

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do not stonewall at this hour.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Instead of the Bill having to be sent to the Governor for assent, it will be brought in by proclamation. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 3.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.34 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Friday, 30th September, 1949.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Denaro Concrete Block Company.*

Hon. H. K. WATSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What members of the Housing Commission are directors of, or shareholders in, Denaro Concrete Block Manufacturing Co. (W.A.) Ltd.?

(2) How many building permits have been granted by the Housing Commission in which the Commission has, without the request of the applicant, made it a condition that the permit is granted subject to the building being constructed of Denaro bricks?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) No member of the State Housing Commission is a director of, or a shareholder in, Denaro Concrete Block Manufacturing Co. (W.A.) Ltd.

(2) The information is not immediately available. It would necessitate an examination of many hundreds of files. It has always been the policy of the Commission to encourage the use of alternative materials, particularly concrete bricks or blocks, in an endeavour to economise in the use of clay bricks which have been in very short supply.

(b) *As to Squarage Permitted.*

Hon. A. THOMSON (for Hon. A. L. Loton) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it a fact that the rental homes which have been constructed by the Housing Commission have a floor area ranging from 1,150 square feet to 1,600 square feet, including verandah area?

(2) In respect of permits granted to owner-builders, on what grounds does the Housing Commission seek to justify the restriction of such homes to a floor area of 750 square feet, or thereabouts?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The floor area of complete Commonwealth-State rental homes ranges from 858 square feet up to 1,513 square feet, including verandah. In addition, the Commission is building expansible homes of a floor area of 700 square feet for small unit families.

(2) "Self-help" permits are restricted to 700 square feet under main roof with 200 square feet of verandah for a three unit family and an additional 100 square feet under main roof for each additional family unit provided that the maximum under the main roof must not exceed 1,200 square feet.

Persons receive "self-help" permits when they are in a position to carry out some of the skilled labour themselves without interfering with the ordinary housing programme and are prepared to accept the minimum of accommodation. In this way they gain an advantage over others on the ordinary priority list by not having to wait so long for the issue of a permit.

(c) *As to Contracts for Fibrous Plaster Work.*

Hon. H. L. ROCHE asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is the Minister aware that, owing to what is known as a guarantee clause recently attached to Housing Commission contracts, all fibrous plaster work in War Service Homes has to carry a guarantee of 12 months' maintenance?

(2) That only the members of the Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers' Association are permitted to undertake the maintenance on fibrous plaster work in War Service Homes?

(3) That as a result of the operation of the guarantee clause there is every prospect of the individual fibrous plaster fixer, and small firms engaged in such work being debarred from undertaking much of the Housing Commission's work?

(4) That creating a monopoly for a few big firms in this work appears to be certain from the operation of the guarantee clause?

(5) If the Minister is not aware of the foregoing, will he have inquiries made, and action taken to avoid what will become a very undesirable state of affairs?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The guarantee clause has been in operation for the past two years.

(2) Any fibrous plaster manufacturer can undertake work on Commission projects provided he gives the necessary maintenance guarantee.

(3) No. See answer to No. (2).

(4) No monopoly has been created.

(5) See answer to No. (2).

(d) *As to Squarage Recommendation by Advisory Panel.*

Hon. H. K. WATSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it a fact that his Building Advisory Panel has advised the Minister for Housing that there should be either no permits required, or alternatively, an automatic granting of permits to applicants for the erection of all homes up to a floor area not exceeding 1,500 square feet?

(2) If so, is it the intention of the Government to give early effect to that recommendation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) No advice to this effect has been tendered by the panel to the Minister.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

ROADS.

As to Bituminising, Coolgardie-Norseman.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to continue bituminising the Coolgardie-Norseman-road this coming year?

(2) If so, for what distance and when will operations commence?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. H. L. Roche, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to the Honorary Minister for Agriculture (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—LIQUID FUEL (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [2.39]: The Bill in the main is to provide power to obtain information on the hoarding of liquid fuel in this State and includes other provisions which will be proclaimed to give the State power to control the sale, distribution, acquisition and use of fuel oil only if rationing is not re-introduced by the Commonwealth. It is not intended that any State scheme should entail the use of tickets unless all other methods fail. In reality, the Bill is only an enabling measure.

To my mind, it paints an extremely sorry picture. There we have the Government bringing down a Bill to make provision in the event of the Commonwealth not re-introducing the liquid fuel rationing system. I was about to say it is rather amusing, but it is too serious a question to say that, because we found that certain sections of people and individuals were always raising complaints about the rationing system of fuel oil and it became popular

for them to advocate the decontrol of some items. Certain interests made it their business to challenge the validity of the Commonwealth regulations in the High Court with the result that the rationing of fuel oil was terminated very abruptly.

The object of rationing is to ensure that each person or group of persons shall be able to obtain the necessary quantity of fuel according to his or their requirements. In fact, that is the reason for rationing any commodity in short supply. I should say that this experience should be a warning to those people who are continually suggesting that various items still under control should be decontrolled. Immediately the legal rationing of petrol ceased, quite a number of people, showing no consideration whatever for anybody else, obtained as much petrol as they desired and, in some instances, were assisted by certain oil companies which permitted large quantities of fuel to be purchased. Consequently, a lot of other people now find it impossible to obtain the quantity to which they were entitled during the rationing period.

A number of people have hoarded petrol knowing full well that they are depriving others of the opportunity to obtain what is requisite for business, industrial or private purposes, and so owners of small businesses and of private cars are unable to obtain the requisite fuel to run their cars or trucks. In view of recent experience, therefore, it is necessary to re-introduce the rationing of fuel oil. Although the Government has submitted this Bill, which is only an enabling measure to be used in the event of the Commonwealth's not re-introducing rationing, apparently the Government is not in favour of a rationing system, but the baby has been handed on to it. The time has arrived when the Government should make known whether it favours the rationing of liquid fuel or not.

Hon. G. Fraser: The Government wants to sit on the fence.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Rationing is considered to be not very popular. Recently, however, many proprietors of petrol stations have been urging the re-introduction of rationing and one can understand their attitude. No business man likes to tell a client who has been a customer for a considerable time that his requirements cannot be sup-

plied, because he would possibly lose the business, but if he could say, "You have only a certain number of tickets entitling you to a certain quantity of petrol and that is all I can supply," he is carrying out the law and not giving any offence to the client.

This is a national question, one to which we must give very serious consideration. Industry must be enabled to carry on and private individuals must be afforded opportunity to make use of any form of transport needing fuel oil. It is time the Government realised this. Although rationing may not be popular, I think the States realise that it is necessary, and hence have been compelled to ask the Commonwealth Government to re-introduce the system. Petrol is a commodity of very great importance in this country. It may not be similarly regarded in countries having large towns, because they have other means of transport, but in a State like Western Australia, with its vast area and the need for long distance travelling, fuel oil plays a very important part. Therefore we should exert every endeavour to use judiciously any fuel that may be available for transport.

The reason for the shortage of fuel oil is that it either comes from dollar countries or is carried in dollar boats, and as the question of dollars in relation to sterling is important, every endeavour should be made to view the question from a reasonable angle. There are some people who consider that Australia should not take cognisance of the question of what dollars are available from the dollar pool because, whatever dollars we use, means depriving the United Kingdom of them. The United Kingdom is endeavouring to build up its industries after one of the greatest wars in history. In 1940, the people of Great Britain stood alone against the battering and the blitz and came through successfully, and it is only reasonable to assume that many of its industries have not yet succeeded in returning to full production.

Hon. H. K. Watson: In my opinion, the present Government of Britain is trying to run that country to a standstill.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: That might be the hon. member's opinion. He is evidently one of those individuals prepared to decry the Government of the United Kingdom simply because it does not happen to be of his

political complexion. Such an attitude is unpatriotic. We have always regarded the United Kingdom as the Mother Country that over the years has protected and assisted the Dominions. The Dominions have developed and today it is their responsibility to stand by the Mother Country. Any other attitude is very unpatriotic, and those who express other opinions can only do so because they are blinded by their own political bigotry. I have always remained loyal to the Mother of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Irrespective of what party has been in power, I have always stood up for the Empire. So I say that those people who criticise the Mother Country because the Government Party happens to be of a different political complexion from theirs are definitely unpatriotic.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What has that to do with the Bill?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: If the hon. member does not like my remarks, he need not remain in the Chamber; I have no objection to his leaving. I repeat that this Bill is merely an enabling measure. Its object is to make provision for the future in the event of the Commonwealth Government's not assuming the responsibility for the re-introduction of rationing. Although I consider I should support the measure for the time being, the Government has, in my opinion, introduced it knowing full well that we must have some form of rationing, but is not prepared to undertake the task itself. It is, however, prepared to hand the baby over to the Commonwealth. I propose to support the second reading.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [2.51]: I support the Bill, although I am very reluctant to do so. I had thought the time had arrived when we could do away altogether with the rationing of petrol and diesel oil. I still think that would have been possible had it not been for statements made on various occasions and the methods adopted by one oil company in particular and, to a lesser degree, by one or two other oil companies. However, it would now appear that rationing is again to be enforced. To my way of thinking, the object of the Bill is to prevent persons from hoarding petrol and oil. When we reflect on what has happened since June last, when the blackout occurred

on account of the coal strike, we can judge who has been responsible for the position.

Hon. H. Hearn: The strikers!

Hon. W. R. HALL: No, they were not. What is responsible for the present position is the publicity that was given to the petrol position throughout the Commonwealth of Australia and the action of the oil companies. Anyone travelling around the country knows how the present situation arose. The people were bluffed by propaganda about the shortage of petrol. It has been said that many people have been buying 44-gallon drums of petrol in large quantities from a particular oil company, although I do not know of any person who has done so. But I would not call that hoarding.

Petrol rationing was discontinued from a certain date and those people who bought since that date did so legally. The only way in which this Bill would affect them would be to render them liable to prosecution if they made a false declaration as to the stocks they held. Had petrol been distributed judiciously after rationing was lifted and if all the oil companies had fallen into line, we would not have had the present unsatisfactory position. One company, however, wanted to sell as much as it could, being hungry for profits. Its example was followed, to a lesser degree, by some of the other oil companies. I should be very sorry if we reverted to the ticket system. There is no doubt that it proved to be a farce.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: A racket.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I have known of people who sold petrol tickets at 2s. each. That is evidence of how the ticket system defeats the object of rationing petrol. What happened in the past? Thousands of tickets were illegally printed and sold on the blackmarket. I, for one, do not think that petrol rationing was taken seriously by the Commonwealth Government. My reason for saying so is that the tickets were printed on paper which was nearly as absorbent as blotting paper, nor were they marked or numbered as are, for instance, tram tickets. These are numbered and have a serial letter and therefore can be traced. It would be possible to ascertain from the records what tram tickets were sold, and on what trips they were sold, ten or 20 years ago.

The petrol tickets were quite plain and that left the way open for fraud. I sincerely hope that we shall not again have the ticket system. We must also take into consideration the cost of that system to the State and to the Commonwealth. I asked some questions recently with respect to the Liquid Fuel Control Board. The number of persons employed by the board was not warranted when one took into consideration the quantity of petrol used by the motoring public. The oil companies themselves could assist in rationing.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What do you suggest?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I suggest a card system. It would not be infallible; I do not claim that. During the past 12 months about 2,000 odd new cars have been sold in Western Australia and many purchasers of them are finding it extremely difficult to obtain petrol supplies. Regular customers of garages can do so, but some who purchased cars within, say, the last six months or so, are not recognised by some service stations as regular customers. Surely people who have spent, say, from £700 to £1,100 on motor vehicles are entitled to a reasonable ration of petrol, whether it be for pleasure or business purposes. Is it fair that they should have to go from garage to garage to get one or two gallons of petrol to run their vehicles?

I wish to see some equitable distribution of petrol, so that all owners of motor vehicles will get a fair share whether it be, as I said, for pleasure or business. I am given to understand—and I do not think the information is far wrong—that even today we are drawing on petrol which should have been reserved for the next quarter. If that is so, there will soon be a very serious shortage, unless petrol is taken out of bond to reimburse the supplies which have been sold in advance. If this is not done, we shall find ourselves in a serious predicament. This Bill has been introduced in case the Commonwealth Government does not take over the rationing of petrol.

No Government wants this baby; it is too heavy. There are likely to be too many repercussions. All the States have decided to hand over control to the Commonwealth Government, but some of them are likely to remain outside the agreement. I believe that if the people had not been panicked into

buying large stocks of petrol and holding them, there would have been no need for rationing at this stage.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Certainly not in this State.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Nearly everybody—private motorists and others—went along to garages with their 4-gallon and 8-gallon drums and tins to have them filled. Even when petrol was rationed previously many people who could not afford to pay for the extra petrol they were allowed, went to the garages on the last few days of each rationing period, when the tickets were due to expire, and bought petrol rather than allow the coupons to go to waste. They filled up what receptacles they had or found other ways of ensuring that the tickets were not wasted. I believe that even at this stage, if people were not panicked into buying, there would be no need for rationing.

There is a very interesting article in this month's issue of "Road Patrol," the official organ of the R.A.C., in which the writer says—

During the period under review the following occurred:—

(1) Stocking up by motorists, especially large users, in both metropolitan and country districts on at least two occasions for fear of a return of rationing.

(2) A very marked increase in motor transport and emergency auxiliary plants because of the coal strike.

These conditions obviously make unreliable any conclusions that may be drawn from experience over this period which we submit should be regarded as extraordinary and considered accordingly.

It is the considered opinion of my committee that the 440,000,000 gallons announced by the Federal Government as the limit for the 1949-50 period should be sufficient for the needs of commercial transport and the general motoring public, subject to the following provisos:—

(a) That the practice which obtained under rationing of permitting additional imports to cover the requirements of new registrations be maintained.

(b) Replacement through additional imports of the amount of petrol used as a direct result of the coal strike.

(c) Absence of scare statements likely to promote panic buying.

We wish respectfully to submit that the situation does not warrant the abandonment of a free market at this stage and that it would be fair and reasonable to provide for an experimental period of not less than three

months on a free market, devoid of abnormal conditions, in order to establish with certainty the amount of petrol required for normal operations.

It is suggested that if Cabinet should think fit to make such a recommendation to the Federal Government it might with advantage be coupled with an appeal for the co-operation of motorists during the experimental period and such an appeal would receive the universal endorsement of all concerned and the fullest support of my club.

I think such an appeal would receive the support of all car owners. The motoring industry is one of the largest in the Commonwealth. From the time a man purchases a vehicle until he sells it, he finds it very costly to run either for pleasure or business. Only recently the "Government Gazette" published information concerning the lifting of the control of labour costs in connection with work done on cars—they used to amount to 11s. 6d. an hour—so that the garages and service stations can now charge anything they like. Then there are the amount of sales tax paid on a new car and the Customs duties that go to the Governments of the States!

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Not to the States.

Hon. W. R. HALL: The sales tax goes to the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: So do the Customs duties.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes, that is right. What an asset motorists are to the big firms and to the Commonwealth and States generally! Curtailment in one direction means curtailment in another. We can be quite certain that if rationing is reimposed—as it will be, because there is no alternative but to support the Bill—it will have a detrimental effect on industry.

I have been given authentic figures which indicate that the paid motor drivers of Australia—I include transport drivers, taxi drivers and other employed motorists—are greater in number than the employees of all the railway systems in the Commonwealth. The motoring industry keeps a lot of people employed in this State and in Australia as a whole. I am very sorry to see the prospect of rationing having to be faced once more by motorists. Again, the cost of running the Liquid Fuel Boards in the various States must be terrific. It must have cost hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Hon. H. Hearn: They have developed some good dart players!

Hon. W. R. HALL: It is a wonder the hon. member did not visit them and learn how to play himself, though I am given to understand he is a recognised dart player.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Restrictions ought to be placed on the big man with the money.

Hon. H. L. Roche: From playing darts?

Hon. G. Bennetts: No, from getting plenty of petrol.

Hon. W. R. HALL: This is no joking matter, but a very serious one. Garages in the metropolitan area do not want to shoulder any of the responsibility now. Previously they did not mind; they thought they were home on the pig's back. But they believe it is a different proposition today. A lot of them have not co-operated in ensuring proper distribution of supplies, inasmuch as they thought rationing was to be abolished for all time. I do not want to see rationing under the coupon system reintroduced.

Hon. E. H. Gray: How are we going to do it?

Hon. W. R. HALL: There must be somebody with brains in the Commonwealth who could devise some means other than rationing by tickets which can be counterfeited. One did not have to go to Sydney if one wanted to obtain extra petrol tickets; there were plenty in Western Australia. I wonder how much has been hushed up by the fuel boards in the various States concerning things that happened with regard to petrol tickets! The authorities were very lenient with the general public because there were very few prosecutions. I venture to say that many matters have been hushed up. That sort of thing applies where there are big boards. That is one reason why I do not want to see a ticket system introduced. Questions have been asked in both Houses about the Fuel Board, and Ministers have more or less wriggled out of giving definite answers. What about the cost of the Rationing Commission, where thousands of people are employed?

There is no alternative to the Bill, which is fairly drastic. We have not had much time to consider it. It has always been the policy of the Opposition, when Labour

has been in power, to say, "We do not get time to go through the Bills." But I notice this Government is bringing down Bills in the same way, hoping the Labour representatives will be asleep while they are going through. When Mr. Kitson was Chief Secretary, there used to be a howl about Bills coming down at this stage.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: It was not due to our stonewalling.

Hon. W. R. HALL: The members of the Legislative Council did not need five hours to deal with a Bill. As Sir Charles Latham remarked last night—five hours and nothing said! I reluctantly support the Bill.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [3.13]: I support the Bill, but I would prefer to see something other than the ticket system. Because of the position regarding petrol supplies, we must do something to see that everyone gets a proper share. In the last fortnight, many people in my district have spoken to me on the question. Certain oil companies squealed and said there would be a shortage of petrol, and something would have to be done. There is no doubt that 44-gallon drums have been taken away. I have seen not one, but dozens of two, four and eight-gallon drums being filled at bowsters. Much petrol has been stored because people have been scared into it. Two friends of mine here who are petrol sellers say that the only thing to do is to re-introduce the ticket system.

Hon. L. Craig: Did they say it before?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: They say it now because they do not know how they are going to manage their supplies. It is the same in Kalgoorlie. A wood contractor there said he was never so short of petrol in his life as at present. He said, "I hope you will do something to get the ticket system brought back into operation." It can be seen, therefore, that something must be wrong. They seem to think the ticket system is the only way in which we can achieve fairness. I know there was a lot of trouble with tickets. I do not think there is one member here who did not get growls from his constituents, because they said certain people did not get enough.

I must say that every time I went to the Liquid Fuel Board I got fair consideration for the people I was representing.

The Prime Minister gave a warning about this. He understands the present world position. In this country, the population is scattered, and we must have a certain amount of petrol on hand for any emergency. We have heard it said that the person who is buying big supplies of petrol is depriving the ordinary man, who cannot afford to do that, of what he requires. The ticket system gave everyone a fair chance. Even after rationing went out, I did not use any more petrol than with rationing, and I do not now because it is too costly. We pay 3s. 7½d. or 3s. 8d. a gallon for it in Kalgoorlie, so we cannot afford to use it as a luxury. Many people in Perth, however, can afford to run around in huge cars giving about 15 miles to the gallon. They are not short of petrol, as they have the means of getting it.

Hon. E. M. Davies: That is why they do not like petrol rationing.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: That is so. It will bring them into line with the ordinary working man, and they do not like that. They want to be a step ahead of him. There may be a better scheme than the ticket system, but in any case we must have some method to give each and every person a fair whack of the petrol available, and not some for the rich and none for the poor.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [3.17]: I support the Bill. The cause of this—

Hon. A. Thomson: Why not put the blame in the right place—on the Commonwealth Government?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The hon. member can blame whom he thinks is wrong. We cannot get away from the basic facts which have caused this confusion and chaos, namely, the High Court decision, followed by the clever, insidious propaganda of private enterprise as represented by the oil companies. One big oil company stood out of the argument. The clever propaganda, through the Press and over the air, misled thousands of people in Australia; it even misled the State Government.

The Bill represents a victory over private enterprise, but unfortunately many people are suffering. The advice and tactics of private enterprise have absolutely failed, with the result that some garage

proprietors who have tried to do a fair thing are suffering today because of the ruthlessness of the people who have taken the petrol, and what amounts to dishonesty on the part of other garage proprietors who, on the advice of some of the oil companies, sold as much petrol as they could get rid of.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That was not dishonest.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They were legitimate sales, though they may have been selfish.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That selfishness has caused a lot of loss and suffering. I hope the people will learn a lesson from this and take more notice of the advice tendered weekly by the Prime Minister, so that a position such as this will not arise again. The only sound system of rationing is by means of petrol tickets, and within a fortnight of the freeing of petrol sales anyone could see that it would be necessary sooner or later to re-introduce rationing.

I am sorry that, on the information to hand, it seems that rationing cannot be introduced until the 1st November, and I think that those who have bought up and hoarded petrol should disgorge most of it in order that their fellow-citizens might share it. I support the second reading and hope that the Government will implement as quickly as possible the provision of the measure that deals with the hoarding of petrol.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South) [3.22]: I support the Bill somewhat reluctantly, as I am not keen on controls, but I realise that the distribution of petrol having been left in the hands of the wholesalers and retailers, the position in this State has become chaotic. It is a compliment to the judgment of the Commonwealth Government that, it having insisted on maintaining control until rationing was declared by the High Court to be unconstitutional, a realisation of the necessity for the re-introduction of rationing has been forced on us.

The distribution of petrol to those who are dependent upon it to earn their livelihood is what I am mainly concerned about. I trust that the Liquid Fuel Control Board, in dealing with applications for increased amounts of petrol in certain cases, will

take the real requirements of the applicants into consideration. In this regard I have in mind particularly our prospectors, who are to a great extent dependent upon petrol for their living and who, in turn, are the basis of one of the State's most valuable industries. I do not think it matters much what type of rationing we have—whether by ticket or card control—as there is always some inconvenience involved in a matter of that sort.

I am satisfied that some form of rationing is essential in order to secure an equitable distribution of available supplies of petrol to the community. I was with one individual the other day in his car, for which the allocation under rationing was in the vicinity of 15 gallons per month, and he told me that he has recently been lucky to get even two gallons per week. I feel that the present position is a reflection on the honesty of the wholesalers and retailers, because of the way they elected to sell stocks of petrol, in view of the fact that many who depend upon supplies of petrol in order to earn their living have recently been able to get little or none. I feel the action of those who sold the petrol in large quantities was tantamount to dishonesty.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [3.25]: I hope that the position in which we find ourselves today will be a lesson to those who raised the parrot cry of decontrol over the past year or so. There is no doubt that those who raised the cry, without examining the position or giving consideration to the advice tendered them by those in possession of the facts, kept up that cry until such time as the move was made to have the High Court declare petrol rationing invalid. As a result of that ruling we find the country in a serious position today. It will now be difficult for those to whom petrol is essential in order to carry on the industries of the State, to get it. That is a sad state of affairs and it has been brought about by the agitation for decontrol.

Like other members, I hate controls, but I will not allow myself to be blinded to the fact that control is still essential in some directions. Unfortunately some people have let their hate of controls blind them to the facts of the true position. That has

occurred not only with regard to petrol supplies, but also in the case of some home-building supplies. After the Government had embarked on its programme of decontrol it was forced, after lifting certain controls, to reintroduce them. Would it not have been better thoroughly to examine the position before lifting those controls in the first place? However, no-one would condemn a Government for changing its mind if it is honest enough to admit it has been wrong in the action taken.

The Government gained a lot of votes, when on the hustings, by its promises about the lifting of controls. It honoured those promises insofar as it lifted the controls from certain commodities, but the realities of the situation forced it before long to retract, and to reimpose the restrictions. I admire anyone who, when he finds himself to be in the wrong, has the courage to admit it. I am not concerned about what system of rationing is to be adopted but, when it is put into operation, I hope some consideration will be given to the question of vehicle license fees.

It may be found necessary to impose a scale of rationing as severe as that which previously operated, and some people may receive as little as two or three gallons of petrol a month. I do not think they should have to pay the full license fees for vehicles that are restricted to a very small monthly mileage. I hope the Government will not ignore that aspect of the matter, but will agree to certain reductions in the license fees of those who are denied free use of their vehicles. Something of that kind might encourage a lot of people not to use even the small ration allowed them, and the less petrol used, the more there will be available to essential users. I am afraid that, rationing having been lifted for so long and so much petrol having been used during the intervening period, it may soon be found difficult to keep even essential users supplied.

The present position illustrates how the truth was distorted by certain people in the community, who said, both publicly and privately, that there had been no extra sales of petrol as the result of decontrol. How often did we read statements of that sort in the Press, said to have been made by responsible people? In spite of that,

the man in the street knew very well what was going on, yet certain interests tried, through the Press, to justify what was happening; and they even encouraged exceptionally heavy sales of petrol.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: A lot of it has been stored away.

Hon. G. FRASER: Because of that, whether it was stored or used, it has not been available for industry. Yet, we find those people making statements of that description. It is about time they woke up to themselves and decided that in future when they deal with the public, particularly through the Press, they will let the public know the true position and not attempt to fool them, as they did.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [3.30]: It is my intention to support the Bill and I will not unduly prolong the debate. This afternoon I have heard some statements that are true and some that, in my opinion, are entirely false. It is very significant that every time we have to discuss anything such as this Bill, some members always make a tilt at those people who believe in free trading and decontrol.

Hon. G. Fraser: We believe in it just the same.

Hon. H. HEARN: I want to remind the House of one or two factors concerning the question of the limitation of petrol supplies from the standpoint of those who still believe that the decontrol of most things is the surest basis for a free Australia.

Hon. E. M. Davies: It has not been borne out by fact.

Hon. H. HEARN: When the case was heard by the High Court and petrol rationing suddenly ceased, there is no doubt that for the first two or three weeks there was no intense increase in petrol consumption. Then what happened? We had the industrial trouble in the Eastern States—No. 1. If any member, on either side of the House, can tell me that that did not have a tremendous influence on the drain upon petrol—I know it did in our own State—then I think he is begging the question. Not only did that happen but I say that the Commonwealth Government deliberately sought to unsettle the general motoring public and the users of petrol.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Stampeded them.

Hon. H. HEARN: The Commonwealth Government stampeded the general motoring public into securing as much petrol as it could. I say the Government did that deliberately because I am perfectly satisfied that the Prime Minister of Australia wanted to take control of petrol before the next Federal election. We find that in other avenues, and it has even extended as far as publicity. Yet we are supposed to think that decontrol is all wrong! From the history of the last six months, we people who believe in decontrol of most things have been proved perfectly right and correct. Therefore I say that the State Governments should do no other than they are.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They should have done it long ago.

Hon. H. HEARN: The States are seeking to meet an emergency but the final blame must still be placed upon the Federal Government because of the chaotic conditions in which we find ourselves today.

HON. E. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [3.33]: I agree that the responsibility for the conditions in which we find ourselves today must be placed with the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. E. H. Gray: No, with private enterprise.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: One of the principal policies of the Federal Government is that of organised shortages. Most previous speakers who have addressed themselves to this question have confined their attention to effects. Let us get back to causes for a moment. Mr. Davies did touch upon them and I desire to refer to one or two matters to which he made mention. We have to bear in mind that all this discussion about rationing of petrol is not due to the fact that there is any world shortage of petrol. It is not due to the fact that there is any shortage of petrol available to Australia, but it is due to the fact that the Prime Minister, in his desire to assist the questionable financial and economic policies of Sir Stafford Cripps, is slashing dollar imports into Australia. That is the real reason for it. Yet Mr. Davies would ask us to say that we should subscribe to that policy because it is patriotic!

Hon. H. Hearn: You would be called unpatriotic if you did not!

Hon. H. K. WATSON: If we do not submit to that line of thought we shall be called unpatriotic. Let us have a look at the other Empire countries and see what they are doing. Let us see what other country besides Australia is slashing imports to bolster up the financial nostrums of Sir Stafford Cripps. Is India doing it? No! Is Pakistan doing it? No!

Hon. G. Fraser: You would not expect them to, would you?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Is South Africa doing it? No! What about Canada? Is Canada doing it? No!

Hon. E. H. Gray: They are doing it in New Zealand.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Canada is a dollar country.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Canada is selling its wheat and cheese to the United Kingdom. She will not accept sterling but is insisting that the payment shall be in dollars. She could have accepted payment in sterling even if she is a dollar country. Because Canada is demanding payment in dollars, would any member say that Canada is unpatriotic? Would any member say to any British merchant who wanted his full payment of 20s. in the £ for any goods he sold, that he was unpatriotic because of that? I suggest, simply because one takes a commonsense view of the position, one cannot be called unpatriotic. The only other country that has approached Australia in its determination to stick with Sir Stafford Cripps and his policy through thick and thin, is the New Zealand Government.

The three Ministers concerned are, in my opinion, inflicting serious and grievous hardships on their respective peoples. That, in a nutshell, is the reason why we have a petrol shortage in Australia, including, of course, Western Australia. It is not due to any shortage of petrol but is simply due to the determination of Mr. Chifley that he shall maintain his organised shortages and will not permit, or not seek, a rearrangement of his financial dealings with Britain and permit of even a small amount of additional petrol coming in.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Are you speaking for the Liberal Party?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I agree with Mr. Hall that the experience in Western Australia, for the first month or a little longer

after petrol rationing was declared invalid, clearly showed that in this State, with the existing overall State supplies available, or perhaps with a very small addition, we could have got along satisfactorily without any rationing at all.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It failed in a fortnight.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: It failed when Mr. Chifley, or other interests that were keen on having rationing restored, started all sorts of furbies about rationing being reimposed. The best way to start a panic is to say that rationing is to be reimposed. If the people were secure in the knowledge that rationing would not be imposed, and the Prime Minister had made an appeal to the people to act like reasonable citizens, I think the public would have responded to it. Unfortunately the Federal Government did nothing like that, and so far as I am concerned I suggest that instead of listening to the advice of Mr. Chifley, as one member suggested, we should blame Mr. Chifley for the position in which we find ourselves today.

Hon. E. M. Davies: We have been doing that all along.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [3.40]: I shall not take up the time of the House in speaking at length in reply to the debate, except to say that we know it is essential to have some form of control. I agree with Mr. Davies that the States cannot exercise that control, which is really a Federal matter. It deals with a Federal power in that the Commonwealth imports the petrol and distributes it to the wholesalers. Members will agree that it is infinitely better that that control should be continued until the consumer actually gets his supplies. In the circumstances, the States have decided to hand over to the Commonwealth, as Mr. Davies pointed out, the power to control the retailing of petrol.

The reason for the introduction of the Bill is that the Commonwealth is not empowered to do that unless all the States vest it with the necessary authority. The matter was discussed at length yesterday and members seemed to agree that they could not accept the word of any Minister that the States would agree to bring in any legislation.

I have in mind the footwear Bill. Members were satisfied that they could not accept the statement that although the States had agreed to pass legislation, they would, in fact, do so. In view of their attitude then, members must agree with me that it is essential to pass this measure as a stand-by except with respect to the first portion of it to which effect will be given immediately. That will enable us to ascertain where the petrol within the State is located and how much is held by those who possess it. With regard to the subsequent distribution, it will be a matter for the Commonwealth to determine.

Personally I was not surprised last night when members asked for the debate on the Bill to be adjourned to enable them to look through its provisions. I trust Sir Charles Latham has looked into it and has refreshed his memory in respect of what has been done during the past few years.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You need not try to be funny!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not being funny; I am serious.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It does not sound too serious to me.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It would not; it does not matter! Sir Charles said what was proposed was entirely divorced from what the Commonwealth did in the past. On the contrary, it is entirely the same. We are handing over to the Commonwealth power to do what it did before, and it is the Commonwealth regulations that we are adopting. No doubt Sir Charles has been able to look into that phase.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I did not say that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Doubtless Sir Charles will agree with that. I also notice the absence of one hon. member who last night voiced such tremendous objections to the Bill being introduced at this stage of the session and claimed that he had not had time to look through this and other Bills that were introduced so late. He wanted the debate adjourned so that he could look through the Bill. But that very member himself introduced a Bill last night at the last minute. Not only that, but he voted in favour of the adjournment of the debate on the Bill now under discussion, and yet he is not in his seat today. He has gone away.

Hon. A. Thomson: He has gone to attend a show.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He has gone to attend a show instead of remaining here to attend to work of the whole of his constituency! He wanted the debate adjourned so that he could look into the Bill. Why did he not say he would not be here today? I do not blame him for attending the show, but his absence indicates to me that he is perfectly satisfied the Bill is all right.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Interpretation:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I thank the Minister for his references to me, but I wish he would quote what I said instead of giving the Committee his own interpretation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question is the adoption of Clause 3.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is the clause I desire to discuss. The interpretation of "invoked regulations" refers to what appears on pages 207 to 233 of the "Manual of Defence Transitional Legislation," Second Addition. The manual is published by the Commonwealth and contains the National Security (Liquid Fuel) Regulations with the omissions and amendments indicated in the schedule to the Bill. I understand there are only two copies of the manual in this State, both being in the possession of the Crown Law Department. I endeavoured unsuccessfully this morning to obtain a copy. I do not know how the trade will be able to determine what is necessary unless further copies of the manual are printed and distributed amongst them. I interpret the meaning of the reference later on in the Bill to mean that the Government will be able to make such amendments as may be necessary. I have a copy of the regulations that we worked on at the Liquid Fuel Board.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What is the date of the volume of regulations that you have? I would like to see it.

The CHAIRMAN: Does Sir Charles desire to answer the Chief Secretary's question?

Hon Sir Charles Latham: I shall—as soon as the Minister sits down!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Very well.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The copy I have is the sixth edition and is dated September, 1945, and has the printed amendments made from time to time pasted in on slips of paper.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The volume which I have contains the regulations in force on the 1st January, 1948. They appear at pages 207 to 223. Since this volume was printed, other amendments have been made; but I point out that we are adopting the regulations as printed in this volume, not as printed and amended. The regulations will be available as soon as the Commonwealth takes over the rationing. The matter was considered very carefully and members may rest assured that great care was bestowed by the draftsman on the preparation of this measure. Sir Charles Latham need have no fear that the drafting is incorrect.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Regulations:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of Subclause (4) the words "Legislative Assembly and to each member of the Legislative Council" be struck out and the words "State Parliament" inserted in lieu.

The Legislative Council takes precedence over the Legislative Assembly.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I see no objection to the alteration although I regard it as altogether unnecessary. If agreed to, it would involve the reprinting of the Bill, which would then be sent to another place and returned here. The Government is anxious that the Bill should be passed as it wishes to deal with hoarders of petrol. If it is the desire of the Committee—

Hon. W. J. Mann: It is the desire of this Committee to do the right thing.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think there is any point in placing the lower before the upper, or the upper before the lower.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We ought to adopt the proper procedure.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: When all is said and done, A comes before C. There is no object in having the Bill reprinted for pedantic reasons. I oppose the amendment.

Hon. W. J. MANN: This is not altogether a light matter. I challenge the Chief Secretary to produce any statute of this State in which the Legislative Assembly has taken precedence over the Legislative Council. The Chief Secretary made a feature of the drafting of the Bill and I am quite prepared to believe that there is no sinister motive behind this change. There is, however, clear evidence of loose drafting. No member of this Committee is desirous of holding up the measure and thus embarrassing the Government; but we think we would be remiss in our duty if we allowed this to pass unchallenged. I suggest that those responsible should be reprimanded and warned to adopt the correct procedure in future.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If it meets with the wishes of members, I shall, of course, draw the attention of the draftsman to this bad error.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope Sir Charles Latham will not persevere with his amendment. If we had continued our sitting yesterday until 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and an amendment like this had been moved, I could have understood it. But we have come here fresh today and therefore I cannot understand this objection. If Sir Charles wishes to start a row between the two Houses, here is his opportunity.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I am taking out both Houses, and mentioning members of Parliament.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so, but we would have to give reasons for the alteration. Let this go and forget about it. No one loses any caste because of this. I cannot see anything wrong with the amendment, but if we persevere with it there might be a fair sort of a go between the two places. In addition, it means reprinting and extra cost over a twopenny-half-penny matter.

Hon. W. J. Mann: And a twopenny-half-penny cost.

Hon. G. FRASER: There would also be extra work for the staff.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I point out that as soon as Parliament is prorogued there is no member of the Assembly. It does not exist because there is no Parliament pending the general election. If we get down to technicalities there is no need to send copies of the regulations to Legislative Assembly representatives because they do not exist.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They exist until their successors are known on election day.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They are paid, but they do not exist. Parliament cannot be called together because there are no members. It is prorogued. If members look at the parliamentary pensions scheme they will find the provision there is made for the same reason.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 4.0 to 4.20 p.m.

Clause 6—Invoked regulations:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: In Subclause (2) the Commonwealth Minister is mentioned as the Minister of State for Supply and Shipping, and I would like to point out that there is no such person. I think this is meant to read "the Minister for Shipping and Fuel."

The Chief Secretary: In the regulations the Minister is defined as the Minister for Supply and Shipping.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The latest Commonwealth "Hansard" which I have before me shows that the Minister for Shipping and Fuel is Hon. W. P. Ashley, and the Minister for Supply and Development is Hon. J. I. Armstrong. In the subclause, I think the Minister should be shown as the Minister for Shipping and Fuel.

The Chief Secretary: We certainly want some alteration.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think we should alter it because, if it comes to a question of law it might be a vital point.

The Chief Secretary: I will support whatever you move.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause (2) after the word "for" the words "Supply and" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of Subclause (2) after the word "Shipping" the words "and Fuel" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I draw members' attention to Subclause (4) (c). I think we should be a little more liberal than is indicated in the subclause. People are itinerant and move from place to place, and very few see the "Government Gazette." I do not know how we can give publicity other than through the "Government Gazette," but in many country places it is not seen.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I had not been given notice of this, but I do not know what else can be done.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I do not suppose it could be published in all newspapers.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The newspapers usually obtain information from the "Government Gazette." However, if we say it should be published in "The West Australian," a man who is in Port Hedland might not see a copy of that, either, and it would not be of much use. I doubt very much whether anybody would be fined if he supplied petrol in the circumstances.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: If it were enforced, it would be a little hard.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I agree, but I do not think we can do much about it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 14 to 16—agreed to.

Schedule:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the definition of "the Commonwealth Minister," the words "Supply and" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the definition of "The Commonwealth Minister," after the word "Shipping" the words "and Fuel" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That after Item 14 the following be inserted:—

14A. Regulation 34—Add the following sub-regulations:—

(3) Where the board decides to revoke a license pursuant to the provisions of this regulation, the board shall cause written notice of its decision to be given to the license holder.

(4) Within seven days of receipt of the notice, the license holder may appeal to the magistrate of a Local Court against the decision.

(5) The magistrate may confirm, reverse or vary the decision and make such order as to the costs of the appeal as he shall consider just and his determination shall be final.

This will permit of an appeal being made where a license has been revoked or refused. A similar right was not included in the Commonwealth regulations.

Amendment put and passed; the schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS.

Chief Secretary and Reserves Bill (No. 2).

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Last evening Mr. Davies, when speaking on the Reserves Bill (No. 2) raised a question on Clause 9 dealing with portions of Cockburn Sound Locations Nos. 551 and 839. The point was that the Fremantle City Council had made certain land available to the State Housing Commission as an inducement for it to build houses there. When the sale of these homes was contemplated, it became necessary to subdivide the land into blocks, and the value was fixed at £600. The hon. member wanted some information concerning that sum. I assure the hon. member that the £600 will not be added to the cost of the land, but will be spent in the making of the road.

Chief Secretary and Footwear Regulation Act Amendment Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I promised yesterday to obtain information regarding footwear legislation in the other States. The position is as follows:—

Commonwealth: Commonwealth (Import) Regulations amended Commonwealth Government Gazette No. 56, 4th August, 1949—to come into operation after three months, namely, the 4th November next.

Queensland: Law amended in 1947 and in operation.

New South Wales: No reply has been received.

Victoria: Bill embodying footwear conference resolutions now before Parliament.

Tasmania: Amendment has been recommended—approved in principle by Cabinet.

South Australia: Bill drafted embodying resolutions of conference. Anticipate before Parliament this session.

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had disagreed to the amendment made by the Council.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 10: Insert after the word "principal" in line 24, page 4, the following:—

Provided that where an agent or servant succeeds in recovering from his employer the amount of fine and costs in which he has been mulct, no conviction shall be recorded against him.

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reason for disagreeing is—

The amendment is not consistent with the preceding part of Clause 10; no provision is made for expunging a conviction from the records of the court and, if such conviction should be expunged, this should not be dependent on the ability of the defendant to recover an indemnity from the employer.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I intend to vote against the motion. The reasons given by another place may be legal, but they are not commonsense and they do not reflect very much credit on Parliament. Sooner or later some innocent person is going to have a conviction or convictions recorded against him in the charge books of the

Police Department, which will be there for all time. I discussed the matter with the Minister in another place last night, and he agreed with the principle that a conviction should not be recorded against a person who was merely conveying fish from one place to another, but said that it was rather late and there was some difficulty about framing a new provision.

However, I am not going to allow this state of affairs to exist without a protest. The fact that the Government desires that a person who has been fined shall be given the rather extraordinary opportunity of having the convictions suspended for three months in order that he may institute proceedings against the employer for the recovery of the fine and costs is a fair indication that the Government recognises such individual may easily have been guiltless. Therefore, some provision for expunging the conviction should have been included in this Bill.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: It is an offence now for anyone to be in possession of undersized fish no matter what the circumstances. This Bill is intended to give some relief to an employee of a fisherman—

Hon. W. J. Mann: A servant or agent.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. For instance, it may be the man in the market, who tells the inspector that he has just received a box of fish and states whence he received it. In that case, the person responsible for catching the fish can be traced. But if that sort of thing had been going on week after week, and the man had been selling undersized fish for the fisherman, he would be culpable and should be dealt with accordingly. Nevertheless, under this measure he would be able to recover the fine and costs from the employer. That having been done, we cannot very well do any more.

The amendment is not logical, because it is necessary for a conviction to be recorded before a man can proceed to collect from the employer. Let us take the position of a man who is deliberately carting undersized fish. He refuses to give the name of his employer and is duly fined. A few days afterwards he goes to the police station and says, "I have collected my fine from the employer. Please strike out the conviction." Would that not be a simple

way of defeating the purpose of this Act, namely, to stop the taking and killing of undersized fish?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Does this refer to undersized fish for sale or for use as a fertiliser?

The Chief Secretary: It does not matter what it is for.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You are not allowed to catch them.

The Chief Secretary: You would not have any fish in Esperance harbour if it were allowed!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: That is what I was thinking about. I was there recently with the fisheries inspector and I saw a man taking away two bags of undersized skip-jack. He told me he was obtaining them as fertiliser for his garden. I do not know whether he knew he was doing wrong. I told the inspector about it and he did not seem to bother.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

BILL—FOOTWEAR REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—LOAN (No. 2), £11,720,000.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [4.55]: I do not intend to say much about the Bill; but as the Government is dealing in such a large amount of money, and as this is the last time I shall be able to speak in a general way for about 10 months, I would like to ask whether some of the funds to

be made available can be spent in my province. I consider that quite a lot of money was wasted in the recent cartage of tomatoes and the bringing in of second-class traffic from the Eastern States, which resulted in a certain loss to our Railway Department. All the traffic that came from the Eastern States was carted by road and was second-class traffic.

Some of the money mentioned in the Bill will, I hope, be spent in giving greater assistance to prospectors, who are the means of developing the outback parts of the State and bringing in revenue. I am greatly concerned about the need for spending more money on road-making. I know that the sums provided for main roads come from the Commonwealth Government, but I hope that something will be done to roads in outback districts to encourage decentralisation. I am thinking particularly of the roads between Norseman and Kalgoorlie, and between Esperance and Ravensthorpe. I would like to see money allocated for additions to the Kalgoorlie hospital, which are badly needed.

I would also like to see a high school provided at Esperance, and I am greatly concerned about the need for a flat rate for water for people in rural areas and on the Eastern Goldfields. I noticed a report in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of Tuesday last in which it was indicated that at a meeting of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the delay in the completion of workers' homes on the Goldfields. Both the Kalgoorlie council and the Boulder council, as well as the local road board and the 2nd/28th Battalion have built many homes on the Goldfields, and I hope that the Government scheme will be speeded up. The Government made many promises during the last election as to what would be done with regard to schools and hospitals, and I hope those promises will be honoured.

Half of Kalgoorlie is sewered already but, in spite of repeated requests to the Government for assistance to finish the job, so far no further funds have been made available. I hope the Government will now provide the necessary money for this purpose. Something should be done to improve the school accommodation at Norseman and arrangements should be made to clean out the silt from the dam there. I have re-

ceived letters from the Yilgarn Road Board and the Mingenew Road Board on the subject of soil erosion.

I am informed that the members of the Soil Conservation Committee who recently visited those districts gave valuable advice, but the opinion of the people in that area seems to be that they are expected to do too much of the necessary work with their own ordinary farm plant. Soil erosion is becoming a serious problem in many parts of the State and, in the opinion of these two road boards, assistance should be given, through the making available of staff to give advice and of plant to be used on the work, in an endeavour to curtail the effects of soil erosion. I hope the Government will do something to assist in this direction. I support the Bill.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East). [5.2]: This will probably be the last occasion upon which I will speak in this House. I desire briefly to touch on a matter to which I have frequently said greater attention should be paid. I notice that £50,000 is provided in the Loan Estimates for pine planting and forest regeneration. At present in Western Australia we are cutting our timber faster than it can be grown. It is easy to visualise that in the not far distant future there will be a considerable shortage of timber in this State. I think it is up to the Government, through our schools, to encourage and cultivate in the young people of the community a genuine spirit of silviculture and forest regeneration.

We should impress on our farmers that they should make a practice of planting a small area of trees each year on their properties. I have on more than one occasion referred to the anomalous position that arose when Australia, in years gone by, imported wattle bark from South Africa for tanning purposes, though the seed of that wattle was originally obtained by South Africa from Australia. Again I urge the Government, through the Education Department, to encourage the planting of trees. I believe that for every tree that is cut down today another should be planted for the benefit of future generations.

I congratulate the Government on many of its proposed works. In spite of all the difficulties with which it has been faced,

on the whole it has done an excellent job. I extend to you, Sir, to members and the staff of Parliament my thanks for the courtesy that has always been extended to me here, and I trust that the State of Western Australia will continue to prosper.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.5]: Members representing the West Province are particularly interested in this measure, which includes an item of £1,040,000 for the provision of works for the improvement of harbour and river facilities, particularly at Fremantle. This is an ambitious programme and I hope that the Government will be successful in its plans in this regard. Irrespective of Party, we all desire to see governmental works carried out efficiently and successfully. Those of us interested in harbour extension have a particular interest in the proposed plans for the extension of Fremantle harbour.

Some concern has been expressed to me by residents of Riverside-drive, East Fremantle. I do not know whether State or Commonwealth officers were responsible, and the householders do not seem to know much about it; but they have told me that their cottages were inspected and measured and that the officer said it was proposed to widen Riverside-drive and that it would be necessary to resume cottages and other buildings in that area. It may have been a State officer acting on behalf of the Commonwealth, because that road leads to H.M.A.S. "Leeuwin," the headquarters of the Navy in this State.

If resumption is necessary there to widen that road, I hope accommodation will be found for those whose homes are to be resumed; but if the road was wide enough for the heavy traffic during the war years, I do not think it should be necessary for it to be widened during the present housing shortage. If that resumption is proposed by the Commonwealth, I would like the Chief Secretary to make representations to the Federal members who represent that area. It may be a small matter, but it is of vital importance to the persons whose homes are involved. I understand that it will affect also a new factory that has not long been in operation. I support the Bill.

HON. R. M. FORBEST (North) [5.10]: I was interested in the speech of the Chief Secretary when he dealt with the Loan Estimates. I notice that an item of £417,000 is shown as the loss on the State Shipping Service. That sounds a great amount but it was stated that £213,000 was accounted for by the major overhaul of one vessel. We look upon the State Shipping Service as a public utility and not as a State trading concern, because its function is to serve the North-West coast. The State vessels cannot be run at a profit at the present time when there is such a big debt owing on the service.

If the Government intends to run that service as a State trading concern, the sooner it gets rid of the ships the better. In order to make up some of that loss the Government has raised freights by as much as 100 per cent. in some cases. A population of about 6,000 living in the North-West is expected to pay an increase in freights amounting to £100,000 per annum, which works out at about £15 per head, whereas for the rest of the State, with a population of perhaps 400,000, the increases in freight will amount to about £500,000, or £1 5s. per head.

It is extraordinary that whenever the Government requires money it imposes hardship on the North-West. We know that the price of wool is high at present, but we were surprised when the Government raised the freight on wool from 17s. 6d. per bale to £1 17s. 9d. per bale, an average increase of £1 per bale on all wool carried by the State Shipping Service. Members will have read in the Press recently about the shearing shed at Corunna Downs Station having been burnt to the ground. That is the second shearing shed in two years burned in that district.

We have a good idea who was responsible for the destruction of those sheds, and I hope the Government will make a full investigation into the incident of a few weeks ago where the shearing shed and the whole of the equipment was destroyed. Members are aware that two years ago the shearing shed at Boodarrie Station was burned down in similar circumstances, though it was supposed to be an accident. However, when sheep are brought out of a shed alight, kerosene having been sprinkled over them, we know that wool does not ordinarily burn

in that way. That shed was deliberately burnt down and now there has been another such occurrence. I trust the Government will have a full investigation of what happened at Corunna Downs.

We were disappointed that the Government did not see fit to lift housing restrictions in the North-West. The more houses that are built in that part of Western Australia, the better it will be for everyone. The people are leaving the North-West and statistics show that the population is becoming less every year. I claim, and I think every North-Westerner claims, that the Government should give every encouragement to house-building in the North-West. The other day I received a letter from a person who lives in the country. This person has a block of land in Cottesloe and he forwarded me a copy of the letter he received from the State Housing Commission. This man wishes to build flats on his block of land and I would like to read to the House the conditions regarding that permit.

The Chief Secretary: What is the date of the letter?

Hon. R. M. FORREST: The date is omitted, but it has only recently been sent to me. The conditions under which the permit would be granted were:—

(a) A limit of £1,150 per flat, including architect's fees and other costs and excluding value of the land.

(b) Rent proposed to be charged to be approved by the State Housing Commission and such rent to be maintained during the currency of building controls.

(c) State Housing Commission to nominate the tenants.

I think that is carrying things a bit too far. I can imagine how many private people would be prepared to build flats under those conditions! Surely private people who receive permits to build flats should have the right to say who will live in those flats when they are completed. It means that the Government, or the State Housing Commission, would like people to build flats and then have the say as to who shall occupy them. Maybe some undesirable people would be put into the flats, and that is definitely not right. I support the Bill.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.18]: I would like to congratulate the Government on many of the plans that it

has for the future improvement of this State, and I think the Government has some major projects in front of it. The Government must also be congratulated for having carried through its plans and activities during the last three years. It is obvious that the Government has a knowledge of the State's needs, because that is reflected in the loan measure which have been presented to us. There are a number of interesting points that can be discussed in regard to the Loan Bill, and first of all I would like to have a word or two to say about the railways and tramways.

We all know that at present there is a suggestion to spend large sums of money either upon the rehabilitation of our railways or the alteration of our present gauge to a uniform one. It is interesting to see in the Bill that there is provision for £2,500,000 for rollingstock and £600,000 for additions and improvements to opened railways. Quite a lot can be done to improve our present railway system without spending vast sums of money upon it. I would like to explain the difficulties that still confront the traveller to this State from the Eastern States. I wonder whether some co-operation of railway services in the various States, and with the Commonwealth, could be arranged.

It is quite certain that the introduction of the central rail control, as is contemplated for the Bunbury route, will provide tremendous improvements, and it is a pity that it is not also proposed to adopt the central rail control method with regard to the Perth-Kalgoorlie section because that would lessen considerably the time taken for that journey. From inquiries I made I learned that because of the absence of this central control the express stops 40 times between Perth and Kalgoorlie. Each stop is necessary because of the present electrical staffing arrangements. I also understand that each of these stops takes up at least seven or eight minutes and therefore it is more than likely that between five and six hours are occupied purely in carrying out a system which has been with us for so many years and which is now rendered obsolete.

If this control system could be introduced it is possible that the journey from here to Kalgoorlie, even under present conditions, could be carried out in 12 hours.

The journey from Kalgoorlie to Port Pirie could be speeded up from something like 38 hours to 26 hours. Then, surely the delay which occurs in allowing passengers to travel through South Australia could be eliminated. Under present conditions the traveller reaches Adelaide at 1.15 and does not depart for Victoria until 6.40 p.m. It is interesting to see, after a period of years, the way the travelling has altered. When I first travelled on that train, in 1919 and subsequent years, it was a train used mostly by businessmen. Today there is hardly a businessman using that train due to the fact that air services take business people so much more quickly to their destinations. Surely it would be possible, when improvements to the system are made, to so reduce the travelling time on the trains as to make them once more an appealing proposition to the businessman.

When travelling back in this direction one finds that there is a considerable delay of four hours in Adelaide and another delay, sometimes three or four hours, in Kalgoorlie. Then, because of our lack of modern methods, it takes the traveller eight hours to travel from Merredin to Perth—a distance of 160 miles. In that distance of 160 miles—coming back to my first point—there are something like 20 stopping places for the express. Even without the expenditure of large sums of money, surely it should be possible considerably to improve the service by the introduction of some modern methods, plus the elimination of delay.

The second point of interest is to see the expenditure on tramways. I wonder whether it would not be possible to devise a scheme whereby we could get rid of the queuing of large numbers of people waiting for busses to take them to their suburban destinations. I doubt whether any large city could continue to carry out our methods. Would it not be much better to permit the busses to travel from one side of the metropolitan area to the other—west to east, or north to south? We could possibly extend that and permit certain busses to travel from east to north or south. That would give them a clear run through the entire city and they could pick up people at certain, or possibly numerous, stops.

At the moment there is a terrific bottleneck of traffic because busses travel up William-street and turn into St. George's-terrace to wait for passengers. The people waiting for busses at that point probably comprise the larger section of the population in the metropolitan area. That state of affairs would not be allowed to continue in a city which had possibly double the population of Perth. Consideration should be given to introducing a system of traffic control which would allow a much more free entrance and exit of busses to and from the city.

Every traveller who has visited other parts of the Commonwealth will recollect that in this State the traffic lights have still not been installed. It always amazes me when I pass through the city about meal time—either about midday or in the evening—just as business is ending, to see a sort of free-for-all occur with the pedestrians and motorists because the man on point duty has possibly looked at his watch and decided to go off. I am quite certain that the introduction of traffic lights would instil into the minds of the public the need to stop at cross-sections.

Neither the pedestrians nor the motorists in this State have really learned the value of safety in driving. It would be interesting to find out the number of actual fatalities that have occurred at street crossings around the metropolitan area. I am quite certain that because we have not yet, as a people, learned to stop at these danger points, the number of accidents has been large. If we could introduce traffic lights in the centre of the city for a start, it would bring a consciousness to the mind of the public of the need for stopping and for control at city crossings.

There are one or two other interesting matters in regard to the Loan Bill and I would draw attention to the item of £150,000 for the purchase of a grain distillery at Collie. I trust that the Government realises the immense value of continuing with the suggested plan of conversion of our wheat into another cereal such as edible rice. All our surplus could be dealt with in this way and meet a need which exists in so many other countries for this article of food.

Hon. L. Craig: Do you think they will accept the wheat product when rice returns to the market?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I believe that the whole plan which has been approved and accepted and which has worked out so well in other parts of the world, particularly in America, has proved that the cost of growing rice will always be so high that there will be a shortage for many years to come. There is a vast population looking for rice which can be sold to them at a price considerably below that at which they can produce it in their own country.

Hon. L. Craig: Has this wheat product the same food content as rice?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I have eaten it and it is very difficult for me to tell the difference between it and rice.

Hon. L. Craig: What about its food content?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: They are both cereals and the flavour of the new rice leaves very little to be desired. I believe it is something which would earn for this State a considerable number of dollars and bring a palatable food to a vast number of people who today are short of the commodity. The market for such rice is not a limited one. Although it would appeal at first tremendously to the Philippines, there is that vast army of people living in India who desire more rice than they can purchase today. I think the price of our commodity could compete extremely favourably with anything that is produced in the United States of America, for sale in the areas I have mentioned. I do not think we would run into any dollar problems—

Hon. L. Craig: We would now.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: —on account of the devaluation of the pound sterling, because we would bring back to our State some dollars. But even with the reduction of the pound in dollar value, there will still be a large market for the quantity that Western Australia can produce. I hope the Government will interest itself in this matter, which will necessitate working in association with the Australian Wheat Board and the Commonwealth Government. However, I believe we have, in Western Australia, something here that could develop into one of our major industries. I think I have said sufficient without giving other details which I have acquired on this question, because all I desire, at the moment

is to interest the Government in the tremendous possibilities this particular scheme offers.

I notice the sum of £5,000 is provided for the College of Agriculture. I admit that I am not au fait with the details and the whole of the ramifications of research in agriculture in this State, but I would like to see some day not only the College of Agriculture expanded, but an actual department of research established similar to the Waite Institute in South Australia. The research which has already been done in agriculture in this State has been of immense value and of tremendous interest to many other parts of the world. I believe, if our officers were given a research department completely free from the necessity of making research into our actual needs, that when research was undertaken it would receive even wider acknowledgment throughout agricultural research departments in other parts of the world.

In my opinion, the work which has been done already by Dr. Bennetts on hyperoestræmia, which has developed from feeding on our pastures, has been recognised throughout the world as of an extremely high standard, and I would like eventually to see his achievement given the recognition it deserves, and a department set aside purely for research. I could speak on a number of items under this heading, but I think those I have dealt with are the ones which are of the most outstanding interest to me personally and I trust that they have been of interest to members generally.

There is one matter that is giving me considerable concern which I would like to discuss with members of this House. It should probably be mentioned that it is purely a financial one, and I therefore feel justified in referring to it. I would like to draw members' attention to the fact that the work of Governments has increased tremendously in the last few years. War has brought about a tremendously difficult state of affairs which has resulted in Governments and Government departments taking an ever-increasing part in the communal life. This is adding to the burden of Government departments in a way which we have never before contemplated.

Even during this session I have seen these burdens growing upon members of the Government. I have seen men whom we have chosen to lead us put to physical and mental strain which I do not think is justified. I have seen men who have obviously been straining to do the work which is necessary in their departments to bring to Parliament measures for improvement in conditions generally, and those Bills have given evidence of the work which these men have done. I have then seen these men spend long hours in order to ensure that these measures promoted the volume of discussion which they felt was necessary in order that the Bill should eventually pass through Parliament. In between this work, which is strenuous enough, I find members of the Government being called upon to travel to distant parts of the State to meet deputations, open bazaars, or do any other type of work which they may be called upon to undertake by their constituents or, in fact, by the constituents generally of all electorates.

I do not think that the strain of this sort of work can go on indefinitely, and I would appeal to the Government and members of Parliament generally to take stock of the need for an increase in the number of Ministers or the appointment of junior Ministers, whichever may be considered the wiser, or the appointment of committees to assist Ministers in order that we do not see repeated that which I have already seen in the years I have been in this House—men who have done this work actually destroying their physical health in the interests of the community.

Personally, I consider that we, as thinking members of Parliament, should get together and discuss whether there is not some better way in which our talents can be used in the public interest without calling upon a certain number of men to sacrifice themselves physically and mentally. I believe the time has arrived when we should say that there shall no longer be any question of those appointed as full Ministers handing out portion of their salaries so that men or women may be appointed Honorary Ministers, to do very much the same class of work. I do not think the public any longer expects us to do that sort of thing. If we genuinely accept what we all know is true, that the work of government has

increased tremendously, we must take some new measures to meet the position and, in so doing, I believe we should receive the approval of the public.

I suggest that we should not use one man, as we are using the Chief Secretary, and put him under the strain to which he has been subjected in this last week of having to present every Bill to this House because one Minister is absent on account of having already overworked himself. If this House is to continue, then Ministers must receive more support from members, which could be done by allowing them to do some of the work or by the appointment of junior Ministers. As a result of the present system, we realise that there exists amongst members generally a certain amount of dissatisfaction because we feel that we have to a large extent been dissociated from those of our own Party. We should not have that feeling. We ought to feel that we are in a position to offer our services. Because we have been elected by the people as members, we should be able to offer our services to the Ministers and the departments requiring our assistance.

I speak quite seriously when I say we have to take stock of the position, realising that the present state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue, that the work has increased so greatly and that we cannot ask men to carry this burden for very long periods without taking too big a toll of their physical reserves. This sort of thing is happening, not only here, but also in Parliaments and Governments almost throughout the world, and it is becoming an accepted fact that a man who holds a high office has not long physically to remain in office.

One expresses amazement at times that certain individuals have been able to carry the burden of office over a long period, but this is possible because they are men of a particular temperament. Office should not be possible only to men of that temperament; it should be possible to all who have been elected to sit in Parliament, and they should not be called upon to sacrifice themselves unduly, either financially, physically or mentally, in the service of the Parliament and the State.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.44]: I take this opportunity to make a few remarks on the Bill mainly to congratulate the Government upon this evidence of its long-range planning for the improvement of many of the services scattered throughout the State. It has been said that this is a record Loan Bill for its financial magnitude. I think it can be equally well said that it is also a record so far as it covers the whole of the State and envisages projects that, when time and circumstances have permitted of their being brought to fruition, will be greatly appreciated and will prove to be advantageous to the State.

Hon. G. Fraser: A lot on paper, but not carried out.

Hon. W. J. MANN: It is better to have them on paper than not at all. Some of these items appear for the first time. If the hon. member will cast his mind back, he will recall that quite a number of these items have been long sought and that there was nothing to prevent other Governments from including them in the Loan Bills, even though they were only appearing on paper. It is better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all. I have not hesitated to criticise the present Government. I believe even the Chief Secretary will agree with that remark.

The Chief Secretary: Quite.

Hon. W. J. MANN: However, it is our right and privilege to criticise, and we do it with the best intentions. I am not going to be behind, either, when it comes to offering a Government my congratulations on the work it has done. In the aftermath of all wars right through history, the task of governing a country has always proved very difficult, and I believe it has been extremely difficult since the end of the recent war in particular.

Hon. G. Fraser: You did not think that three years ago.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Let the hon. member state where I gave voice to anything of that sort. He would have a job to find any statement of mine that did not give credit when credit was due, even to the Government that the hon. member supported. The present Government has experienced very difficult conditions, much more difficult than those that confronted its predecessors, and has made a valiant attempt to achieve something worth while.

Reference has been made by Dr. Hislop to the position at what was intended to be the power alcohol plant at Collie. That plant, through no fault of the State Government, has stood idle for quite a long time, but we are hopeful that it will now accomplish all that has been promised. I have no knowledge of the food value of the synthetic rice proposed to be manufactured there, but have been told that if it were put before me, together with a bowl of real rice, I would have some difficulty in deciding which was which. If we can reach that standard, it will be very helpful.

I am glad that the Government has interested itself in the purchase of the flax mill at Boyup Brook. We have proved that we can produce flax of very high quality, and we have the technicians there who, if assisted and encouraged, can develop the industry into something of appreciable size that will be able to compete with the products of other countries. We can certainly turn out a product that is equal in every respect to, if not better, than that of a great many other States. On the question of harbour and river improvements, I am glad to see that the Bunbury harbour is at last to receive some real improvement. The efforts in the past have been more or less piecemeal and, in my opinion, were doomed to failure. The new plan is very much more likely to give us a worthwhile harbour. No mention is made of a harbour at Busselton or Flinders Bay, but possibly these may be provided for in Item 11, "Improvements to Harbours and Rivers." I hope that is so.

The day is not far distant when Flinders Bay will once more be used as a harbour. I recollect in the early days of the timber industry that one scarcely ever went to Flinders Bay without seeing one or two ships loading timber. Those days probably will not return, but we may see the day when the produce of the rich area, extending back towards Busselton and to Nannup and Albany, will be exported from Flinders Bay. An excellent harbour could be formed there with the advantage of ample deep water close to the shore. The difficulties to be found in other ports of the South-West do not exist at Flinders Bay.

I wish to add a word or two to what Dr. Hislop said about research stations. I hope the next research station to be estab-

lished will be in the lower South-West, because that is where one is most urgently required. I hope, too, that the question of soil erosion will not be allowed to drop, as there is ample room for research in that connection. In the South-West we have not much cause to complain about soil erosion, but later on we may have as regards water erosion. That is a question to which the Government might give attention. I support the Bill.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [5.53]: I, like other members, wish to congratulate the Government on the schedule of works set out in the Loan Bill. I shall refer to one or two matters of intense interest to metropolitan members who, as my friend Mr. Bennetts said, represent big business. First, I wish to say how delighted we are to see that a sum of money is being provided for the metropolitan power and gas scheme. In that connection I would say that private enterprise during the last few months has borne a heavy burden owing to the breakdown occasionally of the power supply.

The very fact that employers will still have to engage in business over such a long period before we reach security in regard to power supply speaks well for the tolerance of industry; while the further fact that employers and employees have been able to get together, resolve their differences and continue working notwithstanding the continued interruptions, in almost total employment, reflects great credit upon both employers and employees.

Hon. E. M. Davies: The lion laid down with the lamb!

Hon. H. HEARN: Yes. That is supposed to be the gateway to heaven! As I said last night, it is reiterated so often that every man who employs labour must of necessity be a rogue and vagabond. That is the theory to which my friend Hon. George Bennetts subscribes. However, during the past few months the employers have stood up to their obligations and have received the co-operation of their employees. I would like to pay tribute to all who made it possible to bring about that state of affairs.

With regard to the provision of £50,000 for pine planting, purchase of land and forest regeneration, I spoke last year about the value of our pine plantations to the

State. I wish that we could have many more, as I think that in the coming year we will not be facing the same difficulties as confronted us last year. That is because of the influx of migrants. Seeing that we will have more labour available, we shall be able to proceed with a more vigorous policy of planting the necessary and vital softwoods which we need so urgently and which posterity will also require.

We are at present just beginning to reap the harvest of the foresight of previous Governments in planting these pines. My own company is constantly using pine which grew in the Mundaring district. It is pleasing to me to see the log come from Mundaring and reduced to plywood in my own works at Welshpool. I also note that a considerable sum of money has been put on one side for the development of the State Saw Mills and the purchase of plant. In these days that is, in my opinion, all to the good. The State Saw Mills have done a wonderful job and their service to the business interests of the State during the war years and since has been marvellous. I am glad the Government is alive to the fact that it is necessary to keep this State enterprise right up to date, as it stands well in competition with outside companies.

I also notice that a sum of money has been allocated for the development of the Welshpool undertakings. I congratulate the Government upon the successful development of those industries, and I also pay a tribute to the previous Government that initiated the scheme. We must face up to our responsibilities with regard to secondary industries and the Welshpool factories have made a considerable contribution in that respect. Realising as I do the extreme urgency of our housing problems, I would point out that the Government must do something as early as possible to hasten the release of permits for industrial buildings. Anything that can be done to encourage the expansion of our secondary industries will bring in a harvest of reward in the next few years. Industry generally is very disturbed at the fact that for the moment all industrial permits have practically ceased. I hope that very soon the position will be eased. I support the second reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [6.1]: I do not propose to take up much time in replying to the debate or to deal with all the matters that have been raised, because I think most of them were fully covered in my opening remarks. There are however, one or two subjects to which I would like to refer.

The unfortunate happenings in connection with the burning down of the shearing sheds in the Pilbara district were referred to by Mr. Forrest, who asked that a full investigation be made. I would like to remind members that that is done automatically, and I have not the slightest doubt that the people making this investigation know all about it. But knowing about an offence is one thing and bringing the offender to justice is another. It is a question of obtaining the necessary evidence and supporting a case in court. The hon. member need not fear, however, that the Government, through its proper officers, has not already acted as far as it can with a view to bringing to justice those responsible.

With regard to the raising of freights, I would point out that the freights on the coast are nothing like as high as those elsewhere. The Government is fully alive to the fact that the State Shipping Service is a Government instrumentality and not a profit-making concern. Unfortunately the losses are very great. However, we cannot carry goods up North for nothing. Dr. Hislop referred to the distillery at Collie. Negotiations in that respect have been taking place for some time and have only just recently been finalised. The property is being purchased for the purpose of manufacturing synthetic rice, and we hope that the negotiations will result in a plant for that purpose being established.

Considerable research in agriculture is being carried out; but I would remind members that we have a population of only 500,000 and that we have a tremendous amount to do in the way of research, without sufficient means or population to do it all. We are doing as much as we can in the circumstances. I do not wish to offend any members by not referring to matters they have mentioned, but I did not take full notes of them. I would like to refer

to Mr. Thomson's remarks about the importance of reforestation. I can assure the hon. member that that matter is well in hand, and as far as possible the Forests Department sees that as many trees are put in as are taken out. I think that in some other debate I mentioned that the new mills are being planned on the basis that for every tree cut another will be planted. That is the general policy, and the department is very much alive to the extraordinarily great value of reforestation and the need for proper control of the cutting of timber.

I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating Mr. Thomson on his very many years of service to the State.

Members: Hear, hear!

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Both in this House and elsewhere he has been a man who, without fear or favour, has expressed his thoughts; and that is what we all want. Perhaps we do not like to hear them sometimes, but it is men of that type, who will express their thoughts fearlessly, that we need. I sincerely trust he will have many years in which to enjoy life away from the difficulties, the hard words and the hardships of Party politics. I think we can say that Mr. Thomson has served the State and his electors well, and that he retires with the goodwill of every member of this Chamber.

Members: Hear, hear!

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: It is unfortunate we have to say au revoir to members, but it is only right that we should not expect them to continue when they have really earned retirement.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act Amendment.

2, Marketing of Eggs Act Amendment (No. 2).

Without amendment.

BILL—APPROPRIATION (No. 2).*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [6.10]: I was hoping the Bill would come on some days earlier so that we could debate it.

The Chief Secretary: We have plenty of time.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Bill gives members an opportunity to express their ideas, not only in connection with their electorates, but also on the trade, management and conditions of the State generally. As members know, I am keenly interested in the welfare of the farmers, the flour business and the bread industry. I have of recent weeks been expecting members representing the farming interests to speak to me about an important happening with respect to the export of flour to Malaya.

As we know, the Malay States are at our backdoor. There has been a sharp decrease in our export of flour there. For the year ended June, 1948, we exported 2,725,090 centals, valued at £5,419,000. In 1949, the flour exported from the Commonwealth was 1,939,291 centals at a value of £3,999,000, or a decrease of 785,799 centals, valued at £1,420,000. That is a serious menace to Australia, and to Western Australia in particular. We have to watch that the decrease does not affect Singapore. The position there is much different. In 1948 there were 86,416 centals of flour exported to a value of £166,000, while to June, 1949, there were 298,731 centals exported to a value of £610,000, or an increase in value of £444,000.

I give that information so that I can draw attention to what has taken place since September of this year. In "The West Australian" of the 8th September there appeared a letter from that watchdog of the Wheat Board and the farmers, Mr. Teasdale, in which he drew attention to the fact that Canada was exporting flour to Malaya. From other sources I have learned that the Canadian millers are exporting flour at 5s. a ton less than we can. Mr. J. S. Teasdale, the growers' representative on the Australian Wheat Board, pointed out in his letter that the Canadian Government had abandoned the system of

Government procurement and, in consequence, trade in flour would revert on or about the 1st December to pre-war commercial usages. He then pointed out that this State was in a favourable geographical situation, compared with the Eastern States, and that shipping freights were about £1 a ton lower to Singapore from here than from Melbourne.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Before tea I was referring to a letter written by Mr. Teasdale, the Western Australian representative on the Wheat Board, with regard to the threat to this State's exports to Malaya. I am hopeful that as the result of my remarks tonight on this subject, which is of such importance to every member and to every Western Australian wheatfarmer, sufficient interest will be aroused to ensure that action is taken to meet this danger to our export trade. Mr. Teasdale's letter continued:—

Realising this, Eastern States interests have been endeavouring during the past two months to make arrangements which might result in Western Australia being hindered in the natural development of a post-war trade of the utmost value to the State. The first move was to make representations to Malaya to continue Government-to-Government trading or, alternatively, for trade to be conducted through a very restricted number of importers at the Malayan end and only one supplier at this end. With the utmost definiteness and some truth, Malaya replied that wheat was no longer in short world supply and that therefore there was no justification for governmental procurement. Nor could Malaya give support to a monopolistic tendency in trade by limiting it to a restricted number of importers. Another important aspect was that customers in Malaya placed great value on brands as a guarantee of quality. Chinese merchants in Singapore had always emphasised this point, but during the war specific brands had to give place to a neutral brand which, of course, gave no indication which mill a particular bag of flour came from. West Australian brands had earned an excellent standing prior to the war and this created a guarantee of continuity of business. Canadian millers were thrusting into the Singapore market with flour slightly cheaper than the general run of Australian, but even more important than slight price variation, was the fact that the Canadians were meeting the customer's demand for specific brands. If Canada were given sufficient time and opportunity, a market capable of expansion would be largely lost to Western Australia. Western Australian millers, Mr. Teasdale continued, were well aware of the position.

Having been pampered by wheatgrowers, however, for ten years through the Wheat Board conducting overseas selling for them, at the cost of the growers, they appeared partly to have lost that facility for vigorous salesmanship they previously possessed. At the moment, positive attempts were being made in the Eastern States to pass sales of flour through a bottle-neck at the Australian end with the object of:

(1) Selling on a c.i.f. basis instead of f.o.b. selling would automatically give Western Australia its natural freight advantage as a bargaining counter.

(2) Limiting West Australian trade to the same proportion as applied before the war when, by reason of scarcity and irregularity of ships on the west coast it was hard to develop the Malayan trade.

(3) Continuing the flour trade on the basis of neutral brands.

It is hardly necessary for me to emphasise the extreme importance to West Australia's future economy of the development of active trade relations with the teeming millions of people to the north. The first necessity for such development is a regular sequence of ships, fortnightly or weekly, if possible. Flour is about the only commodity we have of sufficient volume and freight-earning capacity to form the basis for trade in less weighty lines of produce. It is therefore to be hoped that the West Australian Government and the Flour Millers' Association will lose no time in getting busy. We West Australians have to do this job ourselves. Neither Eastern States millers nor the Canadians will help us. On the contrary, they will be ruthless and skilful competitors.

That was replied to by Mr. C. H. Merry, secretary of the W.A. Flour Millers' Association, in "The West Australian" of the 16th September, about a week later. I take no part in the argument between these two men, though I think Mr. Teasdale's statement was correct, and I do not altogether agree with what Mr. Merry said. I am merely placing the arguments of these gentlemen before the House. Mr. Merry in his letter to "The West Australian" said—

In "The West Australian" of September 8, you published a statement by Mr. J. S. Teasdale on the subject of "Flour Trade with Malaya." It is unfortunately true that the Malayan trade with Western Australia may be seriously curtailed, but not for the reasons given by Mr. Teasdale. Millers in Western Australia can stand up to competition from Eastern Australia given equal conditions, but this has been denied to them by successive Governments in Western Australia.

In other States railway freight on export flour is calculated on the full distance from wheat siding to mill and from mill to port with a small break-of-journey charge, whereas

in Western Australia two separate railrage calculations are made, first on the wheat from siding to mill, and secondly on the flour from mill to port. There is a small rebate of 12½ per cent. on the mill-to-port section, but the net effect of the West Australian system is to place West Australian millers at a disadvantage of 8s. (average) a ton. The position has been accentuated by the two railrage increases in September, 1948, and August, 1949.

For over 25 years millers have sought redress of this anomaly, but without success. It is admitted that millers have been able to make reasonable profits on export flour during the war and post-war periods, but there has been no competition and the disability to which the industry has been subjected has been recognised by the Australian Wheat Board and partially allowed for in the price paid by the board for flour.

Under open competition, which is imminent, millers in Western Australia will lose this small allowance and will be compelled to carry the increased freight tax imposed by the Government railways. Unless prices are adjusted, another burden they will have to carry is a lower return for mill offal in Western Australia by comparison with the main flour exporting States, Victoria and New South Wales. The price of mill offal in Victoria is £11 1s. 6d. a ton and in Western Australia £10 2s. 9d. The difference of 18s. 9d. is equivalent to 8s. 3d. a ton of 2,000 lbs. of flour against the West Australian industry.

Thus the West Australian Government railways and the Prices Control Commissioner between them will face the responsibility of placing the export flour industry in a position where it cannot compete. Any falling off in flour exports would greatly affect the amount of shipping space available for export to Malaya of fruit, vegetables, livestock and other products which now depend on flour forming the bulk cargo.

The adoption by the Wheat Board of an f.o.b. basis of quoting flour, as suggested by Mr. Teasdale, would at first sight appear to be desirable from the point of view of West Australian millers as it would give them the benefit of the shipping freight differential now existing. However, it is not thought that the present margin is likely to be maintained and, before advocating an f.o.b. basis, millers are, therefore, going carefully into the position as it is possible that the c.i.f. basis may yet prove to be to their advantage.

Mr. Teasdale may be well assured that millers have not been softened by any pampering process as he suggests, and they have not lost the faculty for vigorous salesmanship which was apparent before the war. In preparation for the resumption of private trading they have maintained their overseas connections and are quite capable of handling the business, provided they are not unduly handicapped by excessive railrage costs, low offal prices or some other factor beyond their control.

I think that this argument should be thrashed out by the departmental experts. Mr. Teasdale's timely warning of the threat to the Western Australian flour trade should be taken notice of. This seriously affects poultry farmers, pig farmers and the dairying industry in this State; because naturally the lower the quantity of our export flour becomes, the less offal will be available to those industries. I think also that the statement by Mr. Merry should be carefully considered and if possible some adjustment made.

I agree with Mr. Teasdale that steps should be taken to develop active trade relations with the teeming millions of the North. We must realise the present position in the wheat trade all over the world. The other day I noticed in the Press that U.S.A. was expecting a record harvest and in the Press of that country it was even suggested that next year the authorities will enforce reduction of acreage under wheat and other crops. It seems to me absolutely unthinkable, even if any country has a tremendous harvest, after the disastrous position in which farmers were placed years ago resulting in a tremendous shortage of grain, that any intelligent man should suggest that wheat farmers should reduce their acreage.

Although I have referred to him previously, I would like to mention that Dr. Kent-Jones, who is a world famous cereal chemist, gave a lecture in Scotland a short time ago, and I have a copy of his remarks taken from an article which commences as follows:—

Bread's Influence on History, By D. W. Kent-Jones, Ph.D., B.Sc., F.R.I.C.: The following address was given by Dr. D. W. Kent-Jones at Edinburgh to members of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Sections of the Royal Institute of Chemistry and the Society of Chemical Industry, the Chemical Society and the Royal Society of Arts.—Reprinted from "Milling," England.

Part of the context reads—

Might I remind you of a statement by Dr. Scott Robertson in his presidential address to the Section of Agriculture of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at their meeting this year in Brighton? Commenting upon losses in grain between harvest and consumption, Dr. Scott Robertson said:

"World losses of crops and stock, when reduced to figures are so fantastic as to create a feeling of unreality. For example, facts which the Food and Agriculture Organ-

isation has assembled in close co-operation with technical experts all over the world show that between harvest and consumption there is destroyed each year by mites, pests and rodents, grain equivalent to all the food travelling into international trade—that is to say, approximately 65,000,000 tons of grain per annum. A decrease in these losses by only 10 per cent. would mean an addition of 6½ million tons of grain available for the hard-pressed European larder and would go a long way to close the cereal gap. Science knows how to control these stupendous losses."

There we have the picture, and we must realise that the high wheat price we have been receiving will gradually drop. In the United States of America and Canada there are indications of a tremendous harvest. Canada is getting a move on and I am of the opinion that that country has never before exported flour to Malaya.

Hon. L. Craig: America does not know where to store her wheat.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I know that flour from Australia has been going to Malaya and the Islands for at least the last 53 years, and we must take serious notice of this threat from Canada.

Hon. L. Craig: The people in the North have had a 3,000,000 increase of population since the war.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We have a tremendous market at our front and back doors, if we care to take notice of world events and prepare to compete in it; but we cannot do that unless we make some alterations.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What are the alterations?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I will deal with them shortly. The first matter to which I shall draw attention is the continuance of selling flour from Western Australia and other parts of the Commonwealth with a neutral brand. That must be stopped directly the Commonwealth arrangement ceases on the 1st December. According to Mr. Teasdale there are strong Eastern States interests obviously keen to continue exporting their flour under a neutral brand. If I were a flourmiller and proud of my product I would oppose that bitterly because the people who are not proud of their product can export it with a neutral brand to the prejudice of the good miller. It will be impossible to maintain our trade with Malaya if we continue with this system of neutral brands.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I agree with you entirely.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: While the war was on, the people of Malaya were glad to get any sort of flour. I do not suggest that we sent any sort of rubbish, but it was an invitation to do so. Government experts in the department should lend their weight for the adoption in Western Australia of specific brands. I was extremely concerned when I saw the article by Mr. Merry in the Press because I know what the threat will mean.

I appreciate that for over half a century Canada has produced flour which is equal to any that is produced in other parts of the world. It produces a high quality flour; and whilst we have been asleep, it has introduced a careful grading system. One can buy any flour from Canada for manufacturing biscuits and other high grade products, and we cannot ignore this competition because it will be seen that Canada will be exporting her high grade flour and will secure a good position on the world market. I have been watching the newspapers and recently when a Canadian ship was in port at Fremantle I tried to secure a sample of Canadian flour in order to compare it with the flour we are exporting from this State.

Hon. L. Craig: Some of the Eastern States flours are blended with Manitoba wheat.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Manitoba wheat is one of the finest grains in the world.

Hon. L. Craig: It is excellent for blending with our own flours.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That makes my argument that we cannot ignore the competition from Canada all the more emphatic. I wish to impress upon members that to make bread in tropical countries is very difficult. It is almost impossible to make good bread in tropical countries if inferior flour is used. Therefore, unless we are very careful, once the Malaysians and Chinese get Canadian flour, it will be a serious menace to Australia. We must take measures to meet that competition.

We in Western Australia are faced with competition, not only from Canada but also from millers in the Eastern States. Chinese merchants are clamouring for the branded flour and we cannot afford to ignore them. Merchants in the Islands place quality as No. 1 priority and if we are to retain and

extend our trade with the Asiatic races in competition with Canada and the United States of America, immediate attention must be given to producing a first quality flour.

This is where the farmer comes in. I have been speaking on this subject for years and shall continue to do so until I can bring our people to my way of thinking. I have made some impression on the Honorary Minister for Agriculture. We cannot afford to continue with our present system of exporting wheat. It is of no use crying out for good flour unless millers are furnished with suitable wheat to enable them to manufacture a first-class product. Let me quote some authorities on this matter. Dr. Kent-Jones, who is also a businessman, has definitely stated that farmers are losing money by adhering to the present method of selling wheat on an f.a.q. basis.

Hon. L. Craig: If a buyer wants wheat and not flour, what are you going to do?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: In that event, we must sell him good wheat. We are threatened with the loss of a very important export trade that vitally affects the welfare of the State. We have to meet the competition by supplying good flour. We must produce flour of a quality to compete with the Canadian flour and must alter our system of grading wheat. Dr. Kent-Jones has been speaking of this for years and so has Dr. Sutton. The latest authority to express himself is Mr. Eric Bond, officer in charge of the Bread Research Institute in New South Wales. Mr. Bond visited Western Australia recently and met the Honorary Minister for Agriculture to whom he explained his ideas on the f.a.q. grading. The Honorary Minister informed me that he was greatly impressed with the case presented by Mr. Bond and intended to give it consideration. Mr. Bond, during his stay in Perth, gave an address to farmers over the air. I hope they listened to him. He explained the position in very clear language as follows:—

The farmer and baker have always had a common interest in wheat—an interest which is only now being really appreciated. In the past there has been suspicion on both sides; the grower had the idea that the baker was interested only in a high baking quality wheat, to the detriment of yielding capacity, disease resistance and other field characteristics, while,

on the other hand, the baker has felt that the farmer has given little or no consideration to the baking quality of the grain which he produces, being only interested in quantity.

Today, with more knowledge and understanding, these fears are rapidly being dissipated. That there is room for extensive scientific research in the cereal countries is apparent to those who understand the problems which the farmer and baker must face. The baking industry in Australia has made a real move in this direction by the establishment of a Bread Research Institute in N.S.W., supported entirely by subscription from its own members, without any outside financial assistance. Bakers of N.S.W. have set aside some £20,000 to launch this institute, and bakers in Perth and Tasmania have thrown in their resources to assist the project.

At the Bread Research Institute, we are intensely interested in the problems of the wheat-grower, since many of these are of direct concern to the baking industry. As an indication of our desire for co-operation, we are undertaking research into the many aspects involved in the baking quality of wheat. This work is being carried out in conjunction with Professor Waterhouse, of the Sydney University, who has played a major part in the development of new and improved wheat varieties in N.S.W.—varieties which give the farmer not only good yielding capacity and resistance to disease, but also assure the baker of a satisfactory quality.

This institute, in addition to undertaking cereal testing for the University, is also working in close co-operation with the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture in its wheat-breeding programme, and I hope that the same co-operation will exist in Western Australia.

That the growing of good baking quality wheats only partly solves the question of better flour and better bread which the public demands is recognised today by other major wheat-producing countries and by a growing number of people in Australia.

These wheats are wasted unless full advantage is taken of them in the form of an efficient handling system. There is a strong demand, not only among bakers, but also growers in Australia today, for a change in the present method of handling wheat under the f.a.q. system. It is felt that some means must be found to classify and grade wheats on the basis of quality. With such a system, not only will the baker and the public gain, but the grower also will reap considerable benefits.

It has been insinuated that there is a conflict of interests between the wheatgrower and the baker in this matter of grading. Such an impression is entirely wrong. Both industries representing the producer and consumer are intimately concerned with the whole problem. Both stand to gain or lose far more than those who are really the middlemen in this business—that is, merchants, shippers and millers—by the way in which wheat produced in this country is handled.

Critics of wheat-grading often say that inferior bread quality is due solely to conditions within the industry, but this is not the complete story. The baking industry, with others, has been affected by changing industrial conditions, and today a slight change in flour or wheat quality is sufficient to throw the production of a bakery unit completely out of balance. One can say, therefore, that changing conditions in the baking industry have spot-lighted deficiencies in wheat and flour quality, particularly in regard to regularity.

The baker cannot be condemned as trying to place all the blame for poor quality bread on the grading or f.a.q. system. The money the industry is spending on research in Australia is probably the best answer to such a charge. However, the improvement of wheat quality is a fundamental issue in these efforts, and the grading of wheat is seen as the way in which regular quality can be assured to a far greater degree than with the f.a.q. system and the farmer secure the real value for his products.

Our job, therefore, at the Bread Research Institute, is to bring the baking industry to the highest technical level possible, thus improving the quality of bread in this country, and ensuring the best possible loaf in every way for the public. The wheatgrower producing the basic ingredient for bread must necessarily be vitally concerned in this work. In Australia we must get away from the old idea that what was good enough 60 years ago is good enough today. This applies to any industry; and wheatgrowing and bread-making are no exception.

That is a valuable contribution from a competent man and it should move our farmers to take interest in this matter, as well as those who are concerned in the development of the wheat, bread and flour industries of Australia. I again emphasise the great movement taking place in England. Last month the Duchess of Kent opened a research institute that will cost from £27,000 to £30,000 a year to run. The Minister in charge of scientific research indicated that if the bakers would raise £17,000 a year the Government would grant a subsidy of £3,000 a year. We must keep in touch with that institute; it will be making intense investigations with the object of improving flour.

England is one of our biggest customers and in this respect we should emulate her excellent example. I hope that, as a result of the discussion now proceeding—for which I think Mr. Teasdale deserves thanks—the Government will direct inquiries to be made with a view to organising our flour industry so successfully as to prevent the introduction of Canadian flour in Malaya. If

Canada captures that market and expands it, the flourmilling industry in this State—indeed the flourmilling of the Commonwealth—will be seriously menaced.

I hope no time will be lost in altering our present system of f.a.q. selling of wheat. Some time will be lost before the plan can be prepared; we cannot do much this coming season, but we can make arrangements to supply wheat of two or three grades in order to meet world competition and the threat to our farmers. We must bear in mind that the present high market price for wheat will not be maintained. I took the opportunity of mentioning this matter on the Appropriation Bill and if everything goes well, I hope a big development will ensue.

I have brought the matter forward session after session and will continue to do so as long as I am a member, not only in the interests of this State as a whole but also in the interests of the farmers themselves, as I consider that when the present market price drops the farmers will be faced with serious loss, particularly in view of the present out-of-date method of marketing our wheat. I support the Bill.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [8.5]: I commence my remarks with an expression of regret at hearing the announcement by Mr. Thomson that he had made his last speech in this Chamber. He has had a long parliamentary career and has served with distinction as well in this as in another place. I wish to say how much I appreciated, as a young member, his kindly encouragement and helpful advice. I join with the Leader of the House in assuring the hon. member that the good wishes of us all will go with him in his retirement.

Tonight I wish to deal with some of the activities of the Education Department, more particularly with respect to visual education. I shall make some suggestions as to the necessity of placing more emphasis on the subject of civics in our schools and I sincerely hope that they will be of value, accepted by the Government and perhaps in some measure be given practical effect. I notice that the amount set aside in the Appropriation Bill for the Minister for Education is £1,908,596. I recall that some three or four years ago, under Mr. Wise's Administration, a similar provision for the

first time had exceeded £1,000,000. It shows the advances that have been made when that figure is now nearly doubled.

We are aware, of course, that everything costs more these days and that therefore the comparison, in terms of figures, is hardly reflected in the difference between the amounts. The fact remains, however, that the amount is considerably more. As one who moves about the country a great deal, I can tell a story of activity in regard to the building of schools, additions to schools, more equipment being furnished, extensions of bus services and matters of that kind. The extension of bus services has had a most beneficial effect, as it has relieved parents of the arduous work of instructing their children by means of the correspondence course.

The latest Education Department's report we have is for the year 1946, so it is now over three years old. Its late arrival is due to a lag in the Government Printing Office owing to circumstances entirely beyond its control. For the most part, therefore, the figures are now of little value. However, I notice the report discloses that the number of primary schools in that year was 663, having an average enrolment of 50,505, the actual number of teachers being 1,857. In addition to that, there were 17 high schools with a teaching staff of 335 and 6,561 scholars. In passing, it may be noted that of those 17 high schools, 11 were in the metropolitan area; but I know it is the Government's desire and intention to establish further high schools in the country when materials are available; and they will be a great boon to those parents who naturally desire that their children should have a high school education, and who just as naturally desire that the children should be as near home as possible.

I think that possibly the most significant and important development within the last year or two in connection with the Education Department has been the growth of visual education. In that respect I am fortunate in having a fairly recent report, which I received by courtesy of the Superintendent, Mr. Norman Uren. It is dated the 31st December, 1948, and is thus just nine months old. The functions of that particular section, which started in 1946, are gov-

erned by a committee of 15 which includes the Minister for Education as chairman, the Director of Education, the Secretary-Superintendent and 12 committee members, representing various sections of educational activity, the University, the Teachers' Union, the Department of Agriculture and several other interested bodies. The functions of the committee are—

(a) To advise the Minister on all matters in connection with visual education concerning the use of non-theatrical, educational, technical and documentary films, and in particular on the acquisition of such films and the distribution thereof amongst interested organisations throughout Western Australia.

(b) To act as liaison between interested organisations in Western Australia and the National Film Board of Canberra.

(c) To maintain an adult library of educational, documentary and instructional films, and public catalogues and lists of films available from the library.

(d) To control and co-ordinate the distribution and use of films of the above-mentioned type.

There are 130 projectors in use in schools and they serve roughly half the pupils in the State. All major schools are equipped and smaller schools are on the way to being equipped. The department does not provide free equipment but subsidises local parents and citizens' associations on a pound for pound basis to the extent of £50 for any one year. There is also one mobile unit fitted with its own power plant; and this, in the nine months up to the 31st December, had travelled nearly 4,000 miles, giving a total number of 1,104 lesson screenings. Altogether about half the number of school children in the State are served, and it is hoped to serve the total number by added units travelling at regular intervals.

The visual aid department conducts a film library which contains 517 16mm. films comprising 438 titles; and 712 35mm. films, with 50 more on order. There are multiple copies of library films bringing the total strips available to 2,072. These are made available to private schools and adult film groups. The borrowings in 1947 and 1948 were—

	Borrowings.	Films.
1947	105	523
1948	336	1,758

The average monthly audience was approximately 8,000. This branch of the department also produces instructional films—

16mm. sound and silent films and 35mm. still strips and slides. The following work has been done in 35mm. film strips and 2in. x 2in. slides:—

	1947.	1948.
Master negatives produced	87	206
Film strips—positives . . .	261	858
2in. x 2in. slides	617	312

Negatives and prints to the total of 1,020 were made for the National Film Council on deportment and posture. Instruction by visual aid films is claimed to have the following advantages:—

(1) Children learn in less than a quarter of the time.

(2) It imparts high quality instruction.

(3) It secures uniform presentation.

(4) It eliminates distracting influences, thus aiding concentration.

(5) It relieves the teacher of a great deal of specialised study and, in fact, instructs the teacher as well as the pupils.

I think I may add that, as far as the pupil is concerned, with the removal of distracting influences, as the films are usually shown in the dark, he is able to relax, and that is a psychological factor of some value.

As visual aid is bound to play an increasingly important part in school instruction, it is to be hoped that the department will seriously consider the question of accommodation. At present the whole outfit—administration, library and records, and film production—is housed in an Army hut, which is hopelessly overcrowded. On the same site there are other Army huts seldom used, and it seems only elementary common-sense to suggest that one or more of these should be made available by the Commonwealth authorities to allow for necessary extension and development of this very important work, and to enable it to be carried out with the maximum efficiency. I have mentioned that more particularly because, in my opinion, the use of visual aid films represents the answer to the difficulty of conveying instruction in civics to the children in our schools.

It was my privilege at the R.S.L. Congress to sponsor a motion on behalf of the Mullewa branch, which I am pleased to say was passed unanimously. This is the text of the motion—

That this Congress strongly recommends to the Government the necessity for greater emphasis on "civics" instruction for advanced classes in schools by:—

(1) A more effective implementation of the courses now set out in the primary and post-primary curriculum.

(2) A defined course of instruction in the form of a handbook or manual for use by teachers, coupled with the use of specially prepared talkie films, designed to fit the child for the responsibilities of citizenship, carefully avoiding any political bias.

(3) That the following values be specially stressed:—

(a) Development of character.

(b) National loyalty.

(c) Individual liberty.

I think members will support me when I say that this is not a Party political question but one of national importance. I have heard various political leaders stress the need for more emphasis to be placed on the value of instruction in civics in our schools; but unfortunately nothing appears to have been done, and I think that perhaps the difficulty of the Education Department has lain in the virtual impossibility of having uniform instruction imparted by the teachers.

When we come to the question of civics, or what would appear to be moral values, we can say that it would vary to a certain degree with each individual teacher. In fact, I think we can say that the more earnest the teacher, the more likely is his instruction to be tinged with political or religious bias. I have no wish to criticise the members of the teaching profession, the great majority of whom are splendid and devoted servants, but they are hampered by the defects of a system, or rather defects in its application, and they have achieved results often in spite of the system rather than because of it. I want to read from the Civics Syllabus that appears in the Post-Primary Courses of Study. I shall do so because the pamphlet is impossible to get. I tried to procure a copy from the Education Department and from the Government Printer, but it is out of print. I think the particulars of the civics curriculum are important enough to be placed on record. They are as follows:—

The chief aim in all classes will be to inculcate such forms of behaviour as will enable the pupils to live in a modern community, by the formation of habits of helpful, constructive, participating citizenship.

Section A.—For All Classes.

Kindness towards animals.

Protection of Nature—flowers, trees, animals, etc.

Protection of Property—problem of vandalism.

Consideration and respect for others.

“Safety First.”

The aims will be best served in Section A—not by formal lessons so much as by short incisive talks on suitable occasions.

I know that the safety first lectures are usually given by traffic officers who visit the schools—

Section B.—Class VII.

A.—The Family as a Social Group. Division of Labour—Interdependence of Members. Ownership in the Family.

B.—The School and Community Activities. Co-operation in the School, Community, Nation, between Nations. Machinery of Co-operation—activities. Conduct of School Debates.

C.—Local Self-Government—its machinery. Elections, Public Meetings, etc. Private and Public Ownership.

Note.—Local and Civic Affairs will provide suitable opportunities for the treatment of the above in concrete form.

Current events.

Section C.—Class VIII.

Cost of Government—How Loans are raised and expended. Taxation and Assessment of Property and Incomes. How Life and Property are protected.

Selection of Members of Government.

The Department of Governments—Legislative, Executive, Judicial.

How one sphere of Government may exist within the domain of another—Local, State and Federal.

Australia as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

International Co-operation, World Friendship—the League of Nations.

Public Affairs will provide suitable opportunities for the treatment of the above in concrete form.

Current events and Australian problems may be treated more extensively.

That, I am sure members will agree, is adequate and comprehensive. No-one will dispute the great present-day need for its application, especially as we are now absorbing migrants into our economy. It is vitally important that these new Australians should be taught the elements of civic behaviour, which will fit them to enter fully into our way of life. But what we do say is that the system as a whole is out of balance, and if it is necessary to sacrifice some of the academic qualifications now insisted upon at the expense of being taught the elements of social obligation, then that sacrifice ought to be made. We are producing a race imbued

with the ideas of comfort and security rather than the old ideas of duty and service. As a teacher friend of mine said, in a letter to me—

In our school curriculum, adequate provision is made for training in citizenship, but one may question whether lip service to it as a subject is not the general rule, especially in view of the fact that the system compels the teacher, often against his will, to over-develop the easily measurable subjects at the expense of character development and training for citizenship. The children of today will become the citizens of tomorrow, and the State desires that the new generation shall become worthy citizens. This is best secured if for each child there is adequate opportunity for making the best of himself and becoming a good man or a good woman—that is, a good citizen. Schools emphasise, and rightly so, the importance of physical standards and healthy living, and equip a child to earn his living, but in view of present needs of great importance, the school has to bear in mind that in a democratic community he must later take a part in the government of his country, and it is expected that he should discharge this duty loyally and intelligently.

Today, as never before, we must face the fact that the business of any educational system is not only to provide the means of making a living, and the passing of examinations to qualify for that—that is training, not education. Nor is the sole remaining business to provide culture or the cultivation of individual tasks or talents to fill out leisure time. In the hard practical world of the next generation, emphasis on the basic virtues of citizenship must overshadow all else. Nothing else matters. These virtues must be taught, and taught in such a way that no child graduates into the normal occupations of adult life without a mental background fitting him for its responsibilities.

I question whether 10 per cent, of our adult population has anything like the requisite knowledge that should be possessed with regard to our political institutions. I have been told by one of our legislators that few members of the community could name their Legislative Council members. I countered this by saying that about the same proportion would know the names of their Assembly members. Another legislative friend of mine recently visited a school, and he said to the scholars, "Can any of you tell me the name of the Governor-General?" The school teacher said, "Do not ask them that question; they do not know anything about it." However, one bright boy put up his hand and said, "Ben Chifley." My friend then said, "Can you tell me the name

of the Governor of Western Australia?" Another lad took his cue from the first and also said, "Ben Chifley."

A teacher who had been taking a course of sociology said he gave his class a list of questions to take home, and one of them was, "Who is the Prime Minister?" In the replies received the next morning, four Prime Ministers were named, including the late Hon. J. Lyons, who has been dead for ten years. As those questions were taken home and treated as home work, it is quite possible that the replies reflected the knowledge possessed by the parents.

Some members may have received in the mail tonight a valuable booklet entitled, "Christian Education in a Democratic Community." I know we receive much matter that we cannot possibly read, but I had heard about this pamphlet and I went to the "Record" office and suggested to the manager that, from what I knew of the pamphlet, it might well be sent to parliamentary members. I do not know whether he adopted that suggestion, but if he did, and in case members are inclined to regard the brochure as one of the many that they need not look into, I suggest they read it. I have typed out some extracts from it—I will not weary the House by reading the pamphlet at length—which I think are not only a reflection on the position in Australia at present but an indictment of the system that has grown up over the years.

The pamphlet sets out that the report of the Harvard Committee entitled "The Objectives of General Education in a Free Society" declared that the supreme need of American education was a unifying purpose and idea. If this is true of America, it is equally true of Australia which cannot boast the same degree of development, and which is now called upon to absorb a considerable number of new Australians into its economy and way of life. It seems to me that the time has come to review our own system in a friendly but critical way and see if it cannot be brought more into line with the present day social needs, and to ask ourselves whether this centralised system of ours has fulfilled its founders' hopes, and if not why not, and whether its faults can be remedied. Here is an extract from the brochure:—

Nearly eighty years have passed since the people of Australia were persuaded by a group of theorists to adopt a system of education that should be free, compulsory and secular. Few would deny that, in a democratic community, education should be "free," that is, paid for out of public funds, and thus ensuring that the children of even the poorest citizens should be able to receive adequate schooling. It will be readily admitted, too, that the community at large is entitled to insist that all children must attend school, and that careless or stupid parents should not be allowed to deprive their children of educational opportunities.

Extensive claims were made for a system based on State controlled secularism. Thus, it was urged, we should get rid of secularism, should allow the light of science to penetrate young minds. Ancient superstitions and ignorance would disappear. The State could provide better equipped schools, more efficiently trained staff, up-to-date apparatus. Such schools must necessarily produce nobler citizens, free from prejudices, fit for democracy, anxious to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the general welfare.

Yet, today, there is a general and constant criticism of the system and its results by teachers, parents, public men, University authorities. Demands for drastic reform are heard on all sides, despite the activities of Ministers and Directors, the expenditure of many millions of pounds, the amazing devotedness and sacrifice of thousands of teachers, and the undoubted improvement—especially in recent years—in the methods of instructing and training young teachers.

Evils which a satisfactory educational system would have remedied or, at least, have mitigated, are frequently enumerated by those to whom the public welfare is a subject of constant concern:—

Class hatred is as bitter today in Australia as it has been in the past.

There is general apathy concerning national problems, and a widespread refusal, especially by the most highly educated, to take part in public life.

The loss of pride in workmanship has been accompanied by a decline in productivity, which threatens the economic life of the nation.

The desire for security, at all costs, has led to an alarming loss of the spirit of adventure and initiative in the young, and to an equally alarming dependence on the State for all their needs.

The high proportion of unskilled workers in the community bears witness to the failure of the system to provide adequate vocational training.

The flight from the land, which today threatens the stability of the nation, is the result not only of bad economics, but of a false outlook engendered by modern education.

May I add two further defects not appearing in the brochure? They are—

(a) An astonishing ignorance of the functions of Parliament and administration, and lack of appreciation of the responsibilities of citizenship which confer on the individual the dignity of being the ruler as well as the ruled.

(b) A state of mind which makes the citizen a ready prey to interested minorities, so that he gets pushed round, instead of possessing the knowledge which he ought to possess, of distinguishing truth from error and from half truth which is even more dangerous.

To quote further from the pamphlet—

It is, of course, unfair to place the whole responsibility for these evils on the educational system. Many are, at least partly, the result of the unchristian organisation of social and economic life. But for over 60 years now our social system has been controlled, sometimes developed, by men who are the products of the State-dominated secularist system.

We expect a certain type of citizen to emerge from our schools and we must therefore demand a certain type of teacher, and we must design a system that will enable the teachers to perform their noble function.

I come now to my suggestion as to the remedy. It is that specially prepared films be exhibited in the schools. That would result in high class instruction being imparted by the films, which could be graded for the different classes and readily absorbed. They could be checked for any religious or political bias and would give a uniform presentation to all the children under our State school system. Such films would be instructive not only to the scholars but also to the teachers. I sincerely hope that this suggestion is of value and will lead to something practical being done.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [8.35]: This measure deals with the appropriation of money, the expenditure of which was approved in connection with the Estimates and the Loan Bill. The Estimates having been agreed to in another place it is necessary that the Appropriation Bill should be passed by this House. The sum to be expended is claimed on this occasion to be a record. That can easily be understood in view of the added expenditure necessary owing to the increase in the cost of materials and labour. To make a comparison of such figures at present would not be fair.

For the development of the State it is necessary that certain public works be undertaken at the cost of a considerable amount of money. There are many Government departments, also, that must be conducted at great cost. We have been supplied with Volume 1 of the Tydeman report on the port of Fremantle, but Volumes 2 and 3, which contain the meat of the report, have not yet been made available owing, I understand, to some difficulty in the Government Printing Office. The whole point is that the city of Fremantle has been endeavouring to bring into being a zoning or town planning scheme and it is difficult to finalise that scheme until the council has obtained Volumes 2 and 3 of the report. I ask the Chief Secretary if it would not be possible, in the near future, for the Government to make available to the Fremantle City Council a full set of the volumes so that the report on its town planning scheme can be finalised.

I wish to deal with a section of Mr. Tydeman's report which concerns the proposal for docking at Fremantle. We all realise that for a port to function adequately it is necessary to have proper docking facilities. This is a question that has been debated in this House, and another place, for a long time. Many reasons have been given why a dock could not be made available in Fremantle but during the last war it became necessary for the American Forces to tow a floating dock some considerable distance and have it placed in the Fremantle harbour to provide docking facilities for some of the American ships. That dock was used for other ships as well and is an indication that it is absolutely necessary for Fremantle, being the chief port of Western Australia, to have proper docking facilities. Mr. Tydeman has dealt with this question in his report but he points out that it would be uneconomical to provide a dock at Fremantle because only certain sizes of ships would be able to use it and even then it would not be used very frequently. Hence it would be a large capital expenditure and would not be put to any great use.

During the war it was necessary for the American Forces to bring this floating dock to Fremantle and during that period over 600 ships of war were victualled and given

harbour facilities at Fremantle. That proves that the western coast of this continent is a particularly vital section, especially in time of war. In view of the trend of events at the moment, every endeavour should be made to see that proper docking facilities are provided at Fremantle and I would suggest that we impress upon the Commonwealth Government the fact that it should associate itself with the State Government with a view to providing a dock on this side of the continent. If that were done, docking facilities would be available both for naval ships and ships allied to the Navy and could be used for private ships as well. The revenue derived as a result of its use by private ships could offset the capital expenditure and the expenditure needed for keeping the dock in commission.

This is really the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government but the State Government would require its use and that would provide certain revenue to offset some of the expenditure. This side of the continent is an important section of the Commonwealth of Australia. Not very far north of us we have considerable numbers of islands in which there are large populations of Asiatics. In conjunction with the peopling of the North and the North-West of this State, proper facilities at Fremantle are necessary, particularly in view of the fact that we must prepare ourselves for the likelihood of future hostilities. I trust that nothing like that will ever happen again, but it is just as well to be prepared. If we had a dock in Fremantle it would not be necessary to send State ships to the Eastern States for overhauls and that would save us in the vicinity of £200,000 for renovations and overhaul to any ship that might require it. I trust that the Government will take steps to endeavour to associate itself with the Commonwealth Government and see if some arrangement can be made—on a share basis perhaps—to establish a dock in Fremantle.

The question of harbour extensions is one that has been exercising the minds of Governments from time to time, and Mr. Tydeman has been asked to make a report on harbour extensions at Fremantle. As I have already pointed out, Volume 1 of his report has been made available and whilst we have certain information from that report it is necessary that Volumes

2 and 3 should also be made available so that members can make themselves an fait with Mr. Tydeman's recommendations. At present Fremantle harbour is used for the supplying of oil to various ships that come to these waters. During the war we were lucky that a national disaster did not occur when the "Panamanian" caught fire. The outbreak was caused by oil floating on the water in the interior of the harbour and had it not been for timely action and a good deal of luck, considerable damage could have been caused to the harbour, which would have rendered it unfit for the use of ships during the war period.

The time has arrived when more attention should be given to the provision of oil depots around Fremantle but outside the harbour itself, and I hope that the Government will give some consideration to that aspect. It is not safe, nor is it right, that the harbour should be used for supplying ships with oil; firstly, because of danger and, secondly, because it is necessary for ships to take up certain berths that could be occupied by ships, which require them for other purposes. I hope the Government will find ways and means of obtaining a report which could be embodied in that of Mr. Tydeman so that we might be given information as to whether it is possible to establish oil installation depots somewhere around the coast but outside of the harbour itself.

The question of water supplies is also one that has caused a great deal of comment during recent years. We are all fully aware that the shortage in the supply of piping is most acute at present and that has contributed a good deal to the very low pressure of water. Quite a number of new houses are being built in various parts of the metropolitan area and some are being built in Fremantle. Houses today are of such a value that they are entitled to be provided with a three-quarter inch boundary main. Houses that have been built for a number of years, and were of a low value, were then entitled to have a half-inch boundary main only. So we find that as housing is extended throughout the districts and the new mains are laid, there is a greater drain on the water supply, and the people who are living in the higher parts of Fremantle are finding it extremely difficult to obtain a decent pressure. I take

this opportunity of again asking the Government to approach the engineers of the Water Supply Department and ascertain if they can make a proper examination of the position in Fremantle to ensure that a decent pressure of water is enjoyed by the residents there.

Another question which has been dealt with here on several occasions and to which I shall now refer, is housing. We know that there have been many difficulties which the Government has attempted to overcome but, unfortunately, the position does not seem to be improving. While it has been stated that the number of houses being built is on the increase, in my opinion they are being built in districts adjacent to Perth. My complaint is that the West Province has not had a fair deal with regard to housing. A considerable area of land has been made available by the Fremantle City Council to the State Housing Commission, but we still find that housing is not progressing at the rate it should in that district.

Although records are claimed for house construction, the West Province is definitely not getting its share. On the hustings during the last election promises of houses for small unit families were made. The Government then stated that it intended to build homes for two- and three-unit families. The latest figures I have obtained show that the few homes for two- or three-unit families that have been built are in South Perth and adjacent districts. When I scanned the figures for not only Fremantle but also the whole of the West Province, I found that only nine houses for two- and three-unit families have been approved, and these have not yet been completed.

In my opinion the Government is not giving the residents of Fremantle and the West Province a fair deal. I do hope that some means will be found to increase the number of houses in that district because the Fremantle municipality is encouraging industries to establish themselves in that area by making land available and quite a number of them have already been attracted there. Because of that, it is necessary that houses should be built for the employees who are working in those industries. I know that houses have been built for key personnel employed in the

South Fremantle power house. Although I am not complaining about that, it is drawing adverse comments from many people who are housed in camps, tents or on verandahs; and they cannot be blamed for criticising the powers-that-be because of other people being granted houses while they are still awaiting decent accommodation. I trust that these matters will be given consideration by the Government and that endeavours will be made to step up construction of houses in the Fremantle district in the near future.

The electricity supply is a matter that should be commented upon in this House. I believe there should be an inquiry into the numerous breakdowns that have been occurring over the past few months. I am, of course, aware that the generator which is giving the trouble has rendered good service over a period of years. Although an expert was brought from the Eastern States to supervise the repairs that were effected, yet in a short space of time we find that the generator has again broken down, which is interfering with industry and the life of the community generally.

I therefore consider that an inquiry should be held to ascertain why, after these repairs have been effected under the supervision of an expert engineer, the generator again breaks down—and that frequently. I would also like to ask the Chief Secretary if it is possible for him to define the length of time the power restrictions will be in operation.

The Chief Secretary: It has been stated in the Press that they will cease on Sunday night.

HON. E. M. DAVIES: I did not see that statement. It is only reasonable that people should be assured that the power restrictions will not be imposed any longer than is necessary, and I also feel that something is required to ensure that these continued breakdowns will not occur so frequently in the future. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [8.55]: I feel that the Treasurer is to be congratulated on the handling of the finances of Western Australia during the past year. One of the outstanding features of the financial returns is the amount of the

State grant. I notice that last year the amount received through the State Grants Commission was £3,600,000 and that the estimated amount to be received this year is £4,100,000. When it is remembered that it is only a few years ago or, in other words, before the present Treasurer assumed office, that the amount which we received from the Commonwealth through the Grants Commission was in the vicinity of £1,000,000, I think it speaks volumes for the ability and the tenacity of our State Treasurer in securing the return from the Commonwealth Government of a much larger proportion of the £20,000,000 which that Government extracts from the people of this State by way of Customs and all the other Federal taxes.

I notice that the estimated amount which the Treasurer expects to receive from the Grants Commission during the current year is £4,100,000, but, knowing the Treasurer as I do and his ability to present the case of Western Australia before the Grants Commission, I would not be surprised if he does not even exceed the target which he has set himself. I feel, however, that the Budget which has been presented by the Premier is likely to be falsified by actions beyond his control. I think it will be found that the Budget which this year has been presented by the Treasurer of Western Australia will be seriously affected by the action of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the United Kingdom and by the Commonwealth Treasurer in Australia.

It will be found, I believe, that the Treasurer's task during the current year will be made considerably more difficult by reason of increased costs arising from the devaluation of the pound sterling and the corresponding devaluation of the Australian pound in relation to dollars. Twenty years ago the Australian pound was worth 4.8 dollars and today it is only worth 2.24 dollars. When a milkman waters the milk he generally bears the penalty himself, but when a Government debases or devalues the currency it is the people who bear the penalty in increased costs and higher prices; they bear the penalty in suffering a reduced purchasing power in the savings which they have built up in life insurance companies and so on.

A point that the people should bear in mind during the coming year is that the increased costs and higher prices which they will be called upon to bear are due, not to any faulty price-fixing control, not to the actions of any hungry manufacturers or merchants, but to the action of the Australian Government directly and to that of the British Government indirectly in devaluing the pound.

I support the views expressed by Dr. Hislop regarding the growing burden that has fallen upon Ministers of the Crown in carrying out the heavily increased duties they are required to discharge. I think that assistance might well be given them along the lines he suggested by the appointment of additional Ministers such as full Ministers or assistant Ministers. The Chief Secretary has had a very strenuous week in the absence of the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, and I am afraid that I perhaps have unwittingly added to his disability. However, I support Dr. Hislop in the view that additional assistance should be rendered to our Ministers in order that their health might not be overtaxed to the extent it has been in recent years.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [9.3]: I shall set members' minds at rest quickly by stating that it is my intention to speak for only a very few minutes. There are one or two matters relating to my province that I feel I ought to mention.

First of all, I wish to emphasise the statements of my colleague, Mr. Davies, regarding the Fremantle harbour. We feel perturbed that no announcement has yet been made as to the action intended to be taken by the Government on the Tydeman report. I mentioned this matter in the House some months ago, but I offer no apologies for bringing it forward again. I have found that, all through the years, the views of the experts consider with regard to the probable life of the Fremantle railway bridge. They were to the effect that within the succeeding four or five years, the life of the bridge, in their opinion, would be ended.

It is time that some action was taken by the Government, especially in view of the shortage of materials that exists and the period that would be occupied in replacing

the bridge. On looking through the Loan programme, I find that something like £300,000 is allotted for harbours, but I take it that is the amount ordinarily provided each year and does not include any sum for the coming year for action under the Tydeman report. If I am wrong in that assumption, I hope the Chief Secretary will correct me and give us some information.

I repeat the warning that a move will have to be made and made very quickly in the way of constructing some bridge to take the place of the present railway bridge. Over the years the various reports submitted have differed on the questions of where the new bridge should be located and whether it should be solely a railway bridge or a combined road and railway bridge. As this is the end of the session and we are considering the appropriation of funds for the year, it seems that another 12 months will pass before any move is made, and that, in my opinion, will be running close to the danger line. I am hoping that, although no public announcement has been made, the Government has not lost sight of the fact that it will have to move and move quickly in coming to a decision on the Tydeman report.

There is one other matter I wish to voice in relation to my province. If all Government departments acted similarly to the Water Supply and Sewerage Department, we would not need a loan programme or an Appropriation Bill. I refer to what has occurred in regard to sewerage connections in portion of my province. Last November, after the work had been in progress for some years, a notification appeared in the "Government Gazette"—a publication that the general public seldom sees—stating that the first section of this area would be ready for connecting up on the 1st February. About Christmas time the department sent a notification to each owner that his premises could be connected and that the water rate would start from the 1st February. To give a notice to a person to have his premises connected with the sewer main during the Christmas period meant that two or three weeks had already gone, so that actually the effective portion would be three or four weeks before the rate would commence.

Members should bear in mind that the first move an owner must make is to lodge an application with the department, which sends some of its employees to make a ground plan of the property. This in itself generally occupies two or three weeks. After that has been supplied, the plumber who is to do the work must make an application to the State Housing Commission for a permit to proceed. Then some weeks elapse before the permit is granted. When the permit has been granted, the problem of obtaining the requisite material confronts the plumber.

Under these conditions, the result was that, although everybody in No. 1 area was paying the extra water rate from the 1st February, only one connection was made in February, two were made in March and two in April, while up to the 30th June, only 14 connections were made. In that area there would be approximately 200, so there was a clear gain by the department of five months' water rates for a service that the people were unable to get. Following on that the people of the No. 2 district were notified that their rate would start from the 1st June, while the rate for the No. 3 district would start from the 1st October and for the No. 4 district—the last portion—from the 1st December of this year. Up to the end of August only 20 connections had been made in the Nos. 1 and 2 districts, which are now paying the rate. No service is given but the rate is being paid. This means that some hundreds of people are paying a rate for which they receive no service. To make the position worse, within the past 12 months the local governing body has had a revaluation made of the district and all valuations were increased. This, of course, meant a further unearned increment for the department.

I hope the Leader of the House will, even at this late stage, take the matter up with the Minister concerned with the object of getting the Government to make some adjustment of the rates. But that is not all. We find that another Government department, which previously approved of the work, now refuses to allow connections to the system to be made on account of the shortage of materials. That department is therefore responsible for the suspension of the work. So we

have one department charging for a service which is not rendered, and another department refusing to allow the work to be continued at all. I hope this Gilbertian situation will not continue much longer.

We have heard much comment in the last few months on certain actions of the State Housing Commission in refusing to allow some types of building materials to be used. Quite recently in the Press it was reported that the Commission had decided that one particular class of material could be used in the erection of self-help homes. If the material is good enough for that purpose, why cannot it be used for other homes? Why cannot the privilege be extended to other people desiring to build homes? We were told by a member of this Chamber who brought the matter up that the extra cost of using this material would be £150 for a house consisting of two bedrooms and other usual rooms than for a brick house of similar size. However, if people are prepared to meet the higher cost, they should be permitted to do so.

What I cannot understand is why one section should be allowed to use this material while another is not. I do not want the State Housing Commission to build rental homes of this type of material, as that would mean a considerable increase in the rent of those premises. I am in agreement with the Housing Commission in refusing to use this material for rental homes. From memory, I think these are now bringing in rentals of from 37s. to 38s. a week, and such charges would be considerably increased by the use of this material. It would be impossible for the people to pay the additional cost. Mention was also made that the Housing Commission had been taken to task for not guaranteeing to take a certain percentage—I think 50 per cent.—of the output of concrete tiles made by the firm which manufactured the material to which I have referred. I hope that before the Housing Commission makes any move to use these tiles, it will insist upon tests being made to prove that they are satisfactory. I urge this because of a personal experience of my own.

When I built my house in 1940, I insisted on the contractor using concrete tiles. He argued the point with me, but I replied, "No, I think they ought to stand up better than Bristle tiles." Naturally, as I was pay-

ing, I won the day, but after about three years I was compelled to take the tiles off and replace them by another brand of tiles at a cost of £129. I am not condemning the tile manufactured by the firm I mentioned, as I know nothing about it, but my experience should prove how necessary it is that these concrete or cement tiles be thoroughly tested. It appears that the mixture in the tiles, after very heavy rain, absorbs water, and when it has absorbed as much as it is capable of absorbing, the water drips down on to the ceilings. There is a water-course, so to speak, in the tile, but only one. In other types of tiles there are two. In windy weather, the rain flows along this course on to the rafters, and so the same thing happens—it drips on to the ceilings. Before I sit down, I must say that this is the last Appropriation Bill we shall receive from the present Government.

The Chief Secretary: No, it is not.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You must have your joke!

The Chief Secretary: You have been serious so far.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. FRASER: Quite a number of members have been congratulating the Government upon its performances during the past three years.

Hon. L. Craig: Are you not going to do so?

Hon. G. W. Miles: After the way you supported the Government during the session!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. FRASER: We find that even the unofficial organ of the Government, "The West Australian," has, in its sub-leaders, taken the Government to task on its bad administration at various times. When we come to the legislative programme of the Government, what do we find? Even its own supporters are not prepared to lend their assistance.

Hon. H. Hearn: But you did.

Hon. G. FRASER: Of course, members of this section of the House are soft-hearted! On several occasions there would have been an absolute rout, because the Government legislation would have been supported only by the Chief Secretary and the Honorary Minister. Naturally, at this hour

of the night I would not attempt to deal extensively with the bungle the Government has made of the housing programme.

Hon. L. Craig: It was never so progressive.

Hon. G. FRASER: I would remind the hon. member that when the previous Government was in office, it supplied the people with either houses or huts. The latest development is that the Government is putting people into tents. That is how well the housing programme has been handled!

Hon. R. M. Forrest: The Government has built a lot of houses, has it not?

Hon. G. FRASER: Of course! And so it should have! But now it is putting people in tents.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They are for people from oversea.

Hon. G. FRASER: They are not. They are for local people evicted from their premises.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: What would you do? Where would you put them?

Hon. G. FRASER: The progress the Government has made has been like that of the crab—backwards and not forwards. So I cannot congratulate the Government on its achievements in that respect.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: You have agreed with everything it has done.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: You have supported it right through the piece.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have attempted to help the Government when its followers deserted it, because I am soft-hearted. The other matter on which I cannot congratulate the Government is the control of prices. I am not going into that question, either. Because of bad administration, we find that young people cannot build homes on account of the increased cost of them.

Hon. L. Craig: You promised to say only a few words.

Hon. G. FRASER: Quite a number of my own friends waited patiently for permits; and when they received them, they inquired into the cost of homes. Today for an ordinary three-roomed house £2,400 odd is asked. The average individual cannot afford that amount, with the result that these people have had to give up any thought of building. From those two angles alone—that of

home building, and that of prices—the Government has let things get out of hand; and it is impossible for me to give it any credit at all for anything done in those directions. I repeat that this will be the last Appropriation Bill that this Government will submit.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: We shall see what you will do!

Hon. L. Craig: No fear we will not.

Hon. G. FRASER: The new Government that will be coming into office will have this State on the road to prosperity in the next few years.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [9.23]: I did not intend to say anything. I have been a silent member this session, and did not want to take up any time of the House or to give "Hansard" any work. But I cannot let this opportunity go by without paying a tribute to the splendid work done by the late Alexander Forrest for North Australia, for Australia, and for the Empire. His centenary was celebrated the other day and the Historical Society and his family saw fit to place wreaths on his monument. But, within two days, vandals of this metropolitan area stole those wreaths.

Members: Shame!

Hon. G. W. Miles: I want to pay my tribute to a great Western Australian and Empire statesman, who opened up the North-West in 1879. An uncle of mine was buried at the DeGrey River in 1877. Forrest passed from Cossack through the DeGrey River area up to Fitzroy and on to the Northern Territory; and in his diary of 1879, he wrote that he could not get a mile away from water. It is a remarkable thing to realise that this magnificent country has been left undeveloped for so long.

I have quoted his diary, not only here but throughout the Empire, in the Old Country and in the Eastern States; and I want to assure members that unless something is done to develop that part of the country very soon, we will lose the whole of Australia. Forty years ago there were 20,000 people up there, and now there are only 6,000. I would like to quote a few words uttered by the Director of Works, Mr. R. J. Dumas, in an address to the Rotary Club on the 28th July. He said—

We have failed in our responsibilities to the North and although we may escape the results in our lifetime, I am sure that our sons, unless they do a better job than we have, will reap the whirlwind.

The 16th September of this year was the anniversary of the date of my first speech in this House. I have been speaking on this subject here for the last 33 years; but I want again to appeal to the present Government and to members to do something for the North of Australia, if they wish to prevent their children being pushed out by the coloured races. Something is being done with regard to the transporting of beef by air and with regard to pig raising in that country.

I myself spoke some time ago about growing peanuts there, and the then Minister for the North-West, the late Hon. John Ewing, said, "Where is your market—the monkeys at the Zoo or Tom Molloy?" That is the vision of those in the South-West of this State! I conclude by congratulating the Government on the work it has done. It has a big job on hand, if it is going to do its duty for the North of Australia, for Australia, and for the Empire.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [9.27]: I trust members will not consider me discourteous in not replying to the many points that have been raised. I was in somewhat of a quandary. I knew full well that members did not wish to sit tomorrow afternoon, but I had the option of replying briefly now or of adjourning so that I could get the necessary information to speak more fully at a later stage. I felt that members would prefer me to apologise now and to bring the various matters to which they have referred before the appropriate Ministers to be dealt with in due course. Many of the matters to which attention was drawn are already in hand. I would like to thank Mr. Fraser for having so often supported me, and I can assure him and his colleagues that I shall have exactly the same pleasure next session in again seeking their support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—LIQUID FUEL (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS).*Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendments.

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Before we adjourn, I would like to make a few remarks as this is the close of the session. I wish to say how pleased we are that you, Mr. President, have been restored to health so as to be able to resume your office. I trust that during the coming recess you will enjoy vastly improved health. I wish also to convey my thanks to you, Sir, for the consideration you have given me during the session. It has not been an altogether easy one, although I may say that as regards hours, it has perhaps been short. I would also like to convey to the Chairman of Committees my thanks for the assistance he has rendered the House during the session, and that also applies to the deputy chairmen.

I am sorry that the Honorary Minister for Agriculture (Hon. G. B. Wood) has been away for some little while, but I understand his health is improving. I trust it will improve rapidly. We all hope that he will soon be back in his office. It was only after he left that I personally appreciated his worth and the great assistance he was in the House. I think I voice the opinion of all members when I say we wish him a speedy recovery. The officers of the House—the Clerk, the Clerk Assistant and the Clerk of Records, have as usual, been most courteous and helpful. On many occasions they have relieved the somewhat serious nature of our duties by bringing in a little of the lighter side of life. That is necessary at times.

There are some people who have to work hard all through. Although we do not cause them the trouble that another place does, they have, nevertheless, had an extremely

hard time this year—I refer to the "Hansard" staff. They have had very long hours and, in addition, Select Committees and Royal Commissions to attend to. The way they get through their work so excellently is rather wonderful. I have not heard one complaint from any member that his speech had not been properly recorded.

When we come to the House, the first man we meet is the hall porter. We ought to thank him for his courtesy and the way he looks after us. He always greets us with some unfortunate circular, or the fact that we have been appointed to some office, which necessitates our writing a letter and enclosing something with it. Nevertheless he hands us our letters with a smiling face; I think he must know what the contents are. We also have a House staff. There is the dining room and the room just before we get there, and where we always receive the utmost courtesy.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Is it the new servery that you mean?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, but there is another place before the new servery where I shall be pleased to accompany the hon. member if he will take me there afterwards. Those members of the staff who are there are extremely courteous and helpful. There are times when they have occasion, perhaps, not to be. They do not know how many of us will be in for meals; or whether the House will be sitting. There are frequent upsets. Although it is not our fault and we have not been the cause, they have had some extremely late hours.

The people who are so often forgotten are our cooks. They have had a bad time this year because for a long time there was no place in which they could perform their duties. I am pleased to say, however, that the House Committee has now provided them with a proper cookhouse, and that the kitchen is now excellent. As a result I think they should be very happy, and I am sure they are. I know we are, because when you, Sir, say, "I shall leave the Chair until 7.30," there is generally an expression of anticipation on the faces of members when they go to see what the cook has provided for them.

A recent and useful innovation in Parliament House is our modern paging system. It is most pleasing to hear a pleasant female voice calling us to the phone. I feel we all owe thanks to our telephonist, Miss Boyle, and to Mr. McDonald, for their unfailing help and courtesy. I must not forget even our messenger boys whose cheerful service has been available to members throughout the session.

Some members of this House have often opposed me, in regard to matters I have brought forward here, and have even on occasions caused me some annoyance, but on reflection I have felt no rancour and have even, at times, felt that they have been right. I have no objection to any member opposing matters I bring forward. I owe even more thanks to those members who have given me their support. Between now and our next meeting here there is to be a general election for another place and ten members of this House must also face the electors. Without wishing to be selfish, I sincerely trust that all my colleagues in another place will be returned, and if some of those who do not think as we do in that place desire to change their opinions and their seats they will be welcome.

To all members who are to go before the electors I would wish the best of good fortune. I trust that whoever occupies this seat when Parliament meets again will bring forward measures for the good government of the country and the happiness of our people. Should I still occupy this seat I trust and believe I will continue to receive support. In conclusion, I wish for all happiness and enjoyment until we meet again. I trust members will relax and meet all their country friends at the Royal Show and that all will return here next year in the best of spirits and good health.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: A somewhat unusual set of circumstances has prevailed this session, Mr. President, with rather curious effects. First of all, it reduced the number of sitting hours of this House, which I believe irked most members here. That reduction of sitting hours has been commented on by a member of another place, who seems to take every opportunity to indulge in adverse criticism of the Legislative Council. I would point out that the blame is entirely

due to the loquacity of our critic and his parliamentary colleagues. Another feature, Mr. President, of this unusual session is that we are closing down at the end of September instead of in the middle of December, and that renders it quite unsuitable to extend the Christmas and New Year greetings which are customary at the closing of any session.

I think we all realise that there is a note of sadness in the closing of the session because with it we see the closing of the public life of one of our oldest members. Mr. Thomson retires from this Parliament carrying with him the best wishes of every member. He has played an important part in the Legislature of this country for more than three decades, and I am sure that I express the wish of every member, Mr. Thomson, when I say we hope that you will enjoy your retirement and will look back with a degree of pleasure on the thousands of hours you have spent in the legislative halls of Western Australia.

Mr. President, I join with the Chief Secretary in expressing great pleasure that you, Sir, have been restored to good health, and I hope that for the rest of this year and in the future your health will steadily improve. Before I resume my seat, might I follow the lead that the Chief Secretary has given in expressing my thanks to you, Sir, for your kindness to me throughout the session. Also my thanks to the Clerk of Parliaments, Mr. Leake; the Clerk Assistant, Mr. Sparks; and the Clerk of Records, Mr. Browne, for the immense assistance they have given me during the year.

I thank the Deputy Chairmen for their help and also the staff of Parliament House which has done an excellent job, as it always does. They provide an excellent service and fare, and our thanks are due to Mr. Roberts and the staff which works under him. "Hansard," of course, always does a good job. I think its members make a much better job of our utterances than we do ourselves, and they deserve a great deal of credit for tidying up the ragged ends of our speeches. Finally, I thank every member of this House for the kindness, consideration and help he has shown to me in every Committee stage of the legislation that has passed through this House this session.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I desire to support the remarks of the Chief Secretary, with the exception of his concluding comments. There is no doubt that sickness has had a tremendous effect upon the business of this Chamber during the year, and I do not think we have ever had the experience of so many members being absent from the House at once as a result of illness. I am indeed sorry that the Honorary Minister for Agriculture has been stricken as he has. He has undoubtedly performed wonderful service in the House and has always been an extremely conscientious Minister. I am sure that it was as a result of his application to his duties that his sickness occurred. Apart from his duties here, he travelled extensively throughout the country on departmental affairs, and I sincerely hope he will have a speedy recovery.

Then again, Mr. Baxter and Mr. Thomson have also suffered sickness during the year, and I am pleased to see that they are with us tonight. I wish to extend my congratulations to Mr. Thomson upon the extremely long parliamentary service he has given to this State. I was one of the first to vote for him when I was a farmer. There was no Labour candidate standing for the district at the time and, being a farmer, I took the chair at his meetings. Since that time, he has had a long parliamentary record, and has rendered great service to the people of the State.

I endorse everything that has been said regarding the officers of Parliament from the highest on the staff to the boys who do the running about. We are very fortunate in having such a competent staff. The session has been a very peaceful one, probably the most peaceful we have ever had. Several of our members will have to face the electors next year and I join with the Chief Secretary, with Party reservations however, in hoping that they will all be returned. You, Mr. President, have had more than your share of sickness. I am delighted to see you back and hope you will enjoy a restful period of good health during the next few months.

Hon. W. J. MANN: As one of the oldest members of this House in years, I have pleasure in supporting all that has been said about the officers and staff and those who have contributed

to make the work of this Chamber run so smoothly. The Chief Secretary enumerated all but one section. I am sure he unwittingly forgot to mention the band of ladies upstairs who, unseen, do one of the finest jobs possible for a team of typistes anywhere. We do not realise just how wonderfully competent those ladies are and how they work the same hours as the other members of the "Hansard" staff.

The Chief Secretary: I included them in referring to the "Hansard" staff.

Hon. W. J. MANN: At any rate, no harm can result from giving them a special mention. I have wondered many times just how they manage to stand up to the work as they do.

One matter I cannot allow to pass without reference is the fact that after sitting alongside my delightful friend, Mr. Thomson, for 17 years, I am about to lose him. He has frequently hauled me back from the wrong track and put me on the right one, and has always been a true friend and helper. Seventeen years is a long time to sit beside another member, but in all those years I cannot remember having had a semblance of a quarrel or disagreement with him other than on the merits of some piece of legislation. We wish Mr. Thomson long years of comfort. We shall miss him just as we shall miss any other members who fail to be returned at the biennial elections next May. I think I can go a little further than Mr. Gray went by saying that I shall be pleased to see the whole nine of the retiring members returned to this House.

The PRESIDENT: In closing the session, I wish to join with those who have expressed their gratitude for and their appreciation of the work that has been carried out by the Minister and the Honorary Minister during the session. I particularly want to express my own thanks for the consideration that has been extended to me by those two gentlemen and also by every member. Unfortunately, I was not able to be here the whole time, and I want to thank the Deputy President for the way in which he carried on the work in my absence. I feel very grateful.

I wish to join with others in extending to Mr. Thomson best wishes for a pleasant time during his retirement. We shall all

miss him; and I am sure we hope that in the future he will come along and visit us occasionally, because we always like to see our old friends back with us. I also join in expressing the hope that Mr. Wood will be speedily restored to health and strength and will be able to carry on the parliamentary work in which he is so keenly interested. To the "Hansard" typists, too, we are very grateful. What the strain of that work is, I think only those who have seen them at work year after year can appreciate.

To the "Hansard" staff—both those who take down our remarks and those who have the typing of them afterwards—we are very grateful. The Controller and his staff have done their duties in the efficient and cordial way that has always characterised their activities. I want to thank members for the standard they have established and maintained in this House. Our work has been carried out with that dignity and decorum which have always distinguished the sittings of the Legislative Council; and while we may not have occupied the usual amount of time in our work, it has at any rate been accomplished efficiently and speedily.

To those members who are retiring we extend our best wishes and the hope that they will survive the appeal to their constituents and will join us in the year that is to come. I believe the State is on the verge of a period of great prosperity. We must realise that the expansion this country is undertaking cannot but be reflected through the whole community, and I wish to close on that note of optimism. I hope that members, during the few months of the recess, will enjoy good health and will see the future blossoming in prosperity.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 30th September, 1949.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

MOTOR VEHICLES, DISTRIBUTION.

As to Urgency Motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the member for Irwin-Moore a letter of today's date, and reading as follows:—