in his representations to buy the Hudson property and to get certain recommendations made. In fact, it came over the wireless this morning that the sale was definitely on, but in this morning's issue of "The West Australian" it was reported the sale was postponed for the time being. Now we find the Minister for Health saying that it was only under consideration and is still being considered.

The people of Fremantle want more than consideration; they want a fair deal. I read a letter signed by nine doctors who stated that a hospital was urgently required. If it is not provided immediately the people of Fremantle will know what to do. It is of no use the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping coming down to Fremantle to address the women there on behalf of a candidate who is opposing the member for North-East Fremantle because she will find she will get no support. The Government asks people to have babies but they receive no consideration. Even Sir James Mitchell said Fremantle is famous for its children and that we should produce more babies but what consideration do the mothers receive? They are getting none whatsoever. I hope the Minister for Health will stand up to his promise and see that they get what they desire, because if they do not he will be branded in the same way, as I said before, Hamilton, M.H.R., was branded by the "Sunday Times." Let me touch on another question before the axe strikes.

Mr. Hegney: You have plenty of time.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I hope the Government will not waste any more money—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The question is:—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

I declare the question passed in the affirmative.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: In common courtesy, Mr. Speaker, you might have asked me to resume my seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The question has been passed in the affirmative.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I call for a division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well! The House will divide.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	24
Noes	21

Majority for	3
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AYES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Ackland	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Murray
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Read
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hall	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Sir Norbert Keenan.	Mr. Wild
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Yates
Mr. Mann	Mr. Brand

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Triat
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. May	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. McCulloch	

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Seward	Mr. Smith
Mr. Naider	Mr. Oliver

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: A Bill for an Act to appropriate and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and from moneys to the credit of the General Loan Fund and from the public account certain sums to make good the Supplies granted for the service of the year—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Mr. Chairman —

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: When you are reading the preamble, Mr. Chairman, may I move to amend it by deleting the word "cheerfully"?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the member for Northam sit down?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Now, Sir?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Clauses 1 to 4, Schedules A to G—agreed to.

Title:

Mr. HEGNEY: Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HEGNEY: What is the Title of the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat?

Mr. HEGNEY: Cannot I get some explanation from the Chair?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the member for Pilbara obey the Chair?

Mr. HEGNEY: I merely want to know the Title.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the member for Pilbara sit down?

Mr. HEGNEY: But, Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: Are you going to obey the Chair?

Mr. HEGNEY: Yes, but I want to know what is the Title.

The CHAIRMAN: I will put the question: That this be the Title of the Bill.

Question put and passed; Title agreed to.

Mr. Rodoreda: What a farce!

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne): Mr. Speaker, on this motion—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There can be no discussion.

Question put and declared carried.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Divide!

Division taken.

Remarks during Division.

Mr. Hegney: This is just Fascism!

Mr. Marshall: It is reducing Parliament to an absolute farce.

Mr. Graham: Is not the Government a farce?

Mr. Marshall: It is time the people turned Parliament out.

Mr. Graham: Heil McLarty!

Mr. Reynolds: The Independents are off the fence!

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I bet the Independents will not have Liberal opponents at the election.

Division Resumed.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	24
Noes	21
Majority for	3

AYES.

Mr. Abbott
Mr. Ackland
Mr. Bovell
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Cornell
Mr. Doney
Mr. Grayden
Mr. Hall
Mr. Hill
Sir N. Keenan
Mr. Leslie
Mr. Mann

Mr. McDonald
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Murray
Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Read
Mr. Shearn
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Wild
Mr. Yates
Mr. Brand

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brady
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Fox
Mr. Graham
Mr. Hawke
Mr. Hegney
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Marshall
Mr. May
Mr. McCulloch

Mr. Needham
Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Panton
Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Styants
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Triat
Mr. Wise
Mr. Rodoreda

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYE. Mr. Seward
Mr. Nalder

No. Mr. Smith
Mr. Oliver

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT (NOTIFICATION OF TRANSACTIONS).

As to Postponement.

Order of the Day read for the moving of the second reading.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I move—
That the Order of the Day be postponed.

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

Ayes	21
Noes	24

Majority against .. 3

AYES.

Mr. Brady
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Fox
Mr. Graham
Mr. Hawke
Mr. Hegney
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Marshall
Mr. May
Mr. McCulloch

Mr. Needham
Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Panton
Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Styants
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Triat
Mr. Wise
Mr. Rodoreda

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Abbott
Mr. Ackland
Mr. Bovell
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Cornell
Mr. Doney
Mr. Grayden
Mr. Hall
Mr. Hill
Sir N. Keenan
Mr. Leslie
Mr. Mann

Mr. McDonald
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Murray
Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Read
Mr. Shearn
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Wild
Mr. Yates
Mr. Brand

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYE. Mr. Smith
Mr. Oliver

No. Mr. Seward
Mr. Nalder

Motion thus negatived.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [11.18] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is being introduced to ensure that the Land Purchase Board shall be aware of all suitable farming properties that are being placed on the market. The Government considers this to be essential in order to assist the War Service Land Settlement Board in obtaining properties, and it is intended that the measure shall operate until the 31st December, 1950.

The Land Sales Control Act, passed last year, enabled a continuation of this control, which was actually an extension of the Commonwealth National Security Regulations that were prolonged since 1946 under the transitional provisions of the Defence Act. In that Act special recognition was given to the claims of former members of the Defence Forces to purchase properties suitable for farming. There is little doubt that this provision has enabled a much greater proportion of ex-

Servicemen to be placed on properties than in any other State. This is clearly indicated in statements by the Commonwealth Minister in charge of War Service Land Settlement.

While the policy of this Government is to pursue the development of Crown lands as far as possible, the purchase of partly developed properties, particularly in the wheat and sheep areas, is essential. The purchase of these properties will ensure a continuity of allotments of properties to ex-Servicemen pending virgin areas being developed to a stage ready for settlement. The Government has provided that the provisions in the Land Sales Control Act giving priority to returned Servicemen for up to six weeks for the purchase of properties through the Land Settlement Board shall be continued to the 31st December, 1949, when the Land Sales Control Act will lapse.

It is the wish of the Government to ensure that the Land Purchase Board shall be aware of all suitable properties which owners may wish to sell, and that a reasonable period shall be given to the board in which to make essential inquiries before the Government is involved in any purchase, and to negotiate with the owner or his agent. The Bill provides for a maximum period of six weeks, although the Land Purchase Board undoubtedly will be able to give a decision on the majority of properties before this time has expired.

The Bill is quite simple and has been designed to cause as little inconvenience as possible to vendors, purchasers and the commercial public. As the Land Purchase Board is interested only in suitable properties, the Bill excludes all properties which would have little chance of being regarded as suitable for ex-Servicemen. Provision is made for all properties below 150 acres in area in the South-West dairying districts to be excluded, as well as any property in the wheat and sheep or oat-growing and sheep districts below 1,500 acres. There is no question of the price being controlled.

If the Land Settlement Board is unable to come to an agreement within six weeks after the property has been offered to the board, the vendor is then at liberty to sell in any other direction. The Land Purchase Board has acquired 410 properties of a

value of £2,318,415 during the last three and a half years which will subdivide into approximately 560 farms. It is hoped that the Bill will enable a continuation of the purchase of properties, particularly in the wheat and sheep areas. Certain property transactions will not be prevented by the Bill and the Governor will, by regulation, exempt those categories. They are listed in Section 13 of the Land Sales Control Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. H. PANTON (Leederville) [11.22]: I fancy there has never been a Bill introduced in this House which will do less good than this one. The Minister himself admits that no question of price control is involved. In my opinion, all the Bill does is to allow any owner of land who believes that he has land suitable for returned soldiers to notify the Land Purchase Board. That is all he has to do. Then, after arguing for the succeeding six weeks without coming to any agreement, he can tell the members of the board to go where they like. The Bill will not succeed in securing land for returned soldiers and no-one knows that better than the Minister himself. What is the use of trying to tell people, particularly returned soldiers, that the Government can do something with a Bill of this sort? It cannot do anything.

Why did not the Minister, in order to overcome some difficulties raised by the Upper House in regard to the resumption of land for industrial purposes, bring down a Bill to amend that legislation? The Minister knows something about it. That Bill was passed in 1945 and was entitled Industrial Development (Resumption of Land) Act. The Minister will probably recollect that the Legislative Council inserted the following proviso in that measure:—

Subject to approval by Parliament—

That is the first point. Land could be resumed.

Subject to approval by Parliament the Governor may from time to time on the recommendation of the Committee—

A committee had to be appointed—

—if adopted by the Minister and with the approval of the Treasurer purchase or acquire compulsorily under and subject to the provisions of the Public Works Act any land which in the opinion of the Minister it is desirable to acquire . . .

Was it not a wonderful amendment which the Legislative Council inserted? It is very interesting, I am sure, even if the Government has forgotten what the Legislative Council did in 1945 in amending that measure. I presume "Parliament" means both Houses of Parliament; at least that is what I was taught. Parliament had to approve of the recommendation of the committee if adopted by the Minister. And then the approval of the Treasurer was required. I suggest, in all sincerity, that if the Minister and the Government are desirous of obtaining land under this Bill, the proper thing for them to do is to ascertain whether the Legislative Council would reverse what it did in 1945. I tell the Minister quite candidly that he has not a chance of getting any land except at the owner's price.

The Minister for Lands: I admit that.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: And the owner's price will mean an increased burden for the returned soldier to bear. The Minister is shaking his head.

The Attorney General: The land will be acquired at no cost to the returned soldier.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Why?

The Minister for Lands: It will be at the cost of the Government, as the property will be written down to its economic value.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: But the returned soldier will pay his share. The result will be that he will start off with a load.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Even if what the Minister says is right, that does not excuse the fact that the Government will have to pay.

The Premier: Do you expect an increase in land values now that controls have been removed?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Any land that is worth while has already been sold for the purpose of settling returned soldiers. Any land that might be submitted under this measure would be at a pretty stiff price. Whether it will be paid for by the returned soldier, or by his dependants and the rest of the State, we shall find ourselves in the same position as we were after the 1914-18 war. A huge amount will have to be written off. That is what will happen.

The Premier: That has been happening.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Of course it has.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: On the fixed values, too.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Is it to happen again?

The Premier: I do not think there will be any great increase in land values.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The Premier has no right to think that. The point is, should not the Government have brought down a Bill for the compulsory resumption of land suitable for soldiers at a proper price, not the price fixed by the owner? That is what I want to ascertain. All that the Bill introduced by the Minister does—and there is no question about this—is to insist on a six weeks' notification to the Land Board. The board will then say to the owner, "We will give you £25,000 for this land." The owner says, "I want £30,000," and lets it rest there. At the end of six weeks the parties are where they started. Do not let us fool ourselves or the returned soldiers who are waiting for land that anything will be got out of this Bill.

The Premier: It will probably help to get something.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It will not help to get anything.

The Premier: I think it will.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I disagree with the Premier. Why has not the Government got the land long ago? The Minister shakes his head. All I want to do is to tell the Government what I think about the Bill and that is what I have done.

The Premier: We will get some land.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Some land of value to nobody else.

The Premier: It will let the Land Board know what land is for sale.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The Land Board already knows that.

The Premier: If the owner is satisfied with the price the board will get it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: He will not be satisfied. All the land still unsold will be worth a lot of money. Anyhow, I do not think the Bill is worth the paper it is written on so far as settling returned soldiers is concerned.

Mr. HEGNEY: I move

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. LESLIE: Mr. Speaker,—

As to Hours of Sitting.

Mr. Needham: On a point of order! This House has carried a resolution that the sitting hours shall not exceed nine. We met at 2.30 p.m. and it is now 11.30 p.m. I want to move that you now adjourn the House automatically.

The Premier: The time for adjournment is 12.45.

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member asking for a ruling?

Mr. Needham: The resolution was that the sitting hours should not exceed nine on any day except the last day. As we met at 2.30 p.m. today and it is 11.30 p.m. now I want to move that House do now adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has asked for a ruling and any motion must come later. The point at issue is whether the nine hours have been accomplished between 2.30 p.m. and 11.30 p.m. I understood the motion to read and to mean nine hours of sitting in this Chamber.

The Premier: That is it!

Several members interjected.

Mr. Speaker: I hope it will not be carried out to the letter.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I suggest that you cannot properly give a decision on that matter until you refer to the actual resolution. It is not much use giving a ruling based on your memory.

Mr. Speaker: Has the hon. member the motion in front of him?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes. And I think your action should have been automatic as it was in regard to the motion submitted by the Government. You would not allow any debate on that. The amendment moved to the Premier's motion on the 22nd September, and carried was—

That the following proviso be added:—
“Provided that no sitting day shall exceed nine hours, except on the last day of the session.”

So if we start to sit at 2.30 p.m. that terminates the sitting day at 11.30 p.m.

The Premier: No!

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It does not say anything about hours of actual sitting.

The Premier: When he moved that proviso, the Leader of the Opposition himself referred to 12.45.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Premier knows that it does not matter what a member says when he is debating. These things are determined by what the House carries. The Premier said that ample time would be provided for a discussion of the Estimates!

The Premier: The time referred to in the proviso covers the hours of actual sitting, and does not include tea suspensions and afternoon tea suspensions.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I will quote the proviso again—

Provided that no sitting day shall exceed nine hours, except on the last day of the session.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: From start to finish.

Mr. Speaker: I think that during the debate it was made quite clear that the time referred to the hours of actual sitting. My ruling is—I may be quite wrong, but this is my opinion—that the “nine hours” means nine hours sitting in this Chamber.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Have you considered the implication of that ruling if this House went into conference? Suppose we commenced to sit at 2.30 p.m. and at 11 p.m. went into conference, would you rule that we would have to remain here until that conference was over because we had not at that stage completed nine hours?

Mr. Speaker: No.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: If you would not rule in that way you cannot rule that an adjournment for lunch or afternoon tea is to be excluded from the hours of sitting.

Mr. Needham: Have you ruled that the hours of sitting mean the actual hours devoted to debate in this Chamber?

Mr. Speaker: My ruling is that the nine hours relates to nine hours actual sitting in this Chamber.

Dissent from Speaker's Ruling.

Mr. Needham: Then I move—

That the House dissent from the Speaker's ruling.

When hours of sitting are specified at the beginning of the session they exclude the tea suspension. When the Leader of the Opposition moved his proviso there was no qualification, good, bad or indifferent, as was evident when the member for North-East Fremantle read the motion that was carried.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:

Ayes	21
Noes	22
Majority against				1

AYES.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Graham	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Styauis
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Triat
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. May	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. McCulloch	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Mann
Mr. Ackland	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Bovell	Mr. McLarty
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Murray
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hall	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Sir Norbert Keenan.	Mr. Yates
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Brand

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Smith	Mr. Seward
Mr. Oliver	Mr. Nalder

Motion thus negatived.

Debate Resumed.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [11.38]: I am in accord with the member for Leederville that the Bill will provide no more for ex-Servicemen than is available today. It will certainly give the war service land settlement people an opportunity to learn what land is being sold; it has that much in its favour. Between 1,800 and 1,900 rural properties were sold last year under price control regulations, and it was possible for the war service land settlement people to become aware of every property offered for sale because approval of the price had to be obtained, so that they could follow what was happening. As price control has disappeared, unless something is done the department will not be aware of the land transactions that are going through. Therefore it would have no opportunity of knowing a property was for sale until such time as the transfer was on the way through. All the Bill will enable the department to do will be to become aware of properties likely to be offered. I do not think it will provide any more land than has been available in the past.

As far as I can see, an intending vendor will have to notify the Minister that he proposes to sell his land, and then wait for 42 days. In the meantime he can dither around with the Minister and the department about the price and everything else. If he does not want his property to go to the War Service Land Settlement people he can merely delay action for 42 days. I would prefer to see a Bill with a provision that the particulars regarding the sale price of the land should be included in the notification so that firm negotiations could be entered into immediately. The condition in the Bill which provides that the Registrar of Titles may refuse to register the instrument until evidence is submitted to him that the provisions of the Act have been complied with is, to my way of thinking, hardly necessary. I thought it might be the salvation of the Bill, but it means nothing at all because the Minister would have to certify that the vendor had offered the land and that the negotiations for its sale were not completed within the 42 days, and, therefore, the land was released from the control exercised by the measure.

When I was on the Opposition side of the House I drew the then Government's attention to a provision in the Victorian Act which gave the Government the power to acquire, under fair terms, land from vendors, who were prepared to sell. It is a comprehensive provision and it is not possible for a private member, but only the Government, to move for its inclusion. It is working successfully in Victoria. If an owner is not satisfied with what the War Service Land Settlement people do, he has the right to appeal to a court of law. He is fully protected. I believe, at the same time, that the War Service Land Settlement authorities have some responsibilities. They have to come to a decision within 21 days of the time of the application for registration of the transfer at the Titles Office. I am still of the opinion that that provision is necessary if we are to get suitable land.

The Bill certainly does some good, and I propose to support it. It will undoubtedly, however, have a disappointing result, because I am certain that while the Minister will be able at the end of a period to point to land and properties that have been acquired as a result of the measure, I and the R.S.L. will be able to point to lots of

other land which was duly notified to the Minister but which, because of the fact that negotiations were not completed within the specified time and because there is not a measure of compulsion, was not acquired.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And no mention of price, either.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes. It will be disappointing to returned servicemen who are looking for an opportunity to settle on the land. The Bill has possibly been drafted rather hastily in order that it might be brought down at this late stage. The member for Irwin-Moore suggests that I should propose an amendment. The only possible amendment is the one included in the Victorian Act but it is not competent for a private member to move it because it involves a charge on the Crown. This is the first I have seen of the Bill, and I have not had an opportunity to consider any other suitable amendment. The measure is something, so do not let us turn it down! Give it an opportunity to work. If we find that we do not profit very much from it then we can arrange to have it amended later.

MR. HOAR (Nelson) [11.47]: I am surprised that the member for Mt. Marshall can see any good in the Bill. To me it is a fitting end to the Government's emptiness this session. As far as I can see there is only one redeeming feature in it and that is the provision that ties the Land Settlement Board down to six weeks. I have seldom known it make a decision within six months.

The Minister for Lands: You are inclined to exaggerate. You know that is not true.

Mr. HOAR: Do not say that I am inclined to exaggerate. I either exaggerate or I do not. I know of many cases in the South-West.

The Minister for Lands: You do not know of too many.

Mr. HOAR: I know of people in the Manjimup area who offered land to the Land Settlement Board. Months have gone by and they have been so disgusted that they have sent telegrams to the Director of Land Settlement informing him that unless he made a decision within ten days they would withdraw the land from sale.

The Minister for Lands: Is that since the 1st April, 1947, or before?

Mr. HOAR: It is since the Minister has occupied his present position.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The board was buying very little land before that date.

Mr. HOAR: There was one such instance this year and two last year. If the Land Settlement Board can make up its mind within six weeks, this Bill will have done some good. For the life of me I can see no value in it. It does not help anybody. It does not help the board to secure land and I am in accord with the member for Mt. Marshall that it will receive approximately the same as it did before.

Mr. Leslie: I did not say that. I said that the Bill would give an opportunity to the board to learn of farms that are to be sold.

Mr. HOAR: I hope the Bill will give the Government an opportunity to learn a bit of sense. The Minister has not explained what caused the Government to believe that any good results could be achieved by the measure. If he has any such ideas he has not informed the Chamber of them. There is no doubt that the Land Settlement Board will have competitors in an open sale, and it will not be in a position to know what the other buyers are willing to offer. I fail to see how it can acquire as much land in the future as it has done in the past.

Mr. Leslie: It gives it that opportunity.

Mr. HOAR: It does not give it any such opportunity, because in the past the sale of land was controlled by the sub-Treasury valuation. Now the Government will be practically confined to the purchase of land at that valuation, in competition with private buyers who are willing to offer a higher price. Consequently no seller who wishes to obtain more than Treasury valuation for his land will sell to the Land Settlement Board. The fact that there is no control now over land sales will exclude the board from free competition in these sales. The Bill is of no value and I have yet to learn from the Minister why he introduced it.

MR. CORNELL (Avon) [11.51]: One point about this Bill intrigues me. Assuming a man offers his property to the Land Settlement Board and the board makes him an offer for it and he then elects to sell it to a third party, who may offer a higher

price, is there anything to prevent him from selling to that third party and ignoring the Land Settlement Board altogether?

Hon. A. H. Panton: There is nothing to prevent him doing so after 42 days.

Mr. CORNELL: If that is so the Bill is hardly worth the paper it is written on and the best thing the board can do will be to go on the open market.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [11.53]: I agree with all who have so far spoken to the debate, as to the lack of any practical result that can be expected to be achieved by the passing of this Bill. Now that land sales are uncontrolled and land can bring any price whatever, the Government will be forced to acquire properties, if it wants them, at the prices asked by the vendors. The only practical approach to the problem is to amend the resumption-of-land section of the Industrial Development Act and the Closer Settlement Act. Unless that is done it is only a pretence to hold out this measure as a sop to pacify returned men who are urgently desirous of going on the land. I would like the Minister to indicate what he thinks will happen when land suitable for soldier settlement is offered to the board and accepted and subdivided, with over-capitalisation resulting from the price asked for the land.

The Act under which land settlement is controlled and the agreement between the Commonwealth and the States make provision for sharing the losses above an economic value at the time of allocation. Even if the 42 days' provision was in the Act we would have some tremendous losses made possible. As other speakers have said, this piece of legislation is useless as a measure to operate in the interests of returned men who wish to acquire land. Now that control over land sales has gone by the board we are faced with a problem which can be solved only by compulsory acquisition and the amending of the two laws I have mentioned.

MR. BOVELL (Sussex) [11.55]: As far as I can see the purpose of the Bill is to give the Government opportunity of knowing what properties are on the market, so that it can purchase them, if necessary, for the rehabilitation of returned men.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Purchase them at a price!

Mr. BOVELL: We are not discussing prices. Unless the measure is passed the Government will have no opportunity of securing the land needed for the re-establishment of returned Servicemen.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Bill will not make it compulsory for owners to offer the Government properties.

Mr. BOVELL: No, but unless the measure is passed, land transactions can take place without the knowledge of the Government, which might therefore miss the opportunity of acquiring properties. That is the virtue I see in the Bill, and I therefore support the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay—in reply) [11.57]: A number of opinions has been expressed about this measure and to some extent we have been led away from its purpose, which is to provide for vendors of suitable properties to offer them to the Government or notify the Government of their sale. Although the Bill may not be of great value it will assist the scheme. While the land sales control operated I had to get the merchants together and discuss the position of properties with them, in order to get them to agree to offer the Government the land it required for the scheme.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What merchants were they?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Agents such as Goldsbrough Mort, Elder Smith and so on. That course was followed so that they would not put transactions through the Treasury only to find the Land Settlement Board coming in and holding up the sales and in some cases proclaiming against them. Whatever members may say about amending different Acts of Parliament that they think would make better provision for the scheme, the fact remains that after the report of the Select Committee and its recommendations, followed by the defeat of the control legislation in another place, the Government is making an attempt to secure the offer of properties so as to have some opportunity of negotiating with the vendors. We have no power to fix prices and members will appreciate what would happen to the Bill if an

attempt were made to amend it in this Chamber. Parliament has decided that there shall be no control in that regard.

Mr. Graham: Not Parliament!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, Parliament has agreed and so we cannot control prices. I ask the House to pass the Bill in order to give the board opportunity of knowing what properties are on the market, so that it may negotiate with the vendors. Although the Bill is not everything that we might desire, it is the best compromise that we can make at the moment. I suggest to the House that we approve of this Bill.

Mr. Graham: Does that guarantee that the Legislative Council will accept it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will be hard put not to accept it.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is innocuous enough.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will give us an opportunity to know what properties are on the market.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Notification of transactions:

Mr. GRAHAM: I had a discussion with the Minister for Education regarding paragraph (ii). He informed me that he would have this paragraph investigated by a qualified legal man because I consider it utterly impracticable in its present form. As members are aware, options are given and taken instantaneously but as I interpret the clause they will be forbidden.

The Attorney General: The option could be subject to the provisions of the Act.

Mr. GRAHAM: In the terms of the Bill as it stands, it would be unlawful to give or take an option. I may be mistaken, but I would like the matter investigated and if necessary some amendment made when the Bill reaches another place.

Mr. CORNELL: The question of an option is immaterial. I would say that even if paragraph (ii) were struck out it would not affect the operation of the Bill.

Mr. Graham: That is how it appealed to me.

Mr. CORNELL: Before anybody can buy or sell a property it must be submitted to the Land Settlement Board and the question of an option is really immaterial. Why is it intended to preclude a person from letting or taking a lease of any rural land? The Land Settlement Board is not interested in the leasing of farm lands. There are many leases in existence and before they could be continued the properties would have to be submitted to the Land Settlement Board, but the owners may not have any desire to sell them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The reason is that if owners were allowed to let or lease it would defeat the purpose of the Bill and that is why the provision has been put in. In reply to the query raised by the member for East Perth, I will have the matter investigated and if necessary adjusted in another place.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 9, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FOOTWEAR REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd September.

MR. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [12.8]: I have closely perused the provisions of this Bill which is to amend the Footwear Regulation Act.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: What are they, kicking boots?

Mr. HEGNEY: It is a most appropriate title. I would remind the Premier that the amending of this legislation has nothing to do with the guillotine or the way in which the Government has recently put the boots into the Opposition. I have found that the main definition applies to the alteration of the word "sole." Here again, the Premier would not know anything about that.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He has never had a soul.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Act was originally passed in 1917 and is known as the Footwear Regulation Act, 1916, but apparently it has not for some considerable time been applied very seriously. During the war the Commonwealth took over the control of the standard and quality of footwear and that control ceased at the end of last year. Following the release of control by the Commonwealth Government, the Federal executive of the Bootmakers' Union made representations to the Prime Minister who, in turn, approached the various States with a view to obtaining the introduction of uniform legislation for the better supervision and control of the standard of footwear. Already in two States legislation has been passed and, as a result of a Premiers' Conference held some time in 1947, it was agreed that uniform legislation would be introduced by all the States. What I would like to hear from the Minister in charge of the Bill is whether he will let the House know that this amendment is in conformity with the decision made at that Premiers' Conference, and whether it is substantially the same Bill that will be introduced in all the States.

I have been in touch with the secretary of the Bootmakers' Union of Western Australia and, while the definition of "sole" includes the heel, no reference is made in the amending Bill to that part of the boot or shoe known as the "uppers." I am not in a position to say whether any reference was made to the quality of the uppers by the Federal secretary of the Bootmakers' Union, but the local secretary is rather concerned on the point because the uppers are a very important part of the boot or shoe, and instances have been known where uppers have been sprayed or painted and, for the time being, they have been all right, but when put to a little use they were no good at all. A lady with three sons got in touch with me today when she heard that this matter was coming before the House. She told me that she bought a pair of shoes for one of her boys, and in three weeks the soles had come completely away from the uppers, and the firm to whom she returned the shoes was good enough to supply her with another pair.

However, she experienced the same trouble with the second pair, and those shoes cost 18s. 9d.

It is proposed to control the standard of footwear in the amendment which provides that a statement of materials must be attached, and that would include the sole which, as I have said, includes the heel. I have found with some boots that the top lift of the heel is of good leather but the other lifts are of extremely inferior quality; in some cases, of cardboard. Of course, in some instances with women's shoes wood and other materials are used. If this State, as an example, were not to pass this legislation and other States did, the position would very soon arise of extremely poor quality boots and shoes being dumped into Western Australia to the detriment of our people. I am therefore anxious to see all States pass this legislation uniformly to ensure that any manufacturer or seller will be obliged to have on the footwear an indication that the materials used are of good quality. If the Minister will be good enough to advise me that the uppers are included in that it will be very reassuring. Of course, if there is to be no control, I have no doubt that footwear of a shoddy nature will be imported into this State.

The Minister for Lands: It leaves us open as a dumping ground.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Act as it now stands will allow that, in my opinion. The provisions of the Bill will tighten up and improve the Act, and from inquiries I have made I am pleased to learn that there will be certain supervision over the import of footwear by the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Mr. HEGNEY: If that is done I think it is a step in the right direction and both the State Branch of the Bootmakers' Union and the Federal body are to be commended for their representations to their respective Governments. After all is said and done the members of that union, being tradesmen, are anxious to turn out an article that is durable and of high quality for the benefit of the people generally. The workers would not get any pleasure or pride from participating in the manufacture of shoddy materials into footwear. We know

that a good deal of this type of manufacture is placed on the market and this measure will help to ensure that the public are sold a product of high quality. I hope the opinion expressed by members of the Bootmakers' Union will be acquiesced in by all the Governments, and that when this Government proclaims the Act it will be able to state that it is uniform throughout Australia.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay—in reply) [12.19]: This legislation is uniform among all the States and the query raised by the member for Pilbara as to the uppers of a boot or shoe is answered in the regulations which specifically deal with that question. I have the regulations before me and I can assure the hon. member that that point is covered in them.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short Title.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members will notice that the short title is shown as the "Footwear Regulations Act, 1916." That is a printer's error and to rectify it, I move—

That in line 1 after the word "the" the words "Footwear Regulation Act Amendment Act, 1949, and shall be read as one with the" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Repeal and re-enactment of Section 4:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Proposed new Section 4 contains a reference to the outside of a boot or shoe, whereas it should mention the outsole. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 the word "outside" be struck out and the word "outsole" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. today.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 12.23 a.m.
(Wednesday).*

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 28th September, 1949.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

TOBACCO.

As to Reduction of Goldfields Ration.

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is the Minister aware that the Western Australian Tobacco Trade Distribution Committee has decided to decrease the tobacco ration by 15 per cent. as from the 1st October, 1949, in Kalgoorlie and Boulder?