

relationship to the principles intended in this Bill, and the proposal in general is contrary to the policy of the law.

I would say, lastly, that it is not incorporated in the law in any other State, except South Australia; and I do not think that that is a strong enough argument to induce us to accept it in Western Australia at this stage. It has already been agreed by those who have referred to this Bill that it is a considerable advancement on the present position. I think we ought to be satisfied with that.

Mr. GUTHRIE: The reason why these clauses have been proposed is the fact that it is only in an action under this statute that there can be any such suit submitted at all; because, as I said earlier in the course of the second reading, the right to sue arises by statute, and it is not a normal common law remedy. As this is the statute that gives people the right to sue for damages for negligence, it is the only measure in which it could find its place. It is intended, as has been said by the High Court when it considered the South Australian statute, as compensation, not for pecuniary loss but for mental suffering; and that is its main purpose.

I have had to deal with many widows who suffered no pecuniary loss at all. On more than one occasion I have had to say to them, "I am sorry, you cannot recover anything." They say to me, "Can a man kill my husband and I get nothing for it?"; and I have had to say on many occasions, "I am not here to make the law but to interpret the law. If you do not like it you had better see a member of Parliament." As I am now a member of Parliament, I cannot continue to give that answer. I have discussed this proposal with other members of my profession, and with one man in particular who appears in these cases more than any other person in Perth. He has personally advocated it to the Law Society, and he agrees with me that it is a necessary amendment. It was commended to the South Australian Legislature by one of the judges of the Supreme Court of South Australia and the amendments were actually prepared by a judge of that court. I feel it would be a gracious action on the part of this Chamber to give people, who have their breadwinner or child taken from them, some form of compensation which they would not otherwise have.

New clause put and negatived.

Mr. GUTHRIE: In view of the decision of the Committee, I will not move the next amendment.

Schedule and Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 12.3 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 26th August, 1959

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

BLACK ROCKS DEEP-WATER PORT

Initial Recommendation

1. Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Will he give the names of the members of the Kimberley Development Committee who first

recommended to the State Government the advisability of locating a deep-water port at Black Rocks near Derby?

- (2) Was the recommendation unanimous?

Mr. WILD replied:

- (1) Mr. C. M. Dimond.
Mr. W. M. Nunn.
Mr. Grenfell Ruddick.
Mr. P. A. Reid.
- (2) There is nothing in the recommendation made by the committee in its report to the Government to indicate that its recommendations were not unanimous.

ORD RIVER SCHEME

Advisability of All-Party Delegation

2. Mr. HAWKE asked the Premier:

When the Government recently decided to send the Minister for the North-West to Canberra to have discussions with the Prime Minister and other senior Ministers regarding the proposed Ord River scheme in the Kimberleys, was any consideration given to the advisability of sending an all-Party delegation with the Minister?

Mr. BRAND replied:

The Commonwealth Government invited us to send ministerial representation for discussion and we accepted that invitation. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that today I received a letter from the Commonwealth in which it agreed to include in the proposals the Ord River diversion dam scheme. I will make a statement later on.

Mr. Graham: Politics at their best!

3. *This question was postponed.*

GERALDTON-CARNARVON ROAD

Financial Allocation and Sealing

4. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) What proportion of the £398,300 allocated by the Main Roads Department for the Carnarvon-Geraldton road for 1959-60, will be—

(a) allocated to the section between Geraldton and the Murchison bridge;

(b) allocated to the section between the Murchison bridge and Carnarvon?

- (2) What new sections are to be sealed between the Murchison bridge and Carnarvon this financial year?

- (3) When is it anticipated that the road between Carnarvon and Geraldton will be completely sealed?

Mr. WILD replied:

- (1) (a) £60,700.
(b) £337,600.
- (2) Out of the funds provided in (b) above the following sealing is proposed:—
Northampton Road Board,
391.2M.-404M. : 12.8 miles.
Shark Bay Road Board,
491M.-511M. : 20 miles.
- (3) June, 1962.

POWER SUB-STATION

Installation in Vicinity of King's Park Road

5. Mr. HEAL asked the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) Could he indicate if a sub-station will be installed in the vicinity of King's Park Road, West Perth, for the purpose of providing adequate power in the area concerned?
- (2) If so, what is the approximate date of the completion of installation of the sub-station?

Mr. WATTS replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) Completion anticipated during December.

WESTERN AIRPORT

Tabling of File

6. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Premier: Would he lay on the Table of the House, the file containing all representations made to the Commonwealth Government in connection with the future development of the main Western Airport and possible transfer to another site?

Mr. BRAND replied:

Tabling of the file would not be in the best interests of the confidential negotiations proceeding with the Commonwealth in regard to the main Western Airport. However, there is no objection to the honourable member perusing the file at the office of the Minister for Housing.

BENTLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Construction

7. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Works:

Is the Bentley High School to be built by day labour or contract?

Mr. WILD replied:

By day labour.

HOUSING LOAN GUARANTEE ACT

Institution Approved, Loans Guaranteed, and Government Policy

8. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many institutions have been approved under the Housing Loan Guarantee Act since the 31st March last?
- (2) How many loans have been guaranteed under the scheme since that date?
- (3) What is the monetary total of loans guaranteed since that date?
- (4) Have any changes of policy or procedure been made in the scheme since the present Government assumed office?
- (5) If so, what are they?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) 2.
- (2) 32.
- (3) £12,609.
- (4) and (5) This matter is at present under review.

OYSTER HARBOUR

Dredging of River Mouth

9. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Would he give consideration—when having plans drawn up for building the new Lower King bridge, Albany—to including dredging the river mouth running into Oyster Harbour?
- (2) If so, would he give further consideration to using material dredged from the river mouth for the purpose of reclaiming river banks and Lower King River town-site?

Mr. WILD replied:

- (1) and (2) There are no known requirements for dredging work in connection with a new Lower King bridge.

ALBANY HARBOUR

Erection of No. 2 Transit Shed

10. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Will finance be made available for the erection of No. 2 transit shed, adjacent to No. 1 berth, at the port of Albany this financial year?
- (2) If so, when is it expected that work will commence?
- (3) If not, when will finance be made available, and work commenced?

Mr. WILD replied:

- (1) Finance will be provided this financial year for a commencement to be made towards the end of the financial year with a view to completion during the 1960-61 financial year.
- (2) and (3) Answered by No. (1) above.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Soup-Kitchen Meals For Unemployed

11A. Mr. HALL asked the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware of the existence of a soup kitchen operating in Fitzgerald Street, West Perth?
- (2) Is he aware that this soup kitchen is serving 120 meals per day, to the needy and unemployed?
- (3) Has the Child Welfare Department carried out an inspection of the soup kitchen, and reported same?
- (4) Does the Government assist the organisation running the soup kitchen in any way?
- (5) What was the date when the soup kitchen first started?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2), (3), and (4) I am aware that meals are being served to needy people by a religious organisation which is independent of the Government.
- (5) Not known.

Withdrawal of Payments to Single Unemployed

11B. Mr. HALL asked the Premier:

What was the date when 17s. 6d. as paid to the single unemployed ceased to be paid by the Government?

Mr. BRAND replied:

The 1st May, 1959.

MUJA POWER STATION

Erection and Date of Production

12. Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) Is it proposed to go ahead with the erection of a power station at Muja?
- (2) If so, when is it anticipated work will commence?
- (3) What date does he anticipate the power station will commence production?

Mr. WATTS replied:

- (1), (2), and (3) Investigations are being made into the possibilities of erecting a power station near the coalfields.

GUAYULE RUBBER*Experimental Planting*

13. Mr. CRAIG asked the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has any experimental planting of the Guayule rubber tree yet been made, and in what areas?
- (2) If not, can it be stated when these plantings will be made and the areas in which trial plots will be established?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) Seedlings of guayule are being grown at the Vegetable Research Station, Wembley, and at the Gascoyne Research Station, Carnarvon.
- (2) It is expected to transplant seedlings for field trials as follows:—
 September, 1959—Mingenew and Kalgoorlie.
 October, 1959—Esperance and Gairdner.
 January, 1960—Carnarvon, Port Hedland, and Derby.

PERTH ROAD BOARD*Power to Strike a Uniform Rate*

14. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is he aware that in a memorandum dated the 11th June, 1957 (L.G.D. 87/57), the secretary for Local Government stated: "... although suggestions have been made to the (Perth Road) Board that it was always desirable for larger local authorities to strike a uniform rate, Ministerial approval to vary the rates as between wards had never, up to the present, been refused, nor did I see any indication that it would be refused if any future application was made."?
- (2) In view of this established practice, for what reasons and at whose instigation did he refuse to approve the application of Perth Road Board for a uniform rate subject to a departure in one ward, along lines for which provision is made in the Act?
- (3) Would it not be reasonable to expect that a local authority would be in the best position to appreciate the requirements of its district as a whole, and its respective wards?

- (4) Is he aware that his refusal to grant the necessary approval could result in one ward being without a sufficiency of funds for its requirements?

Mr. WATTS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) In exercise of the discretionary power cast upon the Minister by section 241 of the Road Districts Act.
- (3) Not in every case.
- (4) No.

RAILWAY ROLLING STOCK*Order of Springs by Tomlinson Ltd.*

15. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Is it true or false that Tomlinson Ltd. have ordered springs from the Eastern States in anticipation of future work?
- (2) Would the number of springs ordered be known to the Government Railways?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) False.
- (2) Answered by No. (1).

KA WAGONS*Fault in Brake Cylinders*

16. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Were the brake vacuum cylinders on the KA wagons being built at Tomlinson Ltd. machined out of round, and is this fault being rectified at the Government's expense?
- (2) Are the Government employees still working on overtime rates?
- (3) Is the rectifying of the fault above being done at Tomlinson Ltd. or the Government Workshops?

Mr. COURT replied:

I have been informed that the question appearing on the notice paper is a misprint and is different from what the honourable member intended. I can give either an answer to the question as it appears on the notice paper or a revised answer, whichever is suitable to the honourable member.

The SPEAKER: Which does the honourable member want?

Mr. Brady: As the question is set out wrongly on the notice paper I will see that it is placed on tomorrow's notice paper in proper form.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**ORD RIVER SCHEME***Tabling of Prime Minister's Letter*

1. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Premier:
Will he lay on the Table of the House a copy of the letter he received from the Prime Minister in respect to the development of the Ord River scheme and other development in the North?

Mr. BRAND replied:

I will lay a copy of the letter on the Table of the House next Tuesday.

FRUIT-FLY*Eradication Measures*

2. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Agriculture:

As fruit-fly has been menacing the export of fruit from this State, and bearing in mind that many buyers are refusing to accept fruit from Western Australia without a fruit-fly certificate, can he advise the House what steps he is taking for the eradication of fruit-fly other than the known methods of controlling it?

Mr. NALDER replied:

The honourable member was good enough to give me notice of this question before you took your seat, Mr. Speaker. The Government is fully aware that fruit-fly is a menace to the industry in Western Australia and is taking every known step to control the spread of the fly. Its total eradication is of course, very desirable, and I am sure that every effort will be made in the future to achieve this objective if at all possible.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES*Number Dismissed*

3. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

- (1) On Wednesday last I asked him for the total number of persons who have been dismissed by the present Government, to which he replied that the information was being obtained and would be supplied as soon as possible. Is he now able to comply with that undertaking?
- (2) If not, when does he anticipate being in a position to do so?

Mr. BRAND replied:

The honourable member gave me prior notice of this question, but I regret to say there are still one or two departments that have not supplied me with the full information. However, I undertake to have it by next Tuesday.

BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT*Proposed Amendments*

4. Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Works:

Is it intended, during the current session, to amend the Builders' Registration Act to place "B" class builders in the same category as "A" class or, alternatively, to raise the permissible amount up to which "B" class builders can accept contracts?

Mr. WILD replied:

Consideration is now being given to some amendments to the Builders' Registration Act.

**TRANSFER OF LAND ACT
AMENDMENT BILL***Third Reading*

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILLS (2)—REPORT

1. Filled Milk.
2. Fatal Accidents.

Adopted.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR*Extension and Railway Bridge
Construction*

Debate resumed from the 12th August on the following motion moved by Mr. Oldfield:—

That this House re-affirms the motion moved on the 8th September, 1954, by the then member for Fremantle, the Hon. J. B. Sleeman—

That this House requests the Government to go on with the outward to south extension scheme instead of the upriver scheme for the Fremantle Harbour and also that this House does not agree to the building of a short-life wooden structure railway bridge downstream and adjacent to the present traffic bridge as per Messrs. Brisbane and Dumas report

and subsequently passed on the 13th October, 1954, with the support of Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver, and Messrs. Ackland, Bovell, Cornell, Court, Heal, Hearman, J. Hegney, Jamieson, Lapham, Lawrence, Mann, I. Manning, McCulloch, Nimmo, Owen, Perkins, Sleeman, Yates and Oldfield.

Mr. WILD (Dale—Minister for Works) [4.46]: This type of motion has been before the House fairly regularly during the 12 years that I have been a member. During the parliamentary life of the Hon. J. B.

Sleeman, the member for Fremantle for many years, he consistently, year by year, either on the Estimates or by a special motion, endeavoured to indicate to the Government of the day—irrespective of the Party that was in office—that he did not agree with what had been generally considered over the years to be the accepted thing on the siting of the new railway bridge. On several occasions he even divided the House on this question.

When Mr. Sleeman ceased to be a member of this House I, for one, thought that would be the end of this particular problem; and I was rather surprised to think that the member for Mt. Lawley, who represents an area a long way away from the port of Fremantle, should have seen fit—although it is his prerogative—to rise to his feet and put forward a motion questioning the decision of the Government to build this new railway bridge upstream. I think it might be of some value—particularly for the edification of the new members—if I were to trace the history of this question because, as I have said, there has been great controversy over the years as to where this bridge should be built.

I point out that during that period there has been, among all the experts who have investigated this scheme, unanimity on the site of the railway bridge. However, just prior to the change of Government in March last, the previous Government, for some unaccountable reason—especially when I look at the file—changed its mind on where the bridge should go. Before I proceed to read some excerpts from the reports of those engineers who have examined this scheme, it will be interesting to indicate that the member for Mt. Lawley, in his speech to the House some three weeks ago, more or less posed these three questions—

1. That the House requests the harbour development to proceed forthwith in accordance with the outward to south extension scheme.
2. That the House should retard up-river extension of the harbour.
3. That the House does not agree to the building of a short-life wooden bridge downstream and adjacent to the present traffic bridge.

Accordingly, before I deal with the speech delivered by the member for Mt. Lawley, I think it would be as well to look back over the years to see where this proposal to build upstream started. The first indication I can find is contained in the Stileman report which was presented to this Parliament in September, 1927. It was a report on the Fremantle Harbour and cross-river communications by the

Engineer-in-Chief. After he had perused the evidence and given a decision, this is what Mr. Stileman finally had to say—

Various proposals for extension either to the north or to the south of the existing entrance have been made in the past. All proposals in the south must contemplate the construction of a new harbour entirely separated from that already existing, of no portion of which could any advantage be taken. In these circumstances the harbour becomes unnecessarily costly both in construction and operation, and difficult to administer.

Extensions to the north, on the other hand, permit of full advantage being taken of the existing entrance channel and ensure that measure of centralisation necessary to co-ordination of control and economy of working.

It is pretty obvious, therefore, that what Mr. Stileman had to say way back in 1927 could still be put forward as an argument today.

Mr. Graham: A lot of water has flowed under a lot of bridges since then.

Mr. WILD: That is perfectly true; but as one goes through these reports one finds all these gentlemen, who were eminently equipped in their particular fields, saying the same thing. I would now like to refer to the report prepared by Sir Alexander Gibb, which was presented to this Parliament in 1929. It is entitled, "Report on the Fremantle Harbour by Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners to the Government in Western Australia on the Proposals for Improvements to and Extensions of the Harbour at the Port of Fremantle." Sir Alexander Gibb had this to say—

When further harbour extension becomes necessary it should be provided by the construction of an outer harbour on the foreshore of the existing North Mole, as shown on drawing No. 5. This harbour would consist of a series of branch docks lying at an angle to the foreshore, protected by an outer breakwater, and having a wide turning space provided in sheltered water near the entrance, which would be protected by extensions of the existing North and South Moles.

He refers to two bridges that should be built in the harbour and says—

After the new bridges, railway and road diversions have been constructed, an up-river extension of the harbour should be made of tapering form with a width of water-way bearing from 1,400 ft. at its junction with the existing harbour to about 900 ft. at its upper end near the railway bridge.

I now pass to the next report, which was presented to Parliament in 1951 by H. C. Meyer. It is entitled, "Port of Fremantle Development Scheme." In that report Mr. Meyer said—

Having regard to all the attendant considerations, I definitely agree that progressive extension to Point Brown as provided for in the Tydeman Scheme, is the correct means of obtaining additional berthage in the first stage of the harbour development. There is, in my opinion, no better method.

The next report that follows is the Tydeman Report, which I need not read, because it is well known to members that the general manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust has stood in the same position, and expressed the same opinion, over the years. He has indicated that it is still in the interests of the Port of Fremantle that the harbour extensions should be upstream. A little later, however, Messrs. R. J. Dumas and D. W. Brisbane were asked to prepare a report, which they did. When summarising the position they said—

That a new railway bridge be constructed immediately below the existing highway bridge and approximately as shown on Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners' Plan 3080/20. That the bridge be built so far as possible of timber, the piles being protected to have a life of 50 years.

Accordingly, one can see that the experts and technical people have been fairly consistent in their opinion over the years, that the bridge should be built upstream. As I said earlier, successive Governments of the day—until only a few months ago—all considered that that was a right appreciation of the situation.

On several occasions my predecessor, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, had the task of having to reply to one of his colleagues, the ex-member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman). I would like to read to the House what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (the member for Melville) said. In reply to one of the annual motions submitted by the then member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman), he said on the 15th September, 1954—

In going outside to provide a harbour in the position where the honourable member wants it established, there would need to be very substantial expenditure made before a single berth could be provided, because no berth can be provided until breakwaters are established there. We would be obliged to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds in building breakwaters and still be without a berth at a time when we were obliged to defer essential water supply works, drainage undertakings and harbour construction projects because the money was

not there to do it. What Government would be able to stand up to the requests from all over the country for water supplies, harbour works, drainage works and the like if it were spending £1,000,000 on breakwaters when it could avoid that expenditure?

He went on to say—

But in the meantime the most economical way of providing the berths which the State so urgently requires would be to utilise the area in the river where an additional five berths can be provided, without the necessity of spending large sums of money on a breakwater before we could get a berth at all. Berths can be provided quickly and economically in the river as soon as it is possible for the Government to find the requisite finance to enable it to proceed. But if, after the space up to the existing railway bridge is utilised, we require additional berths—and if the honourable member is to be followed—the Government must face heavy expenditure for the provision of breakwaters before it can even think of providing one additional berth.

Further on he said—

So I propose to leave the case at that. I trust that members will have a proper regard for the requirements of the situation and the task that confronts the State with limited resources to carry out works of great magnitude in an area of low population density, and will not deliberately say to the Government, "You provide for a scheme that will cost a lot of money before you get any return without regard to the other circumstances." I do not think that a responsible assembly would adopt such an attitude.

This decision was made only after the most careful consideration of all aspects. What makes it all the more important is that the Government had the benefit of inquiries that had been made by men appointed by the previous Government to carry out investigations.

Mr. Hutchinson: You are carrying out expert advice.

The Minister for Works: Very definitely, and all the expert advice without exception is to do precisely what we propose to do. Otherwise, we should be flying in the face of that advice and putting ourselves up as being superior in knowledge and experience to those who have advised the Government.

I repeat that every possible aspect has been given consideration. There can be no other conclusion, however one may feel on the point that land resumption should be avoided to obviate dislocation. This is inevitable when making progress; it is going on all the time.

Finally he said—

I assure the House that if ever a decision was arrived at after careful consideration in the light of expert advice, this one was. Acting on the weight of expert advice, which is all in the one direction, the Government has decided to provide these additional berths, when required, by extending the harbour upstream. It is not intended to go beyond the existing road bridge and when all those berths have been fully utilised, by going up to the existing road bridge, further harbour extension is contemplated in Cockburn Sound.

Last year when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was on the trade mission to Europe and the U.S.A., he sent a telegram from Paris indicating that no further moves should be made to build the new railway bridge. On the railway files there appears the following minute dated the 27th October, 1958:—

The Hon. Premier (in Cabinet):

The honourable Minister for Railways has brought under my notice the question of the replacement of the existing railway bridge at Fremantle and he considers that the matter is urgent.

The work in connection with the new bridge was stopped following upon a recommendation by me, sent from France on the 24th July last.

Since returning to Perth I have given the matter a good deal of consideration, and I feel that two additional berths in the river will be sufficient in the Inner Harbour and that we should proceed to develop Cockburn Sound in accordance with the recommendation of the special committee.

I recommend that the matter be immediately referred to the special departmental committee, comprised of the Director of Works, Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, Commissioner of Main Roads, General Manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, Town planning Commissioner and the Commissioner for Railways, to report upon the positioning of the new railway bridge in order to make it possible for two additional berths to be provided in the Inner Harbour.

(Sgd.) JOHN T. TONKIN,
Minister for Works.

After many years of expert advice dating right back to 1927, the previous Government decided to build the bridge downstream. I am not cavilling at its decision. All of us are entitled to change our minds from time to time. When the change of Government took place in March of this year, the new Government looked at the project in the light of recommendations from the Railway Department, which indicated that the railway bridge at Fremantle had a life of a further 18 months

to two years; and the Government was faced with the task of making a decision. Rightly or wrongly it decided that the new railway bridge should be built upstream.

As a result, we find the member for Mt. Lawley asking the Government to change its mind, and twitting some members on this side of the House for having changed their minds on this matter. To me this question is very serious, as it was to the ex-member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman). To some degree the siting of the new bridge was treated rather lightheartedly by some members, because the ex-member for Fremantle brought it up year by year like a hardy annual.

Mr. Andrew: He put up a very good case.

Mr. WILD: The ex-member for Fremantle was sincere. I found him to be so in the years I have been in this House. He brought the subject up in the form of a motion, or during the Estimates, when he expressed his opposition to the siting of the bridge upstream.

After having given some background to this matter—for the edification of new members in particular—it is as well for me to glance at some of the remarks made by the member for Mt. Lawley. In one part of his speech he made play of the fact that instead of spending money on building the bridge upstream, the Government should spend it on development southward, or at Cockburn Sound. I do not know whether the honourable member has given much thought to that side of his argument. If he were to peruse the report to which I have referred, he would realise that the sum of £1,000,000 to £2,000,000 would be a very small portion of the funds required to construct the breakwaters and other facilities for a new port.

Mr. Andrew: You are now really putting off the matter.

Mr. WILD: This Government considers it is imperative to carry on with some extensions to the harbour immediately. If five additional berths are provided by building the bridge upstream, there will be sufficient berthing space for ships in Fremantle for some years to come.

Looking at the long-range point of view, we must eventually turn to Cockburn Sound. If £1,000,000 to £2,000,000 were available—it was not available to the previous Government, and it is not available to the present Government—for a project such as this, that amount would be a mere flea bite.

The Government had to make a decision whether the additional berth to meet immediate requirements should be built, or, alternatively, whether the new railway bridge should be built alongside the existing bridge. If the latter suggestion is adopted, then for the next 40 to 50 years—which is the life of the new bridge—the higher portion of the harbour will be sealed off. No Government in the near future is likely

to have the funds available to make a worth-while contribution to extending the harbour in Cockburn Sound.

The member for Mt. Lawley also referred to the large ships which will shortly be using the port of Fremantle. The necessary sheds and equipment that make up the modern facilities for berthing the large liners, which are expected to arrive in the port of Fremantle next year, are being constructed. These liners will be 45,000 tons in weight. It is interesting to examine the exact requirements of those large liners, as compared with the vessels now using the harbour.

The existing mail steamers are of a gross tonnage of 28,000 tons, but it is expected that next year the new mail steamers will be 45,000 tons. That is an increase of 17,000 tons, yet the draught of the new ships will only be 33 ft. as against 31 ft. 6 in. for the existing mail steamers. The length of existing steamers is 728 ft., while the length of the new ships will be 820 ft. So the new ships will be longer by slightly under 100 ft., yet they will be one-third larger than the existing ships. The beam of the existing steamers is 90 ft., and that of the new vessels will be 102 ft.

I am advised, and I am also aware from my limited travels in other parts of the world, that the tonnage of vessels is governed by the size of waterways, such as the Panama Canal, the Suez Canal, and the Manchester Canal. They are the three most used waterways in the world. The ships have to go through these canals; and the vessels will be restricted to the same size even though they will be of increased tonnage. The modern trend is to build ships with a greater beam. I am not a seafaring man and do not know all the terms that are used, but one has only to look at these figures to see that there is very little extension by way of length, yet the ships will be of a much greater tonnage.

The honourable member also mentioned turnround at Fremantle Harbour. Some large ships have been turned in Fremantle Harbour, including the *Hood*, which was a very large vessel by anybody's standards, it being 861 ft. long. Another ship, by the name of *Tergi Viken* with a draught of 34 ft. 9 in. was the biggest ship to enter Fremantle Harbour. Those vessels have entered the harbour with the existing facilities. Therefore, it is fairly obvious that the harbour, as we know it today, will be quite capable of taking the new larger ships, and any other ships we can imagine in the foreseeable future.

An opinion was expressed by the honourable member that with larger ships coming into the harbour, instead of having six berths for six ships we would, with the greater length of the new ships, possibly get only four berths in the same space. One must recognise that over many years the average length of ships entering Fremantle Harbour has been slightly over 500

ft. Therefore, to offset one or two larger ships per week there will also be ships of smaller tonnage. So with the same number of berths, we will get exactly the same number of ships as now.

A further point raised by the honourable member concerned ships carrying inflammable goods. I think all members know that practically the whole of the ships carrying oil and petrol to Western Australia are going to Kwinana. There are one or two that go into Fremantle Harbour, but the hazard they create is one that has to be taken in any other port in the world.

The honourable member also questioned the advisability of building a wooden bridge in case of war. During the last war if one went to the Rhine one could look at bridges built of steel and concrete which were pushed into the river. If a nuclear bomb were dropped on Perth in the future, it would not matter whether the bridge was built of steel or any other material. There would be a complete disintegration of everything in the immediate vicinity. Therefore, I do not think it counts for anything whether the bridge be built of wood or steel.

The honourable member also mentioned that a ship was delayed at Victoria Quay for 12 hours because of a heavy blow. I am advised that that is something which rarely happens in the harbour of Fremantle; but last year, in Cockburn Sound, where the Broken Hill Pty vessels and the Anglo-Iranian oil tankers berth, 45 complete days were lost as a result of heavy blows. I do not think that anyone could say anything against Fremantle harbour in regard to the weather.

I feel that in putting up his case, the honourable member more or less indicated to the Government that it should reverse its decision. In looking back over the reports, my colleagues and I can see nothing to indicate that we should change our minds. If we were to shut the upper reaches of the harbour by building a railway bridge on the old site, I feel certain that posterity would look back and query what we had done. Circumstances demand that there shall be a new bridge. If we look to Cockburn Sound, we must face up to the cold hard fact—as I read to the House earlier, and as I think my predecessor stated very clearly—of finding the requisite £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 at this stage.

By the time plans were drawn, and transit facilities provided—including the provision of a narrow or broad gauge railway to Cockburn Sound—it would cost, I venture to suggest, somewhere in the realm of £1,000,000 or more to have the same facilities as those which are now enjoyed at Fremantle. I can see no justification for the motion moved by the member for Mt. Lawley, but I appreciate the fact that he desired to place Mr. Sleeman's views before the House again. However, I

do not think there is one reason that can be advanced as to why this Government must change the decision which is based on information going back to 1927 and was accepted by the previous Government.

I am sure that my predecessor, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, well and truly accepted it. As I said earlier, for some strange reason or another, whilst he was overseas he changed his mind; but that was his business. The decision made by the Government is one which we intend to implement. Plans are now being prepared for a new bridge; and it is intended, in the not-too-distant future, to call tenders for the bridge because we feel certain that something has to be done.

We cannot delay the building of this bridge, as the engineers of the Railway Department say the life of the old bridge is 18 months to two years. A decision in the interests of posterity has been made; that is, that the bridge will be built upstream adjacent to the existing traffic bridge. I see no reason at all to agree to the motion submitted by the member for Mt. Lawley, and I intend to oppose it.

MR. FLETCHER (Fremantle) [5.18]: Evidently the Government hoped that with the departure of my predecessor all opposition to the siting of the bridge would cease. However the issue, like my predecessor, is still very much alive. I represent the same people as he did, and they are still of the same opinion; and he merely reflected that opinion.

The wrong thing would be done by extending the harbour upstream. I am expressing not only my own opinion when I say that, but also that of the people within my electorate.

The Minister, by going back to 1927, is resurrecting the past. However, it is not the past with which we are concerned now, but the future. He referred to posterity, and I feel great consideration can be given to posterity by making extensions to Cockburn Sound. Not only has the member for Mt. Lawley mentioned this, but I have said on a previous occasion that the coastline in the Cockburn Sound area lends itself very favourably to extension.

The Minister stated that it would cost millions of pounds, but I submit that it could be done on a much cheaper basis, because the coastline in that area is limestone and is of a convenient height—practically wharf height. I ask members to take note of that point; because as it is wharf height, it would be simple to tunnel into the coastline and so have a natural wharf on each side. In that way bays would be formed along the lines of submarine pens during the war. There would be no necessity for expensive pile-driving or wharf-building, as there would be a limestone wall on either side; and the height would be suitable for the cranes

on the wharves. In addition there would be solid ground on which the railway lines could be built to cater for the cargo.

Mr. Burt: A lot of dredging would be necessary.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is so; but a lot of expensive dredging would be necessary, in any case, upstream. I contend that the money would be better spent if put towards a big plan for the Cockburn Sound area. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has changed his mind on this matter; and he submitted as one of his reasons the fact that the dredging would have to take place in the upper region if upper region extensions were undertaken; and that it would be a long and costly process.

In view of the experience with the last wharf when the silt kept intruding from behind it, and the dredging went on for some time after the wharf was built, it is reasonable to assume that the same state of affairs would arise in the erection of any future wharves. I maintain that that costly dredging would be obviated by extending the harbour down into the Cockburn Sound area. Surely members can realise what I mean by channelling into the natural coastline and thus creating a pen, as it were, with a natural level on either side of the ship! I submit it is an engineering possibility, and could be done more cheaply than other means of extension.

Mr. Roberts: How far south do you contemplate going?

Mr. FLETCHER: Not as far as Bunbury. The Minister implied that the bigger ships that would be entering the Fremantle harbour would be handling freight. They are, at present, predominantly passenger ships with a minimum of freight. However, I am looking to the future; and so was my predecessor when he claimed that freight should be handled in the Cockburn Sound area.

The tanker channel is already in existence. Why should it be confined to tankers only? It could be used by any ship because it is sufficiently wide for two ships to pass. Anybody who has been in that area will know that to be a fact. I cannot remember who it was, but someone mentioned piers as a possibility or alternative to extension outwards, rather than up river. The nearer piers are placed to the harbour mouth, the greater will be the proportion of surge. Therefore, rather than spend money in the harbour mouth, I say it should be spent—in answer to the member for Bunbury—10 or 12 miles south.

Mr. Roberts: Thank you.

Mr. FLETCHER: In support of that contention I would say that once the protection of the existing islands was reached, the surge created by the prevailing winds would be reduced. I maintain it is in-

evitable that at some stage the extension must take place in the area I have mentioned.

I said previously that it was ultimately intended to connect that locality with a railway loopline between Welshpool and Kwinana. If the ships go into that area, wheat, wool, and all other products from the hinterland will, instead of going to Fremantle, be taken to Kwinana and handled there.

In a recent issue of the *Sunday Times*, I noticed an article submitted by the Cockburn Road Board. The writer made a suggestion which I have previously mentioned in this House; namely, that a causeway should be built from the mainland to Garden Island. Anyone who cares to visit that locality will find that it is mostly extremely shallow from the mainland to Garden Island. I do not want members to be confused with Penguin Island. If a causeway were placed across that particular section, an entirely closed harbour would be formed, extending from Fremantle to the northern extremity of Garden Island, and it would cut out any surge which might affect shipping now or in the future. For those reasons, the logical direction in which to extend the harbour is to the south. I feel that the Government owes it to posterity to extend the harbour in that direction, and not to build a bridge at the site now suggested.

I have pointed out on previous occasions—and so have other members on both sides of the House, I understand—the pollution of the river which takes place and which was demonstrated by placing coloured objects in the water in the harbour area, thus illustrating a drift upstream even as far as Nedlands and beyond; and particularly in close proximity to Melville where, at a favourite swimming spot, people were swimming in sewage that had come upstream from the harbour.

For those reasons, any further upstream extension of Fremantle Harbour should be condemned. Like my predecessor, I oppose any upstream extension of the harbour—not only on my behalf, but also on behalf of the electorate I represent.

MR. TONKIN (Melville) [5.32]: The member for Mt. Lawley should not be chided for having moved this motion. Nobody, in my view, could successfully argue that the only persons entitled to introduce a subject such as this would be those whose electorates were adjacent to Fremantle Harbour; because a project of this magnitude, for the main port of the State, is one which concerns many more persons than those members who happen to have electorates adjoining the port itself. As a matter of fact, it was the practice, in the very early days of this colony, for questions of such importance to be decided in Parliament, and for the Government to act in accordance with the decision of Parliament on such matters.

It would be difficult to imagine a project of greater and more far-reaching importance than that at present under debate; and a wrong decision on this question could be a very serious and costly matter for the State of Western Australia, and could adversely affect every citizen. Perhaps it is not remarkable that opinions regarding Fremantle Harbour have changed many times over the years. Before it was first decided to build Fremantle Harbour where it is, a Bill was introduced into Parliament to provide for the expenditure of £15,000 on the opening up of a channel through the Success Bank, so that Owen Anchorage could be used.

That project was not proceeded with, because it was subsequently accepted that a satisfactory harbour could be built within the river. And so the late C. Y. O'Connor was given the task of establishing the harbour where it is, and a very good one it has been. It must be remembered that the McLarty-Watts Government first of all made a decision to extend the Fremantle Harbour upriver to Point Brown, which would be some distance beyond the extension at present proposed. It is interesting to read the remarks of the present Premier, when speaking to the debate on the motion moved by the then member for Fremantle (the Hon. J. B. Sleeman), when he changed his ground somewhat and said that he then had the opinion that it was sufficient to go as far as the existing road bridge. So not only did the Hawke Government change its mind about where the new railway bridge should be built, but also the minds of Governments and Ministers have changed quite often on this matter, because of different circumstances.

The present Minister for Works quoted from a speech I made in reply to the motion moved by the then member for Fremantle (the Hon. J. B. Sleeman); and he emphasised the arguments which I submitted. What he did not tell the House was that a majority of the members of the House at that time did not accept my arguments, strong as the Minister for Works now thinks they were, because the House voted with the then member for Fremantle. It is interesting to look at the division list, when a division was taken on that motion, after members had heard those powerful arguments which I put forward at that time and which I believed and still believe, but which were not sufficient to cause a majority of members to vote with me.

You, for example, Mr. Speaker, were not convinced. The present Minister for Transport was not convinced. He voted against me on this matter. In fact, there were three of the present Ministers who actually voted with the member for Fremantle, and against the arguments which I adduced; so it lacks a little force for

the Minister to come forward now and use the arguments which I previously used, in order to defeat the motion moved by the member for Mt. Lawley.

Although I did submit what I regarded as very strong arguments at that time, I was then not in possession of information which came to me subsequently. But I said enough then to indicate that I was of the opinion that circumstances could alter the position. I quote from my speech as reported in *Hansard* No. 2 of 1954, at page 1644, when I said—

The member for Fremantle has put two propositions before the House; the first being that the House request the Government to carry out its harbour extension proposals by extending the harbour outside and to the south. The second proposition is that the House disagree with the proposal to erect a short-life timber bridge downstream and adjacent to the existing railway bridge. No decision has been made by the Government with regard to the building of the bridge. It is true that Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane recommended in their report that a timber bridge be built in the position mentioned by the member for Fremantle, and it may be that the decision already made with regard to harbour extension would involve the siting of a bridge in the position stated if it were determined when the decision had to be made that such a bridge would be built. Circumstances could make a big alteration in requirements.

When I made that statement I was not to know that it would be my privilege to observe conditions abroad, and that I would have the opportunity of learning far more than I then knew. But without that knowledge I had thought sufficiently about the position to cause me to say—and I shall read the passage again—

Circumstances could make a big alteration in requirements when it becomes necessary to move the existing bridge, and so the position has not yet arisen where a decision in this matter has to be made, but it is quite competent, of course, for the House at this stage, even though it might be some years in advance of the time, to express an opinion against the building of a bridge in this position.

Then I went on to explain that the special departmental committee, which the Government had appointed, had recommended that the harbour be extended as far as the existing road bridge; but that in the meantime, and without loss of time, inquiries should be made into the possibility of the utilisation of Cockburn Sound. So we always had it in mind that there was a possibility that future development in Cockburn Sound might be advisable.

The present Premier also had that view in mind when he spoke—and I quote from *Hansard* No. 2 of 1954, under date the 13th October—

Therefore I am hopeful, that the Government will maintain its stand and that it will provide the extra berthage and give posterity a chance to decide, as a result of the experience of the refinery at Cockburn Sound, whether a commercial harbour can be established there, or whether it should be established seaward of the existing one. I believe that there is no need to go further up the river than the site of the present road bridge. I realise that even then there will be a great deal of resumption necessary in North Fremantle; that a section of the area will have to be demolished, reclaimed and re-established if a railway is to be diverted to the present road site.

That is why I suggest to the Government, and to the Minister, that they give further consideration to the necessity for the construction of a railway bridge. If it is not absolutely necessary, why not bide our time and be content to have No. 10 berth completed? Have a further examination made of the possibilities at Cockburn Sound and, as a result of the knowledge which is being obtained in this State, the construction of the harbour may be completed in much less time than is imagined now.

I could not agree more with the opinion expressed there; and that is precisely what the Hawke Government did in connection with the matter. It did not proceed with the building of the new rail bridge.

Time went on, and I had the opportunity of observing the various types of harbours overseas. I was struck with the possibilities of Cockburn Sound after I had seen the tremendous expenditure which had been incurred in some countries in order to provide harbours where very few natural facilities existed. I visualised that with only a fraction of such expenditure a much better harbour could be provided in Cockburn Sound. Also, it had to be remembered that we had the value of a number of years' experience in Cockburn Sound, firstly with the oil company; and, secondly, with B.H.P. Although it is acknowledged that some days are difficult, and a special fendering system had to be provided on the wharves there, nevertheless the time lost in Western Australia is only a fraction of the time lost in European ports, where some of them cannot be used for days and days at a time when the weather is adverse.

Of course it is well known that in certain countries, in high latitudes, some ports are frozen over for months at a time, and are completely out of action.

So we should not be unduly worried about the possibility, if we had a harbour in Cockburn Sound, that there would be some days in which it would be difficult to work a ship. But having seen tremendous schemes of breakwaters abroad—which must have involved many tens of millions of pounds—I came to the conclusion that without anything like that expenditure, an excellent harbour could be provided in Cockburn Sound; and I had in mind that there was the possibility, and at that stage a strong probability, that we might induce people to come to Western Australia and establish industries ancillary to the oil refinery, in which case they would require harbour accommodation near at hand.

It seemed to be quite logical that if Cockburn Sound could so develop, instead of spending a lot more money on the inner harbour it would be preferable to make a commencement to provide these harbour facilities in the Cockburn Sound area. We had this further experience: that the information which the Fremantle Harbour Trust had supplied about the urgency of berths in the river was not borne out by experience, because the shipping had fallen off at Fremantle; and instead of there being an urgent demand for the immediate provision of more berthage—which was one of the reasons which caused me to feel that we should get on with the building of berths in the river immediately, and not embark on seaward extensions—we found that it was no longer the case, and the position at Fremantle was more or less static.

There was not this great urgency for the provision of additional berths which we had been led to believe. I had statistical information carefully collated in my office to inform me from week to week what use was being made of the Fremantle Harbour, and whether or not there was any congestion. I repeat: Our experience was that there was no great urgency for the provision of this additional berthage.

So it appeared that, as we had the opportunity to get this additional experience about Cockburn Sound and ascertain whether extensive breakwaters would be required, we should act upon that and commence to provide for the future in very good time. It must be remembered that the Government's decision does not solve this question. It will provide, at the very most, only five additional berths. I do not think anybody would be foolish enough to argue that that number of berths will be adequate for all time for the State of Western Australia.

If we are to develop in the way that we hope and envisage, there will be millions of people residing in this State where now there are only tens of thousands. We have to anticipate that not even five times five will give us a sufficient number of berths

for Western Australia. Therefore, it would appear to be false economy to proceed up-river now and to provide five berths only when, inevitably, a start has to be made at some time in the future to provide berths elsewhere.

It would appear to be sound—it does to me—that when we require these additional berths we should start to provide them in Cockburn Sound. The members of the Fremantle Harbour Trust are only human, and I know they would much prefer to have all the berths under their immediate control and under their noses, as it were, rather than have berths some distance down the coast which might, to some extent, increase their work and responsibility. So they are not to be blamed if they look at the question in the more favourable light, so far as they are concerned, and indicate their preference.

We have to keep in mind that Col. Tydeman's only interest is in the provision of berths in Fremantle Harbour; and if he had his way, he would keep on going up the river, providing berth after berth until it led him into Perth—if he could get there. Members should read his report and they will find that out.

He would keep going up the Swan providing more and more berths because his only concern is a nice, compact harbour with the berths close at hand; and in his report he argues that they could be provided more cheaply in that way. However, he acknowledges that, eventually, after having provided the maximum number of berths in the river, he would be obliged to go seaward to make provision for additional berths. Anybody who loves the Swan, and who is prepared to agree that man does not live by bread alone, would not support such a proposal; namely, that everything has to be subjugated to the interests of commerce, and we should keep on going up the river because that is the easy way to go.

If we admit that we can never hope to provide adequately a sufficient number of berths in the river, we should start to go outside now when there is no great hurry for the provision of berths. We could take that step quite leisurely because we have the experience that berths can satisfactorily be provided to the south in Cockburn Sound. The extremely heavy expenditure which was involved in cutting a channel through the Success and Parmelia Banks has been incurred, so far, in the interests of two companies only—the Anglo-Iranian Oil Refinery and Broken Hill Pty. Ltd.—which have ships entering the Sound through those channels.

Would it not be sound commonsense, in view of the fact that a passageway exists through those banks, to get some advantage from that tremendous capital expenditure and build additional berths there so that ships could proceed to that spot to load and unload their cargoes, especially bulk cargoes?

Mr. Roberts: Is there any siltation in that channel?

Mr. TONKIN: None whatsoever. The fact that the siltation in the channels is negligible is a very important factor, and the channels are in existence. I have no doubt that in years to come they will be deepened, because larger tankers will be required to negotiate the channel; but the heavy expenditure that has been made to date to provide those channels could be put to good use now.

If we had to incur that expenditure before we provided berths in Cockburn Sound, the position would not be so simple as it is now. However, we have, in fact, already expended money in giving access to the Sound, and so the major problem has been solved. It would appear that, in view of the fact that the experts who advised the Government—that is, the previous Government—before it made its decision to go up as far as the existing road bridge, have said they were recommending in that direction because berths immediately required could be provided more expeditiously within the river, in the meantime investigations should be carried out into the possibility of the utilisation of Cockburn Sound. They considered that that was a distinct possibility.

I desire to know how, in such a short time, the Minister for Lands, the Minister for Labour, and the Minister for Railways could change their minds, because they had voted in this House in 1957—

Mr. Bovell: You changed yours!

Mr. TONKIN: I know, and I have given good reason why. But up to date I have not had the reason why the Minister changed his mind. That is the difference.

Mr. Bovell: The cost factor is something that has influenced me. At that time I did not realise the great cost that would be involved in going seaward.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister has now put himself in beautifully because there are no figures in existence that would enable him to make a comparison of the costs.

Mr. Court: Except those you gave in trying to defeat the motion moved by the ex-member for Fremantle.

Mr. TONKIN: But those are the figures that failed to convince the Minister for Lands at that time, so he cannot use those. I would like to know what caused the Minister for Railways to change his mind.

Mr. Court: I will tell you later.

Mr. Hawke: How much later?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Pure Gilbert and Sullivan!

Mr. TONKIN: I hope the Minister will, because it is well-known that the Railway Department—the Minister's own department—does not view favourably the proposition of building the railway bridge alongside the existing road bridge. In fact the Railway Department is strongly against it.

Mr. Court: That is not correct.

Mr. TONKIN: Oh yes it is!

Mr. Court: It is not correct!

Mr. TONKIN: It is correct.

Mr. Court: Definitely that is not correct.

Mr. TONKIN: Will the Minister table the papers?

Mr. Court: I have already answered a question on that, and I will answer more questions on the site of the bridge if you ask me.

Mr. TONKIN: Will the Minister table the papers?

Mr. Court: No.

Mr. TONKIN: Enough said, Mr. Speaker!

Mr. Court: We would have all the files in the world here if you had your way.

Mr. TONKIN: When the ex-member for Fremantle submitted his motion, it was emphasised that the harbour should not be extended up to the existing road bridge. Those who voted for the motion of the member for Fremantle were as follows:—

Mr. Ackland.
Mr. Bovell.
Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver.
Mr. Cornell.
Mr. Court.
Mr. Heal.
Mr. Hearman.
Mr. J. Hegney.
Mr. Jamieson.
Mr. Lapham.
Mr. Lawrence.
Mr. Mann.
Mr. Manning.
Mr. McCulloch.
Mr. Nimmo.
Mr. Owen.
Mr. Perkins.
Mr. Sleeman.
Mr. Yates.
Mr. Oldfield.

All the figures which were in existence—and there are no more figures in existence now—were used by me in connection with that motion. All the arguments I could advance to justify the stand I was taking against the motion of the member for Fremantle were advanced, but nothing I said

could cause the present Minister for Railways (Mr. Court), the present Minister for Lands (Mr. Bovell), and the present Minister for Labour (Mr. Perkins), to vote with me. They voted with the member for Fremantle and said that the harbour should not go up beyond the existing railway bridge. That was their decision.

Mr. Court: Did you oppose the bulk-handling installation on the North Wharf in the interchange sidings?

Mr. TONKIN: Not as far as I know.

Mr. Court: Do you not think that has a similar bearing on inner and outer harbour development?

Mr. TONKIN: The question was current at the time when the Minister made his decision to support the member for Fremantle. That decision was not made within the last day or two.

Mr. Court: That was current when the 1954 vote was taken.

Mr. TONKIN: I have just read the division list for 1954.

Mr. Court: It was not current then; it was not public property that you were going on with that development.

Mr. TONKIN: It was well known at that time that the General Manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust had pointed out the difficulties inherent in the back shunting, which could not be obviated because of the railway layout on the north side; and he had been advocating an alteration in order to facilitate the handling of goods traffic. It was also known because negotiations were proceeding for the establishment of additional bulk-handling facilities.

As a matter of fact, I protested against the action of the Commonwealth in allowing a wheat hospital to be built in that situation, which meant, of course, that we were building up establishments for the handling of bulk cargo which would make it extremely difficult subsequently to transfer elsewhere. However, that has no bearing on this question. If I were to hazard a guess as to why the Government has changed its mind—or why some of the members of the Government have changed their minds—I would say that it is because the present Premier, who accepted the advice of the General Manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust previously—namely, that the harbour should go up the river—took advantage of the fact that the Government had changed and reasserted the attitude which had been previously adopted.

The Government is not being inconsistent in that; the only people who are being inconsistent are certain Ministers in the Government who are in this position: They either took a political line very strongly on the motion moved by the then member for Fremantle, and had no concern for the interests of the State at the time; or else they have gone completely dumb in

Cabinet under this Government when the question has come up for discussion; because nothing has been said so far in this debate which would justify or in any way explain how a man of such decided opinions as the Minister for Railways could, within a matter of a few short weeks, when this Government got into office, turn a complete somersault against the advice of his own department; or, if, as he says, his own department is now in favour of this proposal—and that is what he said a few moments ago—

Mr. Court: I did not say that. I said it was not opposed to it.

Mr. TONKIN: If it is not opposed to it, it must be in favour of it.

Mr. Court: It is not opposed.

Mr. TONKIN: Does the Minister say that deliberately?

Mr. Court: It is not opposed.

Mr. TONKIN: I shall frame my question differently. If the Railway Department is now not opposed to the proposal to place the new railway bridge adjacent to the traffic bridge, how has it come about that within the space of a few weeks the department has turned a complete somersault; because I know it was opposed to it?

Mr. Court: I cannot find the record.

Mr. TONKIN: If the Minister puts the papers on the Table of the House I will guarantee to find it for him.

Mr. Court: I will not put the papers on for you. If you want a copy of the report of the commissioner, saying he did not oppose the scheme, I will let you have it.

Mr. TONKIN: I say to the Minister that if I had access to the railway papers I could find for him—I will guarantee this—the record showing that the Railway Department was strongly opposed to the building of the railway bridge in the position now contemplated.

Mr. Court: I shall be amazed, but I shall have a look.

Mr. TONKIN: I have read those papers myself. The previous Minister for Railways sent them over to me.

Mr. Court: We shall look for them.

Mr. TONKIN: We are now getting places. The honourable member, who was so emphatic that they were not there, now states that he will have a look. Having done that, I hope he will tell us what the position is.

Mr. Hawke: Is the Railway Department permitted to have an opinion under this Government?

Mr. Court: Most definitely.

Mr. TONKIN: It was not my intention to speak on this matter unnecessarily. I felt it incumbent on me to make the position clear, because I did change my mind. I

make no apologies for so doing. I am convinced that the decision of this Government was not the right decision. I am definitely of the opinion there is no great urgency for the building of new berths. Before, or at the time when such an emergency does arise, a commencement should be made to provide the berths in Cockburn Sound.

One would have to go a very great distance before one could find such wonderful natural advantages as exist in that locality. It is advisable to use those natural advantages to the greatest extent possible without having to cause not only dislocation, but also dispossession in North Fremantle, when that can be avoided. If it is possible to avoid dislocation and dispossession, we should do so; so long as the price paid for such avoidance is not too high. In this case I am not aware of any price having to be paid for dislocation and dispossession.

It appears to me that the correct procedure is to put a stop to upriver extension of the harbour. The No. 10 berth has been built; so let us be content with it. We should make a start on the preliminary investigations for the building of additional berths in Cockburn Sound. The plan which was recently published as a result of a submission from the Cockburn Road Board to the Premier seems to be good, basically.

I have had some discussion with engineers about this proposal in the plan. That was before the plan was published. Shortly after our return from the overseas trade mission, I had a discussion with one of the engineers at Rockingham. I was very much impressed by the arguments he advanced in connection with the utilisation of the Cockburn Sound area. With very much less expenditure than I contemplated was needed years ago, we can provide the berthage which this State will undoubtedly require.

I conclude by saying that the member for Mt. Lawley need not apologise for moving this motion and bringing the matter before Parliament, because Parliament is the body which should make a pronouncement. This is the place which has to be satisfied that a thorough investigation has been made, before such a momentous step is taken on this matter.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [6.12]: I intend to say a few words on this motion, because the building of the new railway bridge will have an effect on the upper reaches of the river, in respect of pollution and the natural flow of the water. My electorate has a particular as well as a general interest in the project.

Already a number of people have written to me pointing out that the Narrows Bridge, built on large concrete footings, tends to obstruct the natural flow of

water in the river. The existing railway bridge in Fremantle has a considerable amount of stone at its base, and another bridge is proposed. All these constructions have narrowed the natural flow of water from 1,100 ft. to 900 ft. It does not need much imagination to realise what will happen to the upper reaches of the Swan River when flooding occurs. What should be a swift outlet for the water in the river, will become a bottleneck.

As the member for Fremantle pointed out, there will be a greater amount of pollution in the river. The people living along the river—whether they are in Mt. Lawley, Maylands, or Midland-Guildford does not matter—all have an interest in this subject. I understand there is a rise of 4 ft. to 5 ft. in the level of the water, and we do not want to see the flow restricted.

The Government ought to be thankful that this subject has been discussed over a number of years, and that the main work has not been proceeded with. In my opinion, the extension of the harbour outside of the river altogether is justified. With the introduction of bigger ships, of greater draught and length, the only way to cater for them is to extend the harbour along the Cockburn Sound area.

There is one point which the members of the Government have overlooked. In the planning of the metropolitan area it is anticipated that the future extension will be to the south and south-east. We know that a highway is planned to link Fremantle to Midland Junction, running on the south side of the metropolitan area. There is also a plan to build a railway line linking Kwinana to Midland Junction, on the south side of the metropolitan area. All the indications show that the extension of the metropolitan area will be to the south and south-east.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. BRADY: Before tea, I was saying that I was concerned about the upriver proposal to build a new railway bridge because of possible pollution in the Swan River and flooding of the upper reaches of the river during flood periods. The most important point, as I said before, is that the regional plan seems to envisage that the metropolitan area will go south and south-east in the near future; so much so that it is envisaged that a highway and railway will be built in those areas.

Even at the risk of wearying some of the members of the House I intend to quote from the Metropolitan Regional Plan, because I think this is the time to do it; when a major work of this description is being considered. I know that some members would have been too busy to read it. After reading the Stephenson report, one cannot help but feel the author had in mind that certain reports had been made,

and he was trying to plan into those reports. If members were to read what the Stephenson Plan proposes, I feel sure they would go away from the House realising that Professor Stephenson had in mind that ultimately the main port facilities of Fremantle would be in the outer harbour.

With regard to the port of Fremantle, Professor Stephenson had this to say on page 13, under the main heading of "Summary of Proposals"—

It is envisaged that Inner Harbour extensions will provide five additional berths upstream, immediately below a new railway bridge. Studies and plans should be made for extensions of the Port of Fremantle in Cockburn Sound at a point South-West of the refinery.

What I have just read definitely shows what Professor Stephenson was thinking at the time. Important statistics are mentioned on page 17, dealing with the Fremantle central area. Professor Stephenson had this to say—

Fremantle has been the pre-eminent port in the State, and the western gateway to the Australian Continent, since the end of the 19th Century. The port will continue to grow, with increasing emphasis on the Outer Harbour in Cockburn Sound. Five new upstream berths are possible before the limit of development in the Inner Harbour is reached.

The growth of the city and central area is intimately related to the increasing trade of the port. The central area also has an important relationship with the residential suburbs served by its retail traders.

It is assumed that the expansion of the central area will, in general, be proportionate with that of the central area of Perth and that similar methods of zoning and building bulk control should come into force.

Fremantle has a compact centre which is full of character and relatively small in scale. It has great architectural unity partly because of its compactness, but also because buildings of 50 years ago predominate. There are clearly defined, natural use zones, which provide a basis for the future. Present trends indicate a lateral expansion of the main use areas, and particularly shopping. The zoning proposals in the plan are based on this. The plan also allows for intensification of use in the main zones.

This part is important. To continue—

It is assumed that retail trade may expand by over 300 per cent. in volume because of the population increase in the hinterland (from 50,000 to 180,000), and that warehouse expansion will be determined by the growth of the port.

On page 66 of the report, Chapter 4, Professor Stephenson had this to say—

The establishment of the refinery and steel rolling mill at Kwinana and port developments in Cockburn Sound herald a new phase in industrial development. The advent of these low density, large users of land, brings to the region a new conception of scale. Industries of this nature may require sites as large as 1,000 acres, an area bigger than any previous single industrial area in the State. It is not possible to predict requirements on this scale but, although each case must be taken on its merits, there is some margin allowed in the land set aside in the Kwinana-Rockingham area. This should provide for port extensions in Cockburn Sound and for the possibility of large-scale industries in addition to those already established.

On page 67 there is a plan showing the proposed distribution of employment in relation to the place of living. It shows that immediately around Fremantle itself, residential areas predominate in the ultimate plan as envisaged by Professor Stephenson.

On page 136, Chapter 7, Part III—dealing with Ports and Harbours, Professor Stephenson had quite a lot to say with regard to the Fremantle port. In the seventh paragraph he had this to say—

The construction of the oil refinery at Kwinana, with its ancillary jetties which will accommodate 30,000-ton tankers, is the first step in the extension of the port to Cockburn Sound. In Chapter 4 the future of this area as an industrial centre has been discussed. The rail facilities needed to serve industry should also be designed to deal with port traffic. There exists in the south-eastern part of Cockburn Sound area a vast hinterland capable of accommodating all the uses associated with a major port and industrial area without any of the restrictions on space, becoming more and more apparent, in the vicinity of the Inner Harbour.

The southern end of Cockburn Sound, with a land frontage extending from the oil refinery limits to Palm Beach, Rockingham, has five fathoms of water at a distance varying from 400 to 2,000 feet only from high water mark. The development of wharves backed on the landward side with warehouse, rail, sidings and all the other necessary ancillaries for the efficient working of a port would not present any engineering difficulties.

That bears out the point made by the member for Fremantle earlier this evening. To continue—

There are several thousand acres of open flat land, much in Crown ownership and undeveloped, and as

has been demonstrated on the refinery site, it is excellent land for engineering and building work.

I thought that as the members of the House were now discussing a proposal to build extensions to the inner harbour, they should have in mind that this plan is at the moment before members of Parliament by way of two Acts, to make sure that the plan is implemented. I think it is envisaged that the plan will be commenced immediately, and I feel it is wrong for the Government to start building harbours upstream at this stage. After all, the present harbour will cater for the shipping which is offering at the moment. I believe the Government should take the long view, and that it should make a start on the outer harbour facilities, because it will only lead to chaos if we have a Kwinana-Midland Junction highway, and a Kwinana-Midland Junction railway, but still have only the old port facilities at Fremantle.

However, as I said at the outset, I am concerned with that aspect from a general point of view; and I feel that members should have their attention drawn to the recommendations in the Stephenson Plan, and to what he ultimately conceived as a planner. What I am greatly concerned about in particular is the fact that by the building of a new railway bridge where envisaged by the Minister, with the footings of the old railway bridge and the footings of the old traffic bridge still there, and the Narrows Bridge almost completed, there will be great difficulties in the flood times with the water trying to escape out of Fremantle Harbour.

At present the width of the harbour the other side of the traffic bridge would be somewhere about 1,300 feet; but if the Government is going to build a bank out into the Swan River for about 400 feet, the channel is going to be reduced to 900 feet. In that way, the difficulties already experienced during flood time would be increased.

As long ago as 1948, the member for South Perth drew the attention of the Minister for Works to the pollution that was taking place in the river as a consequence of shipping being allowed in it. This new bridge would only continue to aggravate the position. At the moment I think there are between 400 and 500 ships which enter and depart from Fremantle Harbour, and they cause a certain amount of pollution. It seems to be a contradiction in Government policy to set up, on the one hand, a Swan River conservation committee with a view to stopping the pollution of the river; and, on the other hand, to encourage Government activities in the nature of building new structures in the river which will aggravate the present position by encouraging greater shipping into the harbour which will, in turn, create

greater pollution. I feel that, in representing an electorate which, to a great extent, depends upon the Swan River for its recreation in the summer time, I should enter a protest this evening and support the motion moved by the member for Mt. Lawley. I will do that when it comes to the vote.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Railways) [7.45]: I feel that, as Minister for Railways, and in view of the fact that it is a railway bridge that is to be constructed, I should make some comment and explain why I have changed my attitude from the one I adopted when a vote was taken on a motion moved by the former member for Fremantle. The motion provides for two things: it advocates outward and southward extension of the port development rather than upriver; and it opposes the building of a short-life wooden railway bridge downstream, adjacent to the present traffic bridge.

One of the first things that confronted me when I took over the portfolio of Minister for Railways, was the question of where the railway bridge was to be sited. As far as the Railway Department is concerned, let me hasten to add, it is not concerned primarily with the development of the harbour but with the necessity to cross the river at a point. Frankly, as long as the technical considerations are not insurmountable, it does not much matter to the Railway Department whether the bridge crosses at point A or point B. Therefore, it is not primarily concerned with the actual harbour considerations.

Strong representations were made by the harbour authorities—backed up with what appeared, in my opinion, to be very good material—for the railway bridge to be built further up the river; in other words, alongside the traffic bridge. The Railway Department—and this is the point I was trying to convey to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition by interjection—raised no objection to the bridge being sited at the traffic bridge location. This reverts to the point I made earlier; that its prime concern is to cross the river and not the ultimate plans for the development of the harbour.

If the harbour authorities insist that their future planning will be severely curtailed by the railway bridge being built at the present railway site, the Railway Department will have no real ground for continuing to seek to place a bridge there when the time for replacement occurs. Therefore, the Railway Department has no objection to the amended site. In fact, the former commissioner has suggested that, as far as the Railway Department is concerned, there are no insurmountable technical difficulties about the bridge being sited alongside the existing railway traffic bridge.

Mr. Hawke: What about the question of costs to the Railway Department?

MR. COURT: It is a matter for the Government to determine who is going to stand any extra cost of constructing a railway bridge at point A rather than at point B. It could easily be that to construct it at one site, as against another site, would involve more money. But the Government will have to determine that in conjunction with the other considerations of port development; and I think we have to concede that port development is the primary consideration provided the railway system can function by crossing the river.

The big point against putting the bridge on the existing railway bridge site is that it will restrict, for at least 25 years, any possibility of using the area between the railway bridge and the traffic bridge as part of the general harbour development. After having had the whole situation explained to me, I considered that the sensible thing to do was to agree to the proposal for the railway bridge to be relocated at the traffic bridge site; because if we put the bridge up at the old site, regardless of any further consideration which might arise in the near future, we will restrict, for all practical purposes, upstream development of the harbour beyond where the new bridge is located.

There are many considerations that might arise in the near future, which would make it desirable to develop the area upstream from the present railway bridge. I think that, on reflection, members will agree that it would be shortsighted, even if we retained the view that the upstream area between the two bridges should not be used, to restrict any possibility of that area being used for at least another 25 years by locating the new bridge alongside the existing railway bridge.

It has been said that if the new railway bridge is located alongside the traffic bridge, it will interfere with the Stephenson Plan; but I cannot follow that argument. I cannot recall any statement by the Government or the Minister for Works to the effect that the Government is opposed to outward and southward harbour development in due course. The mere fact that we build the new bridge in a different location does not mean that we are abandoning the ultimate outward and southward development of the harbour.

Mr. Bickerton: You will probably leave it to us.

MR. COURT: I think we all agree that eventually there will be outward and southward development of the harbour; but we must have regard to the fact that practical considerations, not the least of which is finance, will preclude such development for a considerable time. After examining the facts, I believe that in the foreseeable

future, unless something of an extraordinary nature occurs in this State, the Government, no matter what its political colour, will lack the finance to implement such development.

It would be wrong of the Railway Department to be dogmatic about this—if it had any reason to be dogmatic—and insist on the new railway bridge being constructed alongside the existing structure. I felt that the sensible and practical approach was to agree to the relocation of the bridge, thus still leaving the Government of the day unfettered in regard to harbour development. If the new bridge were located alongside the existing structure, the Government of the day, of no matter what political colour, would be hampered in any decision it might make about upstream harbour development.

With those considerations in mind, I believe it desirable that the new bridge should be relocated, in spite of the fact that I might have supported the motion moved by the then member for Fremantle. This motion must be a classic in this House, in regard to the number of members who have changed their views on different occasions—

Mr. Hawke: What do you mean when you say you "might have" supported the motion?

MR. COURT: I was using the expression in the colloquial sense—that I did support the motion. I admit that the then Minister for Works did not convince me that I should have supported him in his views; but when one becomes a Minister one obtains, sometimes, information that may not be readily available in the House; and one may change one's mind, as I have in relation to this matter. I do not think the present proposal interferes with the Stephenson Plan for southward development of the harbour; and it will leave the Government of the day free to make a decision based on the circumstances that exist at that time. I oppose the motion.

MR. OLDFIELD (Mt. Lawley—in reply) [7.55]: I think I will deal only with the Minister's remarks, because other speakers expressed support of the motion. There is little to say in reply to the Minister who, I thought, put forward very weak arguments which had been prepared for him by his staff in opposition to the motion. The Minister referred to my remarks when moving the motion, in regard to the turning circle in Fremantle Harbour, and said that *H.M.S. Hood*—a ship of 861 ft. length—was able, in the early 1920's, to manoeuvre and turn in Fremantle Harbour. It is true that the *Hood* did so; but only in one spot in the harbour, where the width and depth of water permitted it. There was considerable doubt, before the vessel arrived, whether the *Hood* would be able to manoeuvre in the harbour.

The Minister did not mention the fact that the *Hood* did not berth, but was anchored in midstream, because it was too large to berth at Fremantle.

Mr. Owen: The *Hood* came alongside and berthed.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I do not think so. Even if one ship of such dimensions could be handled at Fremantle, I do not think the harbour authorities would like to handle vessels of that size twice per day, in and out of the harbour. The Minister also made reference to larger liners, of 45,000 tons, visiting Fremantle in the next few years. Such vessels will be 100 ft. longer than the ships now using the harbour; and only experience will tell whether there is wisdom in what the Minister said. The average length of vessels using the harbour today is 500-odd ft., and the overseas liners 700 ft., and if we add 100 ft. to that we will be approaching the maximum length that Fremantle Harbour can handle, and I think they will have considerable difficulty in turning in Fremantle Harbour, especially in heavy weather.

I will now refer to pollution—a question that has been debated in this House on numerous occasions. When that subject has been debated members have been almost unanimous in the view that pollution is a question on which a stand should be taken. The member for South Perth, whom I understand is opposed to this motion, should support it because, when he was member for Middle Swan in 1947-48, he was one of the first members to raise in this House the question of pollution.

The honourable member and his brother, who later became the member for Nedlands, dropped hundreds of little red boats or floats into Fremantle Harbour; and circulated every local authority along the Swan River—enclosing a sample of the boats—asking them to return the boats, together with information as to the place and time of their being picked up, to the members concerned. They dropped these boats or floats into the water at different places along the harbour and as far up the river as Blackwall Reach. They were able to establish that pollution came from the harbour as far upriver as Como beach and Point Belches.

It is only natural that, every time we develop the harbour further upstream, we bring pollution further upriver. It is all very well to say that we have passed stringent laws in connection with this matter, and that these laws are being enforced and ships cannot discharge sewage into the harbour or throw garbage overboard, as used to be done, up to and including the war years; but a lot of flotsam still gets cast overboard from the ships. That is inevitable. Oil and other filth and muck is pumped out of the bilges from time to time.

In his usual adept manner, the Minister for Railways explained why on this occasion he intended to vote contrary to the way he voted five years ago. In my opinion there are many members in this House who have changed their opinions, not because of changing circumstances or changing times, but only because there has been a change of Government.

Mr. Andrew: Hear, hear!

Mr. OLDFIELD: That is the basic reason why they have changed their minds; and it is the only reason. Let them be honest about it! They either supported a motion similar to this five years ago because it was an opportunity to defeat the then Government; or this time, because there has been a change of Government, they have not the courage of their convictions; and rather than vote against the Government and embarrass it they intend to vote against the motion on this occasion. They are only shilly-shallying and making a mockery of Parliament.

Mr. Andrew: They are not being honest.

Mr. OLDFIELD: These members have changed their opinions overnight because they are now supporters of the Government, and the Government intends to oppose the motion. I can appreciate the position of the Minister for Railways. The Minister is placed in a difficult position because, as is always the case with Cabinet decisions, Ministers must support each other. That is why on occasions Ministers have had to vote for something, and speak for it with their tongues in their cheeks.

Mr. W. Hegney: It makes it awkward with the two sections in Cabinet!

Mr. OLDFIELD: I know that on many occasions the member for Mt. Hawthorn has had to vote contrary to his conscience because a Cabinet decision had been made.

Mr. Wild: The chickens are coming home to roost.

Mr. W. Hegney: The member for Mt. Lawley is wrong there.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I am not wrong. I would like to tell supporters of the Government that if they voted for this motion they would not be voting contrary to something which their Party supports. As a matter of fact, if members of the Liberal Party voted for this motion they would be voting in favour of something which is a part of their party platform and policy. I have a copy of the policy of the W.A. Federation of the Liberal and Country League of Australia (Inc.), and it is dated January, 1959. On page 9, under the heading "Public Works," and the subheading "Harbours," appears the following:—

- (a) To ensure that harbour development is extended as necessary to provide berthage ahead of demand.

Possibly the Government is doing that, and I am not arguing against it. It goes on—

- (b) To expedite completion of outports to encourage decentralisation of shipping cargoes.

I mentioned that aspect when introducing the motion; and in his reply this evening the Minister spoke as though it was something silly. Yet, according to the Liberal Party platform, in January, 1959, the policy was to expedite the completion of outports to encourage decentralisation of shipping cargoes. Perhaps, because we have had a change of Government since this policy was issued, there has been a change of opinion. However, I doubt that there has been a change of policy. It goes on—

- (c) To equip progressively ports with the most modern cargo-handling machinery to facilitate turnround of ships.
- (d) To provide a deep-sea port on the North-West coast.
- (e) To investigate fully the possibilities of Cockburn Sound being used for Outer Harbour developments, and the ultimate provision of a commercial harbour.

Supporters of the Government, who are also members of the Liberal and Country League, need not be fearful of voting contrary to their Party platform if they support this motion, because I have just read to them the policy upon which the Party went to the polls in March, and was successful in becoming the Government. I feel they have a mandate to carry out that policy and not to carry out the existing one. They have a mandate to carry out the policy upon which they went to the people and upon which they were elected as the Government.

Mr. Bickerton: You are embarrassing them.

Mr. OLDFIELD: In his opening sally, the Minister seemed to take exception to the fact that I, as the member for Mt. Lawley, should move a motion dealing with the Fremantle Harbour. He seemed to have the idea that I had no right to deal with a subject of this kind because my electorate was so far away from the harbour, and, therefore, it was not within my province to move a motion dealing with it.

I am an elected member of this Assembly—I am one of 50—and I have just as much right to raise any matter which my conscience dictates I shall raise, as has the Minister; and I shall continue to do so while this is a democratic Parliament.

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

Ayes—20.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Norton
Mr. Brady	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Hall	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Heal	Mr. Sewell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Toms
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes—21.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Burt	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Court	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Owen
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Perkins
Dr. Henn	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Crommelin
Sir Ross McLarty	

(Teller.)

Majority against—1.

Question thus negated.

BUILDING INDUSTRY

Inquiry by Select Committee

Debate resumed from the 12th August on the following motion moved by Mr. Tonkin:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into, and report upon—

- (1) The drift of skilled labour from the building industry; the decrease in apprenticeships; the extent to which these movements are being accentuated by the Government's policy on day labour, and are likely to lead to a serious dearth of skilled tradesmen.
- (2) The effect of sub-contracting on industrial standards and conditions.

MR. WILD (Dale—Minister for Works) [8.10]: When the Deputy Leader of the Opposition moved this motion I was pleased to note that he did not blame the Government for the chaotic conditions which he said exist in the building industry. The Government recognises that this industry is, in fact, the barometer of the State's prosperity. That has been recognised long since. In the post-war years it was found that activity in the building industry increased following the extremely high prices received for our wool and wheat, because these brought extra income into the State. In addition, of course, the establishment of the Kwinana Refinery by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the rolling mills by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, and the cement works by the Cockburn Cement Company, created more work within the State, especially in the building industry.

The Government believes that the best way to handle this problem is to continue with the type of thinking we exercised when we were the Government from 1947 to 1953; and, in fact, we will continue to think in this way whilst we occupy the Treasury bench. The trend of thought to be followed by the Government is that it will do everything it possibly can to create an atmosphere that will give overseas and Eastern States investors—even investors within the State—every encouragement to invest their money in Western Australia.

Mr. Bickerton: You cannot feed men on that.

Mr. WILD: In reply to the interjection by the member for Pilbara, I say that it does feed men. If a climate is created to encourage investment, I know of no more rapid way to create prosperity and employment.

Mr. Heal: I wish you would hurry up.

Mr. WILD: Here we go again! When one studies the employment figures, one realises that, following the moves that have been taken by the Government in the four months it has been in office, a man who has £1 to spare knows that when he invests it in Western Australia at least he now has a fair chance of getting some return for it.

Mr. Hawke: That is not what the men you sacked are thinking.

Mr. WILD: That policy is being well and truly implemented by the Government. At the time I wrote these notes I was not aware whether my colleague, the Minister for Railways, would be successful in his venture—as we now know he has been—in going to Canberra to induce the Prime Minister and his associates to give Western Australia the opportunity to spend portion of the money advanced by the Commonwealth on the Ord River development scheme. What has transpired is that we are, in fact, doing the very thing we said we would do. The Government intends to create an atmosphere of goodwill in Western Australia which, without a doubt, will bring capital to this State and, in its wake, prosperity in industry.

The Government does not agree that the building industry is in a chaotic state. Whilst I realise that the figures quoted by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition indicate that there has been some slight fall in the number of men employed in the building industry, the position is not half as grave as the honourable member would have us believe. In fact, quoting from the Government Statistician's figures, the total number of tradesmen and others employed in the building industry at the end of June, 1954—which was the year quoted by the member for Melville—was 9,245; whereas, at the end of June, 1958, the total number of tradesmen and others employed was 8,924.

This represents a drop, over a period of four years, of just over 300 people; whereas the Deputy Leader of the Opposition indicated that there were 1,662 fewer persons employed. I have here the figures supplied by the Government Statistician of the number of men employed in the building industry, including apprentices. I will quote them for the information of the House.

The first figures are all for June, 1954—the year that I referred to—when there were 9,245 men engaged in the building industry. The second figures are given as at March, 1959. In June, 1954, there were 3,573 carpenters engaged; and at March, 1959, there were 2,878.

Mr. Toms: What was your first figure?

Mr. WILD: I said 3,573. I will quote the figures in tabulated form as follows:—

	June 1954	March 1959
Carpenters	3,573	2,878
Bricklayers	818	963
Painters	718	864
Electricians	294	471
Plumbers	648	834
Fibrous plaster fixers	316	
Plasterers	397	
Building labourers	1,794	1,547
Other	687	1,274
	<hr/> 9,245	<hr/> 8,831

I would point out that the Government Statistician has discontinued to classify fibrous plaster fixers and plasterers; and for March, 1959, these are placed under the heading of "Other." Therefore, in order to give the figures correctly, they are shown in the table as 687 as at June, 1954; and 1,274 as at March, 1959. That gives us a total of 9,245 in June, 1954, and 8,831 in March 1959.

It is also important to note, and members should appreciate, that the total number of men engaged in the building industry at the end of March, 1959—namely, 8,831—is still more than the number employed in the building industry in what was known as the boom year of 1953. Admittedly, 1946 was the first year after the war ended, and materials were hard to come by; but during that time there were 4,175 men engaged in the industry.

With more than double the work force currently employed, it surely cannot be alleged today, with the great proportion of our housing lag overcome, and with plenty of office accommodation available in the city, that there is grave concern felt in regard to the building industry at present. The Government recognises that industry has a responsibility to train apprentices. But it must be recognised that the up-and-down prosperity of the industry governs

the number of apprentices to be engaged. It is interesting to note the figures contained in a schedule showing the number of apprentices employed in the building trades by both Government departments and private employers, as at the 30th June, 1949 and 1959.

The number of apprentices moved from 904 in 1949 to 1,062 in 1951; from 1,250 in 1952 to 1,387 in 1953; and from 1,591 in 1954 to 1,796 in 1955. In 1957, there were 1,438; and in 1958, there were 1,384; while in 1959, the number was 1,028. It is interesting to know that it is apparently not everybody in circles which one might say belong to the Opposition—namely, Labour circles—who agree with the viewpoint advanced by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that there were insufficient apprentices being trained; because I would remind members that in December, 1956—the second peak year—there were 1,675 apprentices; whereas in 1955 there were 1,796. Of those numbers, 1,100 were being trained as carpenters in 1955, and nearly 1,000 in 1956.

In that very year—1956—Mr. Henley, president of the Carpenters' Union, approached the Arbitration Court of Western Australia pointing out that he was concerned about the number of new apprentices. So concerned was he that he wrote to the Arbitration Court as follows:—

I have been directed to suggest to you that all new apprentice intakes be suspended.

It is rather strange that in 1956 the president of the Carpenters' Union should have written to the Arbitration Court asking that the training of apprentices be suspended in that year; yet here we have the Deputy Leader of the Opposition coming along and saying that insufficient apprentices are being trained; that now we want more.

Mr. Toms: What were the reasons given in the letter?

Mr. WILD: I should imagine that because, in his view, the building trade was going to fall off in 1956-57, which it did. If members will look at *Hansard*, they will find that the previous Minister for Housing and I have on several occasions indicated that when we reached the peak of about 9,000 houses, that would be the point from which we would gradually fall off. That is exactly what has happened.

Over the years the building industry has always gone up and down in tune with the economic prosperity of the State. I have no doubt that any upturn we may have with capital investments in Western Australia, bringing employment with it, will mean that the building industry will be raised again. Not that it is in a chaotic condition or the doldrums; it is merely following the normal economic trend of the country.

We feel it is the responsibility of the Government to create the necessary climate; and that climate having been created, capital will be attracted to the State, which will mean further employment and activity in the building industry. It is one of those things that must look after itself. When there is further activity in the building industry, I have no doubt that we will find fathers advising their sons to seek employment in that industry. As I have said, over the years the building industry has moved with the economic stability of the country.

In the second part of his motion, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made reference to sub-contract work, with particular emphasis on bricklayers. We do not think that we should in any way interfere with something which has been standard practice for some years in the building industry. When I view the conditions under which the men work, I find it hard to believe that those actually engaged in laying bricks in this State wish to return to the old situation of master and servant. In keeping with the prosperity of the industry, the amount those men are able to obtain by laying bricks by contract obviously varies.

When I was at the Housing Commission, sub-contracting for laying bricks was in the vicinity of £12 10s. or £13 10s. a thousand; sometimes more. I am informed that today it is about £10 a thousand. Let us take the case of a bricklayer who receives £10 a thousand; and let us assume that most of it is straight laying. He would not be considered much of a tradesman today if he could not lay, on an average, 500 bricks a day—even allowing for corners and fireplaces. This means that, in the gross, he is still earning from £4 10s. to £5 a day. Have we any right to interfere with these men who like to work hard and make a few extra bob? The Deputy Leader of the Opposition would have us believe, however, that it is not in the best interests of the industry. I would venture the opinion that of the bricks laid in the metropolitan area, 90 per cent. are laid by men doing sub-contract work. If we were to ask them to discontinue sub-contract work and to return to the master and servant relationship, which existed previously, I doubt whether many of them would agree.

Mr. Toms: Would you say that the brickwork performed today is as good as it was in the past?

Mr. WILD: I do not know whether the honourable member was a bricklayer before entering Parliament, but I was not. I have looked around at many houses and buildings; and comparing the work performed by the sub-contract layers of today and that done by the employees of the contractors in the past, the brickwork of today is just as good as it was previously.

Mr. Toms: Apparently you did not take much notice of it before.

Mr. WILD: I do not know what the honourable member is getting at. He is implying that the brickwork of today is not as good as it used to be.

Mr. Toms: I am not saying that. I am saying that sub-contract bricklaying, which must be speeded up on the job, is not as good as it used to be.

Mr. WILD: I cannot subscribe to that view. When I was in England, just after I had relinquished the portfolio of housing, I looked at the cottages erected in various satellite towns. I found that the practice adopted there was exactly the same as exists in this State; that is, sub-contract bricklaying. I do not subscribe to the idea—whether it applies to England or Australia—that work done under sub-contract is worse than that done under day-labour.

Mr. Toms: It should not be, but it is.

Mr. WILD: That is the honourable member's opinion. Today, with the competition that exists in the building industry, there is no reason why the laying of bricks in the construction of houses, hospitals and the like, should be in any way inferior to what it was in the old days under the relationship of master and servant.

Mr. Toms: You did not take so much notice of this years ago, otherwise you would have a different opinion today.

Mr. WILD: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggested that some action should be taken by Parliament to enable the Arbitration Court to legislate in respect of sub-contracting work within the building industry. We on this side of the House disagree with that proposal. We believe that the Arbitration Court has a clearly defined roll: To determine the issues between the employer and the employee.

Sub-contractors are not workers within the meaning of the Act. In fact, they are tendering their services. It is not the practice to approach the Arbitration Court for a determination in respect of tenders submitted in other walks of life. The Arbitration Court was set up and given the task of determining what should be a fair and equitable rate for a worker. It was not suggested—and I hope it will not be suggested—that the Arbitration Court should in any way interfere with the standard practice that is adopted where men offer to sell their services by tender or by contract. It is entirely within their prerogative to do so. It would be detrimental to this State if we were to give the Arbitration Court the right to determine the rates for sub-contract work.

Mr. Hawke: There is nothing before the House at the moment to propose that.

Mr. WILD: Members may well recall the conditions which operated when great numbers of men entered the industry in the post-war years. The number of men in the industry is practically double the number that was employed in 1946. Included in that number is a proportion of apprentices; and the number of apprentices is determined according to whether the conditions in the industry are booming or receding. It ill fits this Parliament to suggest that there should be any alteration to that set-up.

If the Opposition desires there should be more apprentices in the trade, those members should contact the union secretaries and seek permission for the ratio of apprentices to tradesmen to be increased. For example, instead of there being one apprentice to three tradesmen, they could ask to alter the ratio to one apprentice to two tradesmen.

Mr. Toms: Who would take the other apprentices on?

Mr. WILD: I have set out the position of the Government very clearly. We contend that when there is a boom in the building industry, there is an increase in the number of apprentices. The figures I have quoted prove that contention to be correct. During the peak of the boom years the greatest number of apprentices in the industry was to be found.

Mr. Toms: You cannot have apprentices under a sub-contract system.

Mr. WILD: When we consider the number of bricklayers being employed, even though under sub-contract, we find that many apprentices are still being trained.

Mr. Toms: There are many others who are getting out of the trade.

Mr. WILD: Let us examine the number of apprentices being trained in the industry.

Mr. W. Hegney: Have you kept the number of apprentices in the Public Works Department separate?

Mr. WILD: In 1954 there were 818 apprentices, and the number increased during the boom year of 1954-55 to 963.

Mr. Toms: What are the figures for the carpenters?

Mr. WILD: In June, 1954, there were 3,574; and in March, 1959, there were 2,878. I am speaking of carpenters engaged in the industry, and not the apprentices. The number of apprentices engaged in the various building trades increases or reduces, according to the conditions in the industry.

Mr. W. Hegney: You will find that the number will go down in the Public Works Department from now on.

Mr. WILD: It may go down in the Public Works Department from now on, but no apprentice will be dismissed from that

department while he is serving an apprenticeship. Sufficient men will be retained to put the apprentices through their apprenticeship.

Mr. W. Hegney: Fewer apprentices will be taken on.

Mr. WILD: In reply to the honourable member, only time will prove whether that is true. The number of apprentices to be trained in the building industry will be in keeping with the conditions in the industry, as was the practice in the past. At the moment we are going through a slight recession in the building industry.

Mr. W. Hegney: There is a strong procession of dismissals.

Mr. WILD: We have heard a lot about that matter. Members opposite made a song and dance about the dismissals, but they did not get very far. The Government feels there is no necessity for the appointment of a Select Committee.

The two points raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have been answered. The number of apprentices will be determined by the conditions in the industry; and in regard to sub-contract bricklaying, in our view that is entirely the business of the bricklayers themselves. If a man is prepared to work hard to earn a little extra, he is entitled to do so. We do not intend to interfere with the Arbitration Court. It is merely a case of tendering a person's services, just as tenders are submitted for goods.

Mr. Toms: You do not believe in maintaining good industrial relations?

Mr. WILD: More than the hon. member does.

Mr. W. Hegney: Not by your speech.

Mr. WILD: This is not a question for the Arbitration Court at all. As the honourable member was Minister for Labour in the previous Government, he would know that the Arbitration Court was set up to determine the issues between the employers and employees. Sub-contractors are in exactly the same position as any other persons who submit tenders for goods or services. I see no reason for the appointment of the Select Committee, because it would get us nowhere. On behalf of the Government, I oppose the motion.

MR. HALL (Albany) [8.40]: I desire to add a few words to the debate and in doing so I must commend the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for moving this motion which reads as follows:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into, and report upon—

(1) The drift of skilled labour from the building industry; the decrease in apprenticeships; the extent to which these movements are being accentuated by the Government's policy on day labour,

and are likely to lead to a serious dearth of skilled tradesmen.

(2) The effect of sub-contracting on industrial standards and conditions.

Tonight we heard the Minister plausibly reading facts and figures. According to answers to questions given to me by the Premier, a soup kitchen was established for the first time in Western Australia since 1932 or 1933.

Mr. Wild: Does the honourable member realise there were more men out of work this time last year than now?

Mr. HALL: I am not concerned with economics. There were never any soup kitchens during my association with the Labour Government. The questions I asked were as follows:—

(1) Is he aware of the existence of a soup kitchen operating in Fitzgerald Street, West Perth.

The answer to that question was "Yes." Questions (2), (3), and (4) were as follows:

(2) Is he aware that this soup kitchen is serving 120 meals per day, to the needy and unemployed?

(3) Has the Child Welfare Department carried out an inspection of the soup kitchen and reported same?

(4) Does the Government assist the organisation running the soup kitchen in any way?

The Premier's reply to those questions was very vague. I mention these points to prove that since the 1st May, 1959, when the 17s. 6d. per week paid to unemployed single . . .

The SPEAKER: I hope the honourable member is going to connect his remarks to the question before the Chair.

Mr. HALL: I would say without doubt that I can. A few weeks after the 1st May, 1959, when payments to single unemployed were stopped by the Government, a soup kitchen sprang up. This shows the effect the Government's policy is having on the economy of the State, and indicates that the dismissal of Public Works men from the building industry must affect industry and commerce. It will result in other people being put off.

The drift of trained personnel from the building industry will represent a calamity to the State if some balance is not brought into it. The commitments to a sensibly balanced economy would be land, labour, and capital. The argument is not land; it is between the two components, capital and labour. We find it is getting out of hand. The loss of trained personnel to the building trade is a serious loss to the community.

With the increase of child birth and migration our building programme will be inadequate by 1960 or 1961 to meet requirements. If we do not have a sufficient

number of trained personnel and apprentices to carry on in the industry we will definitely have trouble in housing our young people. The cutting down of the Public Works building force is certainly not going to help at all. It has already been pointed out that apprenticeships cannot be obtained from sub-contractors, and the Public Works Department could always be relied upon to engage a few apprentices and so ease that problem.

Labour and management both have a job to do that is essential to the community's welfare. Industrial efficiency, and our standard of living, depend on the way we use the productive powers and the resources at our disposal. The following is an extract from a letter published in the Press on behalf of the Carpenters' Union—

Working on a national basis, they have caused the Australian Council of Trades Unions to draw up a plan to stabilise the building industry by making finance available for public works and housing—for slum removal and replacement of substandard housing—to keep the building force fully employed.

The Menzies Government rejected the whole of the A.C.T.U. plan and refused to accept the fact that there is unemployment in the building industry.

I think that can be refuted. The letter continues—

The Carpenters' Union has an unemployment fund and a contingent fund from which contributions are made to members who have been unemployed for more than a month and to members in distress, provided they were financial when they ran into difficulties.

That proves the unions are trying to help themselves and the industry. They have also joined building societies to try to sponsor the industry and, at the same time, house the public. I do not want to continue too long, Sir, in case you think I am wandering from the subject before the Chair; but on Tuesday, the 14th July, 1959, there was an article in the Press headed, "State Unemployed Percentage Worse." On the 12th August, 1959, another was headed, "No Jobs for 1,000 Teenagers in W.A." Another read, "Unemployed Higher in July." A further heading read, "Magistrate Speaks Out on Milk Bars"; while another was, "Opinion on the Perth Milk Bar Gangs." On the 17th August, there was an article headed, "Opinion on Teenagers Out of Work."

Our youth are being driven away from decent homes and are being forced to walk the streets and obtain social services. They are misguided youth. Unless we do something to relieve the pressure we will have trouble not only in Western Australia but in Australia. I would like to read a letter

which appeared in the Press written by a schoolteacher, under the heading, "Delinquents Not Dull." It reads as follows:—

Overcrowding in London was one of the major causes of juvenile delinquency, School Teacher Michael Jordan, said yesterday.

He has returned after 18 months abroad, much of it spent in English schools including a period in a reform school where boys were sent for trial period before being sent to a home for rehabilitation.

There is no doubt that they are not dull. We in this State should give a lead in regard to delinquency. This struck me very forcibly after the schools broke up, and I went home in the long train which contained as many coaches as I had seen for a long time. I wondered what we were going to do with all of our youth and how we were going to place them. They cannot all be schoolteachers; nor can they all be medical students. Unless avenues for employment and apprenticeships are provided, we will have a frightful mess on our hands in future years.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has really struck a note of warning. If the Government heeds this warning it will be for the betterment of the State, in that we will have a trained, skilled working force at a time when the other States are trying to find apprentices. The men who have had to leave the Public Works cannot find employment, because the building industry is facing a slump.

Previously, some of the people out of work were able to augment their incomes by a few pounds a week and still carry on with social services; but today that has been taken away from them, and they just have to exist on social services. I commend the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on moving this motion and hope it will be successful.

MR. FLETCHER (Fremantle) [8.50]: I also support the appointment of a Select Committee. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition dealt very convincingly with the loss of apprentices to the building trade. This, I feel, also applies to the metal trades. I am deeply concerned with the matter of apprentices generally, and I am particularly interested in the metal trades. I feel that an alarming situation has been created since the present Government took office.

If an impartial view were taken by members on both sides of the House, it would not be denied that the skilled tradesman is the backbone of industry in Australia and, in fact, in the world. Our State's economy is dependent on the skilled tradesman—whether he be the man engaged in the actual trade at the work-bench, or the man who maintains the plant and equipment which is a vital part of industry.

I took note of the article referred to by the member for Albany. In the *Daily News* of the 12th of this month, reference was made to the large number of young people leaving school without any prospects of finding employment. Because the avenues of apprenticeship have become scarce, the situation has been worsened. Considerable publicity was given to that fact, and I ask the Government to take cognisance of it.

The situation is further aggravated by the high birth rate of the early post-war years. Lads born then are now at an age where they are seeking employment. Industry and commerce have to absorb them. I say that the Government's policy is not helpful to the parents of those lads or to the lads themselves; and I believe that for that reason—if for no other—the appointment of a Select Committee would be justified. I would disagree with the Government's policy regarding these apprentices, even if times were normal; but because of the facts I have outlined, the situation is abnormal.

Another point I wish to stress is that ex-servicemen who are the fathers of the youths now leaving school did not fight for the privilege of having their sons face such great difficulties. The Government's policy in closing the training facilities by taking work away from Government departments—which have been the traditional training grounds for apprentices—is to be deplored.

Another contributing factor to the closing of avenues for apprentices is the employment of migrants who have come to this country and filled gaps in industry. Although I do not want to draw any distinction between an Australian and a New Australian, I do say the policy of migration has closed some avenues for Australian apprentices. This is another aspect into which the committee could inquire.

As the father of two sons, I would be reluctant—in view of the present situation—to place either of them in an apprenticeship in the building or metal trades because, as I have outlined, there is very little incentive to do so. Since I would take that attitude, I am quite sure that other parents would do likewise, to the detriment of the trades and the State, in the future.

Mr. Court: If you would not apprentice them to those trades, what would you do with them?

Mr. FLETCHER: That was the question which was raised by the *Daily News*, and the answer to which I want to know. If I could not afford to educate them, and wanted them to enter a trade, the Government's policy would close the door to that avenue. The training facilities are just not available.

Mr. Court: But the policy has not stopped them being trained as apprentices. You said you would not put them into the building trades.

Mr. FLETCHER: Not in view of the prospects—

Mr. Court: You would rather they were unskilled workers?

Mr. FLETCHER: —because there is no stability or future in the trades.

Mr. Court: That is not the point. Would you rather they were unskilled workers? Surely not!

Mr. FLETCHER: The Premier, when questioned, said he would review the situation if required. I believe that the suggested committee could compile a case to demonstrate to the Premier that the situation does require a review and that he should revise the policy. I am astounded, quite frankly, at the casual attitude of members opposite.

Mr. Crommelin: You will learn!

Mr. FLETCHER: I am learning fast about the casual attitude of members opposite in relation to what is considered a vital matter. It is considered vital by tradesmen, representatives of tradesmen, and the working people; and those are the people whom we on this side of the House represent. The Government is so pre-occupied with the reins of office that it overlooks the point I am trying to make. Many on this side of the House are either tradesmen, or sons of tradesmen.

Mr. Perkins: Do you think that the Government is the sole avenue of employment?

Mr. FLETCHER: I cannot see the significance of that interjection. I am pre-occupied with what I am trying to say.

Mr. Perkins: I think you are pre-occupied! You ought to go to school again, I think.

Mr. FLETCHER: These people are our responsibility, on this side of the House; and I ask the Government to respect them. As I said earlier, we are not playing politics when we adopt that attitude.

Mr. O'Connor: All the people of Western Australia should be our responsibility.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is so. I appreciate that interjection. The whole of the people of Western Australia should be our responsibility; and, as I said earlier, the tradesmen contribute much to the maintenance and building of plant and the maintenance of machinery on which industry and the people of Western Australia depend. Therefore, this matter is of concern to the entire population—the members of the public whom the Government represents, and those whom we on this side of the House represent. The appointment of a Select Committee is justified on those grounds.

The Minister mentioned sub-contractors; but they cannot be bothered with apprentices. If a bricklayer, for instance, can make £4 10s. or £5 a day—which the Government encourages—he will push apprentices aside, as they are only an encumbrance to him; and that is not in the best interests of the State.

Mr. O'Connor: Do you consider that the sub-contractors are incompetent for the training of apprentices?

Mr. FLETCHER: No; but the work suffers as the result of the rush to make as much money as possible in a working day. It is that preoccupation which prevents apprentices being trained, not only in bricklaying, but also in the building trades and the metal trades generally. If a private employer engages an apprentice; he may have sufficient work for him for a year of 18 months; and then, when he can no longer keep the lad occupied, the apprentice is shuffled from one employer to another. He may go to three or four different firms or tradesmen during his apprenticeship, and his training suffers accordingly.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made reference to the drift of skilled tradesmen from this State. I know that drift is going on; and, unfortunately, only recently I had to assist one tradesman to get a job in South Australia. He is only one of many tradesmen that I know who have left this State. It is alarming to think that so many trained men are going from here to the Eastern States; and so I think that a committee to inquire into the position would be in the public interest.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.4]: I support the motion, and I cannot understand why the Minister for Works opposed it so vigorously. If agreed to, the motion for a Select Committee to be appointed to inquire into and report upon—

1. The drift of skilled labour from the building industry; the decrease in apprenticeships; the extent to which these movements are being accentuated by the Government's policy on day labour, and are likely to lead to a serious dearth of skilled tradesmen.
2. The effect of sub-contracting on industrial standards and conditions,

would not throw any obligation on the Government to act in accordance with the recommendations of the committee. Has the Government anything to hide? Is it afraid to hold an inquiry into this question? In view of the great number of youths leaving our primary and secondary schools each year, the appointment of such a Select Committee could do no harm; and it might prove fruitful.

I will not weary the House by dealing with the platitudes put forward by the Minister for Works; but in relation to the question of employment I will refer to page 1149 of *Hansard* for the current session, where the following appears:—

STATE ENGINEERING WORKS

Dismissals Since the 3rd April.

Mr. W. Hegney asked the Minister for Works:

What is the number of employees dismissed from the State Engineering Works since the 3rd April, 1959?

Mr. Wild replied:

85 dismissed.

10 under notice.

Of the 85 who were dismissed, I suggest a great number were tradesmen.

Mr. Hawke: And some of them building tradesmen.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I do not think the Government will deny that engineering tradesmen have an indirect bearing on the building trades. On the 20th August last, I asked the Minister for Works another question in relation to the Public Works Department, as follows:—

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Dismissals Since the 3rd April.

Mr. W. Hegney asked the Minister for Works:

What is the number of employees dismissed from the Public Works Department since the 3rd April, 1959?

Mr. Wild replied:

Assuming the question relates only to the architectural division—

282 dismissed.

14 under notice.

I suggest that of the 282 dismissed, a substantial number were probably building tradesmen; and they would include bricklayers and carpenters among others. I have previously said in this House, and I repeat without equivocation, that I believe the Government is endeavouring to create a pool of unemployed in this State.

Mr. Wild: What rubbish! The old record is on again. Why not put on the other side?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It is in accordance with Liberal policy—apparently aided and abetted by members of the Country Party in the Ministry—to create a reserve of unemployed, so that the position envisaged tonight by the Minister for Works may be brought about.

Mr. Wild: That would be more employment.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: According to the statements he has made from time to time the Minister for Works would have one believe that he is a firm believer in the principles of arbitration.

Mr. Wild: So he is.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: There is another example of gross hypocrisy, as I will proceed to prove. I shall deal specifically for the moment with the problems of apprenticeship in the building industry. Some time ago one of the officers of the Carpenters' Union took a case to the Arbitration Court, and a question arose as to whether an employer—I shall not mention his name—was paying a particular person as a sub-contractor or an employee in accordance with the terms of the appropriate award.

Any member who has had anything to do with industrial matters will know that there is a fine line between the definition of a pieceworker, or a taskworker, and a sub-contractor. In large measure it depends on the degree of supervision, or on the element of relationship of master and servant, or employer and employee. In this case, the union took the matter to the Arbitration Court and sued the employer for a breach of the award. The President of the Arbitration Court ruled against the union, but suggested that an appropriate amendment be made to the Arbitration Act to enable the court to decide in any particular application made to it whether a person was an employee or a sub-contractor in relation to his employment with the principal.

I introduced the amending Bill into this Chamber; and, although the circumstances were clearly explained, members opposite vigorously opposed our effort to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act in the manner suggested by the President of the Arbitration Court. Because of the numbers, we were able to pass the legislation here, but it was thrown out—

Mr. Crommelin: The brutal majority.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I do not know from where that grunt came, but the Bill was thrown out in another place. That is an example of the present Government's belief in the principles of arbitration. As the President of the court had suggested the amendment, the least that might have been done was for Parliament as a whole, or this Chamber, to respect the President's recommendations.

The SPEAKER: I am reluctant to interfere, but I hope the honourable member can relate his remarks to the question before the Chair. I presume he is dealing with the second part of the motion.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: This is no laughing matter. The second part of the motion is to inquire into the effect of sub-contracting on industrial standards and conditions. My object in referring to that particular incident was that, had the amending Bill

been passed, the question of sub-contracting or piecework in the building industry would not have been determined in any particular case by the union or by this House; the matter would have been left in the hands of the Arbitration Court.

Now I shall proceed to deal with the result of the Government's policy on the apprenticeship system in this State. Because the Bill I introduced was defeated, the Arbitration Court and the unions have no power to do anything in any case where there is a doubt as to whether certain employees are sub-contractors or pieceworkers. This sort of thing is happening now and will continue to happen until the law is amended. Anybody who has been a pieceworker or a sub-contractor knows, human nature being what it is, that the tendency is to speed up and to do as much work as possible even where the terms of employment are regulated by an industrial award or agreement; consequently carpenters, bricklayers, or any other building tradesmen who are sub-contractors or pieceworkers, will not have the inclination to take the necessary time to train apprentices properly.

That is one of the reasons why, up to recent times, apprentices in this State who have been trained in the Public Works Department, or in the workshops as car and wagon builders, carpenters, and other types of tradesmen, have been able to hold their own in any part of Australia. They have been trained by highly qualified tradesmen who took the necessary time to help them. As the Minister for Works knows, these apprentices are examined regularly. They are required to attend the technical school, and they have to acquire certain qualifications. At the end of five years—that is the usual term of apprenticeship—these apprentices are turned out as competent tradesmen.

There were approximately 1,600 in the work force of the Public Works Department some months ago, and of that number a great many were carpenters. Towards the end of each year, the same as in the Railway Department, the selection board interviewed hundreds of youths who had just left school and who were anxious to become apprentices in the various trades in the Public Works Department. Certain officers would interview these youths, put them through aptitude tests and ensure that they had the ability to make competent tradesmen.

Over the years, in the Public Works Department, the State Engineering Works and the railway workshops—there have been approximately 500 to 600 trained in the workshops—apprentices have been trained and have been able to take their place in industry as highly qualified tradesmen. But the policy followed by the present Government is one which will help to bring about a dearth of tradesmen. The Minister said that it would be better for a

bricklayer to take on a sub-contract to build a certain number of houses, or lay a certain number of bricks a day, if he wanted to make a few bob; and if he wanted to make money why should he be stopped?

Mr. Wild: Is not that the basis—

Mr. W. HEGNEY: You see, Mr. Speaker! I am asked: "Is not that the basis?" I can tell the House that in industries where piecework or taskwork is regulated and controlled by an industrial award or agreement, there is nothing wrong with it; because, invariably, the piecework rate is based on the time rate, plus a percentage. In fact, contract miners are practically guaranteed the time rate of pay. The rate paid is based on a minimum of 10 per cent. of the time rate.

After all said and done, the industrial movement in this State has been fighting for years to get regulated conditions in industry, but that is what the Minister wants to break down. He wants men to carry on in industry without any regulation as to industrial conditions, rates, or anything else. He said that a few years ago a bricklayer got £12 10s. a thousand, and now he is getting about £10 a thousand. If rates and conditions are not regulated in any industry, rates of pay soon become depressed and tradesmen work for less than the basic wage.

We, on this side of the House, are always trying to improve the working conditions of employees in industry; and we will continue to do so. In view of the Minister's actions in the last few weeks in sacking men from the day-labour organisations, I can quite understand that he will do everything he can to sandbag this proposition.

Mr. Wild: No; I am just implementing our policy.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: If this motion is carried, the Government will in no way be bound to act upon the committee's findings. All that will be done is that a sufficient number of members in this House will be appointed to carry out the terms of the motion. Those members, as a committee, would report to Parliament in due course. As a result of their investigations the Government might see fit to take some notice of their recommendations; and even if it did not alter its policy entirely in this connection, it might modify it. I support the motion.

MR. TOMS (Maylands) [9.23]: I commend the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the timely motion he has moved, and I hope the House will carry it. Unlike the member for Mt. Hawthorn, I did not consider that the Minister for Works vigorously opposed the motion. On the contrary, I thought that judging from his docile start—he was going to agree to it.

Mr. Wild: We are always docile over here.

Mr. TOMS: I cannot understand the Minister's attitude to the motion before the House. It does not contain any slight whatsoever against the Government. It is only an attempt to make the Government realise that we on this side of the House consider that there will be a serious dearth of tradesmen before long if the Government continues with its present policy. As I indicated by interjection, it is apparent to me that the Minister, by the way he referred to the quality of the work performed by tradesmen today, has practically no knowledge of the subject on which he has spoken.

Whilst it does not come within the ambit of the motion, but is tied up with sub-contracting, I would like to tell the Minister that if he had been associated with the building industry as closely as I have been, he would be in no doubt whatsoever as to the quality of the work that is performed today by sub-contractors. In my opinion, it is not of a desired or high standard. Only on Sunday last, whilst travelling through Chittering, I spoke to a conditional builder who was registered in that district. He told me that he had now been forced to have his work done by sub-contract. I asked him whether it was cheapening the job, and he said it was in regard to the quality of the work performed. When I asked him to enlarge on that statement he said that a cheaper price was now tendered for the pitching of a roof, but instead of the foot of the rafters being double-nailed they were only being single-nailed. That practice is typical of what is going on in other sections of the building industry today.

Of course it is typical also for the Minister to sit back and say that if a man is keen to earn an extra pound for himself he should be allowed to do so. I agree that we should let him earn an extra pound provided he observes the regulations and the conditions set down by the Arbitration Court. When I listened to the Minister's opening remarks, I thought he was going to agree to the motion and show a little statesmanship and vision for the first time. I felt he was going to permit an inquiry to be made into this question.

There is nothing destructive in the motion. As pointed out by the member for Mt. Hawthorn, the Government is not bound to act on the findings of the committee. However, if a Select Committee were appointed, it would indicate to members on the other side of the House what was happening in the building industry today; and it would, perhaps, make them realise that the picture is not quite as rosy as they would believe when they sit back so smugly in their seats.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [9.28]: I support this motion mainly because of the large number of unemployed in my electorate, which position has been aggravated by the decision of the Government to sack men from the day-labour organisation of the Public Works Department. Whilst there were only 400 unemployed over a little more than a month ago, today there are 500 people out of work in my electorate. Recently I have been receiving many letters from such people describing the desperate plight in which they are placed. The following is an example of the correspondence I have received:—

I am seeking your assistance in obtaining employment and respectfully request your help if you possibly can.

I have been out of work for nearly three years and my financial position is getting desperate. I am unable to purchase the essentials in the way of food and clothing for the most primitive existence, and have reached the position where I cannot pay the rates on my house, land tax, wireless license, etc., and I cannot afford to pay further contributions to the hospital benefits and will thus become disqualified from future benefits should I become ill.

This correspondent then went on to give me other information and signed his name at the bottom of the letter. I do not recollect ever having met the man.

Mr. Roberts: How long did he say he had been unemployed?

Mr. BRADY: Nearly three years. However, the fact remains that the Minister, by his actions, is not helping him to obtain employment. When there is an existing pool of unemployment in any district, and another 100 is added to it, it does not help any man to get work.

The SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will get back to the motion.

Mr. BRADY: If you, Sir, will keep the member for Bunbury quiet, I will not speak to him at all. For many years I have assisted my constituents to have their sons engaged as apprentices in the Public Works Department and other departments. However that avenue has been closed, and that is another factor which has aggravated the unemployment problem. I have discussed the matter with the officers concerned, and I envisaged that this year a number of young men from my district could be selected for apprenticeships in the Public Works Department. But after having heard the views expressed by the Minister, it would seem that that possibility is very remote. There is no doubt that an inquiry would highlight just what will be the position with regard to apprentices.

I would say that this year is going to be one of the blackest years for apprentices in the metropolitan area. It will be one of the blackest since the start of the century, because thousands of children are

leaving school and looking for work. Although the Railway Department has not called for applications for apprenticeships it is receiving many such applications because these young fellows know that other channels of work are cut off from them. As the member for Mt. Hawthorn pointed out, tradesmen who were normally able to earn £20 to £25 per week are today working seven days a week on the basic wage.

One of these people lives quite close to me; and he is working seven days a week, and finds that he cannot meet his commitments. So bad is his plight that he is likely to lose several of the assets he has built up over the years. That is why I say this House, and the public, should know what is happening. It is all very well for the Minister to say he is trying to encourage investors to come and sink their money in the State. To my mind, however, that is half the trouble with which Western Australia is confronted. There is too much money going out of the State already; too many people are taking money out of the State and doing nothing for the State in return.

That is the sort of thing that will continue to happen. People come here with a view to investing their money, but they require a return of 20 or 25 per cent. If they cannot get such a return, they are not prepared to invest their money. That sort of thing is no good for Western Australia; and I hope the Minister will change his outlook.

I would go as far as to say that nearly every small town is being sapped to feed the city, and the city in turn is being sapped to feed the Eastern States investors and financiers. Unless the Government can get back to some form of stability and standard of employment for adult workers the future will be black for these people and for the young apprentices. I have no option but to support a motion such as that moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

On motion by Mr. Hawke, debate adjourned.

STATE CONCERNS (PREVENTION OF DISPOSAL) BILL

Second Reading

MR. HAWKE (Northam) [9.34] in moving the second reading said: In size this Bill is very small; in importance, in my opinion, it is very great. In the first place the measure sets out to define what would be known as a State-owned instrumentality. In the second place it defines a State trading concern. Members who look at the definition of State trading concern will find it comes within the definition already contained in The State Trading Concerns Act. In regard to State-owned instrumentalities, apart from State-owned trading concerns, the definition means a concern other than a State trading concern carried on by the Government, and so on.

The purpose of this Bill is to lay it down on the statute book that no State-owned instrumentality as defined in this measure, and no State trading concern as defined in the State Trading Concerns Act, shall be sold or leased, unless and until the approval of Parliament to the sale, or the lease, has first been obtained. We know that at least one Party to the present Government, during the election campaign in March this year, told the electors that that Party, if it were to become the Government, would dispose of State trading concerns.

The statement the Party made to the electors then went on with a lot of airy-fairy talk about the conditions which would be established in relation to State trading concerns prior to their being offered for sale to private enterprise. I will have more to say about that angle a little later.

On the 1st of July, this year, I submitted to the Premier some questions on the notice paper regarding State trading concerns and State-owned instrumentalities. I sought information as to the dates on which these particular concerns were established; the capital value as set down in the various books and records; the value of production for the financial year 1958-59; and the numbers employed in each concern as at the 30th June, 1959.

As the information contained in the answers is not only interesting but very important, I propose to read it in order that it might appear in *Hansard* in direct relation to the Bill I am now explaining. The first instrumentality is the Wundowie Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry, the building of which was commenced in September, 1943; and which, as an industry, went into production in January, 1948. The fixed assets were valued at £1,750,000; the total value of production for the year 1958-59 was £750,000; and the number employed as at the 30th June, 1959, was 426 persons, including contractors.

The next is the State Electricity Commission which was established in 1946, with a capital value of £35,900,000. The value of output was £7,915,000 for the year to which I have previously referred; and the number of persons employed was 2,313. The Midland Junction Abattoir was established in 1914. The book value was £1,210,998. The value of production for the year in question was £714,050, and the number of persons employed was 434.

The State Engineering Works was established in 1912. The capital value at the 30th June, 1958, was £528,772. The value of production for the year ended the 31st May, 1959, was £901,010; and the number of persons employed was 447.

The Wyndham Meat Works was established in 1919. The capital value was £1,232,717. The value of production for the year in question was £1,694,801, and the number employed was 337.

The Robb's Jetty Meat Works was incorporated as a limited company in 1919. It commenced operations in 1922 under private ownership, and it was taken over by the Treasury or the State Government in 1942, owing to difficulties encountered by the private company running the concern. The book value was £601,000. The estimated value of production for the year in question was £955,000 and the number of persons employed at the works as owned by the State was 294. Other organisations operating at the works employed 96 persons; and in busy seasonal periods during the year, the total number employed would be up to 500.

The State Brickworks was established in 1915. The capital value was £893,303 at the 30th June, 1957. The total earnings to the 30th June, 1957, were £463,020, and the number of persons employed was 196.

The State Saw Mills were established in 1913. The capital value was £1,665,562 at the 30th June, 1957. The total earnings to the 30th June, 1957, were £2,288,379. The number employed was 1,141 at the 30th June, 1957.

Finally, the State Building Supplies, which came into existence on the 1st July, 1957, as a result of the combination of the State Brick Works and the State Saw Mills under the heading of State Building Supplies, had a combined capital value of £2,803,483. The value of production or total earnings to the 30th June, 1957, which covered a period of two years, was £3,069,065. The total number employed at the 19th June, 1959, was 1,428.

These figures together show a total employment of 5,588 persons. After studying the information supplied by the Premier in these answers, particularly in relation to the capital value of the respective concerns, it was clear to me that some of the concerns were considerably under value. So, on the 23rd July of this year, I asked the following question of the Premier:—

What would be the approximate replacement cost, on the basis of present-day costs, of the—

- (a) State Engineering Works.
- (b) State Electricity Commission.
- (c) State Building Supplies.
- (d) Midland Junction Abattoir.
- (e) Robb's Jetty Works.
- (f) Wundowie Wood Distillation, Charcoal Iron & Steel Industry.
- (g) Wyndham Meat Works?

The Premier replied as follows:—

This information is not available in reliable form without detailed and costly examination. It is also considered inadvisable to make this information public at this stage, as it could react against the interest of some of the concerns of the State.

When the Premier gave me that answer I smiled a little, because it was clear to me from the declaration of policy by the Government during the election campaign that the Premier and his colleagues had far less consideration for the State as a whole in relation to these undertakings, than they had for some of their larger friends in the business world in the State. I also asked the Premier on the same day the following question:—

What is the capital value, on a present-day valuation, of the assets of—

- (a) State Engineering Works.
- (b) State Electricity Commission.
- (c) State Building Supplies.
- (d) Midland Junction Abattoir.
- (e) Robb's Jetty Works.
- (f) Wundowie Wood Distillation, Charcoal Iron & Steel Industry.
- (g) Wyndham Meat Works?

The Premier replied as follows:—

It is not considered desirable to give this information. Apart from the great difficulty and cost of making reliable assessments in some of the cases referred to, the information could be used by competitors and others to the disadvantage of the concerns mentioned.

As one will quickly realise, that was an attempt on the part of the Premier to give an excuse, and it was a very poor excuse, for refusing to arrange for an attempt of any kind to be made to obtain information of a reasonably reliable nature, which could be made available to Parliament so that members might have a fair appreciation of the actual value of those concerns as they exist today.

I have yet to decide finally whether or not I shall in the reasonably near future take the step of moving for a return to be prepared in relation to the information which I sought unsuccessfully from the Premier on those matters. To anyone who has had the opportunity of going through these various State concerns it is clear that the capital value, represented by the figures given to Parliament by the Premier in reply to the first set of questions I asked, is well below the real value. If Parliament is not to be given some reasonable and reliable ideas as to the actual value of the concerns today, then clearly it would be within the hands of the Government to dispose of those concerns to private enterprise at figures far below what the State should receive for them, in the event of the Government deciding to sell them.

I think members will have gathered from the information which the Premier made available to us in connection with the dates on which these concerns were established that most of them were established many years ago. In other words, they

have stood the test of time. Not only have they been continued by Labour Governments in the past, but they have also been continued by non-Labour Governments in the past; and, up to this point, they have been continued by the present Government.

It is also true to say that non-Labour Governments in the past have extended some of these concerns. I notice the member for Murray blushing furiously as if he feels, to some small extent, his conscience is taking on a guilty twitch; or it may be—

Sir Ross McLarty: Perhaps I had better not say anything at this stage.

Mr. HAWKE: —that he feels the policy which his Government carried out in relation to these concerns was the common-sense policy; that in his heart of hearts he opposes the policy of this new non-Labour Government but, because he is a pledged supporter of the Government, it would not be diplomatic or advisable for him to say so.

Sir Ross McLarty: Thank you for the advice.

Mr. HAWKE: And perhaps it would not be advisable for him to try to do anything in the House to impede the Government in the carrying out of the policy which it talked about during the election campaign. We all know the fate which would befall him if he dared to take that step. Instead of being the only endorsed candidate for Murray at the next election, he would probably not receive endorsement at all. Despite the fact that he has a large number of relations, he might find it difficult to obtain re-election to this House; and, quite apart from Party politics, that is something we would all regret.

Mr. Bovell: He has weathered a good many political storms.

Mr. HAWKE: I want to read to members a statement issued personally by the present Premier during the election campaign when he was Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Liberal political Party. The fact that this statement was issued under the name of the present Premier and was published in *The West Australian* newspaper indicates that the statement was not carelessly made and was not made on the spur of the moment. It was carefully prepared and put together; and I should think, if not prepared very largely by the present Minister for Railways, it was at least very carefully vetted by him.

I desire to quote the portions of the statement which are appropriate to this Bill, which should enable you, Mr. Speaker, to relax in the Chair in the knowledge that each part of the statement which I read will be most relevant to the Bill now before the House. First of all this gem—

Industry is for people and industrial relations should be based for the general good.

Then there is some talk about the principles of the Liberal Party, one being full employment. Then, later on, there is this amazing statement in view of what has happened since the present Government came into office,—

The Hawke Government is making absurd charges that Liberal intentions are to close all State trading concerns, fire their employees, reduce wages and lengthen working hours. We will fire nobody, nor close any concern down.

I quote again—

What we intend is first to make them—

Presumably that means the State trading concerns. To continue—

—payable, based on sound business principles instead of departmental principles and, when this is done, we will put them on their own as public companies with shares on the Stock Exchange—

Mr. Speaker, have you ever heard such nonsense as in these last several words. I am quoting again—

—to continue their operations as free enterprise concerns.

That is the end of the quotation of that particular part of the statement. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the House, to think on that particular part of the statement. It is the greatest heap of meaningless jargon that was ever put together in so few words.

Mr. May: That's the usual form.

Mr. HAWKE: It is not humanly possible to explain what it means because it means nothing at all in a practical sense. I quote again—

Their—

Presumably the State trading concerns—

—6,300 personnel will remain in their jobs as far as the Government would be concerned.

Clearly these undertakings, seriously and deliberately given by the present Premier during the election campaign, and published in the newspaper under his name, were not given in any sincerity whatsoever, because the new Government had hardly been formed—it was not out of first gear, and not even in second gear—when the business of sacking men in some of these concerns commenced; and it has been going on periodically ever since.

Mr. W. Hegney: About 100 from the State Engineering Works.

Mr. HAWKE: Let me quote one of the portions again—

What we intend is first to make them payable . . .

That is, the State trading concerns. I think you, Mr. Speaker, would know that if you seriously set out to make a State

trading concern payable or profitable in its operations you would not start to lessen the volume of work being carried out within the concern; and you would not start to sack skilled tradesmen. If you were to follow that line of action, obviously you would be following a course which would turn a profit-making State trading concern into a loss-making State trading concern.

We all know that the volume of production or turnover and the volume of business is tremendously important in industry, trade, and commerce. It was always an important factor. However, in these days, it is ever so much more important than it was in previous periods. Yet we find, in regard to the State Engineering Works that, instead of the Government carrying out the policy which it said it would carry out to put the concern on a better basis to make it payable and profitable in order that when it was offered to private enterprise the best possible price could be obtained for it, the very opposite is taking place.

As the volume of total production decreases in that concern, or in any other State trading concern for that matter, the percentage of overhead costs—to take only one factor—will increase on the production which is being carried out; and, inevitably, the costs of production per unit of each article turned out there will increase also. For instance, if the Government were to allow the State Engineering Works to tender with private firms to produce a particular type of article, the State Engineering Works would be placed at an increasing disadvantage in the future in relation to the reducing volume of total production within the workshops.

I understand that approximately 100 skilled and semi-skilled men have already been sacked from the State Engineering Works, due to the fact that the Government is allowing less work to be carried out there than previously. Undoubtedly the policy of the Government in this direction will continue to follow the same course, so that by the end of this year, or sooner, instead of 100 men having been sacked, 200 will have been sacked. Not only will the overhead cost percentage be increased substantially on each unit of production from then on, but the value of the works as a selling proposition will be cut to ribbons. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that this policy is being followed deliberately by the Government. It is extremely difficult to escape that conclusion, more especially when one measures up what I quoted from Mr. Brand's pre-election statement, with what is actually happening at the State Engineering Works.

The very opposite of what he undertook to do is taking place. Not only has he broken his pledge to the people in regard

to what he undertook, but he is doing the very opposite, which constitutes a double breaking of the pledge he gave to the electors. I think it is not an unfair conclusion at which to arrive to say that what is now happening to the State Engineering Works will happen, in turn, to the other State trading concerns. In other words, steadily and surely, the volume of work which they are now carrying out will be reduced. As a consequence, the number of men employed will be steadily but surely reduced.

As time goes on, the value of those concerns, on a selling basis, to private enterprise, will go down, and down. When the time arrives that the Government decides to offer the State Engineering Works—or the other State trading concerns—to private enterprise, the best offer it will receive will be a very poor one compared with the real value of those works today. I should say that the selling value of the State Engineering Works has already been reduced very substantially.

Therefore, we see clearly that this Government is hell-bent, as it were, on crucifying these works; hell-bent on crucifying them for the purpose of making almost a gift of them in due course to the private companies who would wish at that time to get hold of them for next to nothing.

Mr. Court: Only your guess of course!

Mr. W. Hegney: Not far wrong, either.

Mr. HAWKE: It is not a guess—

Mr. Court: It is a wild guess.

Mr. HAWKE: —in relation at least to the State Engineering Works. It is based on the logic of events, and on the facts in regard to the situation. Would the Minister for Railways and the so-called Minister for Industrial Development say to us that the value of the State Engineering Works today, on a selling basis, is as high as it was before the present Government reduced the volume of work down there and sacked 100 men? Would he say that by the end of this year, provided the volume of work has been further reduced and another 100 men have been sacked, that the selling value to a private company would be as high as it was three months ago? Of course not! No-one knows better than the Minister for Industrial Development that what I am saying is absolutely true.

Therefore, it is considered that this matter is of such great significance to the people and of such importance to Parliament, that the Government should not be permitted, willy-nilly, to dispose of these concerns at sacrificial prices, after the Government has put into operation its policy of reducing the concerns to a basis which would make it impossible for the Government to get anywhere near the real value of the concerns when the sales are made.

It is to be remembered that these concerns belong to the people. The Minister for Industrial Development might think—and he would be entitled to think so if he wishes—that the concerns should never have been established. He might be entitled to think that they should be disposed of at the first possible moment, but he is not entitled to think that they should be disposed of, irrespective of whether or not a fair and reasonable price is obtained for them.

Mr. Court: We have laid it down as policy that they will only be sold at a fair and reasonable price.

Mr. HAWKE: That is just a bunch of words.

Mr. Court: It is nothing of the sort.

Mr. HAWKE: Just a bunch of meaningless words.

Mr. Court: It is a clear, simple statement.

Mr. HAWKE: We have had the Minister on the spot in this sort of thing previously and have been able to prove without any shadow of doubt that he just puts forward a bunch of words, without even convincing himself, but with which he hopes to convince everyone else.

Mr. Court: A price can be fair and reasonable. It is an everyday and well-understood expression.

Mr. HAWKE: The Minister tells us that the expression "fair and reasonable price" is a well understood one. Of course it is; but there is a tremendous difference of opinion in regard to what is a fair and reasonable price. I believe that the opinion of the Minister for Railways as to what would be a fair and reasonable price for the State Engineering Works would vary greatly from that held by some other members of this House. I said earlier—and did not wish to have to repeat it—that before this Government came into office these concerns were active, fully employed, fully staffed, and operating on a certain volume of production and turnover; but the Government has already, in the case of the State Engineering Works, engaged in a policy of blood-letting.

Mr. Court: And while your Government was in office, you allowed them unfair competition against their normal competitors.

Mr. HAWKE: Although that is not true, let us admit it for the sake of argument. What difference does it make? The present Government came into office and found all these concerns in a certain state of activity. The present Premier, on behalf of the Minister for Railways—I would not be surprised if the Minister wrote it for him—told the people that before his Government would dispose of any of these concerns it would take steps to build them up, as it were, to a state and condition where one

would expect them to fetch not only what would have been a fair and reasonable price at, say, the 1st April of this year, but an even better price.

Yet the fact is that the Minister for Railways and his Liberal Party colleagues have been undermining the stability and strength of these concerns. I believe the selling value of the State Engineering Works has already been reduced by £250,000, as compared with what would have been a fair and reasonable price for it some four or five months ago. It is no use the Minister for Railways talking smoothly in this Chamber about a fair and reasonable price. That sort of thing might go down when he is talking to the junior members of the Liberal Party, at some specially organised show; but it will not work here.

We had to expose, in this Chamber—as you will clearly remember, Mr. Speaker—the Minister's bird-lime talk about an assurance and guarantee which he and his colleagues had given to the employees in these concerns: that if the concerns were sold, their employment in the future in those concerns would be safeguarded. When we nailed him down on that issue, he finished up as weak, ineffective, and unimpressive as anyone could possibly be.

Mr. Court: That is only your opinion.

Mr. HAWKE: That was the fact, as demonstrated by clear-cut and logical argument.

Mr. Court: It is only your opinion, unless you claim to be the spokesman for the whole of Parliament.

Mr. HAWKE: We pointed out, clearly, logically, and effectively—as we do now—that the Government, once it disposes of any of these concerns, cannot guarantee the future employment in it of the men employed there today; and the Minister for Railways knows that only too well.

Mr. Court: Don't worry! We will look after their conditions of employment.

Mr. HAWKE: Of course the Minister will! In the last six or eight weeks he has sacked 100 of them at the State Engineering Works. Perhaps even now he is having notices prepared to sack some employees at the State Building Supplies or some other of these organisations, in order to reduce their strength and the total volume of their production week by week, so that later on, when zero hour has arrived and these concerns are offered for sale, those who wish to buy them will be able to do so at bargain prices.

These concerns are the assets of the people, no matter whether or not one believes they should have been established; and no matter whether one believes they should now be sold to private enterprise. The over-ruling fact remains that they are the assets of the people and belong to the people of Western Australia.

Mr. J. Hegney: And Ministers are sworn to protect the interests of the people.

Mr. HAWKE: The first duty of members of Parliament is to protect the assets of the people and ensure that they receive value for any of the assets that are disposed of by sale or lease. It seems to me that any decision made to sell or lease any State trading concern should not be solely in the hands of the Executive Government. It should rather be in the hands of Parliament; and that, as I said earlier, is why this Bill is now before the House.

It might be said, "If any proposal to lease or sell is to be subject to the will and decision of Parliament, no-one will enter into any agreement to lease or sell." If that is the case, I think it will indicate that they want to lease or sell a particular concern at far below what would be a fair and reasonable price—to use the Minister's pet expression.

Mr. Court: That does not follow.

Mr. HAWKE: It does not follow absolutely. However, I would point out that the practice of Governments in this State making agreements subject to ratification by Parliament is by no means a new one. The Attorney-General will recall an agreement made between the then State Government and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. in relation to a proposal to establish at Kwinana an industry for the refining of crude oil. That agreement was subject to subsequent ratification by both Houses of Parliament. It was debated here at considerable length, and some features of the agreement were strongly criticised.

I criticised some features of that agreement which seemed to me to indicate that we were giving permanently to the company advantages, which in my judgment, were not fair. However, a majority of members in both Houses of Parliament supported the ratification, as I did. After all, one does not vote against an agreement because there are one or two things in it which one feels are a bit out of line, when one agrees that the major clauses in the agreement are satisfactory and acceptable.

Then we had an agreement brought here for ratification not many years ago in relation to the agreement made by the McLarty-Watts Government with the Broken Hill Pty. Co. I think every member is aware of my views on that agreement. I opposed it very strongly and very hotly; and the passing of time has, I think, justified the stand which I took on that occasion.

However, I do not want to go into the merits or demerits of that proposition at this stage. The fact is that the Government of the day made an agreement with the company on the distinct legal understanding that the agreement would have no operation in legal effect until such time as it was ratified by both Houses of Parliament.

Mr. Bovell: It is a pity that the same thing did not apply to the Chase agreement.

Mr. HAWKE: It did as a matter of fact. I am surprised that the Minister for Lands does not remember it, because I think he spoke during the debate; the Minister for Railways most certainly spoke on that debate.

Mr. Court: You ran out of answers.

Mr. HAWKE: I am rather worried that the weight of ministerial duties, and the cares of office, appear to have impaired the memory of the Minister for Lands. I suggest that the Premier might let him have a long holiday.

Mr. W. Hegney: At Rottneest!

Mr. HAWKE: Yes; that is a bright thought. I will mention it to the Premier myself.

Mr. Bovell: He will take as much notice of you on that as he will on this.

Mr. HAWKE: It is a coincidence that the Minister for Lands should have mentioned the Chase Syndicate, because that was the next agreement about which I was going to say a few words. The agreement made with the Chase Syndicate was subject to ratification by Parliament. The matter was debated, argued about, and criticised here. However, Parliament—that is, both Houses—finally ratified the agreement and it became law.

It might be said that the cases I have mentioned are not comparable to the cases which would exist in the event of the Government negotiating an agreement with a private company for the sale or lease of a State trading concern. The particular set of circumstances on the one side, and on the other side, may not be exactly comparable; but at least they establish the fact that private companies in the past have made agreements with the Government far more important than any which would be made for the sale or lease of a State trading concern, subject to the legal condition that the agreements would not become the law of the State until such time as they had been ratified by both Houses of Parliament.

So I think there is sufficient precedent to justify the introduction and the passing of this Bill, even if there exists no other reason to justify that course being followed. However, in view of what I have had to say regarding the certainty that some of these concerns—if not all of them—when sold, will be sold at far below the value and price at which they should be sold, it becomes an over-powering argument and reason why Parliament should ask the Government to bring any of these agreements which might be made in the future to Parliament for consideration and approval, or otherwise.

We would then be placed in the position of being able to safeguard the assets of the public, and being able to protect their

interests. After all, they are by far the most important people in this business. It is not the Government or the people to whom these concerns might be sold, or even the men who now work in these concerns—or their future welfare—but the public of Western Australia whom we ought to safeguard. The public own these concerns, and therefore Parliament has an undoubted duty to make sure that the people's property is protected, and that a truly fair and reasonable price is obtained either in regard to any sale which might be made or for any leasing which might be entered into.

In my judgment there is every justification and warrant for the introduction of this Bill, and I have much pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Railways), debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.26 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 27th August, 1959

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