

Legislative Assembly

Friday, 26th November, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Applications for Homes, Harvey.*

Mr. MANNING asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many applicants are there under—

(a) Commonwealth-State rental agreement;

(b) State Housing Act;

(c) War Service Homes Act;
for homes to be erected at Harvey?

(2) Is it intended to recommence build-ings at Harvey?

(3) If so, on what land will the houses be erected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Eleven; (b) sixteen; (c) three.

(2) Under the State Housing Act, one house is at present under construction, nine others are programmed to be built on applicants' land under the same Act.

(3) Commission is also negotiating to obtain Crown land.

(b) *As to Court Eviction Orders, Fremantle and Perth.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

What was the number of evictions ordered by the courts at Fremantle and Perth during each of the weeks since the 30th October, 1954?

The MINISTER replied:

The particulars required are—

Week ended.	Perth.	Fremantle.	Midland Junction.
6/11/54 ..	10	6	—
13/11/54 ..	9	1	3
20/11/54 ..	9	6	—
27/11/54 ..	9	4	1

TROLLEY-BUS CURRENT.

As to Danger to Domestic Circuits.

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

Has the danger of trolley-bus power current feeding into domestic circuits been overcome yet?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

Yes. By the 4th December, final adjustments will have been completed to the boom-braking devices, which have been fitted to all trolley-buses. This device limits the swing a boom can make, if dewirement occurs. It thus prevents a situation similar to that which previously occurred.

ESTIMATES DISCUSSION.

As to Replies to Members' Queries.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that last night the Minister for Agriculture, when replying to the debate on Division No. 37, Agriculture, of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, made no effort to answer immediately any of the queries raised in connection with item No. 13, page 74?

(2) In view of the general undertaking by the Minister for Agriculture to reply to any questions raised by members that he thought worth while, can the Premier suggest any opportunity that he could make to enable members who consider the replies they received unsatisfactory, or to enable members who failed to get replies, to debate further the matters they raised on this division, such as artificial insemination of cattle, or could the Minister make a statement next Tuesday?

The PREMIER replied:

I will discuss the questions with the Minister for Agriculture.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [2.24] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is

based on that introduced last session, which was laid aside following disagreement between this House and another place, with the exception that there are a couple of further provisions which have been inserted at the request of the W.A. Fire Brigades Board. These seek to clarify two matters that had been accepted as legitimate powers of the board.

One of the amendments has to do with the cancellation of fire districts. When the Act was consolidated in 1942, all local authority districts, which had been created fire districts, were shown in the Second Schedule. There is a section which authorises the proclamation and cancellation of further fire districts—that is to say, any new ones that are created—but there is no legislative authority for the cancellation of any of the fire brigade districts which were included in that schedule. From time to time, because of prevailing circumstances, there is necessity to cancel a fire brigade district and, as I have indicated, it cannot be done under the terms of the Act at the moment. A case in point is Wiluna.

Another amendment contained in the measure has to do with the validity or regularity of elections that are held for the purpose of appointing the individuals to represent the various authorities of which the Fire Brigades Board is comprised. Recently a query was raised, and it is considered that there should be a right of appeal. The Bill, therefore, makes provision for any question such as that to be referred to a resident or stipendiary magistrate.

The controversial point in this Bill and the one responsible for the laying aside of last year's measure, has to do with the composition of the board. At the present time there are 10 members of the board, two appointed by the Government—one of whom is the president—three elected by insurance companies, one by the Perth City Council and one each by the other metropolitan local authorities, the Goldfields and rural local authorities and one by the volunteer fire brigades. In the view of the Government, it is somewhat ludicrous that there should be on the board a representative of the firemen who carry out that work in a voluntary capacity, while there is no representative of the permanent employees—that is, those whose livelihood is wrapped up with the work of preventing fires and putting them out when they do occur. The proposal therefore is for the two unions concerned, the Fire Brigades Officers' Union and the Fire Brigade Employees' Union, to have the right to nominate a panel of four names from which the Minister controlling the Act can make a selection.

Mr. Yates: Must the four names in that panel be the names of employees?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Not necessarily. That is a matter for the union concerned—to nominate the person who is

to represent them—and as far as I am aware there is no restriction of that kind on the other organisations represented. They nominate a person, and he is accepted by the Minister. The intention is that a similar provision should apply to the permanent employees. Frankly, I see no valid objection to the proposal. On the contrary, it confirms the modern trend in private industry where employers seek the co-operation of the employees and their advice and suggestions for the general benefit of the industry or enterprise concerned. If a person drew on his imagination to the utmost, surely he would not suggest for one moment that one of a board of 11 could have a disturbing effect or influence upon the operations of the board itself.

Mr. Yates: What is the reason for appointing an extra man to the board when it is so large already?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Because in the Government's view it is desirable, as a principle, that a representative of the employees should be associated with governmental, or quasi-governmental boards or committees.

Mr. Yates: Have the employees approached you to have a representative appointed to the board?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, both the industrial unions concerned have approached me. As is known, to cite one example, there is an employees' representative on the State Electricity Commission and I do not think anyone can suggest that in consequence there has been any trouble or disturbance. On the contrary, it has the effect of creating confidence and understanding between the employees and those who are charged with the administration of the organisation. It is provided that if the unions concerned do not nominate the names of a person who is eligible for appointment, the Minister shall be authorised to make the appointment himself.

In 1949, the amount payable to members of the board by way of allowance was increased from £550 to £850. Since that time, the basic wage has increased to practically double, so it is proposed to increase that allowance to £1,250, which would allow an increased amount to be paid to each member of the board and, of course, a similar amount to be paid to the representative of the unions.

Two matters that require more specific mention in the Act are, in the first instance, the question of the board being given power to charge fees for the attendance of firemen at fires on uninsured premises or property. This provision, as worded in the Act at present, has been successfully challenged, and the Bill seeks to place it beyond question. In addition, the Act provides for the making of regulations describing the types of apparatus

and appliances for saving life and property that must be kept on all premises other than individual dwelling-houses.

The Crown Law Department has advised the Chief Secretary that the existing regulation does not grant the proper authority required under the Act, and in consequence it is proposed to amend the Act to validate the regulation. Those are the provisions in the Bill. I hope that wiser counsels will prevail in another place, and that it will be possible to effect these amendments. I repeat that the only one that might be in dispute is that relating to the appointment of a permanent fireman on the board to take his place side by side with the representative of the volunteer firemen. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Yates, debate adjourned.

BILL—LIMITATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

BILL—PHARMACY AND POISONS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 17th November. Mr. Brady in the Chair; Mr. Moir in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 1 had been agreed to. Clause 2—agreed to.

New Clause—Amendment of Section 45:

Mr. MOIR: I move—

That a new clause be added as follows:—

3. Section forty-five of the principal Act is amended by—

- (a) deleting the words “or legally qualified medical practitioner” in lines one and two of subsection (1);
- (b) deleting the words “or a legally qualified medical practitioner” in the last line of subsection (1).

This new clause is in keeping with the provisions of the Bill. After the Bill had been considered in another place, the omission of this clause was discovered and it is sought merely for the purpose of tidying up the Bill.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1954-55.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day, Mr. Brady in the Chair.

Vote—Police, £1,197,736:

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [2.42]: I wish to make a few introductory remarks in connection with the Police Vote. This year's Estimates provide for an increase of £29,197 over the amount expended on police services in the preceding year. Despite the additional amount required, this is an austerity budget, and provides for no new expenditure but only for such services and requirements as are essential for the functioning of the department. In addition to the primary services, namely, that of police protection, rendered by the department, it is also associated with the administration and control of traffic in the metropolitan area, administration of the Weights and Measures Act, the Firearms and Guns Act, the Licensing Act and inspection of liquor.

The authorised strength of the force for the year ended the 30th June, 1954, was 950, but the actual strength was 930. The actual strength of the force fluctuates. The numbers have been as high as 949, only one under the full strength. These fluctuations are due to retirements; sometimes, unfortunately, to dismissals and other reasons.

Hon. A. F. Watts: And occasionally resignations.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Yes, quite a number of resignations take place. I have been receiving a considerable number of applications from members of Parliament, particularly those representing country electorates, for the stationing of police in new localities, and also for reinforcements to existing country stations, but, due to the lack of numbers, in many instances it has not been possible to accede to those requests.

However, during the last three weeks I have had representations made to me by the Commissioner of Police pointing out that, in his opinion, the permissible strength of 950 was insufficient to perform the duties that were offering. In consequence, I made representations to the Treasurer with a view to having approved an increase in the number of the Police Force. He has agreed that, to the end of this year, the permissible strength of the force will be 975, an increase of 25, and that in all probability by the end of 1955, agreement will have been given to increasing the strength to 1,000. By having such a number of officers available, it is thought that many of the requests from country members for

police officers to be stationed in the different parts of their electorates will be met, so that the country districts and the State as a whole will be better protected by the police.

The amount required for contingencies is £155,061 being a decrease of £8,919 compared with last year's figures. It is intended to replace some departmental vehicles that are now beyond economical service, and to add also to the number of motorcycle patrols, a service which becomes ever increasingly necessary. To offset the increased expenditure necessary for the department, it is estimated that revenue receivable will also be increased to an amount of £214,000 as against £201,434 received in the year ended the 30th June, 1954—an increase of £12,566.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [2.47]: I am glad the Minister was able to inform the Committee that the Treasurer has approved of an increase in the personnel of the force because, with the rate of increase in the population, it is essential that police protection be augmented in many districts. I am sorry that the Minister was not able to inform us about improving the quarters for the police.

Sooner or later serious consideration will have to be given to improving the quarters situated in the metropolitan area. As members know, the police are very badly housed around the city. The traffic branch is, in my view, badly accommodated, and some provision should be made for it as early as possible. The motor patrol section is located in a house not designed as business premises. Even the police headquarters are very small and there is no proper accommodation for the police school, which is conducted at headquarters where the facilities are not good at all.

A valuable block of land at Herdsman's Lake has been allotted to the Police Department. When I was Minister for Police I tried to get a considerable area specifically allocated to the police in that district because only portion of the reserve had been allocated for police requirements. In the long run, if the area is increased, a very valuable central organisation could be built there. The branch which controls traffic, the motorcycles and motorcars belonging to the Police Force, could be accommodated in that area. Probably the wireless branch could also be included, and some of the administrative offices. It would certainly be reasonably central having in mind the extension of the city northwards.

The Minister might give serious consideration to the planning of this area in the near future. I do not know of any other area right in the city which is available to meet the needs of the Police Department, nor am I aware that any provision has been made in that regard. It

has been suggested—it is probably a good idea if it can be arranged—that the Perth Boys' School should be taken over by the Police Department. This would be most advantageous because the school is situated in an eminently suitable position. It adjoins the police headquarters.

Mr. May: It will take a lot of alteration.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That can be easily accomplished because the school is suitable for use as offices and administrative headquarters. I do not know what the Minister for Education thinks about this idea. I have no knowledge of the desirability of retaining the Perth Boys' School in that building. Nowadays the boys attending that school generally reside away from the centre of Perth.

Mr. Norton: What about converting it into a technical school?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am not prepared to argue about that. The building would be suitable for administrative offices for the police. I am not sure that it would be a good plan to turn it into a technical school. If one is desired some other plan will need to be evolved.

Mr. Yates: The technical school at Leederville is working very satisfactorily.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so. New technical schools should be dotted around the circumference of the city. If it is intended to establish new schools we should not bring the boys right to the centre of the city to attend them. If possible, schools should be built away from the centre of the city because students live mostly in the outer suburbs. I do not know the views of the present Treasurer, and I do not know what is his experience with the present Minister for Police. With the demand for schools and hospitals, to say nothing of housing, the Treasurer seems to be very dazed when one asks for funds for building purposes.

Mr. May: How did you get on with the Treasurer when you were a Minister?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I did not get on very well, and that is why I am pointing these things out to the present Minister. I did not get on as well as I thought I should have.

Mr. May: You are speaking from experience.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes. I am hoping the present Minister for Police will have more success in that connection than I did. There is another matter, and that is accommodation for members of the Police Force in outlying districts. Very often a policeman does not have a say as to where he will be stationed. I know there is a semi-voluntary system in existence, but where the commissioner cannot get a suitable volunteer, he has to order the most suitable officer to a district and

the officer must go, whether accommodation is provided or not. That is rather unfortunate.

Mr. May: The same thing happens in the Education Department.

The Premier: In the railways it is the same.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know. The Education Department has many more young persons in its service. I realise the difficulties of the situation but I do not consider that the police officers should be forgotten because they are most responsible persons in the community. They should have reasonable privacy, if it can possibly be given. It is not suitable that a police officer should reside in a hotel.

The Minister for Police: That is totally unsuitable.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I thought the Minister would be sympathetic with the view I am advancing that wherever possible police quarters should be provided. At one time there was a barracks for trainees where they could be housed together and given intensive training during their course, but, owing to the lack of accommodation, that scheme had to be abandoned and so the trainees are required at present to live out. I do not think that is desirable. When trainees are doing their course they need to be under strict discipline all the time, as in the army. It is necessary to house them together to enable them to cope with the intensive course and the large amount of knowledge that a trainee is expected to acquire during his training.

Trainees' barracks should be provided as soon as funds are available, and the block at Herdsman's Lake would be most suitable for such a school. The Minister should give some thought to that requirement. I have always found Treasurers to be very hard people. Unless a person makes himself reasonably objectionable, they are apt to forget him. It is a question of the most troublesome and most influential person getting the most out of Treasurers. There is such a position as Deputy Premier, and the holders seem to have preferential treatment on many occasions.

The Minister for Works: I have not noticed it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Perhaps the Minister's colleagues have.

The Premier: What about the Minister for Works. Does he get preferential treatment?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I was referring to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Works as one. One does not like criticising his own Government, but I felt that the Police Force did not receive as much attention as the Minister would like to have given it. I do not think it got all the sympathetic treatment to which it was

entitled. I commend to the Minister for Police a little more forcible treatment of the Treasurer. If violence has to be used, the Minister will have the police behind him. With those comments I leave the matter for consideration.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [2.59]: I would like to bring to the notice of the Minister and to the House the action of the Police Force in Western Australia in relation to charges against s.p. book-makers. During this session a question was asked of the Minister about the fines imposed in Geraldton as compared with those inflicted in other towns. The answer to the question was that the law was administered impartially, yet the amount of fines paid in Geraldton was something over £3,000, a little more than the aggregate of the fines in the other six large towns in the State. If the Minister or the Police Force can tell me how the law against s.p. bettors is being administered impartially, I have a lot to learn. I would like the Minister to explain the position.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [3.1]: It is to be regretted that the Police Vote is based on austerity. The Minister stated that it is the intention of the Government to increase the establishment of the force. The ever-increasing number of people living in Western Australia and the opening up of new areas necessitates an increase in the establishment. I notice that the Police Department did not spend its full vote last year, or anywhere near it. I do not know why that was so, but I have been wondering whether it would be possible for a carry-over to be made from last year. In view of what the Minister has in mind regarding an increase in the establishment and the replacement of old motor-vehicles and motorcycles with new ones, it would be wise not to be so austere with regard to the expenditure on the Police Force in the coming year.

A matter was mentioned by the member for Mt. Lawley that I have brought up in this Chamber for the last eight years. I refer to the Police Court buildings in Beaufort-st. When I asked questions during the hon. member's term of office he said that because of the restricted building programme, it was not possible to allocate funds or materials for the erection of modern police headquarters. When the shortages gradually disappeared and finance became more readily available, the answers to questions were just as evasive.

It appears to me that if a start is not made soon, our police headquarters will become more congested and more dilapidated than ever. The building is old and the facilities for the general public are becoming totally inadequate. If a beginning is to be made in the provision of modern police headquarters and barracks, any

carry-over from a vote could legitimately be placed in a fund for the purpose of future building extensions. I see no reason why, if there is a sum of £10,000 or £15,000 or £20,000 remaining from a previous allocation, it should not be set aside for building extensions at a later date.

This austerity will continue for a long time, because the Government is faced with ever-increasing costs. A growing number of children are entering our schools and perforce the Education Department has to provide more buildings and more staff. The Department of Public Health is also faced with a huge programme of hospital building. I could mention other departments that require finance for buildings. I admit that we must take a broad view and not favour one department to a greater extent than another. But I consider that the Police Department is one of the most important, and if harmony is to be maintained between the general public and the Police Force, modern police facilities and satisfactory conditions for the public having business with the department are necessary and their provision will make for a happy relationship.

In his report for 1953, the Commissioner of Police made a note of the number of resignations from the Police Force. Those who resigned to take up other pursuits numbered 15. Those who retired for other causes totalled 26. Other figures were: Retired on account of age, 9; retired medically unfit, 2; cadets resigned, 13; removals, 2; deaths, 4. That makes a total of 71. For the year just concluded the commissioner reported that the number that resigned to take up other pursuits was 33, more than double that of the previous year. Those who resigned for other causes numbered 17; on account of age, 4; medically unfit, 2; cadets, 3; removals, 2; deaths, 1. That is a total of 62. The figure is lower than that of last year. That was mainly due to the small number of cadets who resigned and the fact that there was only one death this year as compared with four in the previous year.

The number of resignations due to men taking up other pursuits is alarming. It is not general in any Government service for a man who decides to make a career therein, to resign early in life. If we could obtain the statistics of all the Government departments in this State, we would find that the number of resignations is far below that applying to the Police Force. I would like to know the reason for the resignations which are taking place mainly amongst the younger members of the force.

I would say that one of the reasons is lack of amenities and the overcrowding of country stations. That might have an influence on the young man who finds that private employers of labour are making conditions more attractive for their

employees than ever. Unless the Government makes the conditions of its employees just as attractive, it may lose increasing numbers of young men from the Police Force. That may be one of the reasons of the resignations, though I am not sure that it is the major one. To ascertain what is the principal cause would take a long time.

The officers of the Traffic Department work under considerable difficulties. Members only need to visit the department any day of the week to find a terrific number of people waiting at the counter to receive drivers' licences or to have interviews in connection with parking and other offences. The premises are absolutely deplorable. I could not imagine a worse location than a very narrow street opposite a public school attended by hundreds of children and with an absence of parking facilities.

Two or three years ago I mentioned in this Chamber one of the ways in which I thought this difficulty might be overcome. I have investigated the matter further and am fully convinced that the Traffic Department should be split into two, one branch to be located south of the river and the other west of it. In that way a lot of the congestion at the Traffic Department in James-st. would be avoided.

At Victoria Park the police station is centrally situated and has quite a lot of spare land. It is unique in that there is an entrance from two streets. The land commences in Albany Highway and goes through to a street at the back of the police building. I understand that that station caters for one-tenth of the State's population through the work performed by the detectives there, by the motorcycle patrols and through the districts controlled by the station. The importance of that fact should not be overlooked when consideration is being given to extensions of the Police Force.

The time has arrived when we should split the control of the traffic into two parts. All those living south of the river should be able when coming into the city, to report to the Victoria Park police station, with regard to traffic requirements. That would save quite a lot of congestion in the city. It would reduce the work of the department in James-st. by half. It would mean, of course, that a modern traffic department building would have to be erected at Victoria Park; but, in the general scheme of things, that will have to take place, in any event, in the not too distant future. If that were done, I am certain we would overcome quite a lot of our present difficulties, not only so far as the general public are concerned, but also within the Police Force itself.

Quite a number of resignations have come from the Traffic Department because of the terrific strain which is imposed on the staff. The officers there

work from the moment they arrive until they leave. There are very few amenities and there is not much to commend the work itself. I strongly recommend that a full investigation be made into the future of our traffic control in order to see whether it would be possible to have a division of traffic duties and the traffic administration, people between Perth and Fremantle being catered for at the central office; and those south of the river having their needs attended to at Victoria Park.

[Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.]

Mr. May: Do you think that the Victoria Park police station is an appropriate place?

Mr. YATES: I have been talking about the ground. The station has land going through to the next street and this would provide parking facilities for the general public.

Mr. May: Not in the highway.

Mr. YATES: No, in the other street. The facilities there are better than those in James-st. With the land that the department owns at Victoria Park, it could provide a great service to the general public, and especially to motorists.

I do not favour taking over the school in James-st. for police headquarters. I do not consider that the building is suitable, though it would certainly make considerable space available. The building is very old and I think that greater use could be made of it for other purposes than as headquarters for the Police Force or the Traffic Department. In the past, the police have gradually whittled away many public utilities and old homes in James-st. and Francis-st. and an unsightly mess of buildings has been built up as police headquarters. Those places are not very creditable to show visiting Commissioners of Police and others interested in law enforcement. I am sure visitors would not be greatly impressed when viewing the various establishments we have allowed to grow up higgledy-piggledy in our city.

There is an item on the Estimates concerning a subsidy paid by the Police Force to the St. John Ambulance Association. I take it that that is for instruction given to members of the force to enable them to obtain their first-aid certificates. I would like to know from the Minister what amount was paid to the association by the department this year.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [3.15]: The Police Department, especially the traffic branch, is important. As at the end of June this year there were, in the metropolitan area, 15,404 accidents, and out of that number 95 people were killed and 2,730 injured. Whether we could call these occurrences accidents, I do not know, but

looking through the report of the Police Commissioner, I find that the traffic branch discovered 542 defective motor-vehicles.

The Minister for Housing: And some defective drivers, too.

Mr. McCULLOCH: As a result of these 542 defective vehicles being on the road, four people were killed and 127 injured. Something should be done about this matter. I suggest that every car on the road should have to be examined at least once in three years. Whether the examination is carried out by the Police Traffic Department or an outside authority, would not make much difference.

Mr. Yates: You could test the drivers at the same time.

Mr. McCULLOCH: When a vehicle is examined by the Traffic Department and found to be o.k., it is o.k. for life. That is wrong. Some regulation or legislation should be passed whereby each motor-vehicle should be submitted to a mechanic or to the traffic branch for examination, and a certificate should be issued showing that the vehicle is in good order. It is hard to know that people will be killed because of defective vehicles, over which the driver has no control, being on the road. I feel certain that there were more than 542 vehicles involved in the 15,000 odd accidents.

I was somewhat surprised the other night to learn that the so-called instructors who teach people how to drive motorcars need to be licensed for only one year and to hold no other qualifications whatsoever. They do not have to teach road courtesy, or anything else. Some of the people in charge of motor-vehicles in the metropolitan area may be expert drivers, but they lack road courtesy. Some 5,000 odd learners' permits were issued up to June, 1954, and I think that before an instructor is allowed to teach anyone to drive, he should have more knowledge than simply to know how to drive a car.

In addition to the matter of road courtesy, the instructor should know what may lead to a breakdown of the steering gear and so on. These people should have to submit to an R.A.C. examination which would be higher than that which the ordinary licensed driver has to pass. I could, in connection with the Police Estimates, speak on other matters, especially the activities of the gold stealing detection branch, but at this juncture I will not do so. This matter should receive some attention, and I hope it will before very long, otherwise I shall have something to say about it.

The Minister for Police: You have not made any representations to me about it.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [3.21]: I wish to raise the question of the administrative problems that arise from the annual renewal of drivers' licences. It must be a

terrific task and quite a worry to the Police Department to handle the annual renewal of the licences. Furthermore, to the drivers themselves, particularly the busy people, the position is such that the renewal of the licence often gets overlooked. I must plead guilty myself to overlooking the matter although ordinarily I have a system by which I renew my licence each year.

Many business houses would be quite prepared to pay a lump sum which would ensure them a licence for life, subject to certain conditions. Such amount could be actuarially calculated and a table drawn up which would mean that the revenue would receive the equivalent of what the law proposes to recover in the ordinary way. If a man, 30 years of age, wanted to take out a licence and he passed the prescribed tests, he could be given his licence and by paying £10 he would normally be covered, at the rate of 10s. per year, for 20 years.

Certain conditions would apply. First of all, the Government would get the money immediately, and some interest and other charges would be saved. The most important aspect is that it would achieve two things. Firstly, it would break down considerably the administration in regard to the actual issuing of the licences and, secondly, the citizen concerned would be able to forget the renewal of his licence for all time.

Mr. May: Would you advocate a refund if he lost his licence?

Mr. COURT: It could be that due to a change in money values, or other economic circumstances, the licence fee was increased, so that the law under which the lifetime licence was issued could provide for an additional payment in certain circumstances. It might be that after 15 years there would be an increase from 10s. to 15s. per annum. It would not be very difficult to assess the additional charge to be made on people holding these lifetime licences. In addition, if a man holds one of these licences and he commits an offence of such a nature that his licence is suspended or even cancelled, I would suggest that there should be no provision for a refund.

Mr. Sewell: What about his health?

Mr. COURT: I have that point covered, too. If the holder of one of these licences is found guilty of drunken driving, or some similar offence, and has his licence cancelled, I do not think he would have any grievance concerning the unexpired portion of the licence. If a law is passed as a result of which everyone has to submit himself for examination periodically and the holder of one of these licences is found to have defective eyesight or some other physical or mental complaint, so as to be unfit to drive a motor-vehicle, then I think it would be very easy to provide a rebating scheme to meet the position.

Such a person is not in the category of a driver who has committed such an offence that his licence is suspended or cancelled. If people could take out a lifetime licence I am sure that at least 60 per cent. of them would do so. If a person took out a licence at 21 years of age he would have to expect to pay more for his lifetime licence than if he were 40 years of age. A graduated scale would be calculated to achieve equity to all concerned.

I submit the idea in all sincerity to the Minister for his consideration, because I think it would remove a rather irritating job that has to be done once a year. I point out, too, that it is not always easy to remit such a small sum, or to attend at the traffic office. This proposal would save the department a terrific amount of work. It is also in line with modern practice regarding these small amounts, whereby some system is devised resulting in simplicity and economy in administration, although possibly at the expense of minor concessions to the revenue.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [3.28]: There is no residence for the police inspector stationed at Broome, and he is responsible for a district extending from the coast between Roebourne and Wyndham and going inland to Marble Bar and Hall's Creek. This is a vast area, and up to the present time no residence has been provided for him. I cannot understand why. When I was last in Broome, the inspector was living, as others have done in the past, on the verandah of his office. As a consequence, the inspectors who have been stationed at that town have not been able to take their wives with them. The wives do go and stay for a couple of months during the cool weather. This is a matter that should be looking into.

The position in Wyndham was very bad. Thanks to the action of the Government, the old police station that has been condemned for the past 10 or 12 years, is now in the process of being re-built, with quarters for the sergeant and the constable. In my travels as an officer of the Department of Native Affairs, I visited all the police stations north of the 26th parallel.

Whilst most were reasonably good, there were some that needed to be renovated. Probably they have been attended to since I last saw them. Generally speaking, they are not too bad, with the exception of the one at Broome, and, to a lesser extent, another at Derby. Broome is the centre of that portion of the North and therefore the Government should give consideration to providing a police station and quarters in keeping with the fact that the station would be the head office of the Police Department there.

Another point worthy of consideration is that as the roads are gradually being improved in the North the horse plants

should be replaced by motor-vehicles. The jeep at Derby could do the work, which the horses are now required to do, quite adequately and in much quicker time. Of course, it will be necessary to retain horse plants in inland centres such as Hall's Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and Turkey Creek, at least for some time, although with the improved roads inter-station, it will not be long before consideration can be given to their replacement. The horse plant at Broome was replaced some five or six years ago, and I think Derby has reached the stage where horses and mules have outlived their usefulness and could, and should, be replaced by a strong type of vehicle, such as a jeep, which will stand up to any of the rough roads that must be traversed.

HON. DAME FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [3.31]: I would like the Minister to explain the position of the central police station. Next door to it is the building occupied by the National Fitness Council and, in addition, there is the large area of land at the back facing the street running parallel to James-st. There is also a house next door to the building occupied by the National Fitness Council, and I understand that that, too, belongs to the Government.

All this area could be utilised, and modern offices could be constructed in which to house the various sections of the Police Department. The member for South Perth mentioned Victoria Park and if this large office building were constructed for the Police Force, we would have a building with a street running down either side of it. I would like the Minister to explain why something has not been done about this.

The Minister for Police: You tell me. You were picked, when you were Minister, as the one who would not play, and allow them to occupy these buildings.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I think the Minister could do it. The member for Nedlands spoke about the licensing system. I understand that in Queensland a person can get a licence for 10 years. The applicant is thoroughly examined and so long as he or she is not too old, is physically fit and meets with all the necessary requirements of a good driver, a licence can be issued for 10 years. Licences are issued on a graduated scale for 10 years, five years, two years or one year according to the applicant. If the Minister has the Queensland Act, would he explain which he considers the better system—a yearly licence or one that can be issued for up to 10 years?

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [3.33]: In the past, in country posts, constables have been permitted to purchase typewriters and some form of assistance has

been granted by the Government. For some reason that concession seems to have been withdrawn because it is said that typewriters are not necessary. I think the Minister will agree—and this position has been explained to me by several constables—that when making copies of a report a typewriter is rather essential, even though the operator may not be able to use any more than one finger of each hand.

A typed document is much easier to read and, in my opinion, would be much better for general administrative work. I would like the Minister to look at the position to see if some assistance can be given to the constables to enable them to purchase typewriters or, alternatively, make machines available in country districts.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie—in reply) [3.35]: I thank members for their many constructive suggestions regarding the Police Department. As one member said, it is one of the most important public departments in this State. In reply to those who have raised the question of the lack of accommodation in the metropolitan and country districts, I would say that no one knows more about the inadequacy of the accommodation at the central station than I do. I think the solution to the problem is to start a police court and office building on the block now used by the Police Department at the corner of James and Beaufort-sts. If we had a building three or four storeys high to accommodate the police courts and police offices, it would be the solution to our problem.

There is no doubt that the liquor inspection branch, the weights and measures branch, the traffic section and even the police garage are fearfully overcrowded and, as the member for Mt. Lawley said, we are renting, at £25 a week, premises in West Perth for the purpose of housing our road patrol men. When discussing the provisional estimates, I suggested that a certain amount should be set aside each year for the purpose of erecting a building for the Police Department, and to cover both the courts and the main administrative offices on the block at the corner of James and Beaufort-sts. However, when the Estimates were finally decided upon, that item was struck out. Next year, I shall certainly have another go because I believe that if a sum of £60,000 or £70,000, were placed on the Estimates each year, and utilised for the purpose of building a block of offices, it would overcome our problem in regard to accommodation.

Mr. Court: You are not suggesting that for the traffic section?

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE: No, they would want a lot of other ground. My suggestion is for the main administrative

offices and the officers concerned could shift from their present quarters, which would make a good deal of accommodation available for others. There is a move afoot to shift some of the Police Force—maybe the weights and measures branch, the firearms branch and two or three of the other smaller branches—to the new State Insurance Office building in 12 months' time. Even though it will be several months before that building is finished, applications for space have been made by several Government departments. However, though that type of building would not be suitable for some sections of the Police Department, it could be used by some of the smaller ones and that would relieve pressure at the central station.

The member for Mt. Lawley referred to the remount depot at Hardsman Lake. I think serious consideration should be given to the question as to whether the remount section of the Police Force is worth retaining. Except for ceremonial purposes, horses are out of date and the motorcycle patrols are much more useful. As was evidenced during the Queen's visit a motorcycle patrol can replace horses even for ceremonial purposes.

A considerable number of new stations were built last year. We have not been idle and a large sum of money was spent on new stations and quarters. The sum provided in the Estimates was not all used because there was not sufficient staff in the Public Works Department to do the work required. That department could not draw up all the plans needed, and consequently while certain buildings were erected, all the money on the Estimates was not spent. In this year's Estimates a sum of £44,000 is provided for new stations and these will be built at Wembley, Scarborough, Bayswater and a couple of country centres. Provision is being made for new buildings and stations in the metropolitan area and in the country districts.

Regarding the complaint of the member for Geraldton about s.p. betting, I would advise him that I do not tell, or suggest to, the Commissioner of Police what he should do about s.p. betting. A most deplorable state of affairs has grown up under successive Governments in this State and it seems that, largely, the enforcement of the law is at the whim of whoever happens to be the officer in charge of the district.

Some members mentioned retirements from the force. I think this is brought about because younger men, after a few years' service, get tired, because it is rather exacting. As a result, they retire because there is plenty of employment outside and they try their hands at something else. Two of the most objectionable features of work in the Police Force are shift work and working on public holidays. The men do not like that and after giving it a trial they often decide to retire.

As regards the divided control of our traffic section, mentioned by the member for South Perth, I will place the question before the department. I do not control the traffic side but I will place the case before the department and get an opinion on it. We have doubled the number of patrols in the metropolitan area, and I think members will admit that over the last 18 months the manners and driving methods of the average motorist have improved considerably. However, there is still ample room for improvement.

The system of inspection of vehicles, suggested by the member for Hannans, operates in New South Wales and the department there is not particularly keen on it, because a fee is paid to a garage proprietor or attendant for the purpose of inspecting a vehicle and the certificate of road-worthiness must be produced before the licence is renewed. Only casual inspections are made because only a nominal fee is paid by the motor-owner to the inspecting authority.

The department is not particularly enamoured of the effectiveness of this system and the police themselves have to make a thorough inspection. Periodical prosecutions are launched against public transport operators because their vehicles are not up to the required standard—the brakes are not effective or something like that. But the position is very difficult and after a motor-vehicle has been running for a few years it might stand up to a test quite well one day and in a few days' time some defect could occur which was not apparent when the examination was made by the Police Department a week or so before, and it develops and very often causes an accident. The matter of renewing one's driver's licence is, of course, serious, and the member for Nedlands is not the only one who has driven a car without having renewed his licence.

Sitting suspended from 3.46 to 4.7 p.m.

[Mr. Moir took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I was dealing with some suggestions made by members in connection with the Police Department. The particular item was the renewal of drivers' licences and the suggestion was that, instead of the present system of issuing a yearly licence, to grant it for a longer period. There might be something worth while in that suggestion and I will put it to the Police Department and find out what is operating in other States. It might be of advantage to alter our system of renewal from the yearly basis.

True, there was a tremendous congestion in James-st., before the staggering of times for the renewal of vehicle and drivers' licences, but it must be remembered that drivers' licences may now be renewed at any suburban police station,

and this to a large extent has overcome the congestion in James-st. I expected some member to suggest that a notification might be sent to people drawing their attention to the expiry date of their drivers' licences, just as is done when a vehicle licence is nearing the expiry date.

In the case of a comprehensive insurance policy, it could be a serious matter if a person did not renew his driver's licence in time and was unfortunate enough to be involved in an accident. Some two or three years ago, I overlooked renewing my driver's licence and drove for some seven weeks after the expiry date, but I was lucky in not having an accident. I renewed the licence before anyone found out about it.

Some people who have overlooked the renewal of their licences have met with accidents, and it is possible under the conditions of most comprehensive policies that the cover could be voided, though some companies do not take advantage of that clause. As regards the police, however, if a person is caught driving after his licence has expired, he is prosecuted and usually has to pay a fine of a couple of pounds.

The member for Kimberley raised the matter of the inspector's quarters at Broome. I understand that this accommodation has been improved considerably during the last six months. Some of the quarters were converted into living accommodation and that is now fairly comfortable. It would not be advisable to build extensive quarters for the inspector there because, with the possibility of oil being discovered in various parts of the North, it is difficult to say where the inspector will ultimately be stationed permanently. For the time being, the accommodation has been increased and is fairly comfortable.

As regards quarters for police inspectors, the only place where we have not suitable accommodation is Albany. Recently we bought a substantial residence in Narrogin for the police inspector there and he is comfortably accommodated. As regards Albany, the department has certain blocks of land on the Middleton-rd. and I am endeavouring, through the Public Works Department, to arrange for a suitable residence to be constructed there next year.

The suggestion of the member for Kimberley that horses should be replaced with motor patrols in the North seems to be quite logical. In view of the vast distances to be covered, it would be very difficult to get about on horses. I shall put up that suggestion. I believe it has been implemented to a considerable extent in the North, and I would be surprised to learn that horses are now being used for patrol work to any great extent. Wherever the country is suitable for motor-vehicle patrol, that system has been

adopted. The member for Subiaco suggested that the 10-year period for which drivers' licences are issued in Queensland should be considered for adoption here. I shall have inquiries made and see how it operates there and whether it could be adopted with advantage here.

The member for Greenough said that some of the constables at small country stations had complained that the system of supplying them with typewriters had been terminated. I shall inquire into that. Even though a man may not be an expert, when he has to make several copies of a report, a typewriter is essential.

The other point, which I have now cleared up, was that raised by the member for South Perth. He asked whether I knew or could ascertain the amount of subsidy paid by the Police Department to the St. John Ambulance Association and for what purpose it was paid. During the suspension of the sitting, I rang the department and ascertained that the amount paid is £100. The hon. member is aware that before a recruit may be admitted as a member of the force, he must pass a proficiency test conducted by the St. John Ambulance Association. The £100 is granted as a subsidy to the instructors and to cover the cost of the textbook supplied to each recruit.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: With regard to drivers' licences, I would commend to the Minister the system operating in Victoria, where the licences are made of paper similar to a car licence in this State. Each year when his licence becomes due, the driver in Victoria gets what is virtually an account, just as applies here in relation to car licences. I think that system would bring in a considerable amount of revenue to the department because many people, who otherwise would not do so, would probably renew their licences.

As an example, I still hold a Victorian driver's licence and each year when I receive the account I send them a cheque and renew the licence. If we could not go as far as the member for Nedlands suggested, perhaps we could institute the system I have mentioned. I think it would be an improvement, particularly as our licences are thick and clumsy.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The latest ones are not very thick.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Medical, £2,339,712:

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [4.17]: I have much pleasure in presenting the Estimates of the Medical and Health Departments and subdepartments. The cost of maintaining our hospitals continues to grow although, owing to the stability of the basic wage during the past year, the increase has not been as great in the year just closed as it was formerly.

The greatest problem in connection with our hospitals is shortage of beds in the metropolitan area. A substantial amount of building will be necessary to relieve this need and this must take cognisance not only of general and midwifery beds, but also beds for patients suffering from mental illness. A very large sum must be found by the Government to meet this need, and it must be found soon. A new hospital for midwifery cases containing 25 beds has been built at Midland Junction, and I hope this will be the forerunner of the establishment there of a general hospital of suitable size.

Recently the department learned that the private hospitals, Tresillian and Lucknow, were likely to close and because of the essential nature of the accommodation, the Government was forced to purchase both of them. The prices were based upon valuation, but the funds had to be found from the general allocation for hospital work. That will therefore delay the construction of new hospitals and the rehabilitation of others to an appreciable extent.

The shortage of nursing accommodation is still a very vexed question and, in order to increase the number of nurses in training, a vigorous campaign of advertising has been launched through the medium of the Royal Perth Hospital, and the system of nurse-training and bursaries has been applied to girls in the senior schools. This scheme provides that a girl who has passed her junior examination and is willing to continue at school for further training, may be paid a bursary of £80 for one year's additional schooling or £160 for two years' additional schooling, leading up to the leaving standard.

In compensation for this payment, the bursars agree to complete their training as nurses and to work as nurses in a hospital designated by the department, in the case of the £80 bursary for two years and in the case of the £160 bursary for three years. Failure to complete that term makes the bursar and guarantor liable to refund the amount of the bursary, but on completion of the obligation of service, the bursar has no further liability.

Improvements have been effected to hospitals in many towns and the present condition of our country hospitals can justly be stated to be much better than it has ever been in the past. There are, of course, several places where conditions are still unsatisfactory, but that will be remedied in due course. A new hospital is under construction at Meekatharra where the old building, built partly of bush timber and sacking, will be replaced by a modern structure of wood and asbestos sheeting. A tender has been let for major improvements to the Mt. Barker hospital.

Improvements at the Mullewa and Kununoppin hospitals have been completed and those at the Three Springs and Morawa hospitals are slowly reaching

completion. Many other small improvements and alterations have been completed or authorised at other hospitals. Tenders have been called for a 200-bed chest hospital to be situated at Hollywood, while work on the tuberculosis control branch is proceeding. Both of these works are to be paid for by the Commonwealth. It is a pity that we could not get more Commonwealth money to pay for some of the other hospitals that are necessary to cater for the sick in this State, and especially for mental cases.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are doing pretty well from the Commonwealth, if you look at the Auditor General's report and see what you do get.

[Mr. J. Hegney resumed the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, we have done very well, but unfortunately it does not cater for our patients except those suffering from tuberculosis, in which instance it has done a wonderful job. The incidence of tuberculosis has been reduced by about 75 per cent. in this State, and that is a wonderful achievement. A recent visit by the Under Secretary to our northern and North-West hospitals will result in a considerable programme of repairs and improvements, which has been authorised.

During the early months of this year I visited Sydney to attend a conference of Ministers for Health and was accompanied by the Under Secretary. After that conference, we visited Queensland in order to study the system followed in that State, which is in many respects different from the practices in other States. It will not be possible for this State to adopt some of those practices because of the need for us to satisfy the requirements of the Grants Commission.

I was, however, impressed by the health education service that has been developed to a high degree there, the purpose being to educate the public in preventive health measures, the avoidance of unnecessary accidents in the industrial, traffic and domestic fields, including such carelessness as leaving kerosene or other liquids within reach of young children. The methods used include the Press, slides, lectures and a regular column in the daily papers. Exhibitions are conducted, and posters are widely distributed, while working models of many causes of accidents are used. These are displayed at agricultural shows and other places where large crowds congregate.

A great deal of the cost and services is donated by public-spirited people in Queensland, including the gift of the newspaper space referred to for regular articles by a writer using "Dr. Day" as a pseudonym. As the result of my visit, an additional sum of £12,000 over the previous expenditure has been provided on these Estimates for health education, which is very important.

Another feature that impressed me greatly and one that I would like to see developed in this State, was the wide extent of dental services available to everyone in Queensland, even in the most isolated places, by means of periodical visits by mobile dental units. For this purpose use is made of aircraft, trains, motor-vehicles, boats and even—so we were informed—camels.

The Government has approved of the establishment of a dental unit at Port Hedland and another at Derby. They will each consist of a surgeon dentist, a mechanic and probably a dental nurse. Before the personnel can be appointed, living accommodation, surgeries and waiting rooms must be provided. It is useless to seek to secure staff before premises are available, and it might be difficult even to attract applications.

The "Sunset" aged men's home had a new ward attached to it during the year as the result of the remodelling of existing wards. This provides about 50 additional beds for cases that require nursing. We hope within the next month or two to open a new ward at the Mt. Henry home and still a further new ward at the same place later this financial year. The capital cost will be borne by the Lotteries Commission, maintenance being the responsibility of the State Government.

I come now to mental hospitals. At the Claremont Mental Hospital two new wards of modern and attractive design have been opened and general renovation of the old building is progressing. "Greenplace" has been refitted at considerable expense and steps are now being taken to convert premises known as the Davis-rd. block to the purpose for which it is designed, namely, as a treatment block for acute cases.

Many improvements of an important nature have been made at Heathcote and will facilitate the working of the institution, although not providing additional beds. A new block is about to be constructed at Whitby Falls to take the place of the old farmhouse which has served up to the present. This building was constructed something like 100 years ago of mud bricks and cannot be maintained any longer. Some additional beds will be provided in this construction. The need for a new mental institution of considerable size cannot be too strongly emphasised. There is no problem facing the department more acute than that of providing a large number of additional beds for mental treatment.

With regard to trachoma, further surveys have been made of distant areas with a view to ascertaining the extent of infection with this malady and to organise treatment. Treatment has been continued and further arrangements for its continuance are being formulated. With regard to leprosy, the work of control and

treatment is continuing. Modern treatment methods at the Derby leprosarium have given encouraging results. For the first time discharges have exceeded admissions, but several years must elapse before we can be sure that success is on the way.

With regard to the Health Estimates, I have just given a brief outline of the position which is, of course, not nearly as easy as I have outlined. The shortage of beds throughout the State is very great and in the metropolitan area is being felt to an acute degree, especially the shortage of beds for mental patients. If the Government had £300,000 or £400,000 available, the money could be well spent on giving service to those who cannot look after themselves. Unfortunately, due to the war, the provision of more hospital accommodation has been allowed to drift and we have now reached a serious stage. My predecessor will know how grave the position is. While she was in office she did a wonderful job with the limited funds available to her at that time, and so I am not complaining in that respect.

Nevertheless, I feel the time has come when more money should be made available for the provision of health services. Unless that is done the position will become extremely serious within a year or two. We will probably find ourselves in the same position as we were with electricity supplies, which reached a very critical stage owing to the war, not because we were unaware of the dangers, but because we could not do anything at the time to rectify the position.

The necessity for more sewerage installations is also a pressing matter and unless more work is done in this respect we will have a big problem to contend with. There are many suburbs that are served with sewerage systems now, but there are also many more which do not enjoy this service. With the rapid increase in population, the position is becoming more acute every year.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What sites have you under consideration for the erection of a new mental hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: A site has been selected at Guildford, but I have not yet had an opportunity to take the Premier there to inspect it. After the close of the session, I will ask him to visit the site at his earliest convenience. The area selected is ideal and very convenient. We will be able to house staff there and transport facilities are already available.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is, more or less, in a built-up area.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Well, how can you get away from it?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Actually, it is not in a built-up area because the site is a large farm. It is just over the river on the north-west side and it will

be ideal for our purposes if we can only afford it, but again it is a question of money.

I think there has been a slight misunderstanding in regard to hospital fees. Many people consider that the Royal Perth Hospital should be able to balance its budget. The expenditure of the hospital for the past year was £975,131 which was £87,768 greater than that of last year. Of this, the State Government provided £638,856, the Commonwealth benefits amounted to £84,916, whilst patients paid £219,050, which included a proportion arising from hospital insurance. The amount collected from patients and from the Commonwealth represents only 7s 1d. towards each £1 of expenditure. The balance comes from State revenue. So it can be seen that the whole of the collections made by the hospital represent only that small amount and the Government must find the balance. Therefore, the Royal Perth Hospital is not balancing its budget by any means. Although the fees vary from 24s. a day to 40s. a day, the cost of maintaining a patient in the hospital for one day has averaged £3 17s. 11d. A total of 13,979 people were treated as in-patients and spent an aggregate of 200,419 days in hospital—an average of 14.33 days. As a whole, the maintenance of the outpatient department cost £123,000 and there were 114,948 attendances by 22,229 patients.

All these costs appear to be extremely high, but they are matched or exceeded by hospitals of similar character in other States and countries. These figures have been maintained because nearly all the medical and surgical care of patients is provided by the honorary medical staff. If these medical services were paid for, the cost of maintaining the hospital would be much greater. Therefore, we owe a debt of gratitude to our honorary medical staff. They have helped the State to keep costs down, but I think, sooner or later, something will have to be done to pay them for their services. If it is, our costs will rise to a certain extent.

Unfortunately, the department is losing a very valuable officer in Mr. Stitfold, Under Secretary, the Chief Secretary's Department and the Medical and Health Departments. In my opinion, we do not give sufficient consideration to the services that are rendered by our departmental heads. For instance, when Mr. W. H. Taylor, the general manager of the Tramways Department, who was also in charge of our electricity supplies, reached 65 years of age, he was more or less thrown on the scrap heap, and nobody was aware of his past services to the State.

Therefore, I intend to outline briefly the importance of the services that have been rendered by some of our departmental heads. As I have said, Mr. Stitfold, who will be 65 years of age next year, will be retiring from the department.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is a pity that we have to lose these valuable servants when they reach the age of 65.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I feel, too, seeing that longevity has increased greatly that there will come a time when we will have to increase the age limit from 65 to 70, under certain conditions. For instance, it could be provided that if a man's health is good and he has not become too old at that age, his services could be retained. There is no doubt that some people at 50 are older than those aged 70. If we go on as we are, we will have more people who are over 65 years of age than under. Therefore, the economics of the country will be greatly retarded because such men who have had great experience in public life will be lost to us.

On the other hand, of course, there will be young people coming along seeking opportunities to reach the height of their ambitions. Nevertheless, they will have the same opportunity as the older men. Mr. Stitfold is very young for his age. He has done a wonderful job and is extremely popular although some do not consider him to be so at times because of his efficiency. Mr. Alex Reid, who was Under Treasurer, but who has now retired from that position, is another very able man and thank goodness his services will not be lost to the State because he has been appointed as a member of the Grants Commission and of other bodies. His experience is extremely wide and I do not think there is anyone in the State who knows more about our finances than he does.

Returning to my comments on the retirement of Mr. Stitfold, I regret to mention that he will commence his retiring leave before the next session of Parliament and when he does so, he will have had more than 48 years' of service. Mr. Stitfold has made very valuable contributions to the Public Service during this long period. His career has been notable and it is fitting that I should draw the attention of the Committee to the following features.

After many years in the Premier's Office, during which he was promoted to Assistant Under Secretary, he was appointed to succeed Mr. L. E. Shapcott, as Secretary, Premier's Office. Shortly after taking over that position, the war with Japan broke out, making the organisation of manpower for the fighting and civilian fronts of great importance. The Prime Minister asked the State to lend the Commonwealth a senior officer of great ability and experience for what was expected to develop into a position of the greatest importance.

This expectation was fully justified. The Government of the day seconded Mr. Stitfold, whose duty it became to organise the whole field of male and female labour, and to ensure the most advantageous use of the labour reserves available for

the reinforcement of the forces, and for maintaining production of war requirements and of civilian needs.

Most of us had dealings with Mr. Stitfold in his capacity as Deputy Director General of Manpower, and were impressed by his grasp of the problem and his readiness to do everything possible to meet emergencies. He was remarkably successful in this. I was a Minister during that period and I know how satisfied the State Government was with his work. The opinion of his services held by the Commonwealth is well illustrated by the letters sent by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Labour and National Service, of which I have secured copies and will quote them later. His administration was signally honoured also by the War Historian, who selected the administrative records and instructions of the Western Australian branch of the Manpower Directorate for permanent preservation in the War Museum as representing the work of the directorate.

After the war he was appointed to his present position, which is one of the most senior in the Public Service and carries very great responsibilities. It covers all the hospitals in the State—nearly 100—the mental hospitals, benevolent homes and prisons and, under the Chief Secretary, he also has heavy responsibility. The departments carry nearly 3,500 persons on the payroll, and have a gross expenditure of £5,500,000 and a gross revenue of £2,400,000.

At the time of his appointment, the whole of these State social services were run down because of war and earlier financial difficulties. He took up this appointment with energy and in the succeeding 10 years has raised the standard of hospital accommodation to a point higher than it has ever reached before. The mental hospitals and benevolent homes have also benefited from his energetic and far-sighted work, and the inmates have good reason to be grateful for his sympathy and understanding of their problem.

This is a letter from the last Prime Minister of Australia, to Mr. Stitfold. It says—

May I take this opportunity of thanking you for the services rendered by you as Deputy Director, Manpower, Western Australia, during your term of service with Manpower Directorate.

The complete mobilisation of the manpower resources of the Commonwealth was one of the greatest problems which the Government had to face during the war, and your position as head of the manpower organisation in your State was one requiring great organising and administrative ability, determination and understanding. That you carried out these duties with such outstanding success

reflects the greatest credit on you personally and the staff under your control.

In thanking you my colleagues and I wish to convey to you our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) J. B. CHIFLEY.

I have another letter from the Minister for Labour and National Service addressed to Mr. Stitfold. It says—

I have your letter of the 15th October, in which you tender your resignation from the position of Deputy Director General of Manpower for Western Australia, a position which you have held with great distinction and satisfaction to the Government, and all you have had to come in contact with during the life time of this wartime Department.

Needless to say, I regret very much to lose such a valuable officer and one who, because of his sterling and manly qualities, I have come to regard as a personal friend. I knew, of course, that you were a State officer who the State Government would not wish to lose, and the Government and myself appreciate the help your Government gave the Commonwealth when they loaned your service for such a necessary position, and we must therefore expect that they should want you back, now that peace has been restored, so we will have to accept your resignation with good grace.

However, Mr. Stitfold, I want you to accept from me personally, as well as the senior officers of my Department generally, our very great thanks and appreciation for the work you have done, and the wise and tolerant manner in which you have done it. I hope you will have many years of service with your State, and that the same co-operation we have enjoyed during the war will continue as the need arises in the years of peace.

(Sgd.) E. J. Holloway.

Members may think it strange that I should read these letters out and that I should pay tribute to the good work of a very fine officer. Those remarks apply not to one officer but to all. Parliament should know something of the work and great responsibility undertaken by these officers. In the past, after they retire, we have forgotten their services and no records have been kept. There was nothing to hand down to posterity. I do think that we have been neglectful in the past.

I was sorry to learn that Mr. W. H. Taylor, a very efficient electrical engineer who came to this State in 1913 and worked very hard on the electricity supply of the

State and on the Fremantle powerhouse scheme, did not get any recognition for his services, and no record was made. That being the position, I felt it my duty to bring this matter forward, even at the risk of being unpopular with some members for wasting their time.

Personally, I felt that an officer of the calibre of Mr. Stitfold was deserving of recognition. In the past we have not in many instances given credit to those to whom credit was due. After all, the head of a department is the chief adviser of the Minister. In many instances the Minister merely carries out the policy of the departmental head. Ministers use their own judgment because they have the prerogative to do so, but, on the other hand, who knows more than the permanent head of a department and who is in a better position to advise the Minister? Parliament, members of the Government and past Ministers including myself, have not given the correct recognition to the good work that has been done by some heads of departments.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [4.50]: I do not intend to speak at any length on this vote, except to make a couple of points. One concerns the Fremantle hospital, and in regard to that I would like to mention that the number of beds provided for the public in the Fremantle hospital zone is quite inadequate to cope with the sick of that region and the treatment which they should receive. I spoke at length on that point during the Address-in-reply so I do not intend to go further into that subject, except to say that the construction of the proposed new Fremantle hospital at Hilton Park should be expedited as much as possible.

From what I can make out, it appears to be practically certain that this hospital will not be commenced until the completion of the proposed university hospital. I feel this is the wrong way to go about it. It seems that, in part, the university hospital will cater for the public south of the river in the area around South Perth, Applecross and as far as Canning Bridge. That, of course, is contingent upon the construction of the Narrows Bridge. I do not know whether that will be constructed in time to enable the 20,000-odd people on the south side of the river to use the facilities of the university hospital.

Of course, I am aware that the construction of this hospital is intended to be linked up with the proposed medical school to be attached to the university. It is perhaps desirable that there should be a university hospital so that the medical school can work absolutely efficiently. I consider it is not essential to have a hospital before a medical school can be started. It is not impracticable that medical students can

get their training and experience, and do all their clinic work in other hospitals in the vicinity.

If the university hospital is being built more or less to assist the medical school, then it would be far better, in the interests of the Fremantle hospital zone, which is inadequately catered for, for the new Fremantle hospital to be started first. I am led to believe that too many hospitals are being grouped within a comparatively small radius, and I have in mind the Royal Perth, the Mount, the Infectious Diseases, the St. John of God and the proposed university hospitals.

Surely the defence angle should be considered closely! When we think of defence in this matter, we think of the possibility of an atom bomb being dropped here. God forbid! We must do everything possible to avoid the difficulties in the event of such a catastrophe happening. It would be a frightful blow if, besides the greater part of the metropolitan area being destroyed, the greater proportion of our hospitals were wiped out at the same time. Absolute chaos would reign. We should disperse our hospitals at strategic points to remove the danger of a number of them being destroyed in one stroke by the dropping of an atom bomb.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [4.56]: It seems to me that all we have at present is "Pie in the sky when we die." What we want is something now. The member for Cottesloe has referred to the proposed Fremantle hospital. It seems to me that the only thing being done at the Fremantle hospital is for the authorities to go around the beds and see how quickly the patients can be discharged. Patients are being discharged before they are completely cured. I asked the Minister for Health what had been proposed for the Fremantle hospital, but I could not see very much in the reply he gave.

It is intended to make alterations to the night nurses' quarters for the purpose of a ward for women. I do not think this will provide accommodation for more than 12 beds for women patients. The Health Department also intends to provide additional beds at the Mt. Henry home, of which 100 will be available in a few months. That is not of very much benefit to the Fremantle hospital because those beds will be for the use of the old and infirm women of the State.

Mr. May: It will not be of much use to Mt. Henry home either because there are about 500 patients.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN: It will benefit Collie just as much as Fremantle, because the old and infirm women from Collie, if lucky enough, will be able to get accommodation at the home. It is also proposed to build a new substantial hospital in the suburb of Hilton Park which, when completed, will provide for the patients

who will be drawn from a wide district south of the Swan River and west of the Canning River, and will take a number of patients at present cared for in the Fremantle hospital.

This new hospital will be so constructed that it may be expanded from time to time to satisfy the needs of the population. But when will it be constructed? The authorities concerned cannot even come to agreement about the land. The Fremantle City Council has offered the Government a block in return as a quid pro quo for some land held by the Government, but no decision has been made, nor has any meeting been held between the interested parties.

Messages have passed, and the Town Clerk has been sent along to some person or another who has told him this and that should be done. They have not even come to a decision on that matter. When are we going to have a hospital? I suppose it will be in another 10 or 15 years. The letter from which I have taken these details continues—

With all respect to these opinions, it would be impossible, even by the acquisition of additional adjacent land, to provide an effective hospital designed to a plan which would combine efficiency with economy and at the same time maintain the working of the present hospital. Any design for a hospital in this position would be forced to bend to the need for continuing the use of the present buildings, however old and unsuitable they may be thought to be. To attempt to construct a large hospital on this site would be to repeat the egregious blunder which confined Royal Perth Hospital to its restricted area.

It will always be necessary to maintain in Fremantle a hospital on its present site, but no attempt could be made to build up its standard in any substantial manner until the new hospital at Hilton Park is functioning and can relieve the Fremantle hospital of a large proportion of its patients. At that time, any remodelling of the Fremantle hospital thought necessary could be undertaken with a minimum of inconvenience to patients, doctors, nurses and staff.

So we are not going to get anything done to the Fremantle hospital until the regional hospital at Hilton Park is built. Yet no decision has been reached about the land! There should be an attempt to come to reasonable terms with the Fremantle council which is renewed for its generosity in providing land for public purposes. A high school was built on land given by the council; and industries have been established all over the place on land provided by the council at £1 per acre. And now the council wants to exchange with the Government this beautiful block at Hilton

Park for some other land held by the Government, but up to date has not been able to reach agreement. I hope that something will soon be done, because it is not good for sick people that this delay should occur year after year.

HON. DAME FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [5.31: I feel that the Minister for Health, whoever it may be, has a very hard row to hoe, and the difficulty of his task is not appreciated by members generally. The present Minister has had to work hard to achieve what has already been done, and I do not want to criticise what he has said today. Plans are made for buildings, and eventually they are erected; but it all takes time. A number of hospitals that have been opened up in the last two years were planned years ago, and the Minister realises that. I had the greatest difficulty, when I was in office, in obtaining materials for those buildings; and I have the greatest sympathy for the present Minister in the difficult work he has to do.

I would like to say a few words about Mr. Stitfold. A man in a big public position, such as he holds, cannot please everybody. He does not always please the Minister who, I am sure, sometimes has a few words with him. I used to have many! But one must realise that a man in Mr. Stitfold's position has to work hard to reach the office he occupies and must know what he is talking about. He expresses his view, with which, however, one may not agree; that is one's prerogative.

This gentleman is to retire at 65, and I want to know what is to prevent the Minister from asking him to stay in office for a little longer. It will be remembered that when I was Minister, Matron Walsh reached the age of 65. I could not find anybody capable of taking her place, and I suggested that she should remain until I could. She is 67 now and will shortly be retiring. As the Minister knows, we are doing all that is possible to show some recognition of the good work she has accomplished. I think the Minister is right when he says that little is done to record the efforts of people who have done work of that kind; and when they retire, they just fade away. I suggest again that Mr. Stitfold be given an extension of time in his present office.

I agree with the site for the new mental hospital. I tried to get it, but I could not, and another site was proposed. The reason I prefer the one to which reference has been made is that it is comparatively near the city. It is always possible to obtain staff for an institution which is close to the metropolis; but it is not so easy to do so when the institution is a long way away, especially when it is a mental hospital. That has been proved in other States, and particularly in Victoria. There is a wonderful mental

hospital 13 miles out of Melbourne, but staff cannot be secured for it. On the other hand, there is a building at Kew—which is almost in the city—which is falling to pieces, but which can be filled with staff. I wish the Health Department luck in its efforts. It would break members' hearts to go to the mental hospital at Claremont and observe the congestion there.

Reference has been made by the member for Fremantle and the member for Cottesloe to the Fremantle hospital. I realise that there is tremendous congestion at that institution, and people are encouraged to leave before an outsider would think they were ready to do so. However, the doctors know better than we do.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The doctor there knows, too. You ask him!

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I do not think any doctor would send a patient away from hospital before he was fit to leave. I think it is good for people to have to leave hospital rather early, because home life is beneficial to them and they recover more quickly when sent home.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you mean to say they should be sent home before they are well?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Of course they should be sent home—for the reason I have stated. I want to pass one little criticism, for which I hope the Minister will forgive me. It is about the canteen at the Claremont hospital. It has been a tremendous success. I believe that profits last year totalled about £1,400 and were distributed to various other institutions. It will be remembered that Mr. Nat Harper gave me £20,000 towards a fund for the establishment of the Nathaniel Harper Homes. That was towards the total amount of £50,000 that was required. There was an understanding reached at that time to the effect that children who had a certain i.q. were to be taken from Claremont and put in those homes; not just to be treated medically, but to be educated.

I thought that the profits from the canteen were to be given to those homes so that the children could be encouraged to grow flowers, or keep chickens, or do sewing, and thus be given an incentive to earn their own living. Of course, as is the case in Melbourne, they would always be under the jurisdiction of the mental hospital authorities. At a similar home in Melbourne, one girl had £800 in the bank and another had £600, earned from sewing. At night, the girls returned from their places of employment and lived in the care and protection of the home. I thought that something of a similar nature was to be done in the Nathaniel Harper Homes, and I trust the Minister will take steps to bring that about.

Another item on which I wish to touch concerns "Sunset". That is a beautiful home, of which I think Western Australia should be very proud. Lately, however, a number of young people have been sent there. There were two in the home when I was Minister, and I tried to have them placed elsewhere. There are more at the home now, and something should be done to provide another institution for them. "Sunset" is a home which should be reserved entirely for older men. I trust the Minister will bring this matter before Mr. Stitfold, or whoever else can render assistance, with a view to having a home bought for the use of younger men. There are many homes for sale today, and one of them could probably be bought for the purpose I have mentioned. In conclusion, I thank the Minister for the excellent exposition he gave of the department's work.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [5.12]: I would like to join with the Minister in commending the officers of the Public Health Department on the excellent work they are doing in this State. They have troubles, such as staff and money shortages, which must provide them with a number of headaches throughout the year. They have continual appeals for assistance from various districts; and it is assistance which, in most cases, is urgently required.

In Northampton, there is a district hospital that badly needs repairs and renovations. In that centre there has been a good deal of trouble in the last two or three years through inability to keep a doctor in the district. I understand that one is now coming from England, and it is hoped he will be able to remain for two or three years. If the hospital is repaired and put in a reasonable condition, I have no doubt the service will be restored to the standard that prevailed a few years ago. I am informed by the department that renovations to the hospital are being considered at present.

In Geraldton there is quite a large hospital which is doing a very good job. The building is old but, with maintenance over the years, has been kept in a reasonable state of repair. We are fortunate in having an excellent staff and management to keep the hospital functioning to serve the needs of a very large district, but I believe efforts should be made to have a regional hospital established at Geraldton. If that were done, it would enable people to obtain specialised surgical and medical treatment, for which at present they have to travel to Perth. I hope it will not be long before some progress will be made with plans for such a regional hospital. The Minister mentioned that the Commonwealth Government had made money available to certain hospitals in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Health: For tuberculosis,

Mr. SEWELL: Yes. I do not see why the Commonwealth Government should not make money available for centres outside the metropolitan area, such as Geraldton, Albany and Bunbury.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [5.15]: I wish to make some comments about "Sunset" and, in particular, about the medical installations there. In recent times there has been a tendency to increase the medical establishment at the home. I feel that, as a result, the home is in danger of losing its character because I understand it was intended to be a refuge for as many men of advanced years as possible. Of course, there has always been a hospital there, and it is necessary for a home of that size to have a medical installation because the inmates get colds and other ailments and they can be put into a hospital right on the spot, if one is there, and when they are cured, they return to the home itself.

It would be wrong not to have a medical installation there, but I do feel that the present set-up goes too far. The place is being turned into an infirmary instead of into a home for old men. It is much better to have as many men as possible accommodated there rather than have an elaborate hospital. This institution is not intended primarily as an old men's hospital.

With the increase of the hospital provisions there, the temptation is for the Royal Perth Hospital and others to send their old men to the hospital at "Sunset." Recently wards normally available for the ordinary living accommodation of the old men were converted into hospital accommodation, thus reducing the capacity of the place to absorb worthy cases. Surely with our increased population and in spite of the improved economic conditions, there must be an increasing demand for accommodation for men of advanced years!

It is my view that if we concentrate on getting some of the less fortunate men who are living in squalid and bad conditions moved into the environment of the home, they will be better, mentally and physically, and the home will serve its primary purpose. There is a tendency on the part of the medical profession to want to prolong the lives of the very old gentlemen there to the maximum extent. Of course, that is in keeping with the ideals of the medical profession, but at "Sunset" we have an increasing number of old men who are past the stage when they can enjoy the benefits of the home itself. They are in need of constant medical attention and it can be safely said that they will remain in hospital until they die.

I would like the Minister to take this matter up with his advisers, because what was intended to be a good move, by increasing the medical installation there, has, I feel, boomeranged and reduced the

very desirable accommodation for the elderly men in the community. Let me make myself clear; I am not offering any criticism of the conduct of the home, because it would be difficult to find an institution of the type, better conducted than is this one by the superintendent, Mr. Bradshaw, and his next in charge, Mr. Mitchell.

In my visits to the place it is most unusual for me to hear any complaint about the conduct of the home, the bed arrangements, the meal arrangements, entertaining and so on. The men are most grateful for the work that is done by the superintendent and the staff who have gone out of their way to brighten up the place and make it attractive. It is not so long ago when "Sunset" was bereft of lawns and flowers. But now there is a bright atmosphere at the home because of the lawns and flowers and as a result of the system that has been introduced which does not mean irksome controls over the men, but does preserve a degree of order. I ask the Minister to take up this question because I feel that the medical installation, as distinct from the institution being an old men's home, has gone too far.

MR. MAY (Collie) [5.21]: I agree with with the member for Subiaco and the member for Nedlands in regard to "Sunset". I visit there almost every week. I have taken quite a number of old people to "Sunset" from Collie, and one old fellow that I interviewed after he had been there a couple of weeks said, "There is only one thing wrong, Harry. I should have been here some years ago." The care of the inmates there is something which is worth while. I have not yet met with a complaint about the treatment they receive. The place is well kept and the inmates are well looked after.

We are most fortunate in having men of the type of Mr. Bradshaw, the superintendent, and Mr. Mitchell, his assistant. They are interested in their work and in the inmates. Altogether, it is a pleasure to go to "Sunset" and talk to the old people and know that they have no complaints. I think it is a wonderful set-up, and I would like to be able to say the same about all our other institutions.

Most metropolitan members have spoken about the metropolitan hospitals. I want to speak about the country, particularly Collie. Much needs to be done in regard to the hospitalisation of the people. The present hospital at Collie was opened in 1928 and it has not been enlarged since although the population has, I think, doubled. One can well imagine, therefore, the need for suitable accommodation there now to meet the requirements of the district.

I know that the Minister has been hamstrung for money, and so was the previous Minister. I think, however, that some attention should be paid to the needs of the

hospital requirements of the larger centres. I understand that the Minister is having plans prepared for the enlargement of the Collie hospital. If I remember correctly, the ex-Minister for Health told me very much the same thing.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: I am sorry I could not do it.

Mr. MAY: I know what the hon. member was up against. I was sorry for her because she could not do it and I was sorry for myself because Collie could not be given the hospital accommodation it deserved. I want to speak about the question of providing suitable grounds for the proposed extension of the Collie hospital. At present quite a large part of the area on which the hospital and the nurses' quarters are located is unoccupied, yet a proposal has been gazetted to resume certain land for hospital purposes.

The most unfortunate part of this proposed resumption is that at the present there are two houses on the land that is to be resumed, and God knows the housing position in Collie is bad enough without resuming land on which are houses, which will necessarily have to be demolished when the time comes to extend the hospital. However, if it takes as long to commence the extensions at Collie as it usually does, the people occupying those houses will have nothing to worry about. Nevertheless, I think it is unnecessary to resume such an area when there is plenty of other land available.

I hope the Minister will give some thought to what I have said; and I also hope that he will visit Collie shortly to see the set-up for himself. It is all very well to say that land must be resumed in order that it will be available in fifty years time, but I have pointed out that in most country centres of any size there is plenty of land that can be used for the building of hospitals and schools without interfering with the people who are already domiciled there.

If the Minister visits Collie, he will understand and appreciate why the people are objecting to the proposed resumption in connection with the hospital. I hope that he will adopt other methods so that it will not be necessary to put people out of their homes at a time when houses are at such a premium.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre—in reply) [5.28]: I thank members for their constructive criticism. I feel their complaints have not been very serious, but I shall look into them. The member for Cottesloe spoke of the inadequacy of the accommodation at the Fremantle hospital. We have reckoned on that, and plans are being drawn up to see what can be done. We have discussed the position. It would not be pos-

sible to construct a new hospital on the present site and in this regard we have had the corroboration of the architectural branch.

The member for Fremantle has told me that the land has not been fixed up, but I understand it has. I shall look into it. As far as priority is concerned, I do not know from where the member for Cottesloe got his information, but it was probably from that draft, and if that is so, it is a matter of Government opinion. That has been put up by the advisory council, but we may not keep to it. These hospitals will take priority in accordance with their requirements.

I know the position at Fremantle. The doctors are very worried about it. Of course, the population has increased rapidly at Kwinana, with the result that the situation has become very difficult. However, I will discuss it with the department and have the position stabilised as soon as possible. I thank the member for Subiaco for her contribution. She knows the position in regard to hospitals and the difficulties we have to face. As Ministers we would like to do everything possible and we try to assist everybody we can. But we are dependent on the Treasurer, and Treasurers are difficult people.

The Treasurer: Is that so?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. I think they have plenty of money but they will not give it to us for the building of hospitals! However, we do our best in that direction. As regards the canteen at the Harper home, I would advise the member for Subiaco that it has done, and is doing, a good job in assisting the children in regard to their education. I have been to the Harper home and I have seen the good work that is being done.

The Minister for Education: They certainly are doing a good job.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They are making wonderful progress and the Minister for Education supports me in that contention. The member for Subiaco has nothing to worry about. The good work she did in establishing the home is being carried on at the home itself. It will be beneficial and the people there are doing a job which was not thought possible when it was first established.

During his speech the member for Geraldton complained about the Northampton hospital. When they get a doctor, the necessary renovations and repairs will be carried out. As regards the regional hospital, that is something that will have to be taken into consideration and it will be built when its priority is reached. I do not know when that will be. No district knows all the problems of other districts. A Minister has to get the advice

of the various departments and he has to use his judgment as to which hospitals shall be built first.

If I were selfish, I would have a new hospital built at Esperance because the town is growing rapidly and yet the hospital is only an old wooden structure. Probably at the next election I will lose a few votes because I have not pushed for a hospital in that town. I have not given it consideration because I believe that there are other areas which require a hospital more urgently. I think the people at Esperance are entitled to a new hospital, and they will get one when their priority is reached.

The Treasurer: Northam has been waiting for a regional hospital for many years.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Even the Treasurer, who hands out the money, is forced to wait his turn. I suppose if he instructed me, as Minister for Health, to proceed with the plans for a regional hospital at Northam, I would have to obey him. But the Treasurer is considerate and will not permit his district to be granted favours when other districts more in need cannot get them.

I agree with the member for Nedlands that the hospital position in his area is getting worse. We have not an infirmary in Western Australia and something will have to be done in the next year or two. Until such time as we do get one, we must do the best we can with the old building. The Royal Perth Hospital is expensive. It costs a patient £3 18s. a day and there is a big waiting list for people who wish to undergo serious operations.

Mr. Court: Are they likely to take away any more of the accommodation and turn it into a hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Where?

Mr. Court: At "Sunset."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not if I can help it.

Mr. Court: Good!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It has been done to overcome an emergency. As regards Collie, plans for the construction of a complete new midwifery wing containing 16 beds are almost completed. The people in the district have been waiting some time for this new wing, but its priority has been reached and we can now proceed with its construction. Upon the erection of this new wing, the accommodation now used for midwifery cases will become available for general cases. This will give Collie a good deal more hospital accommodation. It is expected that tenders will be let for this work during the current financial year and that considerable progress will be made this year with the

new building. At the same time as the new building is being constructed it is hoped to arrange for the complete renovation of the present buildings.

Authority has also been given for the supply and installation of a new laundry machine and a hot water boiler and for the installation of additional power points and a call system in the hospital. This work will be proceeded with as soon as possible. We believe that considerable development will take place at Collie in the future and steps have been taken to resume an additional four acres of land adjoining the hospital block. I shall visit Collie and have a look at the exact position in regard to it. When a hospital is built, provision must be made for additions as the district grows. Unfortunately in Collie the hospital was built on a small area of land, only 10 acres, whereas when building new hospitals we try to provide not less than 25 acres and in some cases 40 or 50 acres.

On Tuesday the member for Victoria Park, the member for Canning and I will be looking at a site for a hospital over the river; if possible, we want to get 50 acres of ground. That is one of the troubles with the Royal Perth Hospital. We have had to resume, at great cost, 13 or 14 acres, whereas if people in the early days had had sufficient foresight, that land would have been set aside for hospital purposes. In addition, the resumption of this land has antagonised many people. As far as Collie is concerned, the position is serious because in time that town will become a city and more land will have to be made available or another hospital built. I shall go to Collie with the member for the district, and while there we will look at the land that the department intends to resume.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Homes, £255,204; Public Health, £282,981; Tuberculosis, £502,250; Mental Hospitals and Inebriates, £660,018—agreed to.

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £379,557:

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [5.41]: I would like to emphasise to the Minister the need for a new court house at Katanning. We were given to understand that this would be dealt with before long. I must point out, however, that back in 1926 the Minister concerned at that time promised a new court house at Katanning.

That is a long time ago and we have still got the old court house, which is a disgrace to the community. It is an old, dilapidated building and it is certainly not very nice for the officers of the Police Department to have to do their work in that

court house under the conditions that exist there at present. It is nothing to be proud about at all. I would like to emphasise the need for some move to be made for the provision of a new court house in order that these officers may have decent conditions to work in.

During the summer months the heat is so intense that if the Minister were there I am sure he would not last more than a few hours; he would be almost cooked. The people there have got used to it and they are able to stand the extreme heat during the summer months and the extreme cold during the winter. This old building has been there since about 1870.

We must be reasonable about this and assist the officers who are doing such an important job in the country. We should encourage them in the work they have on hand. I know the Minister is aware of the conditions that exist there, and I would like him to make every effort to have work commenced to provide a reasonably up-to-date building to house the officers concerned.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.45]: Although we are on the vote dealing with justice, I often wonder if we will ever get any justice done. It seems to me that private members have not got very much. Motions are brought down by us and carried and nothing is done about them. Apparently the only way to get something done is to move to reduce the vote. Last year I moved a motion asking the Minister for Justice to bring down a Bill to deal with the parole of prisoners, but nothing has been done.

I do not blame the present Minister, because I would say he is about the most humane Minister for Justice we have had since I have been a member. I had not been here long before I moved a motion in relation to the degrading system of transporting prisoners from the city to the Fremantle gaol, and I suggested that it should be done away with in favour of motor transport. It was not many months before that was put into effect.

As I have said, last year I asked for a Bill to provide the parole of prisoners, but we got nothing. The time has arrived when something should be done. I would like to read an opinion expressed by the Inspector General of Prisons, in Victoria. The newspaper cutting reads as follows:—

A parole system would soon replace Victoria's outmoded imprisoning, the Inspector-General of Prisons (Mr. A. R. Whatmore) said at Wesley Pleasant Sunday Afternoon yesterday.

Parole would give more chance of reform, be far less harsh on prisoners' innocent wives and families, and be far less expensive to the taxpayer, Mr. Whatmore said.

It would involve part prison sentences and part parole under the supervision of trained officers.

Every other civilised country had adopted the parole system.

We must be one of the uncivilised countries because we have not yet adopted it. Let us consider the countries that have already adopted it. In "The Canada Year Book" we find the following:—

Other countries have also adopted the parole system. It was accepted in Germany in 1871, the Netherlands in 1881, Japan in 1882, the French Republic in 1885 and has since been used by Austria, Italy and Portugal. A number of the States in the United States have now a system of parole or conditional liberation in force for prisoners.

After motions had been carried on two or three different occasions, I think the least we could have expected was that some action would have been taken. People seem to think that prisoners should be thrown into gaol and left there; that if a man is sentenced to 15 years he should stay there for that period unless he gets some small remission for good conduct. I would like to know what the Minister proposes to do about the parole of prisoners. In Canada they let out about 60,000 prisoners in a few years and only 5 per cent. of them returned. The Minister cannot say that this is difficult to achieve because of finance. If he accepted my suggestion it would save him money, because it would be a saving by way of food and clothing which is normally supplied to prisoners.

Nobody spoke against this matter last year in the House; indeed members were unanimous on it. I want to know when the Minister will do something to bring in a system of parole which has been in operation in other civilised countries in the world.

MR. ANDREW (Victoria Park) [5.39]: I wish to speak about a holding in Yanchep owned by a Mrs. Lindsay which was sold and, after the people had bought the land, they were kicked out. An elector of mine in Victoria Park approached me and asked me to do what I could in the matter. I do not think, however, that very much can be done for him; and the object of my speaking here this evening is to try to stop this sort of thing happening again. I do not wish to take up too much time of the Committee, so I will content myself with reading the letter this man wrote me.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Was not there litigation about that matter?

Mr. ANDREW: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Then why not read the judgment in order to get an impartial view?

Mr. ANDREW: The hon. member may read the judgment if he so desires. I do not say that necessarily I agree with everything contained in the letter, but I shall read it—

I think it is about time Parliament did something about the illegal sale and control of land at Yanchep by one, Mrs. Lindsay, who acts on behalf of her daughter in London and son in Victoria, and sells $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre blocks of land which have not been subdivided, surveyed, or approved of by the town planner.

Mrs. Lindsay controls 18,000 acres and more along the coast from a point south of Yanchep Beach to a point north of Wreck Point. Any fisherman on this non-productive terrific holding of land 35 miles north of Perth without permission is liable to be prosecuted by Mrs. Lindsay.

The only two anchorages between Fremantle and Lancelin Island, 90 miles, are Yanchep Beach and Wreck Point where crayfishing boats can operate with a shore base. When the dollar-earning crayfishing industry came into its own, the 18,000 acres which had been asleep for 30 years was suddenly awakened by the crayfish truck, which ran to Yanchep and Wreck Point once per day. Mrs. Lindsay put a stop to the truck from the fishing base, Wreck Point, by not allowing it to travel through her property. The truck had to make a detour through very rough country. This added $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours on to the journey to Fremantle, and the bashing around the crayfish received caused a loss in dead fish of over £1,000 in one week. Shortly after this Wreck Point folded up.

In 1952 I purchased a block from Mrs. Lindsay for £100 cash, for which I received a receipt. I built a home on my block at Yanchep Beach which I valued at £400, and I fished from there for three seasons. Mrs. Lindsay is dead crooked on crayfishermen and me in particular.

In June this year she took a Supreme Court action against me. This case took two full days in the court, presided over by Mr. Justice Jackson. I lost. I feel sure that the case was won on a lie told by Mrs. Lindsay about the boundaries of the block. I could have had in court six witnesses to prove

this point, but my counsel thought we had this point sewn up, as it were. The outcome is this—

I've lost—	£
The block and home	400
I have to pay her costs	200
My own costs	180
The purchase price Mrs. Lindsay is keeping for misuse of the property for the three seasons I was there	100
Total loss	£880

I am a married man with three children under four years. I was a commando and paratrooper for four years during the war fighting for Australia. How comes it this country deprives me of $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre which I paid good money for.

On receiving that letter I wrote to the Minister for Justice as follows:—

Enclosed please find communication from an elector of mine referring to matters in regard to a recent court case. The letter concerns C. F. Carruthers of 53 McMillan St., Victoria Park, and Mrs. Lindsay, of Yanchep, and I think it is self-explanatory.

It appears to me that Carruthers had a very raw deal, and I would like you to look into this matter and see if something could be done.

Also, it seems to me on looking up the Town Planning and Development Act that Mrs. Lindsay has infringed the law because Part III, Section 20,—Alienated Land—states—

No person shall lay out, grant or convey a street, road or way, or subdivide or sell lands as lots until a plan of subdivision has been approved by the board.

This, I understand, she failed to do. The other sections to which I would like to draw your attention and which may affect this case are 25 and 27 of the same Act.

If you would have your legal officers look into this matter we could then have a good idea of the real position.

I have had several conferences on the matter and I understand that the only action Carruthers can take is by way of appeal. To do this is out of the question because of the condition of his finances. I believe that Mrs. Lindsay won her action mainly on the ground that the land had not been surveyed or properly defined. I believe that is why the case fell through. But here is the important point. I have

been informed on reliable authority that she has sold additional blocks in the same area.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not think she sells; I think she leases the land.

Mr. ANDREW: I have made that statement on the authority of an officer of a Government department. He said that she had sold some land, but that the buyers might not get a title to it. There is a clause in the agreement drawn up by her solicitors that, if buyers fail to get a title to the land, they may have it on lease. I cannot see why any purchaser should be placed in that position. I have already given the effect of Section 20 of the Act and I am not sure whether Section 25 would affect the position. That section reads—

Where, after the erection of a building on land the property of one owner, it is found that such building encroaches upon the land the property of another owner to the extent of not more than three feet, and where the encroaching owner desires to purchase the land upon which the encroachment stands, the board shall, upon the application of the owner of the land which is encroached upon, and upon being satisfied that there has not been collusion but that everything has been done in good faith without intention to evade the law, approve of the necessary subdivision or transfer.

The Minister might well look into this matter.

The Minister for Justice: Once the case has gone to the court, not much can be done.

Mr. ANDREW: The main consideration I have in mind is that the Act should be tightened up to prevent a repetition of this sort of thing. I suggest that the Minister investigate the matter from that angle. It is wrong that a person should have to lose the greater part of £1,000 when he has paid for a block of land and still does not own it.

Hon. A. F. Watts: What was the point on which the case was lost?

Mr. ANDREW: That the land had not been defined and there was no plan. The block was sold to Carruthers after certain features had been indicated. I understand that the land now being sold to other people is being disposed of on the same basis, but that there is no defined plan. I suggest that the Minister should earnestly consider this matter with a view to having the Act amended to prevent such happenings in future.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [6.1]: I support the remarks of the member for Fremantle in connection with the parole of prisoners. This matter was discussed last

year and although I did not speak on it at the time, I agreed with what the hon. member said. I think the Minister should have the position examined by highly placed men who are more au fait with the situation that we are, and then let us have their report so that we can judge whether it would be advisable to introduce a parole system.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.2 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 30th November, 1954.

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

STANDING ORDERS AMENDMENTS.

Message.

The PRESIDENT: I have received a message from His Excellency the Governor notifying approval of the amendments to Standing Orders recently adopted by the Legislative Council.

BILL—PHARMACY AND POISONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; Hon. R. J. Boylen in charge of the Bill.