

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 11.5 p.m.*



# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 10th November, 1954.

## CONTENTS.

	Page
Sittings of the House, statement by Premier	2754
Questions : Education, (a) as to school bus service, Margaret River district ....	2754
(b) as to postponement of school ground improvements ....	2754
(c) as to tenders for school, Carey Park ....	2754
Transport, as to suggested terminus, Subiaco ....	2755
Betting, as to suggested State-wide totalisator ....	2755
Forests, as to royalties on timber from private holdings ....	2755
Railways, as to report on broad gauge, Kalgoorlie to Fremantle ....	2755
Export fruit, as to improving appearance of cases ....	2756
Royal Perth Hospital, as to abolishing visiting fee ....	2756
Assent to Bills ....	2756
Motion : Air Beef Pty., Ltd., as to continuance of Government subsidy ....	2756
Annual Estimates, 1954-55, Com. of Supply, general debate ....	2764
Speakers on financial policy—	
Mr. Johnson ....	2764
Mr. Sewell ....	2770
Mr. Ackland ....	2771
Mr. May ....	2775
Mr. Brady ....	2780
Mr. Oldfield ....	2785
Bills : Stock Diseases Act Amendment, 1r.	2756
Parks and Reserves Act Amendment, 1r.	2756
Vermín Act Amendment, 3r. ....	2756
Marketing of Eggs Act Amendment, 3r.	2756
Corneal and Tissue Grafting, report ....	2756
Builders Registration Act Amendment, 2r. ....	2762
Dried Fruits Act Amendment, 2r. ....	2763

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

## SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE.

*Statement by Premier.*

The **PREMIER**: I should like to indicate that the Government will be asking the House to sit after tea tomorrow evening.

## QUESTIONS.

## EDUCATION.

(a) *As to School Bus Service, Margaret River District.*

Mr. **BOVELL** asked the Minister for Education:

What new school bus routes will operate, and when will tenders be called for transport of schoolchildren from surrounding districts to Margaret River when consolidation at that centre becomes effective in February, 1955?

The **PREMIER** (for the Minister for Education) replied:

Tenders, which close on the 26th November have been advertised in the Press for the following new bus services:—

Margaret River-Bramley-Osmington—Circular route of 33½ miles for 50 children.

Margaret River-Rosa Brook—Circular route of 33 miles for 40 children.

Margaret River-Augusta—(Post primary bus). Terminal route of 28 miles for 45 children.

Forest Grove-Warner Glen—Circular route of 31 miles for 35 children.

Karridale-Nillup—Terminal route of 29 miles for 35 children.

(b) *As to Postponement of School Ground Improvements.*

Hon. C. F. J. **NORTH** asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the disappointment expressed in Swanbourne that the improvement of the school grounds there has been postponed, will he inform the House which (if any) other schools in the State are in the same predicament?

The **PREMIER** (for the Minister for Education) replied:

Yes, there are 50 other schools listed for ground improvements when finance becomes available.

(c) *As to Tenders for School, Carey Park.*

Mr. **GUTHRIE** asked the Minister for Education:

Will he inform the House whether tenders have yet been called for the new school at Carey Park? If so, when is a start likely to be made on the building?

The **PREMIER** (for the Minister for Education) replied:

Tenders have been withdrawn and the school redesigned. Tenders will be again called on the 30th November, 1954.

### TRANSPORT.

*As to Suggested Terminus, Subiaco.*

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is he aware that the suggested terminus at the junction of Rokeby-rd and Hay-st., Subiaco, is the most dangerous in the metropolitan area?

(2) If so, will he suggest an alternative terminus?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is not considered by the Tramway Department that this is a dangerous terminus.

(2) See answer to previous question.

### BETTING.

*As to Suggested State-wide Totalisator.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Did he, some weeks ago, receive a deputation from the W.A.T.C. and the W.A.T.A. on the question of a State-wide totalisator?

(2) If so, was any written proposal submitted by the deputation or was a note taken of the submissions?

(3) Will he lay on the Table of the House today any such proposal and/or the transcript of such note?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) and (3) Proposals were put forward in the form of suggestions. I think that by no stretch of imagination could it be said that any proposals were put forward for the setting up of an off-the-course totalisator system. Abbreviated notes of the deputation were taken. I am prepared to place the notes or a copy of them on the Table of the House and will do so at tomorrow's sitting.

### FORESTS.

*As to Royalties on Timber from Private Holdings.*

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Forests:

Recently I asked the Minister the following questions:—

(1) Amount of timber royalties due to landowner-farmers on all timber removed from holdings by the Forests Department?

(2) Area and type of timber which can be claimed and retained by landowner-farmers for own use?

(3) Responsibility of Forests Department to clear debris, protect pastures and repair damage to fences and other improvements?

The reply of the Minister was that he would obtain the information, but a considerable time would be necessary to prepare it. Is the information now available?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is not possible to state the amount of timber royalties due to settlers, as it is not known whether they are entitled to a share of the royalty until the applications have been received and investigated to see whether they comply with the conditions laid down.

To 31/10/54, 83 applications have been received.

61 have been approved.

10 not approved because they did not qualify.

12 not yet finalised.

Amount paid to settlers to 31/10/54, £4,930.

(2) A settler is not entitled to claim the timber on any area for his own use.

The Forests Department, however, marks sufficient timber suitable for fence posts, rails, poles, shed timbers, etc., to be retained to meet the normal needs of the settler.

(3) The Forests Department is not responsible for the clearing of debris resulting from sawmilling operations.

In all permits issued by the department, clauses are inserted prohibiting the felling of timber on established pasture without the written consent of the owner or occupier of the land, and requiring the permit holder to repair any damage to fences or other improvements.

### RAILWAYS.

*As to Report on Broad Gauge, Kalgoorlie to Fremantle.*

Mr. ACKLAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

Has he yet received the report from the Commissioner of Railways with regard to a conference which that officer attended in the Eastern States relative to the establishment of a broad gauge railway between Kalgoorlie and the coast?

The PREMIER replied:

I have not yet received the report, but the Minister for Railways has just told me that it is now available and that a copy is being forwarded to me today. That report will be available after today.

**EXPORT FRUIT.***As to Improving Appearance of Cases.*

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Forests:

Is he aware that considerable adverse comment arose last season overseas in connection with our export fruit as the result of the poor appearance of the Western Australian cases and, if so, can he advise whether any steps are being taken to improve the appearance of the cases—particularly for export—for the coming season?

The MINISTER replied:

I cannot recollect any complaints in this regard having been directed to me as Minister for Forests. On the other hand, I have heard of some complaints indirectly, particularly in connection with the sliced boards that are prepared at Pemberton. In this connection it might be suggested that those interested in the marketing of the fruit should place their orders with the sawmillers in reasonable time so that they can, perhaps, use alternative methods. Up to date, the practice has been for no intimation to be given until very late in the season and then, of course, it is necessary for sawmillers and others who cut cases to proceed with the utmost expedition and, naturally, the same attention cannot then be given to the work as would otherwise be done. However, now that the matter has been raised by the member for Blackwood, I will look into the question and see what can be done in this regard.

**ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL.***As to Abolishing Visiting Fee.*

Mr. OLDFIELD (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

In view of the fact that patients at the Royal Perth Hospital are now required to pay an amount equivalent to that charged by private institutions, will he give consideration to abolishing the visiting fee?

The MINISTER replied:

Much consideration has been given to this aspect of the matter. Not from a financial point of view, but in order to protect the nurses and also the patients who are very sick, we do not think it advisable that too many people should visit the hospital at any time. I recently had an experience in this hospital and there were four beds in the ward. One patient, suffering from ulcers, was very sick and another, who was progressing very favourably, had a number of visitors who, unfortunately, neglected to recognise that there were very sick patients in the room.

I will give the question further consideration, but I do not think it is wise to abolish the fee as the visitors already have sufficient scope seeing that there

are three days per week on which they can visit their friends in the hospital without payment of a fee.

**ASSENT TO BILLS.**

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

- 1, Guardianship of Infants Act Amendment.
- 2, Administration Act Amendment.

**BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Stock Diseases Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.
- 2, Parks and Reserves Act Amendment.  
Introduced by Mr. Lapham.

**BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.**

- 1, Vermin Act Amendment.
- 2, Marketing of Eggs Act Amendment.  
Transmitted to the Council.

**BILL—CORNEAL AND TISSUE GRAFTING.**

Report of Committee adopted.

**MOTION—AIR BEEF PTY. LTD.***As to Continuance of Government Subsidy.*

Debate resumed from the 3rd November on the following motion by Mr. Court:—

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should continue the assistance to Air Beef Pty. Ltd. by relieving the company of charges from the Wyndham Meat Works in excess of 1.2 pence per lb. (or the adjusted charge under the formula) or at least enter into an arrangement to taper off assistance over an agreed period of years.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [4.48]: I rise to oppose this motion, Mr. Speaker, and in doing so I am guided by the opinions given to me by pastoralists in the area concerned. At the outset, I might say that I have taken a keen interest in, and have been an enthusiastic supporter of, Air Beef since its commencement. I was once a cattle-grower, although in quite a small way, hence my personal interest in the scheme. However, the growers in that area who contacted me or those that I spoke to on my last visit to the North, were of the opinion that the scheme was worthy of a trial and it was for that reason that they supplied Air Beef with cattle, knowing full well that they were going to make a loss on those beasts, but, to use their own words, they have now given it a go and have had it.

A comparison of the prices which the growers received from the Wyndham Meat Works, with those received from Air Beef is interesting. In 1949 the Wyndham Meat Works paid, on an average, £10 4s. 7d. a head, and Air Beef paid £6 8s. 1d. In 1950 Wyndham Meat Works paid £12 11s. 11d. per head, and Air Beef £7 4s. 4d. For the following years the figures were:—1951—Wyndham Meat Works, £15 8s. 1d.; Air Beef, £7 4s. 3d.; 1952—Wyndham Meat Works, £19 12s. 6d.; Air Beef, £10 18s.; 1953—Wyndham Meat Works, £20 13s. 1d.; Air Beef, £10 15s.

Mr. Court: You know £10 15s. is not the right price.

Mr. RHATIGAN: That is the price that was given to me.

Mr. Court: It is not right. It is £11 7s. 6d.

Mr. RHATIGAN: From those figures it can be seen that it is quite obvious that the grower, by sending his cattle to Air Beef, received only half the amount that he would get if they had been sent to Wyndham Meat Works.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Would they be the same grade of cattle?

Mr. RHATIGAN: Well, they are Kimberley cattle.

Mr. Oldfield: You would not expect to get Kimberley cattle in the South-West, would you?

Mr. RHATIGAN: The price obtained by growers from Air Beef represents only a quarter of that which they would receive if the cattle were sent to Perth.

Mr. Court: But could they ship them down to Perth?

Mr. RHATIGAN: It is nonsense to say that Air Beef is developing the North because the growers are receiving only half the amount they should obtain to reinvest in their properties.

Mr. Court: Could they ship the cattle south if they wanted to?

Mr. RHATIGAN: Quite a few came down the year before last.

Mr. Court: You missed the point. They cannot get them down to the port.

Mr. RHATIGAN: I gave the hon. member a fair go when he was speaking, and I think he might have the courtesy to refrain from interjecting during my speech. I would further point out that a few years ago great publicity was put out by the airline companies to the effect that they intended to open up Air Beef killing centres at Hall's Creek and Fitzroy Crossing, but this has never eventuated, the reason being that probably the cattle were not available. Mention has been made of the large number of stations that are supplying Air Beef with cattle. I pointed out earlier that these growers

are only supplying the beef as an experiment and now, at the expiration of the six-year period, during which Air Beef had every chance of proving whether the scheme would be an economic success, they consider it is uneconomic for them to supply beef to the company in the future.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Are you referring to the growers that were using the scheme?

Mr. Court: Would they use it again in a drought?

Mr. RHATIGAN: That remains to be seen. It has also not been mentioned that some of the cattle have strayed off many of the stations on to other stations close to Glenroy, and naturally those growers would put the cattle in with their own.

Mr. Hutchinson: But Air Beef cannot work against the betterment of the Kimberleys!

Mr. RHATIGAN: The point is, can the money paid as a subsidy to Air Beef be put to better use?

Mr. Hutchinson: By paying the money to the individual station-owners?

Mr. RHATIGAN: Yes, by helping them with the provision of better water supplies or by the importation of bloodstock to improve their herds, which is the most important point. If this were done, we could be sure of good quality cattle in the future. The absentee cattle-owner is not prepared to import bloodstock so that the quality of the herd may be improved, because he is more concerned with the dividend that he will receive. I was happy to hear the Premier announce that assistance would be given to struggling growers. I take it he was referring to those who are in a small way, and there are not many left.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: How many would you say there were left?

Mr. RHATIGAN: Probably half a dozen.

Mr. Ackland: How many growers have Air Beef been assisting with its service?

The Premier: Only about three to any worth-while extent.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Members should not get the impression that I am opposed to this scheme merely because Air Beef Pty. Ltd. is operating it. I am merely repeating what these pastoralists have told me.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: These half a dozen small pastoralists?

Mr. RHATIGAN: I did not say half a dozen. The hon. member asked me how many small pastoralists were in the area, and I told him that there were half a dozen. The argument that the growers get the benefit of their supplies being transported by air looks all right on the surface.

It has been said that a plane taking a load of beef into the meat works can bring back stores on its return trip. Such a service would work all right in April, depending, of course, on whether the wet season was late or early.

Normally, the outback people obtain their supplies twice a year. Before the wet season starts, they obtain their supplies in April and May, and to carry them over the wet season, their goods come forward in October and November. The service rendered by Air Beef usually runs for approximately four months and finishes in August. Therefore, the supplies that are urgently needed to carry the people over the wet season are not carried by that company.

Mr. Court: You will agree that the supplies brought in for developmental work would not otherwise be brought in normally.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Can the hon. member tell me what supplies for developmental work have been brought in by air?

Mr. Court: All the stations have used the service generally.

Mr. Norton: What do you mean by "all the stations"?

Mr. Court: All the stations in the area.

Mr. Norton: How many are there?

Mr. Court: There are eighteen.

The Premier: Oh!

Mr. RHATIGAN: Therefore, as the Air Beef service operates for a short period only, contract truck-drivers are not going to stand by and let Air Beef transport the supplies in the early portion of the year and then do all the rough driving in their trucks to cart the supplies for the remainder of the year. The few brief remarks I have made are based on the reports I have received from the pastoralists who supply Glenroy with cattle. They know full well that they are losing money by continuing to send their cattle to that company and they agreed to do that in the first place only to ascertain whether the scheme would be a success.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you think that such an organisation as Air Beef Pty. Ltd. could help to solve the problem in the Kimberleys?

Mr. RHATIGAN: No, the provision of better roads is the solution to the problem in the Kimberleys. There are many factors that would assist also, such as the division of land by fencing, provision of better water supplies and the importation of bloodstock to improve the quality of the herds.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: And better roads.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Yes, and better roads.

Mr. Oldfield: Do not you think that the Air Beef service is a modern method of transport?

Mr. RHATIGAN: I would advise the hon. member to take a trip up there in the wet season, and if he does he might learn something. I oppose the motion.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [4.59]: I was extremely interested to hear that the Premier intended to give some support to the smaller pastoralists who operate in the Kimberley area. Even although there are only half a dozen of them, I think that they are worthy of some consideration.

The Premier: There are more than half a dozen in the Kimberleys.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am accepting the figure given by the member for Kimberley. I am referring to the small pastoralists. The Premier said he was going to help the small battlers. That is an excellent idea, and small pastoralists should be encouraged by assistance in purchasing better bloodstock. I have had some experience of cattle-breeding because after the first World War, I was interested in a station on the Trans line. I know the difficulty and expense of getting good bloodstock. We managed to get the bloodstock and it made a tremendous difference to the cattle.

The Minister for Health: Did you also go out jackarooing?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, but I earned a few bob to put into buying bloodstock. What has been lost sight of is the principle that reasonable transport is being provided by the State to every area and at very considerable expense to the public. If an analysis were made, the amount paid for this in the North would be shown as a very large sum. No Government has stinted providing reasonable finance for transport to the North. Nearly £600,000 is being spent to provide additional shipping for the North-West. No one quarrels with that because it is a justifiable subsidy for people who are developing the North.

The Premier: That subsidy benefits everyone in the northern areas.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It does.

The Premier: And benefits many people in the south, also.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Premier does not suggest that the subsidy is not justifiable?

The Premier: It is absolutely justifiable.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: As Treasurer, he knows that some railway lines are making tremendous losses, such as on the line to Wiluna. Such lines are being run at the expense of the community of this State and of Australia as a whole.

The Premier: They benefit a great number of people.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I admit that. Not only do they benefit many people, but the expense of running these lines is terrific. There is the matter of transporting workers to Midland Junction workshops by train. Everyone knows that this is a very expensive procedure because drivers have to be employed during the whole of the day. That is one of the reasons why the railways have always been anxious to carry on the metropolitan traffic, because in any case it has to employ drivers on the run to Midland Junction. I do not say it is not justified, but it is done at a considerable loss in providing what is deemed to be reasonable transport for workers. No one suggests that this service should be discontinued because it does not pay its way. Other forms of assistance are given to industry in the North. In the case of the Wyndham Meat Works, there is an accumulated loss of £1,400,000. No one begrudges it or suggests that the running of the meat works is not justifiable. Although it is not a transport industry, still it is essential. It benefits all Kimberley pastoralists who are within range of the meat works and can send their cattle there. The Government also assisted indirectly to establish the meat works at Broome, and that was to help a certain number of pastoralists who were within range of that centre. So we see that the Government has from time to time helped many industries.

The Premier: It did not pay them subsidies.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, it did indirectly. Wundowie received a subsidy of £40,000 last year.

The Premier: The Government made free loans to Air Beef.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, and how much?

The Premier: An amount of £18,000.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Government has written off a loan of £500,000 to the Wyndham Meat Works.

The Premier: That was to assist all the cattle-producers.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It was to assist all those who were able to use those meat works.

The Premier: It was not done to assist two or three pastoralists.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The policy of all Governments is to provide reasonable transport, where feasible, to help industry. Irrespective of its nature, only a certain number of people derive benefit from any industry. It is also the policy of all Governments to give extra assistance to those who face the greatest difficulties, as long as there is a reasonable chance of their ultimate success. That is also the policy of the Premier. Let us

examine the Wundowie project and the losses sustained there. I am not saying they were not warranted. I know the Premier thinks they are.

The Premier: You say they are warranted?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I say the undertaking made losses. The deficiency was £40,000 last year. Iron foundries in Western Australia are paying more for commercial iron because they have to purchase it from Wundowie, than they would if permitted to buy it on the open market or from B.H.P.

The Premier: There is nothing to prevent them from purchasing iron in the open market.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, there is. A request has been made by the Government that foundries should not be supplied.

The Premier: A request made to whom?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: To B.H.P.

The Premier: This Government did not make it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know it did not, but the request is there all the same, and the Premier is aware of it. We shall find out more about that later on.

The Premier: I think we shall.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No one, and least of all the Premier, would suggest that a loss of £40,000, which benefits, as far as I can see, only the workers who are earning a reasonable wage at Wundowie, is warranted because the iron today can be obtained at a cheaper rate from B.H.P.

The Premier: I doubt that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is another instance, that of Chamberlain Industries. That has been penalised to some degree by having to use Wundowie iron. It is no use the Premier arguing, "I am not going to benefit a few people." The point is this: Is it reasonable that adequate transport should be provided?

The Premier: At half price?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not know; but it is not at half price.

The Premier: It is less than half price.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Will the Premier consider providing a road for that area?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It will cost the State £600,000 to put a road in.

The Premier: We shall consider it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Premier has already stated he will develop this area, to which he has sent a survey party. Will he put in a road? Otherwise, how does he expect to develop it? I guarantee that development can only be achieved with air transport. It must be admitted that air

transport is in its infancy. The machines used today are practically obsolete. They were not designed for commercial transport or economic running. They are old war machines. One day transport aircraft will be provided to give the cheapest form of transport for medium distances where population is sparse. To construct a reasonable road in the North would cost at the very least £3,000 a mile, and £500 a mile to maintain it. Even then, we would not get a first-class road.

The Premier: The Government is not preventing anyone from using air transport.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is not. But what miserably small assistance it has provided! The Government has made a great song and dance about supplying £75,000 over five years, of which it did not contribute the whole. It made a great song and dance about it—

Mr. May: So are you.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: —for a miserable £10,000 a year to encourage what is undoubtedly the forerunner of the main form of transport for that region. Railway lines will never be built in that area because the difficulties would be too great and there is not the density of population to justify their construction. Roads are expensive to construct and maintain, and cater for a slow means of transport compared with facilities by air. I do not think that cattle will ever be transported by road in this area. They certainly cannot be carried in refrigerated vehicles.

Air Beef was an experiment and, in my view, it was wonderfully successful. I cannot conceive of the Treasurer or the member for Kimberley thinking it necessary to inspect this 15,000 square miles, which is not an inconsiderable area. We know what the manager of the Rural & Industries Bank says about it. He has pointed out that it is almost impossible to put a road through. Is it then unreasonable for the Government to subsidise air transport to the extent of about £10,000 a year, which, I might suggest, the Government of Western Australia does not pay, because it is immediately recouped by the Grants Commission?

Why discontinue the subsidy? If the Grants Commission had complained about the subsidy, there might be some justification for the adoption of that course. There is no suggestion of the State Government being penalised for granting that subsidy. The additional money was paid by the taxpayers of Australia for the assistance of an area that was in need of some means of transport for its products. In my view, Air Beef was a success.

The Premier: In future, we shall use the amount of that subsidy and more to assist more needy cattle-producers in the Kimberleys.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Premier will get that sum and more, because the Government will obtain from the Grants Commission all it wants for the development of the North. Had the Premier personally investigated this matter, and inspected the country, or instructed the Minister for Works to make a survey, then some other decision would have been given by him. I do not know what advice the Government acted on. I feel sure it obtained what advice was available, but I regret that the advice tendered to the Government led it to this decision.

It would have been wiser to appoint some responsible expert to go into the whole matter, to see whether the enterprise was or was not worth while. We know that the Commonwealth is investigating this very scheme; and it seems a little unnecessary, when a serious investigation is taking place, that the Government should say the scheme has been a failure, when Western Australia received the money from the Commonwealth for nothing. It did not cost the Government anything; and it did not cost Western Australia very much, either. So for what reason the Government closed down on the scheme—

The Minister for Lands: It was with a view to using the money to better advantage.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If more money is needed for the North it can be obtained. Assistance for the North has never been refused by the Grants Commission; and if the Government has any good scheme for that part of the State, it will be assisted. The Minister knows that. So why withdraw the assistance that was given to this company? I have a feeling that the Premier thought it was to the advantage of too few people. That was the wrong attitude to take. He felt that too few of the stations were able to take advantage of the assistance given.

The Premier: We thought the scheme had had a fair share of State assistance for a reasonable period, and that we were not justified in continuing to subsidise the improvement of this small number of cattle stations when—

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not know that the Government was improving them.

The Premier: —much greater assistance was needed by other cattle-producers.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Why kill a scheme that, in my view, will ultimately mean the opening up of the North, and will provide a reasonable facility for the people? There are pedal sets and flying doctors, and there will be a lot more aircraft that will develop big areas over long distances in a way that railways and road transport would not be able to do. If the Government had said, "We will assist other works up there," I would have given it all my support. But why kill the only

scheme of this kind that is now in existence? Did the Government close down the Wyndham Meat Works or Wundowie?

The Premier: We own them.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Does the Government classify Wundowie as an experiment still? If it does not, the sooner Wundowie is closed down the better.

The Premier: The Government owns Wundowie.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You tried to close it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I agree. I had a proper perspective of it. Wundowie is still in the experimental stage.

The Premier: The Government owns it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The people own it. What is the difference if they pay one way or another? The people own Wundowie.

The Premier: There is all the difference in the world between continuing Wundowie—

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: At a loss?

The Premier: Yes, at a loss. There is all the difference between continuing Wundowie and continuing to pay a subsidy to wealthy cattle-producers.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Who is suggesting that the Government is paying a subsidy? I am not wanting it to pay a subsidy.

The Premier: That is what we have been doing.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Government has not been doing that at all. It has been providing reasonable transport for the company's products.

The Premier: It has been assisting wealthy cattle-producers to transport their products.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Whether they are wealthy or not is not the point.

The Premier: All the farmers in the south have to pay reasonable transport costs.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Is the Premier going to suggest that these people were not paying reasonable transport costs?

The Premier: Of course they were not.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Did the Premier make any inquiry?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, he did not. What transport has the company now for its beef?

The Premier: Air transport.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Has it?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not think it has.

The Premier: This is an air beef company.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Of course it is! And the other concern is the Wundowie Corporation. What is the difference?

The Premier: All the difference.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is no difference at all, and the Premier knows it.

The Premier: The hon. member is talking only for the sake of talking.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Not at all. I am trying to persuade the Premier to adopt an attitude that I think would be more in the interests of the State. I am trying to do away with comparisons that I thought were very weak. The Premier says that certain people are being subsidised with regard to transportation. That is so. But such subsidies are granted every day of the week. Many other forms of transport are being subsidised.

The Premier: We do not propose to subsidise these very few wealthy cattle-producers any longer.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: First of all, the Premier does not know whether they are wealthy or not.

The Premier: They have admitted it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: They have not admitted it at all. That really is not the point. There are 15,000 square miles of country up there which are producing a large number of cattle, which are an economic necessity for the State and for Australia; and it is a question of providing reasonable transport. Is the Premier going to say, "Why not close down Kalgoorlie, because the rich mines are utilising it?"

The Premier: No one is preventing the cattle-producers from using air transport.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know.

The Premier: Then what are you complaining about?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No one is stopping the people of the North from transporting their goods by air if they care to pay for it, either; but the Government is paying £20,000 a year—

The Premier: To benefit the whole of the people of the North.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is not benefiting the whole of the people.

The Premier: Of course it is!

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: How can people who are out of range of the ports get any benefit?



The Premier: They do.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: They do not.

The Premier: Of course they do. It should not be necessary to tell the hon. member that aeroplanes that travel to the North-West do not land only at the port aerodromes.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know.

The Premier: You do not appear to know.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I said within reasonable range of the aerodromes.

The Premier: You said the ports. There are inland aerodromes.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know; but the Premier must admit that only certain people can receive the advantage of this assistance.

The Premier: A considerable number of people.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes; but it is a considerable sum of money, is it not? All I am suggesting to the Premier is that, as the assistance to Air Beef Pty Ltd. did not mean any extra burden on the State and was of advantage to our export trade and our home trade—because goodness knows we want beef down here, and some of this chilled beef would be very acceptable—as the scheme was still in the experimental stage, the Government could have made some inquiry. It could have set up some expert committee before taking an action which the Premier must admit will probably kill the scheme.

The Premier: The Government is not preventing Air Beef Pty. Ltd. from running aeroplanes to transport beef from the area to Wyndham.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Of course not.

The Premier: What are you complaining about?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is not an economic proposition without some assistance, any more than are the railways or the shipping service.

The Premier: According to the information put up in favour of the motion, it would pay the cattle-producers concerned to have their beef transported by air.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It might or it might not. I think that ultimately, with modern planes that are being developed to burn kerosene, and are designed for heavy transportation, that will probably be so; but, in the meantime, does the Premier not think it must have been discouraging to the Commonwealth for the State to take the action it did, when the Commonwealth was assisting the enterprise at no expense to the State Government?

The Premier: We do not control the Commonwealth.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know; but the Premier knows that the State was being reimbursed for the expenditure, and that it would be reimbursed if it started a scheme to supply stock. I have no doubt of that, because the Commonwealth recognises—and so does the Grants Commission—that the development of the North is necessary. How will we get on if the Government says that it is no good assisting a little group which is too small to be thought of if it is going to say there is no point in helping 200 or 300 people with transport? In all seriousness, I appeal to the Premier to set up a departmental committee to investigate this matter thoroughly—and, if necessary, in conjunction with the Commonwealth—with a view to seeing if some assistance cannot be given to the company.

While I do not say how much is reasonable, it would be advantageous if some consideration could be given to the matter. The Premier knows that members of Cabinet have not time to investigate details of this kind. They have to accept advice tendered to them and balance it against their impressions of the case put forward. I know the Government is not impressed at present; otherwise it would not have ceased providing assistance. I feel the Government thinks advantage is being given to too few people, but I do not think that is quite the right attitude to take. The question to be asked is whether the transport provided to the area concerned was reasonable, and also whether it benefited the State as a whole. Further, was £10,000 too much to pay? If it was, then perhaps some lesser sum could be made available to enable the service to be continued. I hope the Premier will consider the matter on those lines.

On motion by Mr. Johnson, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—BUILDERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [5.28]: I agree with the Minister that it is a good thing to allow tradesmen who are not naturalised to come under the provisions of this measure, and that no good purpose would be served by keeping them out, especially as we have allowed them to enter the country.

In recent years an amendment was made to this Act, and it will be recalled that the amendment was a drastic one. It provided for certain builders, who were not fully registered or acceptable to the Builders Registration Board, to do certain work up to the value of £4,000. I think it would be correct to say that the Builders Guild

and the master builders were not particularly happy about that amendment. But in view of the circumstances, and the need to obtain a greater amount of labour for the building industry, the amendment was agreed to by Parliament. I think that as time has passed there has been evidence that the building trade unionists have not been as happy about that amendment as they might have been at the time it was introduced.

A position could arise with respect to the conditional registration provision under which certain non-unionists could obtain work as contractors or pieceworkers outside of the actual award. I believe that situation could develop as time goes on, even if it has not already come about. It is a question for the Minister, the union and the whole of the trade to consider. With respect to the actual amendment before the House, I am of the opinion that these people who have qualifications equal to what are possessed by those who are being accepted under the conditional registration provision at present, should be included. Therefore, in the hope that the amendment will bring a greater force of labour to the building industry at a time when it is badly needed, I support it.

Furthermore, as we have accepted and encouraged these people to come to this country as migrants, I feel that we should direct their efforts into the channels where they are best suited. I understand that today, as a result of the publicity that has been given to this matter, quite a number of foreigners have made application to various officers of the building trade, for immediate registration. I imagine that the Minister's estimate of 50 is very much the minimum, or quite an underestimate, of the number of people who are interested. However, because the building trade is quite happy about this proposition, and because I think it is a logical approach to the question, I support the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Jamieson, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—DRIED FRUITS ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. L. THORN** (Toodyay) [5.33]: I have to admit that I have not had much time to consider the Bill, because under the new rules of the House we cannot get a copy of the Minister's speech until he has checked it. But, as he explained, the measure is to tighten up the control of marketing and bring it into line with what operates in other States. That is the main objective of the measure, which also provides for inspections. I hope, on that

point, that this legislation will not be responsible for again increasing the levy on fruit-growers, because they are paying quite sufficient today.

The dried fruits industry has not enjoyed a very prosperous time over the last few years. One reason for its lack of prosperity is that all through the war the people engaged in it were denied the necessary fertilisers to keep their vineyards up to standard. As a result, lower returns were experienced. There is nothing wrong with the fertility of the land in the Swan Valley, but if we are producing a crop that has to go right through the summer months and stand up to the changes in the weather, the soil must be properly fertilised and cared for. That is the main reason for the drop in the production of dried fruits.

Some 20 or 25 years ago, the production of the Swan Valley was much higher than it is today. At that time I was one of two inspectors who were in charge of the industry there. We were employed by the Commonwealth Government, and we handled a far greater tonnage of dried fruits than is handled today. The Government now has three full-time inspectors there, and they handle less than 3,000 tons of fruit. If, under this legislation, further inspections have to be carried out, I strongly urge that these commonwealth inspectors do the work. I hope the appointment of State inspectors is not necessary. It seems ridiculous to have to appoint inspectors, apart from the Commonwealth inspectors, to handle this small tonnage of fruit.

In Western Australia we are suffering through fruit coming in from the Eastern States. The board wants some power to control and register the dealers who bring in this fruit. I think that is fair enough, because it is absurd for dried fruits to be coming in from the Eastern States in fairly large tonnages, and then for the West to turn around and export the unsaleable portion of its crop to the Eastern States for sale there; and that is what is happening.

The Australian Dried Fruits Association is a great organisation for the dried fruits industry; it has done a tremendous lot of good for the growers, all of whom are members of the A.D.F.A. The control is a voluntary one, more or less, and it has helped the industry considerably. If merchants and dealers will take notice of the A.D.F.A., it will arrange the markets and the requirements for the different States, and we will not have this shipping, backwards and forwards.

The amending legislation is important. As the Minister stated, it deals with only two phases: one to give the board further powers and to bring the position into line with what obtains in the other States, and the other to provide for closer control and inspection. I have word from

the secretary of the Dried Fruits Board that the amendment has been asked for by the board, and he assures me that it is all right; that it is to bring the legislation into line with what obtains in the Eastern States. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1954-55.

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Moir in the Chair.

*Vote—Legislative Council, £6,362:*

**MR. JOHNSON** (Leederville) [5.40]: I have, in connection with the matters that I wish to deal with, prepared a document, copies of which I would ask your permission, Sir, to have distributed to members so that they will be able to follow what I say. In this debate I wish to deal with only two matters. I have dealt with them previously, but I do not want to make precisely the same speech as I made on those occasions. I wish to develop the same idea a little bit further. The subjects are the form of the Public Accounts, and the matter of industrial accidents and legislation appertaining thereto.

The document I am asking to have passed around is in connection with the Public Accounts. The points of interest in the Budget proper, include first of all, the increase of revenue by £1,750,000. The principal expected increases are £500,000 in income tax reimbursement, and approximately £1,000,000 in railway revenue. These are matters of considerable importance, and have been commented on previously. There is an increased expenditure of a similar amount, namely, £1,750,000.

The point I wish to emphasise is that of this increase, approximately £834,000 is in respect of amounts covered by "Special Acts." It can be anticipated that those

amounts will continue next year and the year after. Of the £834,000 odd, the sum of £649,556 is an increase under "Special Acts" brought about by an increase in interest on loan, so we can see that we have absolutely no control over a large proportion of our increased revenue because about £650,000 out of the increase of £1,750,000 is directly out of the hands of the Government.

Therefore, although we have statements that there are large increases, the real effect of them is small, and before the effect becomes apparent, it is necessary for the Public Accounts to be brought before our notice in some other way. I think the figures could be presented in a different manner so that the real and important effects could be given greater emphasis. I would like to say in passing that, in my opinion, those items which are not now considered because they come under "Special Acts," should be reviewed in each annual budget. I consider it wrong that Parliament should put out of reach of budgetary control a large proportion of Government income. The part which comes under "Special Acts" is a vital portion of Government finance.

A further point which is one of interest, and I think of importance—or I consider it of importance—is the fact that in practically every department in the State we spend money under the Estimates, under "Special Acts" and under loan. As far as the department is concerned there is a slight difference in accounting but in real effect, particularly its effect upon the State, it matters not whether the money spent comes from loan, revenue within the budget or from "Special Acts." As far as the State is concerned, what matters is that the money is spent.

I suggest to members that real consideration needs to be given to the method of presentation of these accounts. For that purpose I have had an example produced. It has been circulated among members and I will skim briefly through the figures in order to have the table reproduced in "Hansard." It reads—

#### Division 22—Revenue Estimates.

##### Public Works.

	1953-54.	1954-55.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£	£	£	£
Salaries .....	220,508	229,761	9,253	....
Wages .....	18,394	23,000	4,606	....
Works .....	71,552	74,100	2,348	....
Harbours and rivers .....	85,827	103,600	17,773	....
Other services .....	49,573	53,500	3,927	....
Buildings .....	444,443	462,200	17,757	....
Other revenue producing works .....	161,005	108,000	....	53,005
	£1,051,302	£1,054,161	£55,664	£53,005

That is the point at which we will debate our public works when we come to them. In addition, the following moneys are spent out of Loan Estimates:—

## Loan Estimates.

	1953-54.	1954-55.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£	£	£	£
Abattoirs and saleyards ....	132,557	138,000	5,443	....
Albany harbour works ....	230,951	135,000	....	95,951
Bulkhandling of wheat—provision of facilities at ports ....	1,987	45,000	43,013	....
Bunbury harbour works ....	37,811	40,000	2,189	....
Busselton jetty improvement ....	....	3,000	3,000	....
Cockburn Sound harbour works ....	523,568	545,000	21,432	....
Country areas and town water supplies ....	460,567	954,870	494,303	....
Drainage and irrigation ....	53,632	89,000	35,368	....
Dredges and barges ....	116,061	75,500	....	40,561
Geraldton harbour works ....	6	5,000	4,994	....
Improvements to harbours and rivers ....	25,152	48,000	22,848	....
Kwinana area development ....	208,954	160,500	....	48,454
Public buildings, furniture, etc. ....	1,450,839	2,086,350	635,511	....
Salaries and incidentals ....	165,288	161,900	....	3,388
Sewerage for country towns ....	34,905	29,000	....	5,905
	£3,442,278	£4,516,120	£1,268,101	£194,259
Gross totals—				
Expenditure ....	4,493,580	5,570,281	....	....
Increases ....	....	....	1,323,985	....
Decreases ....	....	....	....	247,264
Total increase ....	....	....	1,076,701	....
Less Revenue—				
Slipway ....	41,999	60,000	18,001	....
Other ....	293,710	314,000	20,290	....
Net total ....	£4,157,871	£5,196,281	£1,038,410	....

Being effect on a public account of P.W.D.

Naturally the reading of the table was boring, but the figures themselves should have been of interest because they indicate that although under revenue we are spending £1,050,000 each year in this department, under loan we spent £3,500,000 last year and we will spend £4,500,000 this year. Our revenue will increase from roughly £330,000 to £370,000 and I feel that the accounts of each department should be dealt with in this way because it is as a whole that that department has its effect upon the accounts of the State. As well as showing our accounts in this form, I think that it may be necessary to amend the procedure of this Chamber so that instead of having a general debate on the Revenue Estimates, and a general debate on the Loan Estimates, and then separate departmental debates under each heading, we should be able to debate each individual department on its own.

Furthermore, if possible—and I cannot see why it should not be possible, although I do not claim to be an expert—I would like the accounts in that form to be accompanied by the Auditor General's report on the matters concerned in the group

of estimates. In other words, I think the Auditor General's report should accompany the Estimates of the departments. It is the practice of private accountancy, and the practice of Government accountancy is that the Auditor General's report is normally available at approximately the same time as the Estimates are introduced. In fact, we have the Auditor General's report for this year on our benches now.

If we need a general debate on Government accounts, I think they should be shown in a manner similar to that which the Victorian Government uses in its Budget papers. I am not saying that that method is ideal, but it is an improvement on our own. For instance, that Government shows an analysis of the accounts for three years with the estimate for the year under consideration. They present not only the total, but also the per capita figures. In addition, they show statements for every department and particulars for everything in the nature of a trading concern and indicate the effect upon the Public Accounts of the State or, as they describe it, the estimated net benefit or the net cost to revenue.

In some ways, the Budget papers are not as easy as ours to follow—certainly not to a person who does not know the figures of that State. However, their method of presentation makes it easier to follow. One of the reasons why finance is a subject avoided by the majority of members in this Chamber and neglected by nearly everybody outside is that it is difficult, even for the trained accountant, who is not an expert in Government accounts, to follow those financial statements. I am not saying that it cannot be done, but it is certainly not easy.

[*Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.*]

Mr. Court: Do you know that representations are being made to the Commonwealth Government along the same lines as you are now advocating?

Mr. JOHNSON: I realise that, and I was going to mention the point. When I was in Canberra in January this year, I was able to get the first 10 reports of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts, and I know that the Commonwealth is moving in that direction. I hope something will come of it, but, as I said in the debate last year, I can see no reason why we, in Western Australia, because our figures are smaller, our numbers are smaller and our departments are smaller, cannot make a forward move in the presentation of accounts more readily than the Commonwealth.

Previously, I suggested that a body—I do not know whether it should be a select committee, a Royal Commission or a board of inquiry of some kind—should be set up to see if something cannot be done in this matter. As I said earlier, I am completely convinced that if we are to arouse public interest and member interest in finance, we must be able to show the figures in a way which is easily understandable and is of interest to the people reading them. I think that one of the points that requires attention is that all the figures of the department should be shown together.

For my own interest, and it may be of interest to other members, I have gone through quite a number of the accounts of the Government, and worked out their net effect on the revenue figures of the total Government accounts. In doing so I have taken it upon myself to allocate to each department every item shown in "Treasury Miscellaneous." Whether my allocations are correct or not, is, of course, open to argument, but I have not the slightest doubt that Treasury experts could allocate every item shown in "Treasury Miscellaneous" to the account to which it properly belongs.

The incidence of that particular account is of peculiar interest to everyone—it is all concerned with public finance—because it

has the effect of hiding expenditure, which quite rightly belongs to other departments, under the heading of "Treasury Miscellaneous." Let us take the Department of Agriculture as an example. Under revenue, 13 headings are shown, with a total for last year of £495,647; this year the total was £543,600—an increase of £47,953. Under "Special Acts" there is Wheat Industry Stabilisation. This disbursement is admittedly only small, but in some departments expenditure under "Special Acts" is very large.

I think money spent on wheat industry stabilisation should most properly be shown under the Department of Agriculture; it is an agricultural expenditure. That expenditure was £107,000 last year and £150,000 this year, which is an increase of £43,000. Under "Treasury Miscellaneous" there are such items as—

Bulk wheat installation, operating cost.  
Dairy cattle compensation, t.b. infected.

Freight concession, drought and fire area.

Rail freights and fare concessions—on fittings for bulk wheat; rebate on flour.

Road transport of general goods, centres away from rail—wheat and super, Lakes district; Ravensthorpe and Newdegate; Yarramonny eastward.

Dairy farm improvement scheme.

Rural & Industries Bank, recoup costs administering Government agencies.

War service land settlement scheme, State share.

All those items are shown not under "Agriculture" but under "Treasury Miscellaneous"; to my mind quite wrongly. Furthermore, to illustrate the point, there is item No. 40 of the Loan Estimates for expenditure on "Development of Agriculture," shown as £31,099 last year and £38,250 this year. The total expenditure applicable to the Department of Agriculture last year was £697,101 and this year £853,500, which is an increase of £156,399. Similarly, under the revenue heading, which is shown on an entirely different page—although it is available as a footnote on the Revenue Estimates—there are a number of incomes. We find the amounts for sale of produce, stock fees, brands, recoup by Commonwealth, miscellaneous, and fruit inspector fee, making a total of £145,879 last year and £146,000 this year.

So it will be seen that the effect on the Public Accounts is actually £551,222 last year and £707,500 this. This figure is not very different from the amount shown in the Revenue Estimates but it is arrived at after including expenditure under "Special Acts" and "Treasury Miscellaneous" and

reducing it by the revenue expected. The point I really wish to make is that these figures, which I have given for the Department of Agriculture, could lead to a far more suitable debate on that department than the figures which come before us under Revenue Estimates alone.

I suggest that steps should be taken to do something of that general nature. I will not bore the Committee with the figures I have taken out for the Lands Department, for instance, which is an accompanying department, or for the various other departmental sections as shown in the earlier parts of the Estimates. But I do feel I have made a fairly sound case for at least some change in those particular matters, having used only the figures which are before the Committee.

Further, I would like to suggest—and this is something that does not occur in the Victorian accounts as at present—that we should have with our Estimates as they come before us, a forecast showing those portions of our future revenue which are already allocated. We know much of it can be worked out from the "Special Acts," particularly the ones relating to interest, as well as what the charge for next year will be, and we can estimate fairly closely which of the other "Special Acts" will require funds from next year's revenue and the revenue for the year after.

But there is nowhere in the figures that come before us any statement showing those revenue expenditures, or those loan expenditures to which we are committed in future years. I think those particulars should be available for us to discuss and, if necessary, to change when the financial debate is before this Chamber. Various people who attended the convention of the 'accountants' delegates, which was held in Adelaide this year, gave considerable attention to related subjects such as this—presentation of Government accounts and similar matters. I have not been able to read those reports so far, although I have been promised a copy when they are available, but I do feel that this is a matter, which should be dealt with as one of some urgency in a State which is developing and will continue to develop even more rapidly.

I think the correct man to head the board of inquiry, or whatever body is set up, should be Professor A. A. Fitzgerald Professor of Accountancy, Melbourne, if he is available. He is better known to us as chairman of the Grants Commission. The professor is an acknowledged expert and I know he follows Government accounts very easily as they stand at present. I think a small body assisting a chairman such as Professor Fitzgerald, could be appointed comprising probably a representative of the local accountancy institute, one of the very senior officers of our own Treasury, and possibly a back-bencher from each side of the House.

They could go into the matter and should have the power to call for people who, in their own opinion, should be able to give information. I think the number of people who would volunteer ideas on the subject from the general public would be very small. I feel, however, that such bodies as the Taxpayers' Association should be made to give evidence, if they do not volunteer it, because it is a matter on which they at least should have very important ideas. At times I have noticed that they criticise both the Federal and the State taxation policy and on occasions it has struck me that they are not quite aware of all the implications of the figures with which they are dealing. It would be in their own interests to have the accounts set out in a manner in which they could follow.

Mr. Court: I do not think they would need any prompting; they have been very active in other States.

Mr. JOHNSON: My knowledge of what goes on in other States is limited, but I have been very surprised at their apparent lack of interest in this State's financial doings.

Mr. Court: I think you will find that there is a revival of interest among them.

Mr. JOHNSON: I trust that is so, and I would like to think that I have been responsible for some of that interest, because I have suggested during the last three Budget debates that they should take such interest. That concludes all I think it is necessary to say at this stage on the publication of Government accounts. I would like to emphasise, however, that finance is a major portion of government and yet it is the portion in which the least interest is taken by the public and by members of this Chamber generally. I am convinced that government cannot be effective unless the public in general knows what goes on and takes part in the government. If the general public leaves the formation of political opinion solely to this Chamber, then there can be no doubt that the democratic system will eventually fail.

If the public is not prepared to take an interest in that most important section of finance, then it is necessary for us to change our method of presentation of finance until such time as the general public does take some interest in it. If necessary, let us present our figures with the aid of the advertising mediums and make them arresting. If it is necessary to stimulate interest in figures, there is no reason why we should not issue Government accounts with a corset advertisement on the outside! It is necessary to stimulate that interest vigorously. The matter is one which I think should be attended to very quickly.

The other point on which I wish to make reference fairly shortly concerns the accidents that take place in and apart from

industry. On various other occasions I have dealt with it shortly, but I would now like to take it a step further.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. JOHNSON: The second subject with which I wish to deal—and this quite briefly—is in relation to accidents. In July of this year, I asked a question of the Minister regarding a newspaper report about the injuries to a schoolboy by a milking machine, and received a reply that machinery of this type is exempt from inspection under the machinery Act. In August, there was a report of an accident on another farm—an accident connected with a harvester—and I received a reply to the effect that harvesters were not subject to inspection under the Act.

In 1949, a board of inquiry was appointed in Victoria to consider suggested amendments to the Factories and Shops Act, and its report contains some very interesting remarks about this particular problem. Paragraph 39 states—

The board views with great concern the fact that, except for chaffcutters, no actual provision is made for the guarding of machinery used in places other than factories. Attention was directed to reports submitted by the Department of Labour concerning fatal accidents caused by machinery on farms, and as the result of an examination of these reports, members have been very disturbed to find that lives have been, and others may be, lost in this way. Yet there is no law requiring supervision of the installation or maintenance of such machinery to ensure suitable guards being provided.

Paragraph 40 reads—

Recently, a little girl three years of age, was caught in the motor driving the milking machines on her father's property. She suffered multiple fractures of both legs, the injuries being such that the child died a few days after the accident occurred. Early in 1946, there was a similar fatal accident when another farmer lost his daughter aged two years and nine months. The child apparently sat on a revolving driving shaft which was not effectively guarded; her clothing became caught and she received such severe head injuries that she died almost immediately. Later, another fatal accident occurred. On this occasion, it was the wife of a farmer who was killed when portion of her clothing became entangled in the flywheel of an engine at her husband's dairy farm.

Paragraph 41 states—

It cannot therefore be too strongly emphasised that there is urgent need for legislation which would require all

stationary machinery used on farms and in primary industry generally to be guarded in accordance with the provisions of the Factories and Shops Acts.

In 1953, a Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria to amend and consolidate the law relating to industrial matters and the supervision and regulation of factories, shops and other premises, and for other purposes. In Part IX, Division 1, dealing with machinery, guards, precautions against accidents, etc., it is provided—

(1) Every occupier—

(a) of a factory, shall provide guards for—

(i) all dangerous parts of the machinery of the factory;

(ii) all dangerous appliances used in or in connection with the factory; and

(iii) all dangerous parts of the factory;

(b) of any land, shall notwithstanding anything in section six of this Act, provide guards for all dangerous parts of stationary power driven machinery used on the land—

so as to prevent as far as possible loss of life or bodily injury, and shall keep all such guards constantly maintained in an efficient state and properly adjusted.

(2) For the prevention of accidents the Minister may from time to time by order under his hand—

(a) direct the occupier of any factory or land or the occupiers of all factories or land to take such steps as the Minister deems necessary to prevent the occurrence of accidents or;

(b) direct that any specified machine or appliance shall not be used.

I have brought these points forward to show that our experience is common with that of other States and that, at least in Victoria, it has been found possible to amend the law effectively to minimise accidents of these types. They are particularly bad accidents because it is apparent, not only in this State but also in Victoria, that the victims are nearly always children, and the wastage of life is serious. A report appeared in the "Western Mail" of the 11th March last under the following heading:—

Six children in 25 tractor fatalities in one year. During the four years to 1953 there were 63 tractor fatalities

in New Zealand, and 25 of these occurred in 1952. Six of the 25 concerned children, and five of these had been allowed to ride on the machines.

The report of the Chief Inspector of Factories in Victoria is particularly interesting in dealing with phases of accident prevention and accidents that have occurred. I wish to direct attention to the statistical tables, which show in great detail where the accidents occurred, to whom they occurred and, in effect, which are the vulnerable sections of industry. When the vulnerable sections of industry are known, it is possible to do something about them.

There is great need for the standardisation of the statistics of accidents in all the States. Reference to the "Commonwealth Year Book" shows that, although in previous years accidents were recorded for all States, it has now been found preferable not to record accidents other than fatalities for industries except mining, because the standards set out for each State are different. I should like to see an interstate consultation to ensure that accidents are recorded in a standard manner in all the States, so that comparisons might be made and the danger spots pinpointed and correct action taken with a view to prevention.

One thing should follow accidents in industry and that is consideration of what happens to a person concerned in an accident who is not fatally injured. There is one risk to life wherein something has been done, and that relates to the incidence of tuberculosis. A person who is the victim of t.b. is provided for in many ways. This complaint cannot be regarded as anything but an accident, although, of course, it is not an industrial accident. The t.b. sufferer is provided with financial support during the period of his treatment, and in this State provision is made for his rehabilitation as a useful and fully-employed member of society, it being realised that the man having suffered in this way and been thereby weakened and more vulnerable in many ways may have to be retrained and given a new occupation.

The authorities have established a colony at Linley Valley which is doing good work in the rehabilitation of ex-t.b. personnel, and there is a cardboard box factory which is also assisting those who have suffered from t.b. to rehabilitate themselves in industry and become accustomed, physically and mentally, to the return to work. I am concerned—and in this I am not alone—that those who suffer from other accidents, particularly industrial accidents which destroy their ability to earn, should be rehabilitated and made fully useful and productive citizens once more, and I would

couple with that the suggestion that victims of accidents at birth and in ill-health could be made much more useful citizens by correct treatment and rehabilitation.

Referring to what has happened in England—I do not wish it to be thought that what I am saying is my own idea only and completely impracticable—I will quote from the reference handbook entitled "Britain", issued by the Central Office of Information, London, for the year 1952. In that publication, under the heading of "Disablement Resettlement Service" we read the following:—

The purpose of this service is to help disabled persons to get and keep suitable work. It is not confined to war casualties but is available to all persons over school-leaving age who are handicapped as a result of injury, disease or congenital deformity.

A body such as that could be set up in Western Australia. Further, under the heading of "Rehabilitation", we find the following:—

Rehabilitation departments are established at the main hospital centres. The work is carried out by teams of physiotherapists, remedial gymnasts, occupational therapists and social workers under the guidance of the appropriate medical specialist. The aim is to prevent undue disability and to restore fitness after all forms of sickness and injury. Experience has shown that efficient medical rehabilitation reduces the stay in hospital, the incidence of permanent disability and the period of incapacity for full work.

That is the theoretical background. The practical method employed is Remploy Ltd. and in this connection we read—

Remploy Ltd. is a non-profit-making public company with no share capital, established in accordance with the provisions of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act, 1944. Its objects are to provide training and employment facilities to registered disabled persons who are unlikely to obtain work except under special conditions. Its powers are wide enough to cover the provision of special factories and workshops, hostel accommodation and facilities for home workers. The directors are appointed by the Minister of Labour; funds for capital development and to meet operational costs are provided by loans and grants under the Ministry of Labour Vote.

That section of the law also requires that employers of more than a certain number of employees shall employ a specified number of handicapped persons. There is a great deal of literature available on the subject and it deals with the manner in which people handicapped in



various ways can be employed. There are statistics which show that the correct placement of handicapped persons results in greater production than the employment of fully able persons. There is a psychological reason ascribed for that. I would like, if possible, the whole of this aspect to be much more closely studied than it has been so far.

In the Press fairly recently there was reference to a person who I understood to be Dr. Colebatch, at the Infectious Diseases Hospital, leading the interest in a group to provide rehabilitation training and placement—in a manner similar to that which I have suggested—for those handicapped as the result of polio. That sort of thing needs to be done, but I hope that when it is undertaken it will be part of a much wider scheme to take in all who are handicapped in various ways. I would emphasise particularly the fact that there is already a vast volume of statistics dealing with the productive capacity of various types of handicapped persons in industry. There is no reason at all why people should be thrown on the scrap heap simply because they are handicapped in some way.

It is apparently the experience of employers in factories in overseas countries that the correct placement of handicapped persons results in higher production. I would like the Employers' Federation to study the available statistics and endeavour to persuade its members to adopt this view because not only is it a Christian point of view which leads to helping other people, but also it is apparently a means of achieving greater production, provided the placement is correct.

I am convinced that if the employers do not adopt that attitude it will be necessary, as this State becomes more industrialised, to follow the lead given overseas and require by law employers to employ handicapped people in numbers specified by statute. Placement of such persons under those circumstances might, however, be less effective because it is better for such things to be done willingly than under pressure. I put forward for their consideration the fact that if they do not do this willingly, it will follow, almost automatically, that before too many years have passed they will be forced into it by law, and, as we know, one volunteer is better than three forced people when it comes to doing good deeds.

**MR. SEWELL** (Geraldton) [7.52]: I desire first to pay tribute to the officers and employees of the Main Roads Department who are doing, and have done, a very good job in this State. In the Geraldton electorate they have progressed with the construction of the North-West Coastal Highway until it has now reached a position close to the Murchison River and I know it is the wish of other North-West members, as well as mine, that it will not be

long before that highway reaches the Murchison River and even Carnarvon. I would like the Minister to consider having this highway declared a main road or major highway because I feel that its importance demands that that should be done.

Earlier this year a conference was held of all the road boards in the Victoria district, with their headquarters at Geraldton, and the subject dealt with was the improvement of the water schemes in that area. Nothing much had been heard of that lately until we had the report of the hydraulic engineer, and that proved interesting. Certain facts and figures were laid before us but on that occasion I think the 5d. per acre water rate proposed to be levied somewhat frightened the primary producers in the area. I believe, however, that quite a number of them are beginning to realise that something will have to be done in regard to their water schemes.

When the Government is considering a comprehensive water scheme for that area it will, of course, have to take Geraldton into account as the main point of the scheme. We have now reached a stage where we must pay attention to improving country water schemes generally, to the conservation of water and the discovery of water underground so that it may be reticulated to the points where it is most needed. Over the years my experience in Geraldton has been that the departments concerned have endeavoured to do a good job but have been handicapped by lack of finance.

In practice so much money is allocated for certain works over a given period and by the time they are completed it is found that the town or district concerned has grown to such an extent that the works are inadequate and the position remains in effect, much the same as it was before the work was started. The time has arrived when a bigger and bolder scheme should be implemented, with the help of the Federal Government, to provide a more comprehensive water supply for our country districts. That applies not only to the Geraldton area but also to the rest of the State.

At the entrance to Geraldton harbour there is a rock bar which some authorities say is part of the continental shelf, and at low tide or with a certain kind of swell it can be a danger to the type of shipping that is generally expected to lift the cargo from our ports—ordinary cargo vessels. I believe there are reports in the hands of the department of a survey taken a couple of years ago at the entrance to Geraldton harbour, showing the depth of water available to vessels using the port. It is the wish of the people of Geraldton and those using the port that money be placed on the Estimates for the removal of the rock bar so as to allow the

trade and commerce of the district to flow freely through the natural harbour at that port.

During the present session there has been a great deal said in this House about price control and its effect on the basic wage together with the rise in the cost of living in respect of which the workers have not been granted any consideration. In the South-West Land Division the workers, through the basic wage not having been adjusted in accordance with the rise in the cost of living, are now down to the extent of about 30s. per week. Recently, through the action of the Federal Government in removing control from hides and leather, there has been an increase in the price of boots and shoes. There has also been the spectacle in the metropolitan area, of a further halfpenny rise in the price of a 2lb. loaf of bread, the excuse being given that the wages of the carters have been increased.

In Geraldton the price of a 2lb. loaf was increased by 1d. although there was no corresponding increase—and in fact, no increase at all—in the wages of the carters. I believe this is mainly the result of the price control legislation in this State having lapsed in consequence of which manufacturers and employers generally now have an open slather to charge what they like for goods and services. The position we have reached is such that something should be done in an effort to bring the basic wage earner more into line with what his position should be in order that, by means of a proper basic wage, he might enjoy the fruits of his labour.

In conjunction with the growth of the Geraldton district—it has grown greatly in the last five years—we now find a shortage of loan funds crippling the local schools and playing grounds. We no sooner build a new school or add a room to an existing school than we find it again overcrowded. I believe the Minister for Education was recently in Geraldton and I think he took a note of these facts, but, at all events, I would like him to bear in mind that more schoolrooms are urgently required at Geraldton as well as improvements to the school grounds, particularly the Northampton school ground, which at present has a rough stone surface and actually is not a school ground at all.

Good work has been carried out by the Railways Department in rehabilitating the permanent way in the Geraldton area, but there is a great deal more to be done and we are looking forward to the use of diesel locomotives on that line. Water is sometimes hauled from Yalgoo to as far as Caron and coal is hauled from Collie right through to Geraldton. Therefore, it is asking far too much to expect the railways to pay under such conditions. I would also draw the attention of the Minister for Railways to the deplorable

living conditions of the railway employees, particularly fettlers. The department expects gangs of fettlers to go into outlying districts with their families and in most cases they are living in tents or camps. There are many other items I wish to discuss, but I will raise them during the debate on the departmental estimates.

**MR. ACKLAND (Moore)** [8.3]: Like the member for Geraldton, there are several matters I wish to raise, but I am afraid I will have to leave some of them until we deal with the departmental estimates. The member for Geraldton referred to ever-increasing costs. As there is a prospect of general unrest in industry, it would be advisable to draw attention to the State's dependence upon its exports. If we are to hold our place in the world's markets, we will have to continue to increase our exports to obtain revenue beyond the amounts we are receiving for our products overseas at present.

Mr. May: You will get that by conciliation, too.

Mr. ACKLAND: Not only the members of this House, but also the people throughout Australia generally would be well advised to consider carefully the cost of production structure. As has been the position for many years, Australia is today almost entirely dependent upon its primary products to meet its commitments. During the last financial year, exports of primary products represented more than 80 per cent. of the total exports from the Commonwealth.

Although every encouragement has been given to other manufacturers by way of protection, tariffs, bonuses and preferences, we find that except for some improvement in output, as a result of the increased consumption within Australia, those manufacturers are not contributing any more than they have done over a lengthy period. Further, overseas exports from processed primary products of one form or another, represent 15 per cent. of the remainder of our overseas exports. Therefore, more than 90 per cent. of the wealth of this country, as represented by the money that is obtained from the sale of our products overseas, is obtained from primary production exported either in its raw state, or in processed form.

There is need for a great deal of stock-taking. Those firms that have been processing milk have been priced out of overseas markets and, if my information is correct, all milk processing plants, not only in Western Australia but also in the Eastern States, are finding it almost impossible to sell their products outside Australia because of the rising costs. The same applies to preserved fruits, and even fresh fruits, jams and flour. Because of the excessive cost of production and the impossibility of meeting world competition, the demand for our products is diminishing.

I hope that members will take heed that the amount of revenue that is coming into Australia is dwindling rapidly. Everyone, no matter what form of employment he may be engaged in, is most anxious to maintain the living standard in Australia which is at a high level. The maintenance of that standard depends on whether we can meet our commitments overseas. The seven main exports from Australia are wool—which is by far the greatest—meat, wheat, dairy products, sugar, fruits and metals. As I have already stated, those products, in their raw state, represent more than 75 per cent. of the nation's income obtained from overseas. If we study each of them individually, we find that there are unmistakable signs that all is not well with the financial structure of this country.

Whilst wool is by far the biggest revenue-producer we have, the wool returns are progressively decreasing even though at present Australia has a greater number of sheep than ever before. There are now 127,000,000 sheep depastured throughout Australia. This has been achieved despite serious droughts in the pastoral districts of the various States—including the shocking drought that we have had in the Murchison districts in this State—which has reduced sheep flocks to a great extent. The increase in sheep numbers has been achieved with the assistance of agricultural experts.

It has been found that some of our land which previously was considered to be quite useless for sheep grazing, is today carrying a large number of sheep mainly as a result of the introduction of trace elements, the use of fertilisers and the introduction of better types of grasses and clovers. However, this has been done at tremendous expense. The cost of production has increased considerably and, apart from that, there has been a constant decrease in returns received from this major industry upon which rests the prosperity of the whole of the Commonwealth. Members will be interested to note that during the last five years the proceeds from wool have decreased from £655,400,000 in 1950-1951 to £337,200,000 in 1951-1952. In 1952-1953, £402,900,000 was received, which showed a slight increase over the preceding year and a further increase was shown in 1953-1954 when £412,200,000 was received. However, this year there will be a further decrease because only £350,000,000 is expected from the overseas wool clip. In the forthcoming year, there is likely to be a decline of at least £50,000,000 in the income received from wool, which will bring the total income received for that commodity—from which everyone receives a great deal of benefit—to a figure no higher than £350,000,000. This will be received for the clip being sold at present.

It cannot be denied that during the past few years woolgrowers have enjoyed an exceptionally buoyant period. However, that has been the climax of many years of starvation, hardship and heartbreaks in the industry. Instead of people being so willing to decry the people in the pastoral industry because they are receiving such high returns, it would be well to remember that all the people in the Commonwealth have benefited materially from the high prices for wool that have been realised throughout Australia. It is well to remember that the present wool clip promises to be nearly 50 per cent. below the wool yield of the peak year. It is also well to remember that the return from wool this year will be considerably less than it was immediately before the year in which wool prices rose so steeply.

Another point well worth remembering is that the cost of production of wool has increased at least by 150 per cent. during the past six years. We have only to study the increases in the basic wage and in the price of superphosphate, which is so necessary for the production of wool in the less fertile districts, to get some indication of how much the income of this country will be reduced. I mentioned in this House a few weeks ago, after the first wool sale was conducted in Western Australia that the wool clip of Western Australia promised to be down by £3,500,000 and possibly more, if the price did not improve at that sale. It is quite easy to see that this was an understatement. Western Australia will receive at least £6,000,000 less for its wool clip than last year, which was by no means a peak year, and well below the preceding years.

Passing from wool to the wheat industry which provides the second largest income for Australia, I would point out that it also finds more employment for labour, directly and indirectly, than any other activity. The wheat industry is in a most unhealthy position because costs have risen tremendously over the last five years. In 1950-51 the cost of production figure compiled by the Commonwealth Government showed that it cost 5s. 10d. to grow a bushel of wheat; working under the same formula, the cost for 1953 was 12s. 7d. It is not an over-statement to say that the cost for 1954 may be in the vicinity of 13s. 6d. per bushel when next adjusted.

Mr. May: This was not caused by any increase in the basic wage.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am not laying a charge against any particular section, but against the whole community. On more than one occasion I have been accused of attacking the trade unions. I have not attacked them any more than I have attacked the manufacturers and distributors. I am not over-certain that my own industry, primary production, has a halo around its head, which is not dented and

somewhat discoloured. It is the responsibility of all the people of this country that the cost of production has risen so steeply.

It is interesting to note that from 1950-51 to 1953-54, the receipts from the sale of wheat overseas, whether in the form of flour or grain, dropped from £107,000,000 to £60,700,000. It is not anticipated that the return from the export of wheat and flour will be any more than £45,000,000 for this year. One needs to be an optimist to estimate it at £50,000,000.

The Minister for Agriculture: What makes you think that the cost of production will increase by 11d. this year?

Mr. ACKLAND: I shall deal with that when speaking to one of the items in the Estimates. I can give ample proof that the increase may be 11d. Members are not allowed to bet in this Chamber, but if the Minister adheres to his view, I would like to talk to him outside the precincts of this Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: Not before the Betting Control Bill is passed.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am willing to support any statement which I make in this House, more so any relating to wheat. Over the past few years, from 1951 to 1954, I have tried to indicate to members that the return from the wheat crop has dropped by approximately 60 per cent. While on this subject it is as well to remind the Chamber that whereas the average saleable wheat crop has been 36,000,000 bushels over the past several years, there is little prospect this year of producing more than 25,000,000 bushels. We must also remember that a portion of the last two seasons' wheat crops is still unsold and is stored in silos. There are 26,000,000 bushels of wheat unsold, and with every passing day on which this wheat cannot be sold, it is deteriorating in value. It becomes more difficult to find a buyer—

Mr. May: The poultry farmers are in great need of it.

Mr. ACKLAND: That is quite true. If a solution can be found to rectify the position, I shall be only too glad to support it provided always that the people of Australia as a whole make the position of the poultry farmer easier. I was interested to read in the Press one day this week that the president of the pig section of the Farmers' Union took the Government and the wheatgrower to task because the pig industry was languishing. That industry is in a deplorable condition. Those who rear pigs or move among pig breeders and fatteners will agree that most of them are on the verge of bankruptcy. The member for Collie might be able to suggest how the people of Australia as a whole, and not one section, can help to rectify that position.

The Premier: Consumers are still paying a high price for ham and bacon.

Mr. ACKLAND: I agree.

The Minister for Agriculture: What have you to suggest to rectify the position.

Mr. ACKLAND: The Minister should throw out a better bait to put me off.

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not think you have an answer to that question.

Mr. ACKLAND: The Minister can make his speech in the way he likes, and I shall do the same. Last night I heard in this Chamber a most mischievous and entirely untrue statement made by the member for Gascoyne. I do not suggest that he was deliberate in misrepresenting the position relating to the subsidy which, according to him, went to the wheatgrowers of the State. He was either wrongly informed or did not seek the correct information when he said that the wheatgrowers received £57,000 a year as a subsidy from the Government, being a subsidy on the freight charged on flour.

Evidently he did not know what he was talking about, but I believe he made the statement in good faith. The position is entirely different, and my statement can be verified. It is quite true that country flourmillers in this State receive a freight rebate. That is a subsidy to the industry and not to the wheatgrower because the latter does not receive a farthing's worth of freight rebate. The freight on wheat from the siding at which it is loaded to the nearest port of embarkation is deducted from the price paid to the grower.

Mr. Johnson: That is a deduction in cost, of course.

Mr. ACKLAND: It is quite true there are two freights paid in this State. Prior to 1951 a discount of 12½ per cent. was allowed on freight rates for flour sent by flourmillers for export, where the millers operated in country districts. This was justifiable assistance to the flourmilling industry and no one else, because millers operating in the country worked under a disadvantage. In the case of the Northam mill, much of the wheat required for milling comes from 100 miles away. Freight on the wheat for 160 or 170 miles, is deducted from the price paid to the farmer, but the miller pays the freight for only 100 miles. If the miller had to pay the freight on the flour manufactured from the wheat for the 60 or 70 miles down to the port of embarkation, it would be impossible for him to compete on the overseas market with flour millers operating along the coast and in the Eastern States.

The Minister for Agriculture: Is not the farmer charged a flat rate for all of his wheat?

Mr. ACKLAND: He is charged the same rate for freight whether it goes to Geraldton, Albany or Bunbury, whichever is the

natural port of export from his property. I made an inquiry after hearing what was said in this Chamber and I found that the miller is charged 50 per cent. of the "M" class freight for flour sent to the ports, and the Railway Department debits the other 50 per cent. of the freight to the Treasury. Country millers in this State could not operate unless some assistance of that nature were given. I know that the millers operating at Kellerberrin, York and Kataning could not possibly compete with the millers on the coast or in other parts of Australia if they had to pay two lots of full freight, firstly from the farm to the mill, and then from the mill to the port.

Consideration must also be given to the fact that country millers pay a great deal more for their water and power than millers more favourably situated. I would suggest to the member for Gascoyne that he be a little more careful in his statements in this Chamber. It is common knowledge that many members of Parliament here are not friendly disposed towards the wheatgrowers. Every case should be judge on its merits. Members should not indulge in misstatements, which in this instance, may have been made in good faith.

Mr. Oldfield: If they had any brains, they would realise that the wheatgrower was the backbone of the country.

The Premier: That is the first time I have heard the member for Maylands square off to the member for Moore.

Mr. ACKLAND: There is another matter I would like to mention, and that is the quality of wheat. There has been a good deal of agitation in Western Australia—and, I believe, in the Eastern States—for the segregation of wheat, and its sale on a grade basis rather than on the f.a.q. system, which has been so very satisfactory over the years. I know that there is not one leader of a prominent organisation in Western Australia which has anything to do with the growing or handling of wheat, or with the manufacture of the wheat product, who favours such a suggestion. I know that Dr. Sutton has been advocating it and has some recruits; but those who have seen the segregation system of wheat selling, as it operates in other countries, know how enviously those countries look at Australia because of the system under which it sells its wheat.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why do they not change their system then?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not know. But I happen to have met people from two of the biggest wheat-producing countries in the world, which are envious of our system. Of course, there are reasons—particularly in Canada, with its varying climatic conditions—that would make it more difficult than is the case here to adopt the f.a.q. system. They have so

much wheat that is regarded as unsaleable for human consumption because of its low quality, and there are other factors that operate.

Naturally, I am not going to suggest for one minute that the f.a.q. system, as we have it here, is by any means perfect; but I would appeal to the Minister himself to take some steps, which are within his scope, to rectify the position. It has been stated that because of the quality of our wheat, we are not able to sell it overseas. I have read an article from the millers of New Zealand, who are very critical of the wheat they receive; and which, incidentally, I have been told comes almost entirely from Victoria.

I have here before me the August edition of the "Journal of Agriculture" of South Australia; and although I have been told by one member of the Agricultural Department that the information contained therein is not entirely correct, I would point out that it has been compiled from statistics; and I believe that we cannot come to a decision on this matter other than through statistics. I am willing to agree that wheats grown in various districts are of varying quality; but if a hard wheat is grown in a district it will have a better milling quality than a soft wheat grown in the same district. The information I have before me is certainly of interest to me, and I shall be sorry if it wearies the rest of the House.

We find that the six wheatgrowing States of Australia produce wheat of varying quality. Queensland produces from approximately 455,000 acres. Its very weak and weak wheat comprise 7 per cent. of the total; and strong and medium wheat comprise 86.7 per cent. The balance is unspecified. In New South Wales, 2,835,000 acres are under cultivation, and weak and very weak wheat comprise 46.7 per cent. of the total; while strong and medium strong comprise 44.6 per cent., the balance being unspecified. In Victoria, 2,490,000 acres of wheat are grown. This is the wheat that mostly goes to New Zealand. The weak and very weak wheat comprise 95.3 per cent.; and the strong and medium strong, 2.9 per cent., the balance being unspecified. The area in South Australia is 1,687,000 acres, and the respective percentages are 41 and 47, the balance being unspecified. We find that the buyers of Australian wheat like to purchase wheat from New South Wales in preference to any other.

The Minister for Agriculture: What are the Western Australian figures?

Mr. ACKLAND: In Western Australia the total area is 3,162,000 acres. Weak and very weak wheat represent 87.1 per cent. of the total; and strong and medium strong, 7.1 per cent. We have a Department of Agriculture which breeds a great deal of wheat that is distributed to growers throughout the State as seed. Although I

have no wish to see Western Australia depart from the f.a.q. system, I have a very keen desire—in the interests of the growers and of the State as a whole—to see the quality of the wheat raised. I suggest to the Minister that he prevent his experimental stations from producing any wheat for distribution amongst the growers that does not conform to a reasonable strength.

The Minister for Agriculture: I think that is the position today.

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not vouch for the correctness of the figures I have quoted; but I think that the Minister would be very wroth if somebody in a Parliament in another State made the assertion that the information contained in the journal issued by his department was incorrect and misleading. The men who compile these statistics are men of responsibility, and must be reasonably correct in their information.

The Minister for Agriculture: I understood that the Australian average of strong wheat was 25 per cent.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am going by this article. When I read it, I was amazed; but I could wish that the Minister was correct, and that the article is wrong. However, if the Minister is right and we grow 25 per cent, of wheat of good milling quality, it is not enough.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, it is not.

Mr. ACKLAND: We find that it is more difficult to sell wheat today, because millers purchasing it, whether for human consumption or for the overseas flour trade, have the right to pick the eyes out of the f.a.q. sample for milling and there is nothing but the poorer quality left for the overseas market. It is becoming more difficult to sell our wheat in the South-East Asia market because of its low strength. I am told by members of the Australian Wheat Board that it is nearly impossible to get buyers for Victorian wheat because its quality is so much lower than ours.

I know that New South Wales has better wheat than we have, and I believe that that is because it has better wheatgrowing districts than we have. I believe there are parts of the north-western wheat belt of New South Wales that are particularly good for the growing of wheat of high milling quality—far better than our land here—but it looks as though there is far more than climate and soil involved in the figures I have quoted. I have several items I want to bring before members but there will be other opportunities to ventilate them.

MR. MAY (Collie) [8.41]: When speaking on the Address-in-reply, I purposely refrained from being parochial, because I wanted to touch on matters concerning

my electorate when the Estimates were under consideration. I therefore take this opportunity of bringing before members a few items which, in my opinion and that of the people I represent, need some attention.

I suppose that, apart from the discovery of oil, the most important discovery of recent days has been the finding of a certain type of Collie coal which can be coked for commercial purposes. There is a ready market in this State for upwards of 50,000 tons of this product per year. At present, all the coke that has to be used in this State must be imported from the Eastern States and elsewhere.

Hon. D. Brand: Has it been proved that the coke is suitable for commercial use?

Mr. MAY: Yes. This coal is available only from the new seam that has been found at Muja. Years ago Collie coal was coked, but was found to be so friable that it could not be transported because it was reduced to dust. However, the coal taken from the seam at Muja has been found possible of conversion into coke of commercial value and to be equal to, if not better than, the product imported from the Eastern States and elsewhere. As a matter of fact, I understand that the imported product is very inferior. Whether this State has been unfortunate in not being able to get the best quality coke, I do not know; but the fact remains that the coke that has been imported from the Eastern States and overseas has been of very poor quality. Not only will the coke from our coal be valuable but also the residue after completion of the coking process.

Hon. D. Brand: Has a great deal of coke been produced?

Mr. MAY: No. I understand a pilot plant is in course of construction at Welshpool, and I urge the Government to push on with that plant in order that another industry may be established in this State.

Hon. D. Brand: Is that a State-owned pilot plant?

Mr. MAY: I think it is. I speak subject to correction, but I think the Government feels that it is so important for us to produce our own coke that it is proceeding with the pilot plant. It is estimated that about 50,000 tons of coke are used annually in Western Australia. This amount would represent the normal output of a single mine. In view of the fact that the powers that be in the past saw fit to bring diesel locomotives into the State, the coal required for 50,000 tons of coke would offset the loss of coal as a result of the introduction of diesels.

This new industry would, therefore, more or less keep the production of coal on a level basis; and any value attaching to the introduction of diesel locomotives would be obtained by the State. I do not think there would be any difficulty in regard to

the provision of capital to establish a company to produce coke, and that is why I suggest to the Government that it should push on with the pilot plant so that it could find out the cheapest possible manner in which to coke Collie coal.

Next, I want to refer to the drainage problem that has been created in the town of Collie as a result of the terrific building operations that have taken place there over the past seven years. Collie was, seven years ago, surrounded by jarrah forests and there was no drainage problem because the forest trees absorbed any excess drainage that was evident, but now that the forests have been cleared and the town extended to the north, south-east and west, the drainage problem has become acute.

It is unfortunate that the Housing Commission, which has been responsible for the increased number of houses, does not take any responsibility for drainage. The road board says that the commission is responsible for the problem because of the houses it has built. The cost of overcoming this trouble is too great for the road board to handle. During the winter months, when the wet weather is on—Collie is a particularly wet place—the septic installations and drains are chockablock and overflowing, and this has created a problem which so far the Public Health Department has not been interested in. Yet it is a danger to the health of the people at Collie. They, individually, cannot do anything except try in a small way to drain their own holdings. The north and south parts of the town are built on high land, with the result that in the wet weather the lower areas are affected.

A serious situation has been created. The Government and the road board—by the Government, I mean the State Housing Commission—should co-operate to find a solution of this difficult problem, which is liable to result in an epidemic and endanger the lives of people living there. The present position is a real danger to the health of the general public, and such a state of affairs should surely interest the Public Health Department with a view at least to ensuring that someone attended to the matter. I want also to refer to the proposed closure of the Proprietary mine. Members may have seen in the paper some time ago that the company was desirous of closing this mine. It is some two years since the company decided to open up another seam connected with the Proprietary mine, and for this purpose, working on the cost-plus system, which is what the coal industry has worked on for some years now, terrific expenditure was incurred; when I say terrific expenditure, I mean many thousands of pounds.

It is not the company's money that has been spent but money that has been provided by the State under the cost-plus

system. Since the seam has been worked, the coal from it has been found to be unsuitable, and as a consequence the company has desired that the mine should be closed. With all the technical advisers available to the coal industry, I cannot understand why all the money should have been spent before the seam was properly bored and tested to ascertain the quality of the coal there. I have not been able to ascertain how it was that the company was allowed to proceed with the opening up of that seam before it was bored and tested.

Recently, the railways and the S.E.C. refused to take the coal, and as a consequence the company wanted to close the mine. That is all the worry the company had in connection with it. It was allowed to spend all this money to develop the seam, and then the S.E.C. and the railways said, "We do not want any more of that coal; it is rubbish." The company just said, "We will close the mine." No company should be allowed to get away with that. What has been done there has meant a total waste of public money. Someone is responsible for that, and the person or persons who are responsible should be brought to book.

However, the unions there took a hand in the matter; they made representations to allow the mine to remain open. As a consequence, the Railway Department was persuaded to make a test of the coal after it had been properly mined and correctly screened. By that, I mean that all the foreign matter—slate or stone—was taken from the coal. I have been able to ascertain that when the screened coal was tested, it was found to be very suitable. This goes to show that if the trouble is taken to clean any Collie coal that may have these seams of slate and stone in them, the coal is quite suitable for consumption by the railways and the S.E.C.

Mr. Hearman: How would the cost of production of that seam compare with that of other seams?

Mr. MAY: That is a different matter.

Mr. Hearman: It is important.

Mr. MAY: I agree. There is a lack of control in the industry and not sufficient powers are given to the technical men who are appointed to safeguard it. I understand their powers are inadequate to deal with the situation, so that the companies are allowed to do more or less as they like and spend what they like, without having to account to anyone. The coal is produced on the cost-plus system, and any expenditure above what is considered to be reasonable by some authoritative committee is provided out of public funds.

Mr. Hearman: Would the coal from that seam cost much more than from an open-cut?

Mr. MAY: Of course, cleaning the coal would cost more.

Mr. Hearman: How much more?

Mr. MAY: The unions maintain that by proper co-operation and mining methods, the coal can be produced at a much cheaper cost than applies today. This would allow of the cleaning of the coal so that it could be presented to the customer in a condition suitable for his purposes.

Mr. Hearman: What would the cost of the mining of the coal of that seam be compared with costs in respect to an open-cut?

Mr. MAY: If the coal from this seam were properly cleaned, the price would be about £6 a ton, which is out of all proportion.

Mr. Hearman: New South Wales coal would be cheaper than that, would it not?

Mr. MAY: No, it would not.

Mr. Hearman: That is, taking into account the calorific value.

Mr. MAY: The terrific freight cost of bringing coal from the Eastern States is all that prevents the serious dumping of Eastern States coal in this State; and that would be to the detriment of the production of our local coal, if not its complete extinction. I feel that the time has arrived when someone ought to take hold of this industry—particularly in regard to mining methods and expenditure—and place it on a proper basis so that the consumers will get what they pay for and so that we will have nothing to fear from Eastern States competition.

I know, and I suppose many other members know too, that at present coal is being stockpiled in the Eastern States because they are not able to ship it owing to freight charges. There is no doubt that if the shipping companies were to say, "We will bring Eastern States coal to Western Australia at a rate which is below the cost of production in that State," they would simply put our industry out of production. I hope that situation is appreciated and as most of our deep mines have been mechanised, or are in the course of mechanisation, we will be able to produce coal just as quickly and as cheaply as it has been produced by the open-cut method.

Once that stage has been reached the open-cut method of mining should be abolished because it is likely to ruin the industry. The coal so mined is of an immature type because of its close proximity to the surface. Simply because it is cheaper to produce coal by the open-cut method than by the old deep-mining method, the companies desire to cling to the open-cut system rather than go on with the development of their deep mines. We have plenty of good coal at Collie—the best that any consumer here could wish for—but so long as the coal companies are allowed to exploit the cheap

stuff which comes from the open-cuts we will have trouble in this State from our coal consumers, particularly the railways and the State Electricity Commission.

Mr. Ackland: How long is it since they started to use open-cut coal?

Mr. MAY: Since the war; 1944, I think it was.

Mr. Ackland: I can remember, many years before that, Collie coal starting fires in the agricultural areas.

Mr. MAY: That may be so, but that is a different story. These fires have not originated simply because of the use of open-cut coal. I am not talking of that aspect at all; I am talking of the quality of the coal and not about the sparks that can come from using Collie coal. That is a different problem altogether. My opinion is that if the railways continue to install the master mechanical type of spark arrester there will be little cause for the farmers of this State to complain and there will be few, if any, fires started by sparks from railway engines.

Mr. Ackland: Can the firemen get enough steam if they use these spark arresters?

Mr. MAY: Not from the open-cut coal. That has been the complaint of drivers and firemen for years—ever since we have been using open-cut coal. In the early stages firemen were asked to produce steam from lumps of granite and that sort of thing. In any case, that is all I want to say on that aspect tonight. I might tell a long story about it one of these evenings.

Now I want to discuss the Collie hospital. Over the last 7 or 8 years the population of the town has doubled and it has less hospitalisation facilities than it had 8 years ago. At that time there were two private maternity hospitals in Collie but since then they have closed down and the only provision for maternity cases in the Collie hospital is a one-bed labour ward. We feel that the time has arrived when some consideration should be given to the situation. Mothers are being sent home three or four days after their confinement because there is no accommodation available for other urgent cases.

The situation must be dealt with and, to put the position briefly, I shall read an article from the "Collie Mail" newspaper. This letter is dated the 30th September, 1954, and is written by Mr. Reg. C. Sack, the chairman of the Collie District Hospital Comforts Committee. It reads—

The Collie District Hospital Comforts Committee has instructed me to publicise through your columns, the appalling conditions at the Collie District Hospital. Repeated approaches to successive Governments have done nothing to alleviate the position, which must worsen.



Briefly, the general hospital has 24 ward beds and 29 beds are crowded on the verandahs. There is no actual children's section—one ward in the women's section being used for young children and girls, while boys over 10 years are placed with the men.

However, the maternity section is Collie's chief concern. There is one labour bed and nine midwifery beds. In an emergency—which arises far too often—an extra labour bed is placed in a room used as a thoroughfare. Such conditions mean that many mothers have to return home at the end of four or five days, often when their health demands the full period of treatment and rest, and thus are rendered prone to further illness. These conditions have existed in Collie since 1944, when an infectious diseases ward was converted into a midwifery section. Since that time Collie has more than doubled its population which now stands, with its outlying areas, at well over 10,000 people. This means that one labour bed is available to every 10,000 people, which would mean in Perth 38 labour beds for the whole of the metropolitan area—a state of affairs that would cause great public outcry. Collie is still expanding and it is reasonable to expect that unless the hospital is promptly enlarged, and a new midwifery section built, all the ingenuity of the staff in meeting the rising demand, will be of little avail. The committee, therefore, makes public this shocking state of affairs in the hope that public opinion will compel the authorities to remedy the position immediately.

I need say no more in regard to that matter except that I understand plans are in course of preparation for the enlargement of the hospital and the building of a maternity ward, which is so badly needed.

With regard to housing, I only want to say that although we have many unsatisfied applications in the town of Collie, the housing situation has improved. However, many married men come to the town and the adjacent district and find employment. They leave their wives and families in the metropolitan area in the hope that before long they will be able to find accommodation for them. But I am sorry to say that owing to the great shortage of houses, in many instances the men leave their permanent jobs in the country and return to the metropolitan area.

This creates another problem because they apply for houses in the city and that is one of the reasons why the metropolitan area is becoming so overloaded with people who could, and should, have been accommodated in country towns where they had permanent employment. Until

we realise and appreciate that such a situation exists, we will not do anything to bring about decentralisation of population in this State. I have spoken on this subject before and I think it should be the policy of any Government that a man who has obtained suitable and permanent employment away from the metropolitan area should be given every possible facility to enable him to remain there.

How many of us realise what will happen if the population of the metropolitan area remains as it is at the moment, or increases? I do not know where sufficient employment will be found for all these people, but until we wake up to the situation there will be continual trouble and the population of the metropolitan area and the country will be out of balance. I hope somebody will take enough interest in the problem to evolve some scheme so that people who go to the country districts can obtain permanent employment and housing accommodation to enable them to remain there. After all, it is the people who are working in the back portions of this State who provide those in the metropolitan area with the wherewithal to enable them to exist.

There is one other matter and this concerns the policy of the Forests Department. So far as I am concerned, in my district this matter is linked with what is known as the Water Purity Committee. I understand that this committee deals with the question of water catchment areas and is comprised of public servants. So far as I am able to understand, none of these public servants has visited the areas over which the committee has jurisdiction and I do not see how any of them can arrive at a decision about what is to be done in a water catchment area. I am not speaking of the newly-appointed conservator at the moment, but over past years I cannot recollect one instance where people have applied, either on their own behalf, or have asked me to make representations for them, and have been granted additional land.

I do not want members to think that I am against reforestation. Wherever any of our marketable timber exists, it should be protected; I am all for it. But I cannot understand the policy of the Forests Department. When any land that has been taken up and has been forfeited—in some cases it has been cleared—the policy of the department has been to include it, whether there is any timber on it or not, in State forests. I do not think that is fair and I do not think that was intended by those responsible for the setting up of the Forests Department.

Personally, I believe the department was created to protect our native timbers; by that I mean any timber used for any purpose and which is of marketable value. I cannot see why the Forests Department should be allowed to confiscate land that

does not belong to it and became available only because someone had to forfeit it to the Crown. I think such land should continue to be used for agricultural purposes, especially if there is no timber on it. There are a great many acres of land around my district at any rate that have been included in the forest reserve and on which there is no timber of any consequence. I think it is a very grabbing policy for the Forests Department to pursue. The department should serve a useful purpose in the State, but it is futile for it to include agricultural land in State forests when it could be used for agricultural purposes.

There are many farmers around Collie who in the first instance took up small holdings of land. At that time they had no family and they were allowed to take up as much land as they wanted. After a while they established themselves. These men only took up enough land to supply them with a living, but now that they have families who have grown up, they find their holdings are not adequate to supply their families and themselves with sufficient income. In consequence and owing to the policy of the Forests Department, we find that members of the family have separated and gone away.

I know of one case of a man and his wife who had a boy at the war. When he came back he wanted to stay with his father and improve the holding. This man asked me to apply on his behalf for more land to be allocated to him. There was land available adjoining his property and he wanted it to enable his son to remain with his parents in their later years to help them develop the place and produce enough income to give them a certain amount of security.

The Forests Department said, "No, we are not going to allow that land to be taken from the State forests." In consequence, the boy had to leave home and find other employment, whereas he could have been established on his father's property and become an asset in the agricultural development of the State. We find a complete blanket has been thrown over the Collie area and in the district where the Wellington Weir is situated, about 18 miles from Collie, and as far as Boyup Brook.

If anybody applies for a block in that area and the land is not controlled by the Forests Department, the Water Purity Committee will not permit the land to be taken up for agricultural pursuits. It says, "That country is part of the Wellington weir catchment area and nobody is allowed to stay on it." It is ridiculous. There are hundreds of places that have been established for years and there should be some other method of dealing with the question of the purity of water that eventually finds its ways into the Wellington weir.

Hon. D. Brand: Is there any restriction on the places already established?

Mr. MAY: No restriction at all. I brought up the question and said, "What about the people established there and those who have been established there for years? They have their poultry farms, their orchards and so on?" The answer was, "We cannot do anything about that, but we will stop anybody else." That means that if the coal industry at Collie declined, everybody would have to clear out. Yet, there are thousands of acres of land lying idle which are suitable for the production of foodstuffs that are required in the State, and the products of which could be exported overseas and to other parts of Australia.

We produce apples, and the export of those apples has been satisfactory as has the price obtained for them. Yet under the policy laid down by the Forests Department and the Water Purity Committee, no further extension is to be made in any direction in the water catchment area of the Wellington dam. There are other countries that have similar problems and have overcome them. There is enough area in the district to which I refer to make it comparable with the size of England. What would they do in England? They would quickly overcome it.

Hon. D. Brand: They drink the water from the Thames.

Mr. MAY: I know to what the hon. member is referring. In some cases they are now drinking water from the dams.

Hon. D. Brand: I said from the Thames.

Mr. MAY: I do not know whether we would find any dirtier river—with the possible exception of the Yarra—than the Thames in England. I know, because I have lived there. If this can be done in other countries and the water can be purified, I think it would be much better to adopt a similar system here than to follow the policy to which the authorities in the State are adhering at present. It is too silly for words, and I am sure the other States laugh at us. I do not know what the representatives from those States think when they find that because of this system we are cutting out hundreds of acres of good land which could be used for agricultural pursuits.

Next, I would like to refer to the recent agricultural show at Collie. The Minister for Agriculture is not here at the moment. I should say there were about 10,000 people at the show. I do not think there is another show outside the metropolitan area at which there was such a large attendance. There were displays of every conceivable form of product from the district. I am told that the horse parade was equal to the parade at the Royal Show. It would give members some idea of what could be produced in the district if they were able to attend the show and see the exhibits. Yet we are told that this must

be confined and restricted because the water from Boyup Brook and other districts eventually finds its way into the Wellington Dam.

We are told that land is to be allowed to lie idle because we have not enough initiative to cleanse water by any method other than by prohibiting people from living on the land surrounding it. I think it is too silly for words. I hope wiser counsels will prevail and that somebody with initiative and some conception of what it means to tie up that land and let it lie idle, will do something about it.

We heard the member for Moore speak about the wheat and the wool industry in this State. I notice, however, that he sidestepped another primary producing industry, and I refer to poultry farmers. I happen to have quite a number of poultry farmers in my district and because of the situation in which they find themselves today, they are going out of business. They are forced to sell and get out because of the price they are getting for their eggs and poultry as against the cost of feeding.

It does seem strange when we find a representative of a wheat district getting up and saying we are unable to get rid of our locally grown wheat and realise that the poultry producers of the State have to close down because they cannot buy it on account of the exorbitant price at which the wheat is sold. There should be some method whereby the wheat could be made available to poultry producers. I do not suggest that the wheat farmer should maintain the poultry industry but somebody should see if it is not possible to make wheat available to poultry farmers to enable them to carry on.

When it is kept for any length of time, the wheat is bound to deteriorate; it certainly does not improve. It is interesting to note the cost of poultry food from 1951 to the present year. In 1951 the poultry farmer was paying 9s. 4d. a bushel for his wheat; today he is paying 16s. 7d. The price of bran was £14 15s. 6d. a ton in 1951 and today it is £24 3s. In 1951 pollard cost £14 15s. 6d. a ton but today it is £25 3s. It is little wonder that the poultry farmer is unable to carry on. In 1951 the price of meat meal was 23s. 3d. a bag and today it costs 38s. 6d. Whale meal cost 46s a bag in 1951, but today it costs 85s. a bag. Bone meal was 42s. in 1951 and today it is 55s.; there is not such a big increase on that.

In those circumstances, when we realise that over a period of three or four years the price of poultry food has increased to that extent, it is little wonder that the poultry farmers in this State are going out of existence. I think it would be a great pity to allow that position to continue. On the one hand, we have a State with millions of bushels of wheat which cannot be sold, and, on the other, we have the

spectacle of farmers going out of existence because the price of wheat is too high.

Mr. Oldfield: Has there been an increase in the price of eggs?

Mr. MAY: I will give the hon. member the figures. In 1951 producers received 3s 7d.; in 1954 they received 3s. 6d. and later 3s. 7d.; I think it has now dropped to 3s. 4d. As a matter of fact, I believe it has fallen to 2s. 9d.; that is the latest figure I have heard. That will give members an idea of the situation in which the poultry farmers find themselves at the moment. It seems ridiculous that we should be holding so much unsold wheat that is deteriorating through being held—we were told by the member for Moore that some of it had been held for two years—and that poultry producers are being forced out of the industry because they cannot afford the prices for stock feed.

I hope that something will be done to help the poultry farmers over their present difficulties. I do not know to what extent the Egg Marketing Board plays a part in this matter, but surely somebody connected with the industry could find means whereby the extinction of the poultry farming industry in this State could be avoided! I hope that some notice will be taken of the matters I have mentioned, and that action by the Government will follow.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [9.31]: I feel that I should mention some matters affecting my district. While they are many in number, I shall be as brief as possible in my address because some members might be inclined to say that I am on my swan song again, seeing that my remarks will include references to the Swan River and its pollution. This has been so for six years, and I think the condition of the river is even worse now.

I am pleased to notice that the Railways Commission recently announced its intention to make a bid to regain some of the railway patronage which was previously held and lost. In 1945, the passenger fares totalled about 18,000,000; in 1949 the number had dropped to 13,000,000 and by 1953 it was down to 6,000,000. In other words two-thirds of the passenger traffic on the suburban lines has been lost, and this, of course, means a great loss of revenue to the department.

The commission has expressed the opinion that in the near future, by providing a service with fast diesels and additional sidings, it will be able to recover some of the lost traffic, and that people using motorcars will be encouraged to park at the sidings, leave their cars there, take a train to Perth, and then retrieve their cars at the siding on the way home.

This might be a popular proposition because people in two parts of my electorate have asked me to endeavour to get a diesel siding for them—one at East Guildford and one between East Guildford and West Midland. If these services were provided, the department would probably be able to surpass road transport in catering for passenger traffic. I compliment the Railways Commission on making this bid to provide a better service for the travelling public.

On perusing the Estimates, I have felt concerned that so much money is being sent overseas in payment for rollingstock, particularly diesels and locomotives. I hope that the Railways Commission will be encouraged by the Minister to anticipate the day when all the diesels and rollingstock required will be built in the railway workshops at Midland Junction, for which purpose I believe they were originally erected. Recently I had an opportunity to see a moving picture in one of the suburban theatres showing the Clyde Engineering Works, Sydney, constructing diesel engines for the cane fields in Queensland and I thought it would be much preferable if the commission lodged its orders for diesels with the Sydney works rather than sending overseas.

The Minister for Railways: Those works would not take the orders.

Mr. BRADY: That was probably correct at the time. However, I hope that ultimately we shall be able to design and fabricate diesels and steam engines at Midland Junction to cater for local requirements. I appreciate that difficulties will arise in planning this, because it would take a while for local tradesmen to get the "know-how," as the Americans term it, but I maintain that if Australian tradesmen can do this work in New South Wales, it could be done here, and I hope that the commission will take action towards this end.

A matter that has crept into the news recently is the closing of the Mundaring railway. I know that the district council of the A.L.P., which I regularly visit, is being worked up over this matter, and that people residing in the hills are upset about the closure of the line. Recently they have produced one or two arguments that I believe were overlooked when the decision was made to close the line. It has been pointed out that major accidents have occurred on the main line around the tunnel, and that the traffic as a result has been held up for considerable periods. Had the Mundaring line been open, the traffic could have been diverted and much delay avoided.

The present arrangement whereby a private bus company is providing road transport to serve that area when it should

have been taken over by the railway transport services is the subject of much criticism. This brings me to the point that I had hoped the Government would see fit to appoint a transport co-ordinating committee in the metropolitan area to review the matter of road transport. I believe that quite a lot of road transport in the city—this applies from my district—could well be channelled into the railway service and that the railways would benefit by this traffic. I believe that a co-ordinating committee could profitably consider this matter. It seems reasonable that road traffic, instead of being taken into the city, should be linked with the suburban railways, and that the Railway Department should be given an opportunity to run the hills service previously provided by the trains.

The men in the Midland Junction workshops, of whom I meet many, complain bitterly that the privileges they enjoyed in the matter of railway passes have been taken from them and the equivalent is not made up to them by road services. Others complain that they built homes in the hills and expected that in due course the railway service would be improved, thus encouraging relatives and others to settle in the hills so that the service could be still further expanded. This has not come to pass. I hope that, in the interests of the railway employees and of the general public, the decision to close the Mundaring line is not irrevocable and that ultimately we shall see a fast diesel service provided for the hills traffic. As time goes on I believe that many business men and their families will prefer to make their homes in the hills rather than live in the congested city where they feel they are still in the midst of their working environment.

There is a railway building in the heart of Midland Junction known as the old delicensed Victoria Hotel. I believe that the property was purchased by the McLarty-Watts Government with the intention of providing a hostel for railway employees, who were experiencing difficulty four or five years ago in obtaining living accommodation. Apparently the idea of providing those facilities has been abandoned, as recently tenders have been called for the purchase of the building. I urge upon the Government the desirability of retaining the property as a public works building.

All Government services in the eastern suburbs are expanding rapidly, including the activities of the State Electricity Commission, the Water Supply and Sewerage Department, the Main Roads Department, the abattoir, railways and so forth. I believe that the building could be adapted for use as a police court and perhaps as police barracks or station. Structurally, I understand, the building is sound, but a sum of £5,000 or £6,000 would need to be spent on renovations. If the building were

sold for £4,000 or £5,000, I believe that in the near future the Government would rue its decision and regret that it had not retained the building for its own purposes.

I hope that consideration will be given to the matter of retaining this property. I believe that tenders were called for its purchase two months ago, but that so far no tender has been accepted. I urge the Government, before parting with the property, seriously to consider retaining it for a public works building. An entirely new housing centre has arisen at Midvale and the marshallng yards are being expanded. A new silo costing some £500,000 has been constructed in the area, and it seems that great activity will be experienced in that district and that the property will greatly increase in value.

The expansion of Government departments in that area makes the present an opportune time for the Government to take over that building and renovate it extensively for use by those departments. I am glad to note that the Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department is at last sewerage West Midland. The work is long overdue, as that should have been one of the first centres to be sewered, instead of one of the last. The result is that people are now paying anything from £200 to £250 to have their premises sewered, while people in Subiaco, Mosman Park and Fremantle had the same installation done years ago for a cost of £80 or £90.

Hon. D. Brand: Somebody had to be first.

Mr. BRADY: Yes, and it would seem that there are special interests in certain localities. It is strange that the municipality of Midland Junction was established in 1895 or 1898 and that only now, after 50 years, has it been granted the privilege of being sewered, while some of the newer areas such as Nedlands, established about 25 years ago, have been given all the services in the world. I may have a suspicious mind but I feel I could be excused for thinking that a preponderance of civil servants might live in the Nedlands area or that some members of Cabinet of past Governments or high officials in local government live there.

An injustice has been done to the eastern suburbs in leaving them to the last, as far as works of this nature are concerned. The Midland Junction and Bassendean areas all require a considerable amount of drainage. Lack of drainage in those districts has been responsible for hundreds of acres of land lying idle for more than half a century. In recent times the State Housing Commission has built dwellings on an area originally considered to be too low-lying. Governments are now being forced into installing sewerage in those areas so as to enable the houses to be occupied and let the people live in decent circumstances.

If drainage was being installed in those areas as well as sewerage, the position would be much better, as Midland Junction is extending far more rapidly now than in years gone by, particularly in view of the fact that saturation point has been reached in the western suburbs. It is well known that land is changing hands in the western suburbs at anything from £500 to £1,300 per quarter-acre block and as people are declining to pay such high prices they are being forced into the eastern suburbs. It is unfortunate that this trend had to become necessary before essential services such as sewerage could be extended to the eastern suburbs. I hope that in the near future extensive drainage will be undertaken in North Bassendean and North Midland Junction.

The Midland Junction area is in greater need now of hospitalisation than at any other time in the last 50 years. When I went to Midland Junction and Bassendean 25 years ago, there were seven or eight private hospitals in that area, but they are all closed now with one exception, the last of those which shut down having closed about two months ago. The result is that there has been a loss of from 20 to 25 beds for general hospitalisation and maternity cases in the area, in spite of the fact that in the past seven years the population of the district has increased by nearly 100 per cent.

I hope the Minister for Health and Cabinet will have regard to the necessity for the early commencement of building on the general section of the Swan Districts Hospital. For 15 years there has been agitation for the building of a general hospital there, but apart from the establishment of the maternity hospital some four or five months ago, nothing has been done.

Hon. L. Thorn: There is no hospital at Guildford at all now, is there?

Mr. BRADY: No. There were three private hospitals there some years ago and five in Midland Junction alone 25 years ago. But today there is only St. Andrew's hospital, run by Sister Nevin, and, although she has done an outstanding job, she is a very tired sister today. The Beaufort hospital was closed down about two weeks ago, and now all general cases must come into Perth if required.

The other night the Midland Junction Municipal Council held a meeting of interested parties and compared the 1947 census with that of 1954. That comparison showed an approximate increase of 100 per cent. in the overall districts population, but, in spite of that, we have lost four or five private hospitals, with the result that all the patients cannot now be accommodated at the Royal Perth Hospital. Several have recently been brought into Perth and have been taken to four or five different hospitals in the course of the

day while arrangements were made for their treatment, owing to lack of facilities in the private hospitals.

The Minister for Health: Why did those hospitals close down?

Mr. BRADY: Because of the high cost of running them. The matron of the one which closed down a month ago told me she was losing money and could not carry on unless the Government subsidised her losses. I arranged for her representative to interview the department and thought it would agree to pay a subsidy, but it did not, and consequently Sister Baker had to close her hospital. The result is a further burden on the local people. "The West Australian" of the 14th August published the following report:—

**The Midland Area Needs to Buy an Ambulance.**

The need for the purchase of a new ambulance for the Midland Junction and district St. John Ambulance sub-centre was raised at the annual meeting of the centre last night. The station officer, Mr. Hyde, said one of the station's two ambulances had been bought secondhand and its replacement had to be considered. The annual report showed that 1,051 cases had been carried for the year to the 30th June, of which 292 were traffic cases and industrial and domestic accident cases.

So 25 per cent. of the cases in the electorate are emergency cases.

The two ambulances had in the period covered 24,135 miles.

Members will realise that these two ambulances are running anything from 45 to 50 miles from Midland Junction to pick up emergency cases, and the people of Midland Junction and the surrounding districts have to find the finance to keep the sub-centre going. Why should Midland Junction have to find those services, any more than Fremantle should? Fremantle has a public hospital and there is talk of one being built at Kwinana, which was established only five minutes ago as compared with Midland Junction.

Midland Junction has no general hospital and yet has to provide an ambulance centre to run people 25 or 30 miles to the hospital in Perth. It carries all the local cases into Perth and the local people have the inconvenience of having to travel anything up to 30 miles to visit relatives in hospital, often at very awkward hours, when they should have a hospital in their own centre. The activities of the districts concerned warrant an early commencement of the building of the general wing of the Swan Districts Hospital. A deputation of local governing bodies in the area will wait on the Minister in the near future for this purpose, and I hope favourable consideration will be given to its request.

I have spoken on the Estimates every year since I have been in this House and have mentioned the pollution of the Swan River, which I think is greater now than it was six years ago. There may be special features about the present year owing to the unusually low rainfall, but a further factor is that with the raising of the wall at Mundaring Weir, the Swan River will never again be flushed out to the same extent as was usual in the past. This raises an important point for members representing suburban electorates, all of whom desire to have a reasonably clean and healthy river available for use by their constituents.

The raising of the wall at Mundaring Weir by about 33 ft. means, as I have said, that the overflow will never again be what it has been in the past and the river will not in future be flushed each year as it has been for centuries past. Certain impediments in the river in the Guildford area have been mentioned for the past 25 or 30 years, but nothing concrete has been done by the departments concerned to remove them, and, in my opinion, the result is that the river is now more polluted than ever before.

Hon. D. Brand: Would the removal of the impediments improve the situation?

Mr. BRADY: If the river was dredged and de-snagged in many places, it would be greatly improved for recreational purposes. A large number of institutions have built on the river in order that the children might use it for recreational purposes, and yet we now find it being gradually polluted. Although the Minister for Health in the McLarty-Watts Government, four or five years ago advised local governing bodies not to site swimming pools on the river, Dr. Henzell in today's Press states—

Recognised swimming pools below the Causeway are safe for swimming, but there is a risk of infection above the Causeway. *Bacillus coli* are ever present and there is a possibility of contamination from faecal organisms in the summer.

It is only 18 months ago since certain foodstuffs were withdrawn from the market because of similar contamination; yet now we find our river, 25 miles long, containing these organisms. Despite that, there is no concentrated or determined effort to rid the river of these organisms.

In dealing with this problem, the Minister for Works said he hoped to see legislation introduced in the near future for the purpose of setting up a committee to control the river. All Governments will rue the day if they do not soon take steps to stop the pollution of the river. The unfortunate feature is that the health authorities have announced that children should not use the river for swimming and therefore, if young people desire to bathe, they will be forced to go to the ocean

beaches for such recreation. That is a tragic state of affairs. I sincerely hope that the Government will take steps in the near future to clear the river of all pollution.

I now wish to refer to housing, regarding which several members have spoken. I consider that in the metropolitan area the Government is nearing the stage where it can say that it has the housing problem in hand. I agree with the member for Collie in that I think the Government should give consideration to opening up areas of land around the metropolitan area for intense cultivation. That might be done to conform to the town planner's proposal to develop a green belt around the metropolis. If small plots of about 15 or 20 acres were granted to people in outlying parts of the metropolitan area, many foodstuffs could be grown which would alleviate a shortage that is becoming evident with the increase in the population of the metropolitan area.

There are many people of British stock now entering our State who would be glad to be settled on small areas of land so that they could engage in intense cultivation in growing vegetables or other foodstuffs. They should be encouraged to do so. Apart from that, there are many Australian workers who are now on a 40-hour week who could use their spare time to great advantage by growing foodstuffs on small plots. It must be remembered that in the last five or six years approximately 80,000 or 90,000 new Australians have entered this State.

I think our intake of migrants has been greater than that of any other State of the Commonwealth. The majority of these people were born and bred in rural districts in the countries of their birth, and they consider that Australia is a second Mecca in regard to land settlement. In Europe, they are unable to buy land as freely as they can in Australia, where small tracts of five or ten acres can be purchased at a fairly reasonable figure. I have attended many naturalisation ceremonies recently in civic centres, and I think that the type of new Australian that is becoming naturalised would be glad to have the opportunity of settling on a five or ten-acre block.

Therefore, the Government, through the medium of the Minister for Housing, would be well advised to throw open many thousands of acres and give these people an opportunity to grow vegetables and other foodstuffs so that the increasing population of the metropolitan area might be adequately supplied with these products at cheaper prices. As such development increased, the people in the hinterland could be supplied with such products, and eventually much of it might be exported.

The Minister for Lands: They do not have to be naturalised to take up land.

Mr. BRADY: That is news to me. While I am of the opinion that unnaturalised persons should not be given an opportunity to become landowners, I feel certain that when all these new migrants are naturalised they will tend to apply for small blocks of land.

I now wish to stress the increasing accident rate in the metropolitan area. Every quarter, the number of accidents is becoming greater and I would urge the Minister for Police to have an investigation made into the nature of the accidents that occur. It is unfortunate that many elderly and young people are being killed on the highways as a result of being struck by cars driven at high speed. At this stage, I would like to pay tribute to the members of the police road patrol which has performed excellent service in the past 12 months.

In conjunction with the National Safety Council, members of that patrol have made the public more safety-minded, and I am pleased to say they are continuing their good work. Despite their efforts, however, the accident rate is increasing. I have here a cutting from "The West Australian," which reads as follows:—

#### A Little Boy Killed as he Crosses.

A boy aged 3½ years was killed when he was struck by a car in Onslow-rd., Shenton Park, early yesterday afternoon.

He was Gary Diss, of Hilda-st., Shenton Park.

The car was driven by Peter Healy, of McMillan-st., Victoria Park.

The police were told that the little boy was running across the road to return to his home when he was struck.

He was rushed to the Princess Margaret Hospital, but was dead on arrival there.

I can also cite the case that occurred at Bellevue in my own electorate. A new Australian mother sent her son to buy some groceries for the evening meal, and on crossing the road to return home he was knocked down by a car. As a result, the father was faced with a bill for medical expenses amounting to £150. When he tried to claim this amount from the driver of the car, he was told there was no negligence on his part and so the parent could not obtain any reimbursement.

Mr. Bovell: Would not the third party insurance provisions cover such a case?

Mr. BRADY: I was told that he could not claim against the driver because he had not been negligent. Apparently it was considered that the boy was negligent, although he was only eight or nine years of age. I am not only concerned with young children, but also with elderly people. With the increase in traffic, aged people now have to wait on the side of

the road for 15 or 20 minutes before attempting to cross. In Midland Junction, elderly men and women can be seen standing on the footpath in trepidation. They have no chance of crossing the street when traffic is travelling along it at 30 miles an hour in both directions.

Traffic signal lights should be installed at every intersection along a main highway so that both children and elderly people would be protected. They should not have to take their lives in their hands every time they venture out on the road. For those reasons, I hope the Government will investigate the nature of the accidents that are increasing daily.

The establishment of a medical school at the university has become a topical subject because the South Australian and Victorian universities have refused to take our fourth, fifth and sixth-year students to finish their medical course. In the past, a percentage of Western Australians have been accepted by those universities, but now those young people who desire to follow the medical profession cannot be accepted by universities in the Eastern States, nor can they enter the University of Western Australia to do their first year of study after next year, if the University Senate's recommendations are carried out.

I believe the lack of facilities and accommodation is responsible for this decision. This is a tragic state of affairs. In my opinion, the Commonwealth Government should accept more responsibility in regard to this problem. In fact, I think it is obliged to accept greater financial responsibility for the establishment of a medical school in Western Australia than it has exhibited up till now. The other night, I asked the Treasurer a series of questions in regard to this matter. The questions were as follows:—

- (1) What is the approximate capital cost of setting up a medical course at the Western Australian University?
- (2) What is the estimated annual upkeep of such a course?
- (3) What years (if any) in the medical course are catered for at the Western Australian University?
- (4) What subsidy (if any) is given by the Commonwealth Government to the Western Australian University at present?

The replies were as follows:—

- (1) £234,000, if use is made of some temporary buildings.
- (2) £129,000, when fully in operation and teaching 60 students a year.
- (3) First year.
- (4) £108,677 for 1954. The State Government is contributing £328,686 in this year.

If the State Government is paying £328,000 to the University of Western Australia, it is doing as much as it possibly can. In 1946, a referendum was held among the people of the Commonwealth on the question of whether the Commonwealth Government should assume responsibility for the provision of certain amenities and facilities. As a result, a new subsection was added to Section 51 of the Australian Constitution Act granting further powers to the Commonwealth Parliament. Section 23A. provides that the Commonwealth Government has an obligation to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to the provision of maternity allowances, widows' pensions, child endowment, unemployment, pharmaceutical, sickness and hospital benefits, medical and dental services, but not so as to authorise any form of civil subscription to benefits to students and family allowances.

That adequately covers the responsibility of the Government in regard to its subsidising the medical school for Western Australia. There are two separate sections mentioned there, namely, the matter of adopting reforms for medical and dental services and the provision of benefits to students. Under those two sections, the Commonwealth Government could be asked to subsidise the university. If something is not done we in Western Australia will be placed in a difficult position in the near future because the outlying districts are already experiencing difficulty in obtaining doctors. In recent times I have known of several local authorities calling for medical men to go to the country. We know that the North-West is very short of doctors. If this State is to be denied the opportunity to give local students medical training, then a very serious position will eventuate.

The whole State is crying out for more medical facilities and for new hospitals with improved facilities. I hope that members representing all parties will urge their Federal confreres, in the House of Representatives and the Senate, to do something for this State. In concluding my address on the Estimates, I would refer to the question of pollution of the Swan River, to the drainage of the district and to associated matters. I trust that Cabinet will pay due regard to them when they appear before it, and place them on a high priority.

**MR. OLDFIELD** (Maylands) [10.17]: I wish to speak on one or two matters and commence with a subject which is very dear to the heart of the last speaker. It relates to Swan River pollution. In the postwar years there was a lot of talk by responsible people in the community on what should be done to cleanse the river and retain our national heritage. So far, no real effort has been made. The Swan



River Conservation Committee, a voluntary body, has done a lot of work and research. At times it has attempted, with heartbreaking results, to interest public opinion to support its meritorious work.

The public and the Government departments are conscious of what is happening to the river. Like the member for Guildford-Midland, I strongly support any move by him or by any other member to cleanse the river and to retain it in a healthy state. Many reasons have been advanced as to the cause of the silting up and pollution of the river. A large number of suggestions have been put forward by amateurs as well as by experts, including officers of Government departments.

Apart from one or two minor moves, nothing concrete has been done to cleanse the river except dredging in certain portions for reclamation of foreshores. Not being an engineer, I probably will not be regarded as competent to offer an opinion on this matter, but I would suggest that investigations should be carried out in the upper reaches of the river and remedial measures taken from there to the opening. We should go down the river and remedy any factor which contributes to its pollution. We should commence from the hinterland, where the topsoil is washed down from the farmlands into the streams forming the tributaries of the river.

We should not only be concerned with the pollution of the river, but also with the wealth of the land that is being washed away. We do not own the land; we only have the use of it during our lifetime, and it is our responsibility to hand it on to posterity in at least as good a condition as we received it. Some farmers are not conscious of their obligation to conserve the topsoil and do not take precautions against soil erosion. Steps should be taken to enforce the necessary measures to prevent such erosion. The valuable topsoil should be retained in order that future generations might be fed.

The soil washed down from the hinterland eventually reaches the lower reaches of the Swan to form silt and slime on the foreshore. At one time the foreshore was composed of sandy beaches. When I was a schoolboy and learned to swim on the river, in both the upper and lower reaches, especially in the vicinity of the Causeway, there were many sandy coves and islands which have since been dredged away to form the Causeway. The foreshore was fringed with white sand and a few rushes. There were sandy banks above and below the Causeway stretching as far as Bassendean. I used to travel to Bassendean in those days and swim at Sandy Beach. Recently I went to look at that beach and could not recognise it because the sand has all disappeared. The silt has been the cause of turning the sandy beaches into mud banks.

In the early stages of stormwater drainage it was found expedient and economical to channel the water into the river. Thus the sediment from the streets settled in the river. For many years the filth of streets has been washed into it and this has added to the pollution. Not only must we prevent factories from discharging their effluent into the river, but we should take steps to divert the stormwater from the river into the open sea. Every shower of rain tends to wash the dust and dirt from the streets into the river, although some of it may be retained in the traps under the manholes.

Engineers have advanced many suggestions to prevent silt from entering the river. One system is to construct weirs at the upper reaches above Midland Junction. The Premier should know from experience in his electorate one classic example where such a weir has been built. I remember swimming at this weir at Northam as a boy. It was quite deep at that time, but today before anyone can swim in it, it has to be dredged. It is no more than knee deep. It has silted up obviously because of the topsoil being washed down from the farmlands.

The time has arrived when we should face up to realities. We should recognise the seriousness of the situation and make some definite move to cleanse the river. I realise that finance is required for this work, and that some authority must be set up to control the Swan River, the same as the one set up to control the Thames.

I would like to touch on several other matters. Firstly, I support the member for Collie in his plea for the lot of the poultry farmers to be improved. Not often is the case for the poultry farmer put forward in this Chamber. He is possibly the only person following a farming pursuit who has not reaped a harvest during the war and post-war years.

The Minister for Agriculture: The dairy farmer is another.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The dairy farmer has not done badly for himself although he has not reaped as rich a reward as has the wheat or woolgrower. That he has done better than the poultry farmer, I know from my own experience. Before entering Parliament I was engaged in the produce industry and had dealings with poultry and dairy farmers. I know that the dairy farmers were doing much better than the poultry men. It is significant that the poultry farmer has not reaped the reward which he deserves for the hours he works. The poultry farmer works just as long hours as the dairy farmer, for seven days of the week, and sometimes well into the night to candle and pack his eggs. Even in 1951 the farmers were receiving more for their eggs than they are today, and at

that time the cost of feed was very much lower. But strangely enough, even in 1951 the poultry farmer was not ahead of it.

I knew the state of the accounts of poultry farmers with the various produce firms and at all times they were hard pressed to meet their commitments. They seemed to be sincere and genuine farmers who struggled hard to pay their way, but there was always something wrong. No sooner did they catch up with their accounts than they were behind again, because they had to buy new stock, sometimes annually and sometimes twice a year. Again, when they had young chickens, their food costs rose, without any extra return. When we consider the price of poultry food today, and the price the grower is receiving for his product, it is little wonder that poultry farmers are going out of the industry.

**The Minister for Agriculture:** It is not only on that account. Has it not something to do with overseas markets—Great Britain, for instance?

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** I am not complaining about the price they are receiving for their eggs, but I am comparing the cost of feeding the stock as compared with the return of 2s. 9d. per dozen for eggs. The overseas market could be the cause of that. We have not a remedy for that; we cannot control the overseas market.

**The Minister for Agriculture:** That is what I am trying to say.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** I am not throwing any stones.

**The Premier:** Do the growers receive only 2s. 9d. per dozen?

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** At the present time, yes.

**The Premier:** What does the consumer pay?

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** He pays 4s. 6d. Twelve months ago he was paying up to 6s. At that stage the grower was receiving about 3s. 9d. I understand that the shopkeeper receives a profit of 5d. per dozen.

**Hon. J. B. Sleeman:** What about the middleman?

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** There happens to be no middleman, at whom the member for Fremantle has a great delight in having a shot. In this instance there is an organisation set up by the Government and practically controlled by it. I refer to the Egg Board.

**Mr. Heal:** What does the board receive?

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** About 10d. a dozen.

**Mr. Ackland:** Is it not 11½d.?

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** I think it is 10d., but I would not be certain. The board receives a lot more than the shopkeepers.

**The Minister for Agriculture:** There is ½d. for stabilisation.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** Yes. But the board gets as much for handling in bulk as the grocer by resale.

**The Premier:** A lot of the money received by the board has gone into the creation of assets.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** That is true. I did not intend to criticise the board until the member for Fremantle had something to say about the much despised middleman. The middleman does not exist in the poultry industry. When we realise what poultry farmers used to pay for food and what they received for eggs, and compare those figures with an increased cost of 75 per cent., and a reduction in the return, we see that the only method by which the poultry farmer can keep going is a reduction in the cost of labour, or a greater return for the same amount of labour. This can only be achieved by improved methods of production and by labour-saving devices, which are being rapidly introduced.

New methods of watering the stock have been discovered. There are troughs fitted with the old ball and stopcock system, operating in the same way as the old horse troughs which used to be located in the streets. When the water goes down to a certain level the float sinks down and allows the water to float in the pipe until it reaches a certain level and shuts off. This method enables the poultry farmer to save a lot of the time that had to be expended in watering stock.

**Mr. May:** Many of them have to cart their own water.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** Yes. But in the recognised poultry farming areas adjacent to the metropolis, if poultry farmers have not scheme water, they possess pumps and bores by means of which they obtain supplies. Another labour-saving device has been introduced which has enabled poultry farmers to double their stock and yet have less work to do. I refer to the method of hopper-feeding with pellets. This has replaced the old orthodox mash in the morning and wheat in the afternoon.

Pellets are put into the hopper and are there all the time for the fowls to pick at as they wish. The pellets are dearer, but a lot of work and time is saved; and it has to be remembered that labour costs money. I am led to believe that stock reared from the chicken stage to exist on pellets give a greater production of eggs than those which are fed with the orthodox mash and meatmeal. I believe it is necessary to add a little meatmeal in the yard so that the fowls can pick at it if they wish to do so.

This method of feeding stock, while helping the full-time farmer, has also been a great boon to people who have jobs in town and take up a few acres of land in places like Welshpool, Queen's Park, Riverton, Wanneroo, Osborne Park and Bayswater. At one time these men had to

get up early in the morning and feed the fowls before going to work, and they had to feed them with wheat when they returned at night. In the meantime the wives collected the eggs during the day. Then, after tea, they would have to settle down and clean and candle the eggs for market. Under the modern methods they have been relieved of the morning feeding, because all that is necessary is to replenish the pellets in the hoppers once a week, and to make sure that the watering system is operating efficiently. All that is required to be done in addition is for the wives to throw to the fowls some green feed which has been prepared by the husband in the morning, and to gather the eggs. Then in the evening the couple sit down and treat the eggs as is necessary.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It sounds like poultry farming made easy.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I am speaking of men who work in town during the day. They have developed that system of lightening their burden in the morning and evening. But during the week-end they are at work full-time repairing fences, providing new sheds, growing green stuff and improving their properties against the day when they hope to become full-time poultry farmers working 16 hours a day, seven days a week, for something less than the basic wage, their only reward being that they will be their own bosses.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why would a man want to do that if he has a good job already?

Mr. OLDFIELD: That is how they develop their properties.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why would they want to work 16 hours a day for seven days a week if they have a good job? You are not laying it on thick, are you?

Mr. OLDFIELD: I do not know how they receive even the basic wage with the present cost of food and the return they receive for the eggs, especially if they have to employ labour. When I was closely associated with the industry, I knew some farmers who had as many as 10,000 head of poultry.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There are not too many of them.

Mr. OLDFIELD: As a matter of fact, it was in the Melville area, and the Campbell brothers were in that position.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Mr. Love had that number, but he has only a quarter now.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I suppose that is because he discovered that the more he had under present conditions, the more money he was losing; because the stage has been reached where the industry cannot afford to pay wages. When the Campbell brothers had 10,000 head, it was considered that

1,000 birds provided a full day's work. Five or six men were employed on that property, in addition to the principals. A poultry farmer today running 10,000 head would have to find between £75 and £85 a week in wages; and other costs, such as payroll tax, and workers' compensation would bring the amount to about £100. And their employees would work only 40 hours a week. So poultry farmers have reduced their stock to a number that can be adequately handled without the employment of labour. I feel, with the memoir Collie, that something will have to be done either by way of scientific research or—

The Minister for Agriculture: That is going on all the time.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes, but there must be an attempt to reduce costs.

The Minister for Agriculture: Five pilot farms are doing research work at Gosnells now.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I realise that. Something will have to be done to find a method of reducing costs or increasing production, or some form of subsidy will have to be paid to enable the industry to continue. If it is allowed to lapse, it will take a lot of restarting. I think that the industry has reached as high a peak of efficiency as is possible with the knowledge available to the farmers.

Another matter I would like to mention concerns traffic within our city. A problem we will have to face very shortly is that of outlets and inlets from and to the city itself. All members are aware of the congestion which takes place, not only at peak periods but throughout the day, through people endeavouring not only to enter, but also to leave Perth, and especially those travelling to or from the northern suburbs. We have only two outlets to the north—those via the Horseshoe Bridge and the Beaufort-st. bridge.

When one looks at the map of Perth and its environs and sees the population living north of Perth, one realises that those two avenues of access to the city are far from adequate. Not only do they have to provide entrance to and exit from the city for people resident in the northern and north-eastern suburbs, but they have also to provide an avenue for people coming across the Causeway to the north of Perth, such as that area north of the line where a large amount of industry is rapidly being established.

Mr. Heal: Can they go East Perth way?

Mr. OLDFIELD: No, because although we have numerous level crossings between the Beaufort-st. bridge and the Mt. Lawley subway, people in the Newcastle-st. or Bulwer-st. area who travel to South Perth or Victoria Park, have a much further distance to go if they travel via the Mt. Lawley subway than if they go over the

Beaufort-st. bridge. Even people travelling from immediately north of Perth to East Perth must go over the Beaufort-st. bridge or the Horseshoe bridge. At peak periods, all this traffic adds to the congestion in the city. We must realise what the position will be very shortly. Provision will have to be made for at least one further crossing over the line between the Beaufort-st. bridge and the East Perth railway station.

Mr. Heal: Do you think they could use the Pier-st. crossing?

Mr. OLDFIELD: That would be a great help because it would keep a lot of traffic from entering the heart of the city.

Mr. May: Do you not think the Garratt-rd. bridge could be enlarged?

Mr. OLDFIELD: It would not help the traffic.

Mr. May: Do you not think the traffic could go that way instead of through Perth?

Mr. OLDFIELD: Motorists are not going to travel an extra five miles if they can avoid it. We have numerous level crossings that were at one time open practically continuously; the gates were closed only when a train was about to pass through. Rail traffic, however, has reached such proportions that it is not now possible to keep those gates open. Sometimes people wait at the Lord-st. gates for about half an hour. The gates are opened for about five minutes and then they sneak through.

The Melbourne-rd. gates are opened in much the same way, but very few people wait there. All that traffic, having to go into town is most difficult to handle. It is difficult for anyone to get into the city because after 3.30 p.m. there are no right-hand turns. Anyone coming along Guildford-rd. and Stirling-st. into Perth and wanting to travel to some place west in Wellington-st., or to get into Hay-st., must turn left in Wellington-st. and break into a line of traffic at Pier-st., and then travel down Hay-st.. If he wants to get into Wellington-st. he must make a right-hand turn out of Hay-st. into Barrack-st. and then a left-hand turn into Wellington-st.

By this means we are forcing people to stay longer in town and are putting more vehicles on the streets than would be necessary if they could turn immediately in any chosen direction. The Traffic Advisory Council would be well advised to give thought to instituting a complete system of one-way streets, as has been found necessary in Sydney. Although at the moment we might increase our outlets to the areas lying to the north and north-east of the city, we could possibly make the most beneficial use of those that we have at present.

We have the Horseshoe bridge and the Beaufort-st. bridge and we could make each of them a one-way traffic bridge. The Beaufort-st. bridge could cater for one way traffic into Perth and the Horseshoe bridge one way traffic out of Perth and this would at least speed up the traffic in and out of the city to a considerable degree, and it would also overcome the no-right turn restriction, because, as we are well aware, a right hand turn is always permitted out of a one-way street.

Under this arrangement, anyone entering Perth from the north would come over the Beaufort-st. bridge and would be permitted to make a right or left turn out of Barrack-st., provided he did not attempt to turn against the traffic in an existing one-way street. The traffic going out of town could use the Horseshoe bridge which, of course, would also deal only with one-way traffic. The Traffic Advisory Council could give thought to these matters until such time as added outlets were provided.

We must face up to the fact that within a short space of time added outlets will have to be made available, if not at Lord-st., then at Moore-st. or Pier-st. The latter is close to Barrack-st., and it is possible that a more economical site could be found further out of Perth either for an overhead bridge or for a subway. This would take a large amount of traffic off the city streets. Further outlets are possibly required at the western end of the city to take traffic out to the north of Perth.

I wish once again to bring to the notice of the Government three items which are causing a considerable amount of concern in my electorate. First of all, some small sewerage extensions have been required for a considerable time in the North Inglewood area in the vicinity of Dundas-rd. and Normandy-st. The point is that the area is expanding, and the people who are going into the new homes are put to the expense of providing septic tanks when they know it should not be long before the deep sewerage system is provided.

The worst feature, however, is that in this new area the sanitary cart still operates because one or two people, whose homes were built prior to the existing by-laws which state that all new homes must be provided with a septic system if they are not connected with the sewerage service, have as their sanitary convenience the old fashioned earth closet. The same thing applies in the East Maylands area—the Traylen-rd.—Queen-st.—Caledonian Avenue area—where sewerage extensions have been requested for a number of years.

As far as I can ascertain, my predecessor, the late Mr. H. V. Shearn, first made representations for sewerage extensions in this area, and he was informed that the matter would be considered in the 1951-52 Estimates. I subsequently made representations and was informed that the area

could not be serviced then owing to the non-availability of the necessary pumping stations. If the pumping stations are available now, it would be appreciated by the residents of the district if one could be installed at the earliest opportunity and the sewerage extensions provided to tidy up the area and to facilitate the removal of the pan system.

Another matter I wish to touch on is that concerning the Queen-st. swamp which borders on the new East Maylands school. This swamp has been the subject of a lot of correspondence; of numerous questions asked in the House; and of much controversy throughout the district. The Education Department was recently put to the expense of replacing a five-strand wire fence at the school with a picket fence in order to prevent the children from getting into the swamp. The answers to questions I asked earlier in the year revealed that the swamp is injurious to the health of the children if they come in contact with the water.

Representations were first made for the draining of this swamp some three years ago when I brought the matter before the department. An estimate of the work was taken out at that time and I understand that the drainage scheme envisaged would cost some £35,000. A scheme of that magnitude is far beyond the resources of the local authority.

Mr. McCulloch: It is private property, is it not?

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes, but if the swamp is to be drained, I imagine that it would be resumed before £35,000 was spent on it. This area, if drained, would provide a natural amphitheatre and much needed sporting grounds and playing-fields for the area. Maylands, like many other of the older established districts in the metropolitan area, is woefully short of playing fields and sports grounds as adequate provision was not made for these amenities when the original subdivisions were put through.

Those subdivisions were made before the days of town planning and at a time when people were not conscious of the need for playing grounds and sports fields. Although the scheme involving £35,000 is rather ambitious and costly, it does not entail the drainage of only one swamp, but quite a considerable area. The Margaret-st. swamp and one or two other wet spots there would be dealt with, and many of the residents would be relieved of a nuisance that they now suffer in the winter time when the water banks up in those swamps and also in the creeks that run through their properties.

If by draining these swamps we can provide additional recreational areas for posterity, we will, I think, be doing something worth while. When we look at a city such as Melbourne we find that it

has set aside, in close proximity to the city itself, considerable areas. I refer to the park lands around Middle Park and Royal Park, and all the park lands to the south of Melbourne from the Melbourne football grounds to Outer Park and St. Kilda.

This is just one big park area, and even on a Sunday afternoon every available piece of land is used for a football match. There are Sunday competitions or young folk generally spend their time taking part in healthy sports. We must all realise how woefully short Perth will be of playing-fields if the city reaches the same magnitude as those on the eastern seaboard. When one drives around one finds that we have not areas set aside that should have been developed into suitable playing-areas.

During his speech this evening, the member for Guildford-Midland spoke about his old swan song. I cannot sit down without bringing up the subject of Guildford-rd. The Minister has been good enough to inform us that this financial year, the section from Ninth Avenue to Grosvenor-rd. will be dealt with, and then the section from Garrett-rd. to Slade-st. in Bayswater will be put in order. We have been assured that it will be done before autumn, but the work has not yet commenced, and at that rate of progress it will be at least 10 years before the whole of the road is in decent order. By that time the original portions will need re-doing.

This is one matter that the department concerned will have to deal with quickly, namely, put the road from the Mt. Lawley subway, or from Walcott-st., to the Bassendean bridge into order. I should say that the section through the Bassendean township would be the worst piece of road in Western Australia. I think the member for Guildford-Midland, and any member who was driven through the Bassendean township, will readily subscribe to that line of thought.

Mr. May: I think you will have to adjust that statement.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I would say that it is the worst piece of road in Western Australia.

Mr. May: You have not a clue.

The Minister for Railways: He has not been out of the metropolitan area, apparently.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I am not an engineer, but I know that the road is covered with pot-holes. I have driven over corrugated roads and roads with all types of surfaces, but I would say that this is the worst of them all. It has humps like a camel's back and where other roads join it, there are humps and bumps. It has subsided in places and, but for the bituminous sealing, would be covered in pot-holes and corrugated. As a matter of fact, the sealing is the only thing that is holding it together.

Mr. Brady: Could you travel over it at 50 miles an hour?

Mr. OLDFIELD: If one hit a bump at that speed, one would finish up in the Bassendean railway station.

Mr. May: You should know.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The section known as the mad mile was sealed about two years ago—that is the section from the Belmont crossing down past Cresco's and finishing about the Mt. Lyell superphosphate works. The road has been sealed and drained, but from my observations it will not last much longer unless the work is completed. I understand that one of the delays in working on the section from the Mt. Lawley subway to Ninth Avenue is occasioned by one or two major drainage problems and the Water Supply Department has mains running under the road. That department wants to replace the pipes and the desire is to carry out that work at the same time.

If that is the excuse for delaying the work at that end, I cannot see any reason for delaying it at the Bassendean end. Although that section is not in my electorate, we are all concerned about the road and I well remember the agreement made between the three local authorities, the Main Roads Department and the Local Government Department some three years ago. That agreement stated that the department was to spend some £10,000 per annum on the road and since then the total expenditure has been in the vicinity of £10,000 or £12,000. Although the agreement has become null and void because of the amendment to the Traffic Act last year, the expenditure on the road is some £20,000 behind schedule, and possibly by the end of the next financial year it will still be behind by the same sum. I know thousands of people will join with me in showing their appreciation if the road is put in order as quickly as possible.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the general debate.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.9 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Thursday, 11th November, 1954.

### CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Housing, as to applications and programme, Geraldton	2791
Indictable childbirth cases, as to summary trial	2792
Firewood licences, as to Kalgoorlie bush lands	2792
Trainee Nurses' Examination, as to tutor sisters' letter	2792
Standing Orders Committee presentation of report	2792
Bills : Dog Act Amendment, 3r.	2792
City of Perth Scheme for Superannuation (Amendments Authorisation), 3r., passed	2792
Vermin Act Amendment, 2r.	2792
Milk Act Amendment, 2r.	2793
Corneal and Tissue Grafting, 1r.	2796
Argentine Ant, report	2796
Marketing of Eggs Act Amendment, 2r.	2796
Native Welfare, 2r.	2797
Loan, £14,808,000, 2r., Com., report	2809
Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	2810
Married Women's Protection Act Amendment, 2r., Com.	2810
Traffic Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r.	2810
Pharmacy and Poisons Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	2812
Mines Regulation Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r.	2812

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### HOUSING.

*As to Applications and Programme, Geraldton.*

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

In view of the large number of applicants for Commonwealth-State rental homes and State workers' homes in Geraldton, which total approximately 150, and as contracts have been let for only 10 Commonwealth-State rental homes and 13 Simms Cooke prefab type will he give immediate consideration to a programme for the erection of at least another 25 houses in this town?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Ten conventional type homes and 13 imported Simms Cooke homes are programmed to be built in Geraldton under the Commonwealth-State housing scheme this financial year. In addition, five conventional type homes will be built under the provisions of the State Housing Act and four under the provisions of the War Service Homes Act.

The commission's building programme covering the whole of the State is governed by the funds position and as no further