

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 22nd September, 1949.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Kalgoorlie meat prices, as to adjournment of House	2370
Questions : Railways, (a) as to oxywelding costs	2370
(b) as to refreshment service returns	2371
(c) as to engagement of engineer in England	2371
Gold price increase, (a) as to assistance to prospectors	2371
(b) as to payment for untreated sands	2371
(c) as to State Battery charges	2371
Prices control, (a) as to wines and spirituous liquors	2372
(b) as to overcharging at Kalgoorlie	2372
(c) as to prosecution of Kalgoorlie butchers	2372
Goldfields Water Scheme, (a) as to tribute to Mr. N. W. Harper	2372
(b) as to tribute to Mr. J. S. Talbot	2372
State Batteries, (a) as to appointment of superintendent	2373
(b) as to assaying of samples	2373
Electricity supply, (a) as to breakdown at East Perth	2373
(b) as to obtaining expert	2374
(c) as to consulting ex-manager	2374
Housing, as to liberalising building conditions	2374
Petrol, (a) as to exhaustion of garage supplies	2375
(b) as to hoarding of supplies	2375
Motion : Government business, Standing Orders suspension, passed	2375
Bills : Traffic Act Amendment (No. 2), returned	2390
Bush Fires Act Amendment (No. 3), 2r.	2390
Marketing of Apples and Pears (No. 2), Message	2390
Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment (No. 2), Message, 2r.	2419
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r.	2422
Companies Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r., Com.	2423
Licensing Act Amendment (No. 2), returned	2426
Bread Act Amendment, 1r.	2426
Road Closure (No. 2), 2r.	2426
State Trading Concerns Estimates, 1949-50, report	2391
Loan Estimates, 1949-50	2396
Adjournment, special	2427

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

KALGOORLIE MEAT PRICES.

As to Adjournment of House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have been approached by the member for Kalgoorlie to allow a motion for the adjournment of the House to be moved in order that attention may be

drawn to the prices charged for meat at Kalgoorlie being excessive. In view of the fact that the subject was dealt with in the course of a debate in the House last night, and that the Loan Estimates will shortly be under review, I have advised the hon. member that the course suggested by him is not necessary.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Oxy-welding Costs.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What amount was paid to oxy-welding plant owners for work done on behalf of the Railway Department in the Eastern Goldfields district for the three years ended the 30th June, 1949?

(2) What is the estimated cost of establishing such a plant by the Railway Department to enable this work to be done within the department?

(3) What is the charge per hour paid for work done by private plant owners?

(4) How much of the cost mentioned in the first question was done on A.S.G. engines?

(5) What charge is made (per mile) for travelling costs by private plant owners?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Electric welding is done at Kalgoorlie and oxy-welding at Gwalia and Norseman. Total amounts paid were—

1946-47	£136 12 6
1947-48	£281 18 9
1948-49	£516 18 1

(2) One portable electric welding plant was put into use in January, 1948, at a cost of £750.

Three smaller sets are on order at a total cost of £1,008.

(3) Details are not known. Each job is charged separately and if price is thought reasonable, the firm is considered for subsequent jobs.

(4) 1946-47	£46 10 0
1947-48	£102 17 2
1948-49	£315 7 1

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

(b) As to Refreshment Service Returns.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways:

What was the profit, or loss, shown by the Railway Refreshment Services (excluding revenue from book stalls) for the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1949?

The MINISTER replied:

Net profit, £1,406, after allowing for interest and depreciation.

(c) As to Engagement of Engineer in England.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Have the conditions of engagement been determined for the engineer who is to inspect locomotives being purchased in England?

(2) In the event of additional locomotives being purchased overseas, is it intended to obtain the services of another engineer outside the State railways for inspection purposes?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. It is anticipated the same engineer will inspect any additional near-future purchases.

Consideration is being given by the Commission to sending W.A.G.R. employees to assist the inspecting officer, and gain experience at the same time.

GOLD PRICE INCREASE.*(a) As to Assistance to Prospectors.*

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

Having regard to the increase in the price of gold, and the consequent impetus it will give to gold production, will he take steps to provide prospectors and small gold producers with public treatment plants suitable for the treatment of all types of gold-bearing ores?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

This has always been the policy of the Mines Department and will be continued.

(b) As to Payment for Untreated Sands.

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

(1) In view of the fact that the Minister for Mines has decided to pay prospectors in full for untreated sands from crushings up till March last, and he has declared that in making that decision he did not believe a rise in the price of gold was imminent, and that the State Batteries Department might make a substantial profit on the arrangement, will he now pay to such prospectors the increased price, provided their sands have not been treated?

(2) How many such prospectors are affected?

(3) How much gold is estimated to be involved?

(4) Why was not his decision publicised, and why was not a responsible body like the Amalgamated Prospectors' Association informed of the new policy?

(5) In view of his reply in the affirmative to a question in the House whether he would consider paying in full for untreated sands for all time, what representations does he require before he takes this step?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) 138.

(3) 882 ozs.

(4) Original request on behalf of prospectors for full payment was made by Mr. Marshall, M.L.A., and he was advised by letter on the 17th June last of approval. The Amalgamated Prospectors' Association was advised by letter on the 23rd August.

(5) The matter is receiving consideration.

(c) As to State Battery Charges.

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

(1) In view of the new price of gold, will he consider immediately a revision of State Battery tariffs?

(2) If so, will some provision be made for refunds retrospectively for prospectors who are crushing at the moment?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) It is not the policy of the Government to increase crushing charges.

(2) There will be no alteration in charges notwithstanding that prospectors will receive much greater returns.

PRICES CONTROL.

(a) *As to Wines and Spirituous Liquors.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Attorney General:

(1) Are the retail prices of wines and spirituous liquors, both Australian and imported, subject to the control of the Prices Commissioner?

(2) If prices are controlled, does the control cover sales in hotels as well as by the holders of gallon licenses?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(b) *As to Overcharging at Kalgoorlie.*

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

(1) In view of the fact that overcharging for commodities is still taking place on the Eastern Goldfields, particularly with regard to meat, will the Minister immediately give consideration to the stationing of a resident officer of the Prices Branch in Kalgoorlie?

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

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

I ask the hon. member to give notice of the question.

Mr. Styants: And let traders get more rake-offs than they have already got.

(c) *As to Prosecution of Kalgoorlie Butchers.*

Mr. OLIVER (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

(1) Will he inform the House whether it is possible to have the butchers at Kalgoorlie charged with offences against the prices control regulations brought before the court immediately?

(2) Subject to the answer to this question being in the affirmative, does he consider that such action would cause the said butchers to respect the prices control regulations and bring the prices of meat at Kalgoorlie down to the fixed prices?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) I inquired as to the position today and was informed that the necessary papers were being forwarded to the Crown Law Department tomorrow. I shall do as much as possible to expedite the hearing.

(2) In my opinion the prosecutions are likely to have a salutary effect.

GOLDFIELDS WATER SCHEME.

(a) *As to Tribute to Mr. N. W. Harper.*

Hon. Sir NORBERT KEENAN asked the Premier:

(1) Is it accepted by the Government as an admitted fact that Mr. N. W. Harper took a very prominent part in advocating the installation of the Goldfields Water Scheme of 1895-1903?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Government undertake to have a plaque erected at No. 1 Pumping Station to place on record an appreciation of Mr. Harper's work?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The report prepared by Professor Murdoch contains the following extract—

To Mr. Harper is due the credit of having given Forrest support and encouragement at a time when he needed all the support and encouragement he could get.

(2) The suggestion will receive consideration.

(b) *As to Tribute to Mr. J. S. Talbot.*

Mr. FOX (without notice) asked the Premier:

Following upon the answer the Premier gave to the member for Nedlands with regard to a commemorative plaque in connection with inauguration of the Goldfields Water Scheme, as it is an undisputed fact that Mr. J. S. Talbot was the first man to draw attention to the possibility of supplying water to Kalgoorlie and I understand, speaking from memory, that a committee appointed to inquire into the matter, recommended that some recognition should be accorded Mr. Talbot for his work, is the Premier prepared to install a plaque at No. 1 Pumping Station as a memorial to Mr. Talbot—I do not know if he is still alive—as the man who first suggested the construction of the water scheme?

The PREMIER replied:

I am not prepared to give any undertaking that a plaque will be erected to the memory of anyone at the present stage.

STATE BATTERIES.

(a) *As to Appointment of Superintendent.*

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines—

(1) When will a new superintendent of State Batteries be appointed?

(2) Is a selection board now dealing with applications?

(3) Who are the members of the board, and why was each appointed?

(4) If the general manager of the Great Boulder Mine, Mr. J. Hylton, is one, then why was he appointed, and who was responsible for the appointment?

(5) Why was not a person representing the customers of State Batteries appointed to the selection board?

(6) Was the Amalgamated Prospectors' Association asked to supply a representative, or to nominate a mining man who, in their opinion, would be fitted to select a superintendent?

(7) If a selection board has been appointed, has that board the final say in making the appointment? If it recommends, then to whom does that recommendation go?

(8) Is he aware that the manager of the Kalgoorlie State Battery, Mr. Kennedy Smith, has said publicly that he will be appointed superintendent?

(9) Is he aware that Mr. Smith is already making plans to move to Perth?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) In the near future.

(2), (3), (4), (5), (6) and (7) Messrs. Foxall, State Mining Engineer; Mr. Browne, Superintendent of State Batteries; and Mr. Hylton, Vice-President of the Chamber of Mines, President of the Kalgoorlie Sub-Branch of the R.S.L. and General Manager of the Great Boulder Proprietary Mine, were requested by the department to examine the technical quali-

fications of all applicants solely for the information of the department, and to assist it in making a recommendation to the Public Service Commissioner.

(8) No.

(9) No.

(b) *As to Assaying of Samples.*

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

(1) Who assays umpire samples from State Batteries?

(2) Do the customer and the manager both get a certificate showing the result?

(3) Who is the person or official who signs the certificate?

(4) If the customer receives a certificate is it sent direct to him or through the battery manager?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) Government Assayer who is the Director of the Government Chemical Laboratories.

(2) Certificate is sent to manager and a copy of voucher showing assay result accompanies cheque, sent direct from head office to the customer.

(3) Government Assayer.

(4) Answered by No. (2).

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

(a) *As to Breakdown at East Perth.*

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Is he able to supply the House with any information regarding the interruption to the electricity supply at the present moment?

The MINISTER replied:

I knew nothing about the breakdown until I entered the Chamber and my attention was directed to it by the member for North-East Fremantle. The reason for the interruption is that the big No. 6 alternator has broken down. The fault is in the stator, which is the same reason as operated when the last breakdown occurred. Until the machine has been dismantled, it will not be possible to know precisely what the damage is or for how long we are to be without current from that source. A telegram has been sent East to Mr. Oxley, who, I understand is the best man for the job,

and he will arrive here as soon as can reasonably be expected; that is, as soon as the first plane can bring him.

Mr. May: Do not our men know anything about it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Seeing that I obtained the information that I am now passing on to the House from that source, the question is hardly necessary. The Chamber of Manufactures, the A.B.C. and the Press have been informed of the position. We are keeping in touch with the Chamber of Manufactures regarding the nature of the restrictions that it will be necessary to impose. Naturally members' minds will be on the question of the assistance we can get from the auxiliary plant. I am not in a position to say precisely that the plant is ready now for operation, but that matter is being looked into and I should be able to inform members on that point in a few minutes, though I do not assert that I shall be in a position to do so. As the afternoon progresses, if there is anything at all that I am able to pass on in the way of information obtained from the chairman of the Commission, naturally I shall keep members informed. That is as far as I can go at the moment.

(b) As to Obtaining Expert.

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

(1) In view of the frequently recurring breakdowns at the East Perth power house, has the department an officer capable of dealing with the position?

Several members: No.

Mr. SHEARN:

(2) If not, does the Minister intend to take action to obtain the services of a competent officer to prevent undue delay, if necessary, by the importation of a qualified man from another State?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Members will recall when the previous breakdowns occurred having been very insistent indeed about our securing from the Eastern States the very best man available. I am not implying that we have the best man available in Perth. We have excellent men, but there are experts in every line of electrical activity and it is considered that Mr. Oxley is the best obtain-

able. That is the man we are getting for the job. As to whether, after this experience, we shall secure the services of such a man so that he may be available here when the need for his services arises, I am not at the moment able to say. Members will appreciate that within some seven or eight months—I am a little uncertain of the date, not having made a precise calculation—the South Fremantle station should be coming into operation, and then we shall no longer be subject to breakdowns of the sort we are suffering at present. I repeat that, in respect of the starting off of South Fremantle, I am speaking without the aid of a recent calculation.

(c) As to Consulting ex-Manager.

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

In view of the serious position that has arisen from the breakdown of the electricity supply, will the Minister consider the advisability of asking the ex-manager of the East Perth Power House, Mr. W. H. Taylor, for his opinion?

The MINISTER replied:

No.

HOUSING.

As to Liberalising Building Conditions.

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

In view of the statement made by the Chief Secretary during the debate in the Legislative Council last night on the Building Materials and Building Operations Control Act Amendment (Continuance) Bill (No. 2), that the Government and the Housing Commission were still giving careful consideration to some liberalisation of the building policy, will he indicate what proposal the Government has in mind and to what extent such liberalisation is to be implemented?

The MINISTER replied:

This matter is still under consideration. It is desirable to preserve some balance between building demand and materials available, and certain proposals which have been submitted are being examined in order to assess their practicability and value.

PETROL.

(a) As to Exhaustion of Garage Supplies.

Mr. TRIAT (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is he aware that many metropolitan garages are without petrol and that regular customers cannot expect any supplies before Tuesday next?

The PREMIER replied:

I have been told there is a shortage of petrol, but I was not aware of the information conveyed to me by the hon. member that petrol will not be available at garages until Tuesday next. Legislation is to be introduced within the next day or two in order that steps may be taken to safeguard the position with regard to petrol supplies.

(b) As to Hoarding of Supplies.

Mr. TRIAT (without notice) asked the Premier:

Following upon that reply, is the Premier aware that it has been stated in this House that many people have hoarded petrol to an extent of as much as 4,000 gallons? If this is so, will he ask the Criminal Investigation Branch to inquire and report whether such statements are correct?

The PREMIER replied:

I have heard, and have reason to believe, that there has been considerable hoarding of petrol. At this stage I do not think it is a matter for the C.I.B., but any legislation that is introduced is sure to take into account the fact that there has been hoarding of petrol and declarations will have to be made respecting the petrol already hoarded or held.

MOTION—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.*Standing Orders Suspension.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by the Premier:

That, until the House otherwise order, the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable the undermentioned Bills, after the moving of the second readings, to be passed through all their remaining stages on the same day, viz.:—

(1) Liquid Fuel (Emergency Provisions) Bill.

(2) Western Australian Transport Board (Validation) Bill.

(3) Coal Mines Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment Bill.

(4) Marketing of Apples and Pears Bill.

(5) Bush Fires Act Amendment Bill.

(6) War Service Land Settlement (Notification of Transactions) Bill.

Also to enable all messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the same day they are received; and further, to enable any Bills transmitted from the Legislative Council to be introduced and passed through all their remaining stages on the same day.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [2.48]: Pursuant to notice, the Premier yesterday moved for the suspension of Standing Orders to permit of a number of matters enumerated in the motion being discussed and dealt with without delay, and not only without delay but also without the ordinary time being made available for their proper consideration. Over the years it has been the practice, when Parliament has been approaching the end of the session—that is, close to Christmas time—to have a motion of this sort in order to facilitate the despatch of business and permit Parliament to close. But no such emergency exists now. We are still in the month of September and several months must pass before we reach the end of the year. In ordinary circumstances, if the interests of the country were being considered, there would be no necessity for the motion to be moved at this time. Consequently, the only reason why we are being called upon to suspend Standing Orders in September—I emphasise that it is the only reason—is for Party-political considerations.

Thus we have reached the stage when the criterion as to whether we shall suspend Standing Orders is not the welfare of the country or of the people but what is best in the Party interests of the Government. That is the factor to take precedence. It is the only explanation for this motion and the only explanation for the motion passed a week or so ago, portion of which was put into operation last Tuesday. As a result of the Government's action some 30 Divisions of the Estimates were passed through this Chamber in a matter of seconds without any explanation of them being given by Ministers or any debate on them being permitted. More than half the Estimates could not be dis-

cussed because of Party considerations of the Government, not because of the interests of the State. That is our position on this motion.

I submit that the reason for suspending Standing Orders is to enable the procedure to be utilised in the interests of Parliament and the people generally. It was never intended that a Government should make use of it for its own political ends, and that is what is being done by the Government this session. Nobody can argue that members will be given ample time to consider the Bills which are enumerated in the motion. They will be rushed through. If the progress made is not to the satisfaction of the Premier he will do as he did before, make members sit right through the night. That was the cause of the long speeches made by Opposition members as a protest against being obliged to sit until 3, 4, 5 and 6 o'clock in the morning. That is what the Premier will do in connection with these Bills. The object of the motion is to enable him to consider giving attention to them from the second reading stage onwards. He will attempt to force the Bills through, even though it results in completely fatiguing members.

I thought we were returned to Parliament by the people to give earnest and proper consideration to such legislation as was submitted to us. I admit the Government has this session brought in a minimum of legislation—again in the Party interests; not in the interests of the State—but we are not to be given even sufficient time to debate that minimum of legislation properly and adequately. The Government might just as well use a sausage machine to turn out the legislation; the result would be the same. No protestations by the Premier that sufficient time will be given to consider the Bills will be of any avail because—I dislike saying it, but it is nevertheless true—his assurances given on the previous motion were not worth anything.

The Premier: Which motion was that? .

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The guillotine motion. The Premier's assurances were not worth anything at all in that connection. I am very sorry to have to say so but it is an undoubted fact, because the Premier said at the time, when he made his calculation as to the date on which the Estimates

would have to conclude—and he was aware how many hours would be available to members—that ample time would be provided under his proposal, that is, the guillotine proposal, for members not only to debate the General Estimates, but also the Loan Estimates. The member for Northam interjected, "That is not true." The Premier said, "It is true." He must have known at the time, however, that it was not true, because a simple arithmetical calculation would have shown him that it was not.

I then asked, "Is it intended that Ministers shall introduce their Estimates?" and the Premier replied, "Yes." He therefore had that in mind. I then said, "That will take eight hours, at least," and the Premier said, "It has never taken that long before." I would remind him, however, that it took actually six hours 25 minutes to introduce the Divisions that were discussed, and that only half of the Estimates were introduced and discussed. These absorbed more than six hours, whereas my estimate was eight hours for the Ministers to introduce the Estimates for their departments. The Premier went on to say—

So long as the Estimates are introduced and the information is given, that is the main thing.

But half of them were not introduced. Then the Premier said—

I repeat that this motion will not curtail legitimate discussion of any item on the Estimates.

That was the Premier's statement. He said that the guillotine motion would not curtail legitimate discussion of any item on the Estimates. The Premier cannot say, following on the passing of his guillotine motion, that the discussion which took place on the Estimates was not legitimate discussion. Yet his motion did curtail that discussion to the extent of cutting it in half, making it impossible not only for members to discuss some of the Divisions, but also making it impossible for some of the Ministers even to introduce the Estimates for their departments. Is it in the best interests of the State that the Revenue Estimates should have been passed en bloc without explanation and without discussion? Is it in the best interests of the people? It certainly is not, yet it was done. It was done to serve the Party ends of the Government in power. So that, when it comes to reaching a decision

as to what action is to be taken, the criterion apparently is not whether the interests of the people will be best served but whether the interests of the Party will be best served. Presumably the interests of the people can go hang.

It is deplorable that we should have had this session the occurrences we had the other evening when the guillotine motion was given effect to, when the Estimates of important departments such as the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Works, the Department of Railways and the Department of Mines were put through without a single word of explanation by Ministers and without an opportunity being afforded private members to utter a word about them. Does that make for good Government? It is calculated to bring Parliament into contempt. That kind of conduct in years gone by resulted in rebellion of the people, because of the failure to allow them free discussion and freedom of speech. Motions of the type of the guillotine motion to which I have been referring, and the one now before us, are well calculated to bring Parliament into contempt and cause members to rebel.

The Premier could not advance a single argument in support of this motion. He said, "It has been the custom" or words to that effect; "It was the usual motion." But it is not the usual motion at this time of the session; it is the usual motion when but a few days are left and it is necessary to complete the business before the end of the year. But no such necessity now exists. The only necessity is that two members of the Government intend to resign their seats to stand for the Commonwealth Parliament and those resignations will place the Government in difficulty. Because of that, and that only, every other consideration is to be submerged completely and we are to deal with legislation just as fast as the Government desires to pelt it at us. Not only are we to deal with legislation introduced in this House, but if we receive messages from the Legislative Council with regard to other Bills, then, without members having any opportunity whatever to examine those Bills, they can be pushed through all stages in the one sitting. There is no justification for that line of conduct whatever. It is a travesty.

We call ourselves responsible men. We are here to do our best in the interests of our constituents and of the country generally when legislation is under consideration. Have you ever thought, Mr. Speaker, why it is that the various stages of a Bill have been so clearly defined; why it has been the practice to have three stages—the first reading, the second reading and the third reading? It would save a lot of time very often were there only one stage for a Bill so that it could be brought in on one day, dealt with straight away, and sent on to another place. Why has that system not been adopted? It is because it has been recognised that we will never have good law in that way. Members must have time to consider proposals which are brought down; to examine them thoroughly from a different point of view from that taken by the Government; and, because of that necessity, the usages of Parliament have provided for ample time to elapse between the various stages.

It is true that in matters of urgency provision is made for dispensing with the ordinary forms; but then the reason is urgency. When there is no urgency so far as the State is concerned, it is most undesirable that the ordinary procedure should be departed from. In time of war it may be necessary to suspend Standing Orders and have a Bill enacted in a matter of hours. It is the welfare of the country which determines the action to be followed in such instances; and as it is a matter of urgency, nobody objects to such a procedure. In the case of a great financial crash, when banks have had to close their doors and a chaotic state has arisen, it has been necessary to suspend the ordinary forms and put legislation through all stages in a matter of hours. Nobody objects to such a procedure; and if mistakes are made in such circumstances, we put up with them. We take them as something which could not have been avoided in the rush.

But there is no excuse for rushing legislation through if no such case of urgency exists; and the only urgency in this matter is the urgency for the Government to take cover as quickly as possible; the urgency to close up Parliament, not in the interests of the country, but in the interests of the Parties to which the members of the Coalition Government belong. If that pro-

cedure is to be followed regularly—that Party interests will always take precedence over the interests of the people—it is as well that the people should know it and not be under the impression that their interests are paramount and receive first consideration in Parliament. The interests of the people require that with regard to all legislation—and I may say particularly with regard to some of the legislation listed in the motion: that dealing with liquid fuel, for example—proper and careful examination shall be made of the proposals so that the laws will be good laws.

But that does not mean anything to the Government. Its desire is to get the Bills through as quickly as possible. It says, "We cannot avoid having them, or they would not be here. As we cannot avoid bringing them to Parliament, let us get rid of them as quickly as we can. Get them out of sight! No matter whether they are good laws or bad laws, so long as we get them completed and close Parliament up." That is the line the Government is taking, purely in its own interests, to save its own skin. The people should know that and should thoroughly understand that that is the attitude the Government adopts. It is running true to form, because it set a precedent the other evening when it put the guillotine motion.

When I reflect upon the way the Premier got up and gave a solemn assurance that ample time would be provided I feel disgusted, because he said it in a manner which was meant to carry conviction, to suggest that he was quite sincere in his statement that ample time would be given; that he was quite sincere in his statement that Ministers would introduce their Estimates. But it became impossible. Not only was it a case of just missing out, but not more than half the Estimates were considered. So much for the assurances of the Premier! Any assurances that we will have ample time properly to consider this legislation will be of no avail, because we can place no reliance upon them. Apparently the Premier is prepared to give such assurances without first of all ascertaining whether it is possible to carry them out. He just makes them at the time to use them as an argument, not caring very much whether the assurances will be borne out subsequently or whether they will not.

The Government, with the help of the Independents, will have its majority to do this. I suppose it has already canvassed that position and received assurances from the Independents. That is a most remarkable state of affairs too. It is understandable that members of Parties will decide to take what action they think they should take as a body; that they will take concerted action. But the general impression which Independents seek to give is that they are as free as the air we breathe; that they can please themselves how they pass their votes in the House; that they can decide all questions on their merits. I have not seen much evidence of it in this Parliament. If ever there was a time when an Independent ought to exercise his right and vote, it is on a question which is to determine whether legislation shall be rushed through in September or whether members shall have ample time to give proper consideration to it.

If the Independents were true to their protestations, and considered the interests of the country, they would—as they are not bound by any Party affiliations—vote only one way, namely, to ensure that the legislation would be fully and carefully considered. Their vote would be given to see that there would be no rush legislation to suit Party interests, but that there would be ample time to consider all its implications on the public. Taking past experience as a guide, I am pretty certain the Government would not have attempted to give notice of this motion unless it had first canvassed the situation and been assured of the support of the Independents. That would be natural, because the Government would not want to be defeated on a motion of this kind. As the Government has not sufficient supporters to carry such a motion if the Independents voted against it, it could not be certain that the motion would pass unless it had an undertaking from the Independents.

So it is a moral certainty that they have been approached on the matter and have either guaranteed to support the motion, or to pair, so that one vote will cancel the other and the result be the same. That is a remarkable state of affairs on a motion of this type which cannot possibly benefit the State, but which may ultimately do it considerable harm. In the past, even with the most careful consideration of legislation, Parliament has made some bad mistakes.

The chances of making such errors are increased if we rush legislation through without having ample time in which to consider it; and, further, if we deal with it at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, when not more than four or five members are awake.

The Minister for Housing: We are protected by the Legislative Council.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Will not the other place pass a motion similar to this? Is the Minister for Housing giving an assurance that it will not rush the legislation through in one sitting?

The Minister for Housing: I am saying there is protection regarding legislation, by a Chamber of Review.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is funny.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister will not give an assurance that it will not rush the legislation through. We know very well that the Government has set a deadline for the closing of Parliament, and it will close on that day irrespective of the consideration which legislation gets either by this Chamber or the so-called Chamber of Review. The Independents will support that line of action. It is most remarkable for Independents to do that, to say the least, when, if they can lay any claim at all to the support of the people, they can only do so on the basis that they are not bound by any Party considerations but are perfectly free to act in the best interests of the State. But they will act in the best interests of the Liberal Party and the Country Party on this motion. The interests of the State do not require that this motion shall be passed. There is nobody who can bring forward one argument to prove that the interests of the State will be served if the motion is carried. The only interests to be served are Party interests. But we shall find the Independents casting their votes to serve the Party interests of the members of the Liberal and Country League and of the Country and Democratic League.

So these Independent members, for all practical purposes, might as well adopt the label straight out, and join one or other of those Parties, because they are not exercising any independence whatever; they are not considering the interests of the State but only what should be done in the interests of the two Parties I have mentioned. The people should know that as a guide

to the conduct of the Independents in Parliament. The word is a complete misnomer because the Independents are under the domination of the Government, and have been right through the session. I repeat, the Government must be certain of passing this motion or it would not have had the temerity to bring it here. No matter what we say it will be carried. It is shocking to think that it will be carried with the assistance of the Independents.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: So-called!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The motion means that, purely in the interests of the Government, proper and adequate discussion cannot be given to the various matters that are to be brought forward. It is all very well for the Premier to say that they are not contentious, but it is not always on contentious matters that trouble arises. I would rather argue the other way, that on contentious matters we are more likely to get sound law than on non-contentious matters, because if they are contentious we have the various subjects debated at length, and the views, pro and con, of members put forward. On the other hand, if they are not contentious, members are prone to allow them to go through with but scant consideration. In those circumstances, there is more likelihood of bad law resulting. It does not help the Premier to submit that the various Bills enumerated in the motion do not deal with contentious matters. They deal with subjects that require careful consideration, but if the motion is carried that will not be given. I hope the motion will not be passed.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [3.19]: I am in another of those generous moods where I am anxious to assist the Government and give satisfaction to members generally.

The Minister for Lands: You have a big job in front of you.

Mr. GRAHAM: I hope I have not. If the members of the Government will have some regard for what I say, then I think to a great extent the arguments advanced by the member for North-East Fremantle, which are quite valid, will be overcome.

The Minister for Lands: I mean, to satisfy every member in the Chamber. That is a big job.

Mr. GRAHAM: I hope I can do that. I think it is admitted by members on both sides of the House that to introduce legislation and rush it through in one day is an undesirable practice if it can possibly be avoided. We are well aware of the situation confronting the Government, and of the anxiety of the Premier to conclude this session by a given time. Whilst we disagree with him as to his grounds or reasons it is, nevertheless, understandable. After all, it makes a farce of Parliamentary proceedings if a number of important measures are to be introduced without any proper opportunity being given for ample investigation and consultation with the affected parties. While Bills are drafted in accordance with the viewpoint of the Government, it is possible that they may do irreparable damage to the community. I would like the Premier to pay attention to the suggestion I am now going to make. I move—

That the motion be amended by striking out the word "same" in line 5 and inserting the word "following" in lieu.

If the amendment is agreed to I will move a similar and consequential amendment to the last line of the motion. If the House accepts this proposal it will be possible for a Bill to be introduced by the Minister in charge today and for there to be a full discussion on the second reading tomorrow. Following that we could go into Committee, after which the report could be adopted and the third reading agreed to. The measure could then go to the Legislative Council, and if that House expedited the business we could still, on the same day, give consideration to any amendments that might be made by another place. The amendment would allow many things to be done in the one day that are not permissible without a suspension of Standing Orders and it would safeguard the position and avoid the situation with which we are now confronted.

As things stand at present a Bill might be introduced at 8 p.m. and be seen at that hour for the first time by members on both sides of the House. Following that some member from this side of the House would be expected to analyse the Bill, possibly referring it to the organisations directly affected, and then to give a critical analysis of the various clauses when the Bill reached the Committee stage. It is grossly unfair

and unreasonable for the Government to expect legislation to receive proper consideration in those circumstances. If the Premier will allow this interval between the introduction of these measures and their succeeding stages a great deal of the opposition now being expressed will be overcome. I feel sure that the Independents and, indeed, supporters of the Government, will agree that my amendment is a practical and reasonable compromise that will not cause undue delay to the Government's programme. I appeal to the Premier and to members to agree to the amendment.

HON. A. H. PANTON (Leederville—on amendment) [3.25]: I think the amendment represents a fair compromise. Up to date there has been little or no attempt to compromise. If the Premier agrees to the proposal of the member for East Perth it will not mean that a Bill must be introduced on one day and dealt with on the following day. I feel sure that some of these Bills could be dealt with without the mandatory proposition put forward by the Premier, but where it is considered that thorough analysis is necessary, the Bill could be dealt with the following day. Some of the Bills could be dealt with on the day on which they were introduced and some on the following day. Rather than go on fighting one another over something that is not worth while at the moment, I think members should agree to the amendment, which will facilitate the work of Parliament. I appeal to the Premier to accept it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray - Wellington — on amendment) [3.27]: When I moved this motion I stated that it was the usual motion brought down at this period of the session, and that is so. The member for North-East Fremantle spoke at considerable length about the promises I made and did not keep. When I made those promises I did not know that such a considerable length of time was going to be taken up by members opposite in discussing points of order and matters not actually connected with the Revenue Estimates. I therefore do not think the hon. member can hold me responsible for that delay.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: When was that done?

The PREMIER: I think some of the speeches made by members opposite were unduly long, and there was much more discussion on the Estimates and much more time spent on them this session than in any previous year that I know of. The charge made by the member for Fremantle, that the Government has gagged members, cannot be substantiated.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Can it not?

The PREMIER: Had we gone on as we were going, it would have taken many weeks to deal with the Estimates.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I was referring to the programme after you passed your guillotine motion. No time was taken up by points of order then, except on private member's day, and discussion on the Estimates proceeded in the ordinary way, though the Ministers took up six hours and 25 minutes of the time.

The PREMIER: I am perfectly satisfied that if members had dealt only with the facts and essentials relating to the Estimates they could have obtained all the information they wanted and could have had all the discussion they desired. At all events, that is done with now.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What about the amendment?

The PREMIER: I do not propose to accept the amendment, for this reason; the Bills will be introduced and the debates will be adjourned and members will have the week-end in which to think over them and obtain any information they require.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What about our recreation in the week-end?

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member will have time for recreation as well.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The motion doesn't say so.

Mr. Graham: You could introduce a Bill on Thursday or Friday next week and put it through on the same day.

The PREMIER: There is no need for the amendment because the debates can be adjourned.

Mr. Graham: Then agree to the amendment.

The PREMIER: There is no need for me to agree to the amendment. I think members have an idea of the Bills which are on the notice paper. I think they know, within a little, what will be contained in them.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes, not having seen them; that is understandable.

The PREMIER: Let us look at some of them.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Let us look at all of them.

The PREMIER: The member for North-East Fremantle has been responsible for one of the Bills being introduced.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But we do not know what is in it.

The PREMIER: I think the Leader of the Opposition would have a pretty fair idea if I am any judge of him. I do not think I will be very far out.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What about the first one mentioned? Do you think we have any idea about that?

The PREMIER: What is it?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Liquid fuel.

The PREMIER: I do not think there will be anything contentious in that. The hon. member knows that steps have to be taken to safeguard the petrol position. We all agree upon that although there can be discussions as to how it shall be done.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But will you not give us one day to think about the Bill after we have seen it? That is all the amendment seeks.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will have until Tuesday to think about it. There is all the week-end and that will give him time to consult those whom he wishes to see about the Bill.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: How can you do that?

The PREMIER: Parliament does not meet until Tuesday.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But suppose I want to consult a member of Parliament, what then?

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition will be here on Monday.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I will probably be here Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition will be here on Monday and he can consult with any members of Parliament then.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But the officers of State will not be here on Saturday or Sunday.

The PREMIER: They will be here on Monday and Parliament does not meet until 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday. I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition is complaining.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I am not complaining but you are knocking away the prop of your own argument against the amendment.

The PREMIER: I do not think I am.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Why do you not agree with the amendment and save all the argument?

The PREMIER: My idea is to give the hon. member what he wants and he will get that if the motion is agreed to.

Mr. Graham: Agree to the amendment and everyone will be happy.

The PREMIER: There is no intention of stifling debate. I have seen notice papers with more business on them, towards the closing stages of the session, than there is on this notice paper.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But we do not know what is still to come.

The PREMIER: But the Leader of the Opposition knows what is there now.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But what is coming from the Upper House?

The PREMIER: There will be very little from there.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What about the Pearling Bill and Bread Act Amendment Bill and some others?

The PREMIER. We propose to sit on Fridays and I am satisfied that if we can keep to essentials and get down to the real facts we can get through this legislation without depriving members of a full opportunity to deal with it.

MR. HEGNEY (Pilbara—on amendment) [3.33]: I intend to support the amendment which, in a large measure, will ensure that Standing Orders remain as they are at present. I am surprised that the Premier used the arguments he did to speak

against the amendment. If he proposes to introduce Bills on one day and permit them to be discussed on the following day, what is his objection to the amendment?

The Premier: I have given you what you asked for.

Mr. HEGNEY: Then why does the Premier oppose the amendment?

The Premier: This is the usual motion towards the end of the session.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Premier says that this is the usual motion submitted for the consideration of the House towards the end of the session. I would remind the Premier that that motion is usually submitted during the first or second week in December and not during the third or fourth week in September. That is the difference between this motion and the usual one.

The Premier: Do not forget that we met earlier in the year, sat on Fridays and the House has met at an earlier time. This has all meant longer hours for discussion.

Mr. HEGNEY: Before dealing with my remarks on the motion I will deal with the Premier's interjection. The Government by design eliminated the Address-in-reply, although I will admit that Parliament commenced a little earlier than usual. The Address-in-reply was eliminated for the express purpose of attempting to hamstring discussion and stifle the constructive criticism of the Opposition to the Government's acts of omission and commission. That is the reason why the time-honoured Address-in-reply was eliminated. For a considerable time the Premier made great play of the fact, and tried to capitalise upon the action of members of the Opposition indulging in what he was pleased to term obstructive tactics. Our remarks were intended to try to throw the spotlight of the public upon the attitude of the Government. It was the Government and not members of the Opposition who kept Parliament here until two and three o'clock in the morning. Members desired to adjourn at a reasonable hour and the record of votes and proceedings will show that we desired to terminate sittings at 11 o'clock and 11.30 o'clock, but we were obliged to go on because the Government forced us to do so.

The Minister for Lands: Then why did you start singing to us at two o'clock in the morning?

Mr. HEGNEY: Because I can sing and the Minister for Lands cannot. If the Minister for Lands was capable of singing he would have done so. The motion is just another attempt on the part of the Government to stifle discussion and I take strong exception to the Premier's statement that members should keep to essentials. Each member of this House will be his own judge as to what are essentials and non-essentials so long as he keeps within the province of the Standing Orders. It is not for the Premier, with his dictatorial attitude, to define what members on this side of the House, at least, shall say. He has been very successful in stifling the members sitting behind him but we on this side of the House will decide for ourselves what are essentials. The Premier has mentioned that the Bills are not of a contentious nature. I, as a member of this Chamber, do not know the contents of the respective Bills.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: None of us does.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Premier said that there was nothing contentious in the Bill to deal with liquid fuel and he told us that all members are satisfied that petrol must be controlled. But, there will be a vital difference as to the method to be adopted in the control of the distribution of petrol and as to how it shall be rationed. For instance, it would not be any good this State introducing a rationing scheme unless all the other States did likewise. This motion is most inappropriate and the Premier keeps attempting to prove, unsuccessfully, of course, that this side of the House has indulged in obstructive tactics. Since this second part of the session commenced the Government has enjoyed a very large measure of co-operation from members on this side of the Chamber.

The Premier: Won't the following day be private members' day to start with?

Mr. HEGNEY: The Premier asks us whether the following day will be private members' day.

The Premier: We have heard enough from you complaining about private members' day.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Premier saw to it that he introduced contentious measures on private members' day and a good deal of private members' time was taken up in debating his motion for the guillotine which, in due course, was successfully applied. As

far as I know, the time for the ending of the debate on the State Trading Concerns will be at 9 p.m. this evening. Now the Premier has introduced a motion to deal with all these Bills so that they can be put through all stages in the one sitting.

The Premier: I am letting you adjourn them.

Mr. HEGNEY: If the Premier is prepared to accede to the request from this side of the House, why oppose the amendment? That is the question. There will be messages coming from the Legislative Council for consideration by this Chamber, and private members will be at a distinct disadvantage inasmuch as they do not know the contents of them. They are entitled to have time to consider what such messages and amendments from that place contain. When the Labour Government held the reins of office, on a number of occasions I have known measures to be introduced in the closing hours of a particular session, and they were defeated by another place on the second reading on the excuse that the members in that place were not prepared to deal hastily with legislation but desired time to review it.

We have had an admission from the Premier that he and the members of his Government are breaking their necks to close the session as quickly as possible. Why close Parliament at the end of September? No legitimate reason has been put forward other than that the Government desires to save its political skin. That being so, if these Bills go to another place in the dying hours of this Parliament what guarantee have we that they will be passed there? The motion of the Premier should be thrown out altogether and the business of the House should proceed in the usual manner. The Premier would get a long way further if he did not try to foist these tactics on the members of the House. Although only the striking out of the innocuous word "same" is involved, I think the Premier should withdraw the motion or else support the amendment.

MR. READ (Victoria Park—on amendment) [3.43]: I propose to support the amendment. I cannot see that either one or a few extra days will make much difference and perhaps we can bring some thought to bear on the deliberation of these Bills now before us. In view of the urgency of

these measures I hope the Opposition will not hold them up for any considerable period. For instance, the Liquid Fuel (Emergency Provisions) Bill needs urgent consideration because of the present position relating to liquid fuel in Western Australia.

Mr. Graham: Why is it not high on the notice paper?

Mr. READ: If this Bill is not dealt with rapidly I fear that industry could be brought to a standstill.

Mr. Smith: The farmers have all the petrol.

Mr. READ: I was just about to verify that statement. I found it difficult to return to Perth because of the scarcity of petrol supplies which has been mainly brought about by the quantity of petrol that is being stored in the country districts. I heard that one farmer of foreign extraction in Three Springs had 95 44-gallon drums of petrol stored. Therefore, this Bill should be handled with dispatch. I would like to direct a few words to the member for North-East Fremantle as to his opinion of what Independent members of Parliament do or do not do. He said that when those members vote with the Government they should join the Country Party, and I suppose, in reverse, if we vote on this side of the House in opposition we should join the Labour Party.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Tell us how you connect these remarks up with the motion before the Chair?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You go over to the other side; that is where you belong.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Minister for Lands: Sit down!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for North-East Fremantle was discussing the amendment and we are now dealing with the motion. The member for Victoria Park will proceed.

The Minister for Lands: Look at the time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but it is now a quarter to four and I will suspend the House until four p.m.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4 p.m.

Mr. READ: I reiterate that if I thought the postponement would not mean the saving of one day in discussion I would not support the motion. Important measures would not be at any disadvantage whatever, and I therefore support the amendment. Should the opportunity arise, I will have something to say on the motion.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne—on amendment) [4.2]: I regret that the motion was ever moved, because I regard it as entirely unnecessary. Although the amendment moved by the member for East Perth certainly does overcome some of the objectionable features, it would still be necessary—possibly not at this time of the year, but at what we anticipate to be the stage of this session—for a somewhat similar motion. However, all it is necessary to provide for is that the remaining stages, following upon the second reading, shall be passed expeditiously. That is what the Premier is aiming at. If I thought this motion meant that members of the Opposition or any other member desirous of speaking to the Bill would be expected forthwith, following upon the moving of the second reading, to embark upon a full debate on the measure, it would contain most objectionable features.

There may be Bills on the notice paper, or of which notice has been given, that could be dealt with in that way. As far as I am concerned, it may be that the amendments proposed to the Bush Fires Act may contain very simple provisions. There may be other measures in respect of which we would be quite prepared to assist the Government by continuing the debate forthwith. On the other hand, there may be Bills that are contentious. If the Government intends the motion to apply to such Bills, it can well be said that it is looking for trouble anyway. If there are any such Bills of which notice has been given and which we can expect to receive from the Legislative Council, and they prove to be contentious, there is likely to be trouble when we analyse them, if we are still expected to deal with them expeditiously.

Members on this side of the House have no intention whatever of making unduly long speeches; we have no desire to raise objections that are not valid, but we certainly seek in all earnestness a clear ex-

pression of opinion from the Premier of what he intends to do. For my part, I should like to see a proviso added to the motion to the effect that no sitting day shall exceed nine hours, except perhaps the last day, when it would be impossible to measure what the Legislative Council might do in the exchange of messages or as to the holding of conferences that might be necessary. I am wondering what the Premier's reaction to that is.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why nine hours? Make it eight.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Assuming we met at 2.30 p.m., nine hours would carry us through till 12.15 a.m., and for those whose days start very early, especially including the staff of Parliament, that in my view is a reasonable proposition. Whether we continue with Bills and enable them to be passed through all stages on the following day or not, I intend to move the proviso I have outlined. Meanwhile, I support the amendment.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning—on amendment) [4.7]: I propose in a moment or two to deal with the remarks just made by the Leader of the Opposition. As he is aware, some consideration has been given to a portion of them during the suspension for afternoon tea. I should like to say that the fear of some members that the terms of the motion would result in no time being available for second reading debates can hardly be justified by earlier experience of motions somewhat similarly worded.

For example, I refer to the motion moved on the 4th December, 1946. This dealt with the suspension of Standing Orders, and provided that messages from the Legislative Council should be dealt with on the same day as they were received, and also that during the remainder of the session, the Standing Orders should be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced without notice and passed through all remaining stages on the same day.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The date of that motion is the point.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not at the moment concerned about the date, and I think the hon. member knows why. I am not addressing myself in any

manner inimical to the remarks he made. I am merely pointing out that the customary motion for the suspension of Standing Orders has been that a Bill should be introduced without notice and passed through all the remaining stages in the one day. However, that was rarely ever the case. An undertaking was given by the responsible Minister, usually the Premier, that suitable and reasonable time would be allowed for discussion after the second reading had been moved and that the debate would be adjourned for that purpose. This undertaking was always carried into effect.

I submit that the Premier has already given a similar undertaking. As we are dealing with the amendment and he cannot speak at the moment, I am authorised to repeat the undertaking that, in the event of this motion being carried, no attempt will be made after the second reading has been moved, immediately to proceed with the second reading debate any more than there was, as a general rule, under the suspension of Standing Orders hitherto, which provided for the passage of Bills through all stages in one day. That undertaking, so categorically given this year as in past years, may be accepted by the responsible members of the Opposition.

Mr. Graham: What objection have you to the amendment?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not able successfully to gauge the effect of the amendment. It refers to the "following day." Suppose a Bill is introduced on Tuesday; we do not propose that Wednesday shall not be private members' day, and we could not proceed on Wednesday without a repetition of all the arguments about private members' rights, and so I see no sufficient reason why the undertaking previously given and accepted should not now be accepted. That has been the basis for the acceptance of motions for the suspension of Standing Orders in stronger terms than the one now before us, as they included all stages of a Bill.

Hon. A. H. Panton: If you had given that undertaking before we started the debate, the matter would have been finished.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not propose to enter into that argument.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It was very badly managed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Leader of the Opposition now suggests that there should be an addendum to the motion providing that the sitting shall not last beyond nine hours, which would be approximately 12.30 a.m. So far as we are concerned, we are prepared to say that approximately at that hour—certainly not later than 1 a.m.—the sitting will close, except on the last day, provided at the same time that there is some reciprocal understanding that what I have once or twice referred to as marathon speeches are not made.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I suppose you people all have beds to go to.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am most interested in mine, too, I assure the Leader of the Opposition, as I did before. That is why I am so ready to subscribe to what he has expressed, because I think it would bring the discussion to an end and result in the amendment being withdrawn and the matter resolved in a very few minutes. In addressing myself to the amendment, however, I feel that the House should not lose sight of the fact that there have been occasions when legislation has been brought in and an adjournment of the debate refused, not at a time when either the present Leader of the Opposition or any member of his present Party was in charge of the House, but at a time when a Labour Government was in office. I refer to the year 1937, which was the second year of my membership of this Chamber, when at approximately 3 a.m. a measure entitled the Bread Bill was brought into this House and the then Leader of the Opposition moved that the debate be adjourned till a later stage of the sitting.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He was put out.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: His motion was defeated by a majority of the House and because he protested he was suspended from the service of this Chamber.

Hon. A. H. Panton: While I was out having a cup of tea!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He was not suspended for that reason.

The Minister for Lands: The member for Fremantle chucked him out!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: No, not for that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Let me put it a little more clearly. It was as a result of his protests.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It was because of his insubordination.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It was because what the hon. member, when the Speaker, I think regarded as insubordination. The fact remains that he was not permitted to adjourn the debate even till a later stage of that sitting. I personally resented it. I relate the incident not because I want to refer to it in any unpleasant way; what I resented at the time was that the then Leader of the Opposition was refused the adjournment of the debate. That is why I am now prepared to give an assurance that reasonable time will be allowed to debate the second reading of the Bills and that an adjournment will be granted for that purpose. I therefore hope the Leader of the Opposition and his colleague, the member for East Perth, will respectively not proceed with the proposed amendment or with the amendment which has been moved, so that this matter may be resolved, the undertaking accepted and the business of the House proceeded with.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle—on amendment) [4.17]: I do not know what all the argument is about. It seems to me that the amendment moved by the member for East Perth is less than what the Premier said he is going to do. The Premier said he would adjourn the debate over the week-end, whereas the member for East Perth suggests that it should be proceeded with the next day. Why cannot the Premier say, "Right, we will agree to it," and get on with the business?

The Premier: Why cannot the member for East Perth agree with me?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: With regard to the episode mentioned by the Minister for Education that occurred some years ago in connection with the Bread Bill, he said that the then Leader of the Opposition was suspended for protesting against the Bread Bill being proceeded with. That is not true. He was suspended for making a serious reflection on the Chair. He was given the option of making a withdrawal, but was

too stubborn to withdraw and consequently suffered the penalty of being suspended. The Minister for Education knows how that episode terminated. The Premier of the day approached the Speaker of the day and asked, "Have you any personal feelings in this matter?" The Speaker said, "No." The Premier then said, "We will conclude this present sitting and start a new one in half an hour." The Leader of the Opposition was accordingly able to re-enter the Chamber in half an hour. The Minister for Education forgot to tell that to the House, but I cannot let him get away with that. I hope the Premier will agree to the amendment and let the House proceed with the business before it.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	22
A tie	0

AYES.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Read
Mr. Fox	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Graham	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Smith
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Styan
Mr. Mav	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Triant
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Wise
Mr. Oliver	Mr. Rodoreda

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Murray
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hall	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. N. Keenan	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Yates
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Brand

(Teller.)

PATRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Leslie
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Cornell

Mr. SPEAKER: The voting being equal, I give my casting vote with the Noes.

Amendment thus negatived.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [4.23]: I move—

That the following proviso be added:—"Provided that no sitting day shall exceed nine hours, except on the last day of the session."

The reason for this is obvious. While I am quite ready to accept the assurance of the Deputy Premier, I think it is very necessary

for the Government to accept the position that unless there is something extremely contentious introduced at this stage of the session, there will simply be an examination of Bills in a fair way, and no other attitude at all. With regard to private members' day, a very cursory glance at the notice paper will show that there is no private member's Bill left thereon.

The Minister for Education: There is one dealing with pigs.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I beg your pardon.

The Minister for Education: It is a very small one.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, there is one relating to the pig industry. Does the hon. member know what the Government is going to do with it? The balance of the private members' business will be cleaned up in an hour or two. With the exception of the reply of the member for Murchison to the debate on his motion, I should say that most of the motions on the notice paper will take very little time—except also the reply of the member for Geraldton to the debate on his motion. We can expect on Wednesday next to sit from 2.30 p.m. till midnight and that half of the time on that occasion will be devoted to Government business. In any event, let us be quite reasonable in this matter. The Premier has been sitting now on Fridays for three successive weeks. He has been sitting from 2.30 p.m. onwards on almost every sitting day. I submit that the proviso I have moved is perfectly reasonable and I hope the House will agree to it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington—on amendment) [4.25] So far as hours are concerned, I desire to be reasonable. I would be prepared to co-operate with the Leader of the Opposition each day of sitting and tell him exactly what I propose to do. Ordinarily I would say that the hours suggested by the hon. gentleman would be long enough for any of us, and I hope that it will not be necessary to keep even those hours. But we know from past experience that things happen in Parliament which we do not expect to happen.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That has been our experience of what you have done.

The PREMIER: Yes, it has been our experience. It may happen again that some particular amendment will be moved or some other matter come under discussion which will take a long time.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: We cannot sit in the dark, either.

The PREMIER: No. I am told that the lights are expected at any minute.

Mr. Graham: They are on in the rest of the building.

The PREMIER: I would suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that he does not insist on this addendum. I give an assurance that I want as far as possible to meet his wishes, and I am not going to try to rush these Bills through on any particular night.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But surely you will appreciate that if your assurances on this occasion are not worth anything more than they were before—

The PREMIER: We have had all that, and I am trying to reach an amicable agreement with the Leader of the Opposition. If I give him an assurance that I will discuss the matter of hours with him each day I will carry it out, and I think we can come to some agreement in regard to the hours we will sit. I have no more desire than the hon. gentleman—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It takes an awful lot of probing to get times out of you, and information as to what you are going to do at night. You never know!

The PREMIER: I try to give the hon. gentleman any information—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is a case of, "We will see after 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock. We will see how we go."

The PREMIER: The Friday sittings, of which the Leader of the Opposition has spoken have been held in order to—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Help the Government!

The PREMIER: — give Opposition members a chance to discuss matters which they want to discuss. As I have given that promise to the Leader of the Opposition, I hope he will withdraw the addendum.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle—on amendment) [4.29]: I am sorry I have to adopt this attitude. I dislike

doing it. But the Premier gave us a somewhat similar assurance before, and this is it. I will read the Premier's words—

In conclusion I say that it is the desire of the Government to give members ample opportunity during the remainder of the session to discuss the business. I will be prepared to discuss with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or with the Leader of the Opposition hours of sitting and the question of additional hours of sitting.

That assurance I have just quoted is exactly the same as the Premier is now giving us and that assurance was dishonoured.

The Premier: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am afraid we will require to have something more definite. It is no use the Premier saying, "No." Those are his words, as he can see if he refers to "Hansard." That is the exact assurance he gave when dealing with his "gag" motion, but he has not lived up to it. He did not give us ample time for discussion and did not confer with the Deputy Leader or the Leader of the Opposition as to the hours of sitting. How, therefore, can I be certain that the assurance he now gives will be honoured any more than was the previous one?

The Premier: You are safe in taking the risk.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: We took the risk previously.

The Premier: Then do not let us have any more unnecessary points of order, and so on.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Where will we be if the Premier treats this assurance as he treated the other? Our opportunity of protesting or doing anything about it will have gone. This is our only chance. It is unfortunate that we have to take this line, but the Premier knows he did not attempt to honour his solemn assurance.

The Premier: Of course I did.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Did the Premier make any attempt to confer with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or with the Leader of the Opposition as to hours of sitting? He knows he did not. Did he give us opportunity, after the passing of the guillotine motion, adequately to discuss the remaining Estimates? He knows that he did not, because sufficient time was not available. After the "gag" motion was passed I said that in the 30 hours then left for the discussion

of those Estimates, if we discussed nothing else, eight hours would be taken up by Ministers, leaving 22 hours for all private members to discuss all the remaining items which, at that stage, were all except those of the Premier's own department.

A simple calculation will show how impossible it was for there to be adequate discussion under those circumstances. Yet the Premier gave that assurance. The result was that more than 30 Divisions were passed en bloc, some of them being the most important departments of State. The Premier gave that assurance in almost precisely the same terms as he has just used. I do not doubt the Premier's honesty. It is just that he forgets. He gives an assurance in order to get out of an awkward spot and, having done that in all sincerity, he simply forgets about it. That is not satisfactory. I am not conjuring up the assurance that I have just referred to. It was the assurance given by the Premier in this House, and it is recored in "Hansard." It was in the terms that I have quoted, which are almost precisely the same as those of the assurance he has just now given, but he did not honour that first assurance.

Amendment put and division taken with the following result:

Ayes	23
Noes	22
Majority for	1

AYES.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Read
Mr. Fox	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Graham	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Smith
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Styants
Mr. May	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Triat
Mr. Needham	Mr. Wise
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Oliver	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Murray
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Seward
Sir N. Keenan	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hall	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Yates
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Brand
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Leslie
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Cornell

Amendment thus passed.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [4.37]: I have no real objection to the motion, particularly as now we will have no all-night sittings. It seems to be a variation of the customary resolution of this stage of the session, but is less severe in its incidence, in that it provides that the suspension of Standing Orders will take place only after the second readings. I distinctly recall what occurred last session when the motion that Government business should supersede private member's business was moved on the 16th November, to take effect from the 17th November. The session finished in the early hours of the 10th December, which meant that we had about 10 sitting days on which to consider the legislation that was before the House.

If members will look at "Hansard" they will find that in the 10 sitting days that followed the Government brought down something between 30 and 40 new Bills. That is the aspect I object to. I think it would be a good thing if there were a Standing Order to provide that no new business should be brought before the House following the passing of the motion that Government business should take precedence and the Standing Orders be suspended. I can remember last year when Bills were introduced for the first time on the day preceding the closing of Parliament. The result was that they were rushed through the three readings and there was no opportunity for members to give adequate consideration to them. I hope that the Government does not intend to adopt the same methods this year because the indications would tend to point that way. Yesterday, following notice of the motion by the Premier, Ministers gave notice of motions to introduce about half a dozen new Bills.

The Minister for Education: They are the very same Bills mentioned in the Premier's motion.

MR. STYANTS: If the Premier will give an assurance that from now to the close of the session no additional Bills will be introduced that would completely remove my objection, little as it is, to the proposal. Usually the House is taken into the confidence of the Premier some two or three weeks before its closing. I think it was on the 16th of November that the Premier announced the date on which he intended to close Parliament last year.

On this occasion we still do not know when the session will close and yet the Premier has not notified us as to any intending date. The Leader of the Opposition asked him what would be the likely date on which the session would close but he adopted a Micawber-like attitude by saying that he would wait and see how things went. I think this motion is a little less drastic than the one usually moved about this time and I have no great objection to it, but I hope that the Government will not introduce any new legislation and bring down a great number of Bills as it did last year when it introduced measures, and rushed them through their three readings and also the Committee stages all on the one day without due consideration being given to them.

Question put and passed; the motion, as amended, agreed to.

BILL—MARKETING OF APPLES AND PEARS (No. 2).

Message.

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

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [4.48] in moving the second reading said: This measure deals with two subjects which it is desired should operate for the forthcoming fire season. The main purpose of the Bill is to re-insert in the Act certain provisions which were deleted by amendments passed last year. When these amendments were originally under consideration, it was felt that the Act established a principle which it was not desirable to have in legislation. I refer to the fact that, notwithstanding that a person complied with all the provisions laid down in the Act, he was still liable for a civil action against him for damages as a result of his action, even though he acted within the law and was not negligent in any way.

It was known that few actions had actually been taken to the courts, and it was considered that a person who complied with all the requirements of the Bush Fires Act, and who was not negligent in any way, should not be liable for action to be taken against him as a result of his having done something which was permitted by the Act. While still of the opinion that the principle which was contained in the Bush Fires Act was not good, I feel that its removal has had indirect results which have been the cause of some concern in country districts throughout the State.

So many variable factors are involved that the requirements of the Act are not in every case sufficient to provide complete safety when fires are lit. Greater protection against losses from bush fires could possibly be obtained by requiring more stringent precautions, but it is to be kept in mind that, in some parts of the State, to make conditions more restrictive would mean that the development of considerable areas would be greatly retarded.

It has been found that the provisions which were deleted from the Act last year provided some deterrent to those persons who are always inclined to take a risk, and who light fires on an unsuitable day, notwithstanding the fact that they have complied with the provisions of the Bush Fires Act. While such a person is still liable for an action for damages because of negligence, it is feared that, in some instances, it would be difficult to prove negligence. The deterrent of being liable for a claim for damages having been largely removed, greater difficulty has been experienced in controlling the few irresponsible persons who are always to be found among us.

Other means of controlling the activities of such persons as I have mentioned have been carefully considered, but all of the proposals have been subject to strong objections from one aspect or another. No doubt, with further thought and investigation, a solution to these problems will be found, and in the meantime, local authorities, the Rural Fires Prevention Advisory Committee, and farmers' organisations generally have requested that the deterrent—the liability to a claim for damages—should again be included in the Act.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The amendment almost takes away the privilege granted by the permit.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Under the protection of the permit, there was no liability.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. The opportunity has been taken to include in the Bill another small amendment. Changes were made last year in the provisions relating to the burning of firebreaks on railway land. For this purpose, the Minister has power to suspend the operation of the prohibited times to enable the Railway Department to carry out this essential protective burning. The 24th day of December was fixed as the limit to which any extension under the section concerned could be granted. The date mentioned was selected because it has been the practice for many years not to burn after the 24th December, for the reason that holidays then intervened, and not only were many of the railway employees not available after that date, but also many country residents were away.

In the south-western portion of the State and in some coastal districts, however, it is not always possible to burn lower lying patches of country which remain moist, with a consequent growth of green grass. When the grass on this type of land eventually dies off, it presents a very serious fire menace. A number of local authorities have requested that the Railway Department be permitted to burn fire breaks up to the 15th January, and the amendment in the Bill will give the Minister power to grant extensions up to that date, if necessary.

My colleague, the Minister for Railways, has been greatly concerned about the question of fires started by railway locomotives. Up to the present time it has not been possible to get a spark-arrester that has proved completely efficient under all conditions. This problem is receiving a good deal of attention and it is hoped that eventually the difficulties will be overcome by securing a spark-arrester that will efficiently perform its purpose without interfering unduly with the operation of the locomotive.

The securing of a standard grade of coal by blending will also be of assistance, but until these very desirable objects have been attained, it is necessary that fire by sparks

from locomotives should be limited by the provision of adequate fire breaks. A special effort is being made this season by the Railway Department to secure the co-operation of local authorities and their bush fire brigades and the farmers whose land adjoins the railway reserves, in providing adequate firebreaks in order to minimise the dangers arising from sparks from locomotives.

The Government intends to have a comprehensive review made of the Bush Fires Act with a view to improving its operation and increasing the protection that its provisions are intended to secure. I am sure that all members appreciate that the Bush Fires Act is an important piece of legislation, but its provisions are somewhat complicated. Consequently, a review of the Act such as that proposed, will require considerable thought and investigation, and this cannot be done in a short period of time. Therefore, the measure before the House has been introduced to deal with matters which it is desired shall operate during the coming summer. I have received a telegram from the Kojonup Road Board as follows:—

The board inquires whether Section 45 of the Act giving immunity has been repealed. If not, board and fire brigades urge repeal before prohibited season starts.

The road boards have felt great concern. In this respect Kojonup is a risky district, being laid down in pasture and silver grass which, as they dry, become very dangerous. This road board amongst many others has expressed concern about the amendment made last year and asks for its repeal. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

STATE TRADING CONCERNS ESTIMATES, 1949-1950.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 20th September; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

Division—State Shipping Service,
£792,631 (partly considered):

Division put and passed.

Division—Wyndham Freezing Works,
£633,904:

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Has the Premier any information as to how soon a stimulus will be given to the Wyndham Meat Works by the money spent by the Commonwealth

on roads, stockroutes and improvements in the Kimberleys? I have read many conflicting statements and in this Chamber have expressed the view that the roads should come second to the requisite improvements on the leases of pastoralists who supply cattle to the Wyndham Meatworks. I am wondering also whether the Premier has any information as to the success of the treatment of cattle at Mt. House and other stations for aerial transport of carcase beef to the works.

The PREMIER: All I can tell the Leader of the Opposition is that Commonwealth and State efforts are being made to speed up beef production in the East Kimberleys and the West Kimberleys as quickly as possible. I particularly mention the East Kimberleys because the Leader of the Opposition referred to the Wyndham Meat Works. Our State officers have been in consultation with Commonwealth officers to see what means can be taken to speed up beef production in the East Kimberley district. It is considered that roads must be provided. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, the long walks which cattle have from stations to the Wyndham Meat Works have a detrimental effect on them, and by the time they reach the works they have lost a considerable amount of weight. He also knows that in the Northern Territory experiments have been made in regard to road train transport. I think Mr. Johansen is the contractor, and those road trains have proved fairly successful.

But it no use trying to bring cattle over rough roads, particularly for long distances, because it must be quite plain to members that the cattle would be badly bruised by the time they reached the works. Therefore, road construction is necessary in the interests of the industry generally. It is anticipated that within a comparatively short time there will be a step-up in the production of beef in the Kimberleys; and with that object in view, waters are being provided on stations, again through Commonwealth and State co-operation; and, of course, with the co-operation of the growers, who will have to bear some responsibility.

The Leader of the Opposition also referred to the aerial transport of beef which has been carried on from Glenroy Station, in the West Kimberleys. Mr. Blythe called to see me a few days ago. He is the owner of Mt. House Station, at which these abat-

toirs have been established. As was to be expected in the early stages of an experiment of this kind, difficulties were encountered. I think that the particular difficulty was in discovering the correct temperature at which the beef should be chilled before it was flown to Wyndham. That seems to have been overcome; and those who are intimately concerned with the abat-toirs at Glenroy believe that the aerial transport of beef is a practical proposition, and, with the knowledge they have now gained, it is thought it will be extended to the Northern Territory and to other parts of the Kimberleys.

Item, Salaries, etc., £608,004:

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am wondering whether the Premier can give us any particular reason why the overdraft accommodation and the other financial arrangements of the Wyndham Meat Works, should not be undertaken by the Rural and Industries Bank, and why the business should not be transferred to that bank from the Commonwealth Bank. I recall that after I was responsible for the establishment of the Rural and Industries Bank as a trading bank, we were searching for a prospect of Government business being handled by that bank, which business should quite properly belong to our own institution. In my view, and not only because I had the responsibility of placing the institution on its present basis, the Rural Bank should be as far as possible the banking institution of the State Government. I am wondering whether there is any particular reason why it does not handle the business of the Wyndham Meat Works; because it has all the facilities possessed by the Commonwealth Bank with regard to overseas letters of credit, and all things requisite for handling the business of such an organisation as the meat works. If there is no particular reason, I would ask the Premier whether he would look into the matter with a view to handing over the business of the meat works to bank.

The PREMIER: I will discuss the matter with the Under Treasurer within the next day or two. I do not know of any reason why this account should not be transferred to the Rural and Industries Bank. I do not know whether there are any overseas difficulties. We export our beef not only to Britain but to Singapore as well; and

whether there would be any difficulties in that connection, I cannot say without making inquiries. I will certainly go into the matter, as requested.

Division put and passed.

Division—State Hotels, £128,000—agreed to.

Division—West Australian Meat Exports, £211,550:

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: This is an undertaking that was taken over from private enterprise during the period when I was Minister for Agriculture. I know its history very well, and I know that the directors of the private concern, as it was then constituted, pleaded with the Government to attempt on an equitable basis to take over the asset at a valuation to be fixed. The shares on the market at that time were worth about half a crown, and Sir Ernest Lee Steere, Mr. Alec Monger and Mr. John Forrest asked me whether, in absolute confidence, the matter could be considered by the Government of giving them an opportunity to receive back the £78,000 they had invested in the concern. At that time they owed the Government much more than they could possibly pay—several times the amount of their original investment—and the shares were not being exchanged, even at the very low rate at which they were being offered.

An investigation was ordered by the then Government through two highly-placed officers—Mr. Farrell and the Assistant Under Treasurer. The whole of the assets of the W.A. Meat Export Co. were investigated by those men, and through an independent source, including a man skilled in building values; and an estimate of the worth of the undertaking as a going concern was made. As a result of that inquiry, the Government found it could pay to the original shareholders not half a crown a share but £1 for every share worth £1, issued at £1. The undertaking was given by me that, provided there was no exchange of shares which could suggest that anybody knew what values were to be paid or offered, the Government would give the matter the utmost consideration; because at that time it would have been possible for anyone in the know to make thousands of pounds by buying the shares of the company at the prevailing market value.

Fortunately, there was no breach of confidence anywhere and no shares changed hands; and the original shareholders were able to receive, after 20 years' operations, with no interest on their capital it is true, their original share money. It is a very interesting comment on this undertaking that Government supervision succeeded where private enterprise had failed. The concern has given good service to the rural community of Western Australia, because of careful and successful management by the Government; and excessive charges for treatment and storage have been avoided. During the war, when heavy costs had to be incurred to increase the refrigeration space, an arrangement was made with the Commonwealth that, after the war, the concern would be taken over at a valuation to be decided. So the Government has these works now worth approaching half a million pounds, one of the best assets of the State, giving a great service to the whole community; and I am hoping that what rumour has stated is not true: that an offer was made to the Government, because of pressure on it, to sell the works, and consideration was given to the sale. I hope that there is no intention by the Government to sell the works.

I know what profits were made during the first years after we took over the enterprise and placed on the board two highly trusted and efficient public servants. We have been fortunate in securing careful management. We have given to farmers a service at far below the cost that would have been involved had private enterprise been running the works, and treatment on a per pound basis for export lambs, of which there has never been any complaint because of the cheapness of the service. Some of the most influential and successful farmers in this community have all their lambs treated at these works, sending them in special trains; and through the years a considerable profit has been made, even with the cheap rates charged. I know that the Albany works were taken over, again because of the inability of private enterprise to manage them; and I know that the managing director, who had put in a lot of private assets—I refer to Mr. Heron—finally came to the Government, having no alternative but to ask it to buy the works back

from him. But now I find that last year the Albany Freezing Works were sold to private enterprise. I am hoping that the parent institution will not find a similar fate.

Mr. Nalder: I think that was a good move.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The member for Wagin may be quite right. I do not know all the facts, but I do know that with the stimulus that successive Governments have given to the areas north of Albany in lamb and beef production the cream of the profits of the activities is now to fall to the lot of works that are not owned by the Government. The Fremantle institution carried Albany, and quite properly so, because the position was looked at very carefully by the members of the Government at that time to ensure that there would be no contention as to the values and services rendered, whether for cold storage or for slaughtering. I hope, as the member for Wagin has interjected, that this is the right thing to have done, but I am not prepared to say it is on the basis that it obviated a temporary loss to the Government.

I would hate that argument, because of receding profits due to the inability to buy lambs or for the producers of sheep and lambs to grow them for export, to be the yardstick by which the operations of the W.A. Meat Export Company are to be measured. If that is to be the determinant and reason for any sacrifice of the larger works, there can, in the future of this State, be some grave injustices done to our primary industries. I know the history of both these activities very well, and I remember that "Hansard" records that the member for Albany gave me personal thanks for avoiding the closing of the Albany works, and for building them up prior to when the Albany Freezing Works, as a company, took them over. I hope that the present move is the right one in disposing of these works. I am anxious to know whether they were sold at a loss, because I recall that the debt on them when we took over was £22,500. I trust the works have not been handed over to private enterprise at a monetary loss on the cash advanced and the capital account, but that it has been transferred on the basis of a valuation plus the goodwill that has been built up through the years the Government owned them.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What did it cost to take them over?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I think we had to redeem the bank guarantees of the Albany Freezing Works, plus £22,500. I am speaking from memory, of six years ago. That might easily be a guess on my part, but whatever was the cost, they were taken over at a valuation made by the manager of the Wyndham Meat Works, the manager of the W.A. Meat Export Company and, I think, Mr. Brine, a master builder. I am not sure, but I think that an engineer of the State was also brought into it. So we did get a proper assessment of their value both from the building side as well as the production side. But whatever may have been paid to Mr. Heron, and the company he was then associated with, my concern is that the works have now been sold, I understand, to Borthwick & Company, a concern that has its roots well embedded in the Eastern States. It is quite understandable that that company would be anxious to start in Western Australia in a district with the greatest potential, as is the case of Albany and the area northward.

I do not like the idea of an undertaking such as the Albany Freezing Works, which were taken over by Westralian Farmers as a butter factory, and subsequently failed, and then by the Government in the days when Mr. Kenneally was Minister for Industrial Development, being sold. At that time they were sold to the Fremantle Cold Stores Ltd. which developed the Albany Freezing Works with Government assistance as well as the use of large sums of their own capital. As a freezing works, this concern has had a very chequered career, but I think it has proved an asset not only to Albany from the point of view of pig, lamb and cattle slaughter and freezing, but as an outlet for the Mt. Barker fruit it has paid large dividends to Western Australia. So, if the Premier or any of his Ministers can give me some information, it will allay much of the fear that I have that we have handed back to private enterprise something that proved a dismal failure when run as a private concern previously, and became a charge on the State before being re-acquired by the Government.

In regard to what I have termed the parent concern—the works at Fremantle—many approaches by vested interests have

been made, particularly from the export trade and slaughtering sections. I hope that before the Government gives way to the idea that slaughtering for export should take place at Midland Junction, it will give the matter full consideration. That argument has been strongly advanced, but we should carefully weigh it from the strategic point of view, or that of accessibility to the wharf by direct rail communication, and also from the angle of the retention and, indeed, the extension of the W.A. Meat Export Company Ltd. as a useful unit in the economic life of our agricultural community. If members have not, in recent years, seen these works, I recommend them to make a visit, especially during the lamb slaughter season. The efficient working and the diversity of commodities catered for present a sight for them to see. Associated with those works was the fish canning enterprise spoken of in this Chamber some nights ago. Indeed it was actually commenced there. As the one who was responsible for the taking over of these works from private enterprise, I would appreciate it if the Government could tell the Chamber whether there is any likelihood or possibility of their being handed back to private enterprise.

Mr. HILL: I have listened with great interest to what the Leader of the Opposition has said about the Albany Freezing Works. I admit that I thanked him for taking over the works from Mr. Heron. I also appreciate the fact that the Leader of the Opposition was the first prominent Labour member of Parliament of Western Australia to realise that the southern end of the State has a great future. As the hon. member has said, the Albany Freezing Works have had a chequered career. They were first built in about 1912 to deal with the lamb trade.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Albany cannot go into the history of the Albany Freezing Works on this Division.

Mr. HILL: I thought I could as the Leader of the Opposition referred to them.

The CHAIRMAN: He was dealing with them in relation to the W.A. Meat Export Works.

Mr. HILL: Would I be in order in dealing with them in connection with their sale by the Government?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, so long as the hon. member does not go into it at great length.

Mr. HILL: Very well. I have been closely associated with those works from their inception. I was one of the directors of the butter factory that was handed over to Westralian Farmers. I think it is the duty of the Government to see that port facilities are provided, but I prefer private enterprise to run them.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why did not Heron carry on?

Mr. HILL: Because all freezing works at ports had a lean time for many years. Borthwicks realised this. They have taken these works over from the Government, and by doing so are showing great confidence in the southern end of the State. I have figures here—I shall be pleased to pass them over to the Leader of the Opposition later—and it is interesting to note the activities of the freezing works since they have been taken over by Borthwicks.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not think the member for Albany is in order in going into all this detail.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You can on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. HILL: I am sorry that I cannot. I do say, however, that Borthwicks realise they have to carry on. I congratulate the Government on handing over the works to that firm.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In dealing with the sale of the Albany Freezing Works, I might say that the Government, of course, had an offer from Borthwicks and, as the Leader of the Opposition has already said, they are an Australia-wide firm—indeed, world-wide. The Treasury considered the question of selling the works, and the Assistant Under Treasurer, who is closely associated with the W.A. Meat Export Works and the Albany Freezing Works, recommended the sale because of the splendid organisation that Borthwicks had and also because they had their own shipping. It is most important to those freezing works that shipping be available when the lambs are ready for export. In the terms of the agreement of sale, if Borthwicks decide to sell the freezing works again, the Western Australian Government is to be given the first offer. Dealing with the W.A. Meat Export Works, I can tell the Leader of the

Opposition that the Government will not entertain the idea of selling them. I assure the hon. member that I am prejudiced against selling them. I know their early history, just as the Leader of the Opposition does. He undoubtedly knows more of the detail of it than I do, but still I know the history.

The Government took these works over and built them up to the stage they are in today, and it would be a bad move to entertain the idea of selling them. I visit the works and I was down there last year. As members know, during the war freezing space was most essential and consequently those works were extended considerably. Today they would be hard to beat in many States. They have tremendous accommodation for storage and the last time I was down there they were storing eggs, cheese, meat, and apples and were canning fish just near there. They provide a tremendous area for cold storage and it is nothing to see 200 or 300 tons of ice being stored for the summer months. The works, at present, are suffering to some extent because of the price of lambs and wool and the restocking requirements of the hinterland.

Naturally the high price of wool encourages farmers to increase their flocks and this season lambs are not coming forward in any great numbers, but that is only a condition that is existing today because of the high prices. As soon as we come back to earth and there is a levelling down of prices, these works will come into the play again. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that he need have no fears. Another aspect of the work is that they are Government-controlled. The slaughtering charges are controlled and that ensures some guarantee to the farmer that his stock will be handled at a reasonable rate.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Are they still scouring wool down there?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are scouring wool further up the road, but that is a question I could not really answer. Whether they are still doing the scouring at the works or not, I could not say offhand.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That was the unprofitable part of the undertaking.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Because the works are Government-controlled they guarantee that our farmers will have their lambs slaughtered. That is essential.

We should own these works because if they fall into private hands there is nothing to stop the firms from closing down the works when it suits them. The firms may decide that once they have slaughtered so many thousands of lambs they will stop. With Government control we undertake to do slaughtering for the farmers at a reasonable rate. Although the policy of this Government is for private enterprise to be given opportunities, this is one of the State works that has been built up.

Mr. Rodoreda: Don't be so naive.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The works are worth owning and are a guarantee to the farming community that their stock will be slaughtered and exported on their behalf. The Leader of the Opposition can rest assured that this Government has no intention of selling the works.

Division put and passed.

This concluded the Estimates of the State Trading Concerns for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1949-1950,

In Committee.

Resumed from the 15th September; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

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

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gaseoyne) [5.35]: I have often thought that from many points of view a scrutiny of the Loan Estimates and a revision of the loan undertakings of the State are at least as important as the Budget Estimates. The Loan Estimates of the State give an indication of what is planned for the future, in every section of the community where Government expenditure from loan is anticipated or incurred. One could say that had it not been for the expenditure from loan in Western Australia, we still would have been a very badly developed State. This year the Premier has presented an Estimate involving the spending of £12,262,000. Even in these days of astronomical finance figures, it is a very large sum. It may be, as I will attempt to show a little later, far too much, and it may be, as I believe it is, quite impossible of spending in this financial year.

There are other angles, too, which I will analyse, as to the responsibility of Government in these days, if it can, to prevent coming into competition with private enterprise because of the high prices and costs and the scarcity of labour and materials. Every undertaking promoted by Government, which is in conflict with other projects and other needs, is something very carefully to be scrutinised. This amount is mostly to meet commitments of Government already entered into, or to provide for an extension of works already started. There is very little new in the Loan Estimates presented by the Treasurer. As a matter of fact they read to me as the Estimates and recommendations of departments for the continuation of works already authorised, some of which were planned many years ago. There are other works which have been in contemplation over a number of years and the Estimates are for expenditures consequent upon those works. In addition they are to make provision for the purchase of new materials and new assets which are to be bought, in the main, from overseas.

Although the Premier did not mention, in the course of his speech, the amount to be sent overseas, I asked him to supply me with it. It is rather an expressive figure and one pointing to the situation obtaining today. When it is possible for the Premier to introduce Loan Estimates, approved at a Loan Council meeting for the sending abroad of between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000 of moneys raised within Australia, to pay for materials to come from overseas, it denotes two or three things in particular. One of them is the fluidity of money available within Australia and the entirely different approach to governmental spending, and to the prospect of raising moneys for all purposes, from what was the case a few years ago. It denotes, too, the changed financial circumstances of the whole nation, quite apart from the individual attitudes towards the finance of the units of the nation. That is a most interesting position when we realise that the public debt of the Commonwealth, for war and other purposes, stands at a colossal figure. The total debt of the Commonwealth, as at the 30th June last, in respect of the 1914-18 war and the last war, is £1,678,661,000, and in respect of works and other purposes £146,000,000. That is a total of £1,824,661,000.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Does that include the States?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No. If the hon. member will look at the last Commonwealth Year Book available, or obtain from the Statistician that figure, he will find something to give him very much food for thought in regard to loan expenditure. I can recall when as a mere fledgling in this Parliament being interested in this subject and listening to a very clear analysis of loan spendings by the member for Nedlands, when he sat in the seat now occupied by the member for Fremantle. The member for Nedlands analysed the responsibilities of the Western Australian public and Government to the servicing of the public debt, and to ensuring that unless loan moneys were spent in reproductive channels we were heading for a lot of trouble.

The Premier: They cannot all be spent in reproductive avenues.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: But it is a great obligation on Government to endeavour, as far as possible, to see that investments so made give some prospect of their all not being a burden only on the Budget.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: For every million pounds represented in this loan programme, and represented in our total loan indebtedness, it costs us, under the provisions of the National Debt Sinking Fund, approximately £40,000 a year as an interest charge. That will be so for the next 56 years. So there is an obvious need for a very close and strict scrutiny of how these moneys are to be applied. I was dealing with the total amount of war debt and the total amount in respect of works and other purposes. With the war debt it is interesting to note that £1,662,000,000 is owed to the Australian community and approximately 16½ million pounds is owed in London. The figures I have given exclude an amount of approximately £80,000,000 due to the United Kingdom under the Pending Arrangements Act of 1921. If members will give attention to the responsibilities we are building up for other than ourselves, they will, I think, get a much clearer conception of what the public demand may mean in the future as regards the annual charge from taxation to be paid from the annual Budget.

The changing financial relationships between the Commonwealth and the States have had an important bearing on the methods of financing the Australian States. I have said more than once, and I say it again, that there has been no Western Australian Treasurer in history more blessed with opulence in public funds than the present occupant of that office. He has enjoyed not only the greatest returns under the Uniform Taxation Reimbursement Act, based on a formula certainly arranged, and approved, before he attained office, but also, for some reason or other, there has been an absolutely changed attitude on the part of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, acting under Section 96 of the Commonwealth Constitution, insofar as State disability payments are concerned. The Treasurer received last year something like £5,000,000 from taxation, £3,600,000 from the Grants Commission, more than £1,000,000 from the petrol tax, and a further sum on account of interest payments. In addition, he received the credits from the balances at the Commonwealth Bank.

The Premier: What was that regarding the Commonwealth Bank?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: That refers to the difference between the deposits as provided for under the Government Savings Bank Agreement.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Thus the Treasurer has had, as I think he will acknowledge, the greatest cash facilities available to him, compared with what was at the disposal of any of his predecessors. Indeed, he has had 100 per cent. increase in the amount available compared with what was enjoyed by his predecessors as recently as 11 years ago. With regard to grants under Section 96 of the Commonwealth Constitution, we were accustomed to battling for what we could obtain, and we thought we were wonderfully favoured if, after making a claim for £1,500,000 we were able to convince the Grants Commission that they should give us £600,000 or £700,000. In the years when the total taxable capacity of this State in respect of State taxation was about £3,240,000, that was our experience. But now, with our share of uniform taxation applying, that figure has much more than doubled, and I am wondering if the Pre-

mier knows just what his grant is to be for this financial year. As he is smiling so contentedly, I suspect that he does. It could be that he is to receive an almost fantastic amount, over and above the largesse he has had from the Commonwealth Government, amounting to £621,000 to compensate for strike disabilities sustained by the State recently. That amount was far and away beyond what he expected—an amount he neither asked for nor anticipated.

The Premier: He asked for it.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: He did not ask for that large amount. He did not anticipate that he would get anything like that proportion of the total amount disbursed by the Commonwealth Government to all the States of Australia. He is indeed a lucky man. What an amazing situation! To think that the Commonwealth has been so generous to a State the Government of which is so bitterly hostile, in a political sense, to the Commonwealth Government. It is a most amazing set-up, seeing that the Commonwealth Treasurer, with all his opulence, has been so anxious to have distributed among the States the largest amount possible under the Uniform Taxation Reimbursement Act. To such an extent is that so that he was also prepared to give huge amounts to compensate the States for disabilities arising out of the strike.

My assessment of the position was that if there were £12,000,000 or £14,000,000 to be distributed by the Commonwealth to reimburse the States for losses sustained through the strike, New South Wales should have received nearly the whole of that amount. The Premier knows that this addition, which has been received since the Budget was introduced, has been most fortunate, and I can imagine how popular he will attempt to make himself during the election campaign, in asking departments how they can spend this vast sum of money, not worrying at all as to what the Revenue Estimates might contemplate, giving it away because there is no string attached to it, nothing to be reimbursed, something to be given away! I repeat that it is a most amazing position for a Treasurer to find himself in. On top of that and apart from the disabilities and this new trend that Commonwealth-State relationships has taken, he

has the opportunity, without any protest, of spending £12,262,000 of Loan money this year. It is an amazing set-up, is it not?

Mr. Reynolds: Fairyland!

The Premier: Seventy-seven per cent. of it, but I can get the rest if I want it.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Commonwealth says in effect, "We do not believe you can possibly spend that sum, but things are so good and there is so much money about that we are going to raise only 77 per cent. If you find that you can spend the rest, we shall make arrangements by Treasury bills for you to get it." That is how things stand.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I have pleaded in this Chamber for years for members to interest themselves in this subject. In the 14th Report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, they will find an excellent review of the altered circumstances from the time of the financial provisions of the Constitution right up to the present. The financial provisions of the Constitution specifically laid down that three parts of the Customs and Excise revenue of the time was to be paid to the States for the first 10 years of Federation and thereafter until the Parliament otherwise provided. From that time onwards, under Sections 51 and 87 of the Constitution, the Commonwealth found that the States were getting far too much money, and, under the Surplus Revenue Act of 1910 the whole set-up was changed. The Commonwealth paid to the States on a per capita basis an amount as their share for coming into the Federation. That was upset, as the member for Murchison has often told us, by the Financial Agreement of 1927.

This agreement, entered into by Premiers of all shades of political opinion, is something that gave an entirely altered outlook to the States. Later on we had the commencement of the road policy and the assistance from Commonwealth loans for road planning and development. Subsequent to that, because of the depression, in 1931 there was the Premiers' Plan, which was stated at the time to be a plan for recovery from the depression. It was not until 1933 that any attempt was made to implement Section 96 of the Constitution to enable additional payments to be made to States according to their disabilities.

These various stages, not excluding the altered conditions brought about by the war, have led us along the path of violent amendments to the spirit and letter of the financial provisions of the Constitution until today we have reached a stage where, unless we are very careful in the spending of money for which we are dependent upon the Commonwealth, we are likely to find ourselves on the track to unification. There is no alternative. Amounts are being received as reimbursement far in excess of sums that could possibly be collected internally. If a considerable reduction occurs in the collections of the Commonwealth, not only Loan programmes but also budgetary positions will be violently altered and shaken.

For example, if there were a substantial reduction in the values of Australia's primary commodities and if the taxable capacity of those industries shrank, side by side with two other factors—the reduction in taxation and the public insistence upon more social services—the rate prescribed in the present formula for uniform tax could not possibly continue. If it does continue, how can the total sum continue to be £50,000,000 to £60,000,000? I have more than once twitted the Premier on a statement which he very much regrets that he made, a statement which will make him very careful during the next election campaign. He often wishes he had not made it and he realises now that he was not conscious of its import. He said that he would press for the restoration of the State's taxing powers. That would be a calamity in the present circumstances of our financial relations with the Commonwealth.

I regard it as inevitable that the States will as time goes on become more and more dependent upon Commonwealth finance to meet their fixed commitments. As a State becomes responsible for continuing expenditure, which cannot be avoided year by year, obviously it must be on sure ground in regard to its income. The member for Geraldton knows, from his not inconsiderable business experience, that if a person is budgeting for the sale of stock in a business with a capital of £50,000 and requires two-thirds of that sum for finance from other than his own resources, he cannot incur commitments in perpetuity that would absorb half his capital, as he would simply go bankrupt. So

it is with the State. We must be very careful to see that our expenditure is on such undertakings as will return an income.

The Budget tables show how the State's Loan money has been spent. In past days it was extremely difficult to obtain some of that money, and I clearly recall some of the altered circumstances to which I have referred. I was privileged to accompany the late Hon. P. Collier and Hon. J. C. Willcock to many Loan Council meetings, long before I was Treasurer of the State. I saw several Commonwealth Treasurers in action as chairmen of those meetings. I well recall the days when Commonwealth Treasurers grumbled about and objected to a total Loan programme of all the States of £14,000,000. I remember when Mr. R. G. Casey was Treasurer and the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies was Prime Minister and when a programme of £14,000,000 was ridiculed, as it was considered impossible to raise that sum within Australia for the Loan undertakings of all the States.

It was in 1938-1939 when £14,000,000 was the total of the approved Loan programmes. The Commonwealth Treasurer and the Prime Minister went into consultation—while the Premiers sat in the Senate Chamber awaiting finality—with the Commonwealth Bank Board to see if it were possible to raise £14,000,000 within Australia for the Loan programmes of all the States and the Commonwealth. In 1939-40, the sum of £22,500,000 was approved. The loan programmes included provision for semi-governmental undertakings in respect of which a grave responsibility rested on the Government of New South Wales. The Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Treasurer had said in unmistakable terms that £20,000,000 would be the limit, but subsequently £22,500,000 was approved. Then arose the argument between the States as to how the bear, or turkey, if you like, was to be cut up.

The Premier: Turkey is better.

Hon F. J. S. WISE: A Loan programme of £40,000,000 was considered to be absolutely necessary because the States desired to rehabilitate their railways and purchase engines both inside and outside of Australia. I recall Mr. Menzies coming into the room and saying, "Well, Dick, you will have a fit when I tell you that I am prepared to

approve £22,500,000." He was referring to Mr. Casey, the Federal Treasurer. Mr. Willcock and the Under Treasurer for this State were present when Mr. Menzies made that remark. When I think of the colossal debt within Australia and in London and then ponder on the vast sums that can still be obtained in Australia for Loan purposes, I feel I have almost reached the days so often pictured by the member for Murchison, when money can be obtained even though it does not appear to exist, especially when I consider that three or four men in this civilised world can influence the future of nations, and indeed the future of the whole world, by a decision reached in Washington or London.

Mr. Bovell: That is just what is happening in regard to sterling.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is a most astounding position. For one who is perhaps steeped in orthodoxy, as is the member for Sussex—

Mr. Bovell: I do not believe in sterling de-valuation.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If I may be allowed to finish my sentence, I will say something very nice about the hon. member. Even for one such as the hon. member, steeped in orthodoxy insofar as public and private finance are concerned, to have to acknowledge that it is possible for three or four men or a single man to make a decision as to whether the Kalgoorlie goldfields are going to be revived or whether the price of commodities in sterling or dollars is to be a profitable one in all corners of the earth, is an amazing thing. Does it not make one stop to think whether the protests made by the member for Murchison for many years as to man-made depressions may not have been justified; and whether the possibility of a stimulus being given to industry in a depression or of a depression being entirely avoided is not something within the scope as well as the wit of man?

Recent happenings give considerable colour to that point of view. I have mentioned that in 1938-39 it was extremely difficult for Mr. Menzies and Mr. Casey to approve of £14,000,000 being spent in the whole of Australia. Indeed, they had doubts whether £14,000,000 could be raised in Australia! Yet in this year of opulence, when a beneficent Commonwealth has just showered its

blessings on the Treasurer of Western Australia, we find that there is no difficulty at all in having a loan programme of £116,000,000 approved—a loan programme which gets the scrutiny of the Co-ordinator General of Works; a formal scrutiny and approval, I submit, with perhaps an odd £550 cut off an amount of £1,555,550, just as a token of his ability to correct the loan programme of a State. And we find the sum of £116,000,000 passed in a matter of moments.

The Premier: It was nearer £117,000,000.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, but in round figures, £116,000,000. That was passed by the Loan Council in a matter of moments.

The Premier: I will admit it did not take very long.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Just a matter of moments. It was a case of a schedule being submitted and, "Those in favour say 'Aye' and those against say 'No'", and the £116,000,000 was agreed to.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: It shows how much money they have got.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It shows what can happen now, although it was not possible during the war years to raise any sums at all for public works within Australia. I will stress that point when members have been refreshed and might be patient enough to listen further.

Mr. Bovell: We are listening now.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: In the war years it was not possible for a loan for public works to be suggested in governmental spheres. It would almost have been sedition to suggest that for other than war purposes money should be raised on the public market. If members want to examine that position I would refer them to the reports of Sir Harry Brown, one of the great Australians, who gave some of the best years of his life, voluntarily, in the interests of the Australian nation during the war. I could not pay a tribute sufficiently high to do justice to that man—a man now almost forgotten—for what he did to ensure that Australia's internal effort was indeed a total war effort.

Sir Harry Brown in his report to the 58th meeting of the Loan Council, put up proposals which entirely prevented in effect the raising of money within Australia for any public works project during the war.

And what happened was this: Such States as Queensland and New South Wales, which during the war had a considerable income because of the war, were forced to use their cash balances, involving many millions of pounds. The cash balances of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria were used up on the understanding being given by the Commonwealth that as soon as there was a money market they would be replenished from Australian loans.

So all the works in progress during the early war years and later, which had any civil bias and which any State Government considered it necessary to continue, could not possibly be carried out from loan money. They had to be undertaken by the States and the States had to be fully seized of the fact that their own cash resources had to disappear and the rest of the finance was to be undertaken on Treasury bills. I would like to give to this Chamber a very lengthy address on the subject of whether the condition of the assets of Western Australia pre-war and during the war, which has been criticised politically by the Premier, was the direct responsibility of Governments which wished to keep them in a satisfactory condition. I could give to this Chamber, but I might be accused of stonewalling—and I will not be accused of that—a very clear case to prove how it was not possible, especially during the Menzies-Casey regime, for the State Governments to get enough money to carry on, quite apart from undertaking developmental works as loan projects.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I was dealing with the difference in the financial position of Australia in the State and Federal relationship, and stressing the point that it was only in the last pre-war year that the Federal Prime Minister and Treasurer said it was not possible to borrow more than 14 million pounds for spending in all Australia during that current year. What a striking difference there is in the situation that obtains today! Within a few minutes, without argument, the total Loan programme approved by the Loan Council is almost 117 million pounds, of which this State is to get 12,262,000. That is as much as the total borrowings for all Australia 10 or 11 years ago. It shows what a remarkable alteration there is in the approach to the

financial problems today with the same people in control of the banking facilities, but with an entirely different attitude to the subject on the part of Governments and the public.

The Premier: There is a remarkable difference in the national income as well.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, and a tremendous difference in the national debt. Side by side with the national debt position, we find money more fluid and in greater quantity than this nation ever dreamed of as being within its scope. Not only are the States being encouraged to spend, but to import if they can. It is a remarkable set-up. There is no objection by the Commonwealth Government, or by any of the Premiers constituting the Loan Council, to the States' spending £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 abroad if they can successfully place orders for their needs.

The Premier: There is no alternative. That is the reason.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There are many reasons.

The Premier: That is the chief one.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am pointing out that the set-up is different from what it was 10 years ago when Western Australia had the greatest difficulty in getting one and a half millions approved by the Loan Council for necessities which could be bought only from overseas. There was no alternative then to importing the commodities, but we were not permitted to do that. Australia, represented by the Premiers of the six States, and the Commonwealth Treasurer, said it could not be done. They decided that, firstly, because the money was not available, and secondly because it was impossible to exchange Australian currency with overseas countries by way of placing orders for the goods we needed. Let us look at the history, if anyone doubts the position, of the East Perth power house. I do not know whether it is giving the Minister for Works much worry at the moment, but I think it is. The new power house which was opened on the 20th January, 1939—the year in which war broke out—was completed at a cost of £600,000. That had to be the subject of special Loan Council approval as a progressive payment from 1934 onwards. The power station was approved and the plant ordered in 1935. When it was opened—

there are many here who will remember this—the timing was synchronised from London. It was opened from London, and amid great festivity, acclaimed as the most modern of its kind. And, more than that, the Government of 1934 which had planned it and brought it to a successful conclusion, made very clear the claim that the station then had 17,000 kilowatts excess power available.

The installed capacity of the plant was 57,000 kilowatts with a 40,000 kilowatt load. That was the position on the 20th January, 1939. Some kindly and generous statements were made when the station was opened. It was to serve the electricity demands within a 30-mile radius of the metropolis. It was said to be the greatest stimulus for industry that Western Australia had ever experienced. It was said—not by members of the Government, but by people of English origin who were responsible for its construction, and by visitors to Western Australia at the time—that it had an adequate reserve for emergency and overhaul, and that it was a credit to the enterprise of the Government. One speaker said—

We may rest assured that the new station will secure our needs for some years to come, and we can look to the future with confidence. If the reserve of power that we have diminishes more rapidly than is anticipated, it can only be through unexpected progress.

Mr. Marshall: That is just what happened, too.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It was claimed as the greatest factor, up to that period, to stimulate secondary industry in this State, and it had, ten years ago, a reserve power of 17,000 kilowatts. That programme envisaged the duplication of the East Perth power station within seven years, but, immediately war broke out, it was impossible to place an order for the duplication of any part of that plant. In spite of the foresight of the Government of 1934, and its desire to duplicate that power plant, war prevented that course being followed. It must be remembered that equipment for the South Fremantle power station, for which considerable provision is made in these Loan Estimates, was the first order of its kind to be delivered in post-war years by the works of Metropolitan Vickers in England. That was possible only because long before the war ended the State Government sent its officers to England to inquire into the

prospects of placing an order for equipment for the South Fremantle power station. Because the order was placed before war ended, we are now enjoying deliveries which enable the Government to be prepared for expansion and which will provide the security to be offered by that station.

I understand, from Press statements, that since deliveries from Metropolitan Vickers Ltd. have commenced, the Government has been preparing to extend the works so that they will be able to cope with the demand and will not be on full load immediately the plant is put into operation. The whole of the facts about the East Perth power station will be found, if members wish to have them, in the Press of that time, in the leading articles of our daily papers. They tell how the then Government was acclaimed, in the year in which war broke out, for its courage, enterprise and vision in preparing for the great expansion that that station stimulated, even in spite of the war. It is interesting to observe how impossible it would have been to raise money, either inside or outside Australia, to give effect to the desires of that Government to render the position more secure.

Immediately it was necessary to appoint Sir Harry Brown Co-ordinator General of Works during the war years, it also became necessary to carry a resolution in Loan Council to the effect that there should be no approval for public works within the States, if those works involved the spending of loan money. Therefore, while this nation geared itself for war, no loans were raised for public works, with the exception that approval was given for certain non-governmental undertakings in two of the larger States. As against that, today sums of £116,000,000 or £117,000,000 neither frighten the Commonwealth Bank nor give the Federal authorities any concern as to how such amounts should be raised or spent. It is almost hard to believe, when we recall the attitude that prevented the raising of money, either internally or externally, during the years immediately before the war. I call attention to something that it is so easy to ignore for political purposes; that is, the circumstance that in the post-depression years it was impossible for any Government, of whatever complexion, to develop the State for the administration of which it was responsible. It was not until

the year in which war broke out that, either from within Australia or from overseas loans, the desires of Governments could be met to any large degree.

During the following eight years—particularly from 1939 to 1948—until the major part of our war commitments had been placed behind us, there was no suggestion of a revival of Government spending as we know it today. Even until 1946, Governments were discouraged from spending moneys on works that could be deferred. I am concerned at the order of priority of Government undertakings in Australia today. No-one would be foolish enough to deny that public buildings, including Government offices, schools and hospitals, should be built as rapidly as our economic circumstances will permit, but neither do I think anyone would deny that all over Australia today the greatest need is for another 30,000 or 50,000 homes.

Almost every undertaking, on which money is to be spent internally under this loan programme, vies with housing in importance and challenges the house-building programme of all the States. Members will recall that during the war years there was in existence an all-Australian commission investigating post-war housing needs. That commission, side by side with the Co-ordinator General of Works, did very valuable work and plans were prepared, not for things that Australia needed, but to defer things that Australia needed and to insist upon the things that Australia could not do without. I therefore become concerned on the point of how much of these programmes, no matter how justified, the Government believes it can achieve. I have no hesitation in saying that it cannot, and will not, spend £12,262,000. There are items which have been on Loan programmes for many years and items for expenditure which could not be incurred until now. Such items include railway locomotives and dredges which were planned for more than one Government ago. I desire to be absolutely fair in my comments from any angle that might be regarded as political, but I cannot see anything in this programme that is new. Very many items belonged to departments—

The Premier: You must see something new in the expenditure for the railways. There is a huge expenditure there.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No, that is simply a continuation. I would remind the Premier that I had not been the Treasurer for more than six weeks before I had the Commissioner for Railways in the Premier's Office. That can be verified by the Under Treasurer. That discussion was the starting point for the £5,800,000 programme approved in 1946. The diesel trains and all other things which are now being delivered were part of that programme. We were also able to secure 14 engines which were destined for the Sudan during the war years.

Therefore all of those things, including dredges and expenditure which must be made by Governments and cannot be acquired from the petrol tax, so far as the Causeway is concerned, do not show anything new. The Minister for Works will not claim that the Causeway was of his design and preparation. But, it is very heartening to see—in spite of the colossal quantities of cement it demands—the progress being achieved in that and many other directions. I am not speaking in a critical vein on those points, but it is necessary for us to have a fair comparison in regard to what can be done and what it has not been possible to do.

In the Budget tables will be found some very interesting returns and particularly those which have reference to our Loan assets. The summarised classification of Loan assets shows that the public debt, at the 30th June of this year, owing by the public of Western Australia was £103,688,000 and of that sum only £9,101,000 is fully reproductive. Of the total moneys spent and borrowed for the expansion of this State, and other expenditure on our existing assets, only £9,000,000 is fully reproductive. I would like to awaken in the minds of Western Australians the responsibilities of Governments, as well as citizens, upon an insistence that Loan moneys, however applied, should be closely scrutinised to see that their application is upon reproductive works.

In a country warranting development which this State demands, it is not possible to see that all Loan moneys are applied in a way that would make them fully reproductive. In some instances it would not be possible to apply them to give very much return, but considering that every £1,000,000 borrowed at this stage represents an annual

charge on the revenue of Western Australia of approximately £40,000, it is a big responsibility to ensure, if possible, that every million earns £40,000. We should see that not only does it do that as quickly as possible but also that it represents a potential for greater production to the extent that the debt will be cancelled out by such production as quickly as possible. If that be the objective of Governments, no-one should criticise the most ambitious of Loan programmes.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Is that impossible to maintain at the present stage?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I would think that with a total indebtedness by loan of £103,000,000, at this period in Western Australia's history—provided we do not incur heavy expenditure while the spiral of rising costs is prohibitive, and provided we do not come into conflict with the better expenditure of moneys in so far as public development and private enterprise are concerned—Western Australia should, with those circumstances fully considered, go full steam ahead in the spending of Loan moneys to make this country more productive.

The Premier: You agree that this Loan programme is necessary?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I would say that it is very doubtful whether the Government has given the fullest consideration to the impact, of the attempts to spend this sum, upon the rising of costs in many industries and commodities, and in the challenge to home construction and many other things in times of scarcity of materials and labour when the Government is competing with all other instrumentalities and activities.

The Premier: I know what the impact would be if we did not spend it, or at least as much as we can.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If the Premier is going to insist on a policy of spending record sums at a time when high prices are prevailing then his policy is not a sound one, unless every matter is closely scrutinised. No one can deny that spending on materials when the spiral of prices is rising sharply—and before very long there must be a discounting of values in such assets—warrants very close attention to see that moneys are not being applied in directions which threaten expansion of many other things, including the provision of homes. I

am sure members will examine return No. 10 in the Budget tables and the returns which follow it. If they do so they will find cause for much reflection on what should be the attitude of Governments when prices are at their peak and when materials are in shortest supply. It is extremely interesting, I think, to refer to a speech made in this Chamber on the 6th August, 1947, which gives a list of Loan works approved by the predecessors of this Government.

The Premier: What date?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The 6th August, 1947. I will be modest, but I must remind the Premier that the speech was made by me.

The Premier: In 1946, was it not?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No, 1947. I was speaking on the Supply Bill. During the course of the speech a complete list of the works planned and approved was given to the Committee and those works involved a record spending for that time. From memory, I think the Loan programme of 1946-47 was five point six million pounds; a record figure for this State, in which very many items, including the State Electricity Commission undertaking, the purchase of 50 new trolleybusses, six diesel coaches and 14 new class locomotives from England, and many other things involved the spending, mostly within the State, of over £5,000,000. I would like to know what objection the Minister for Works is raising so that I can answer it.

The Premier: It is all right. He is just questioning the date of your speech.

The Minister for Works: It is quite an innocent talk, I can assure you.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Minister should not look so aggressive. I do not wish to delay this Committee or these Estimates, but I do want to draw attention to the extremely heavy responsibility with which a Government is charged when it has the spending, in a period of inflation, of record sums of money. It is not by public spendings alone that a Government can even earn the right to occupy the Treasury bench because the spending of money can denote a profligate government. The actual throwing away of assets can mean a spendthrift attitude, but it is by the soundness of its policy, and the wise application of moneys which must be repaid, that it will be judged.

I sound very strongly the note that it behoves all Governments carefully to avoid, if they can, in periods of rising prices, and shortages of a very serious kind, competition with other enterprises. I am sure the Premier agrees with that point of view.

The Premier: I do.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Since the Premier does agree, I hope that so far as the use internally of materials required to rebuild, to initiate works in this State, the Government will not be a violent competitor with the people who require the materials for that purpose. I hope, too, that the trend of the national debt, on the basis of total indebtedness per capita on every citizen, is to be very closely watched. If it is possible to spend all this twelve million pounds I hope it is to be spent in avenues where the public will justly pay back the money it owes the Crown for the services rendered and the increment which such sums spent means to them. There is an important phase in the public as well as in the private assets of a community that, where assets and values are enhanced by Government spendings, such communities should not cavil at Government charges for such services but they should be made to pay something commensurate with their value.

I do not care whether that applies to increments in land values or to services such as water supplies. There is a responsibility to the Crown by such people who enjoy the benefits accruing from the Government's assets provided that they should never be allowed to be overlooked. I hope, therefore, that progressively with the development of this State there will be millions spent in parts of it to develop all the resources of which I have made mention in recent times in this Chamber—and I refer particularly to the North-West portion of the State. Now that money is available, attention should be given to many of the things mentioned here recently to ensure not only the possibility of greater production and population, but also a better balance in our total economy.

MR. ACKLAND (Irwin-Moore) [8.7]: There are some observations I wish to make, more particularly under the headings of water supplies and agricultural development. In the first instance, I want to make it quite clear that whilst I have a very real apprecia-

tion of the Government's progressive policy, I have some criticism as to where its money is being spent. I am of the opinion that the Midlands and the northern agricultural areas have not received the consideration to which they are entitled.

Mr. Graham: You have nearly all the schools up there.

Mr. ACKLAND: Throughout the life of this Parliament, each time the Estimates have been brought down I have had a feeling of disappointment. Other than schools, to which the member for East Perth has referred and which I think have been distributed very equally over the whole of the State, I have been very disappointed because more money has not been spent in the areas to which I have just referred. I am quite willing to admit that people in the eastern part of my electorate did object to the comprehensive water scheme sponsored by the member for Northam, but the scheme which has been introduced and passed by this Parliament through the Minister for Works has differed, in many material aspects, from the Bill introduced by the previous Government. Some 18 months or two years ago I approached the Minister for Works to include those people in the Ballidu and Dalwallinu areas in that comprehensive water supply scheme. The answer I received was that it could not be extended. Yet subsequently, through a question asked in the House, I found that the Government contemplates extending the scheme further south than the present limits, in fact as far as Mt. Barker.

If we study the scheme, we find that Mt. Barker is nearly 80 miles south of Katanning, the southern limit of the scheme, while Dalwallinu is only 56 or 57 miles north of the present limit of the scheme. Further, Mt. Barker has an average rainfall of over 30 inches while Dalwallinu has an average of only 13. I believe that if the scheme is to be extended, it should be extended the shorter distance to the north rather than the greater distance to the south in the heavy rainfall area.

On perusing the Estimates, I find that there is only one place in the northern agricultural districts other than the town of Geraldton where money is to be expended. According to the Estimates, at page 19, pro-

vision was made last year as follows:—Improvements to the Geraldton main, Waroona reticulation, Albany improvements, Katanning improvements, duplicate tank at Albany, Gnowanergup water supply construction, purchase of Pomona pumps for Geraldton and improvements to supply and reticulation at various towns. This year we find provision for the completion of the Gnowanergup water supply, new reservoir at Albany, Margaret River water supply, Pinjarra water supply, further improvements to supply and reticulation at Albany and Geraldton, new construction at Kulin, Dalwallinu, Boddington and Dwellingup. There is only one town in the northern area outside of Geraldton mentioned in that list.

Though I have no objection to such improvements being made—in fact I consider that the policy of the Government to continue along those lines is worthy of support—I should be failing in my duty to the people of Irwin-Moore if I did not make some reference to the small amount of money to be expended in that area under these Estimates. I know that the north-eastern wheatbelt is receiving attention under the 4½ millions comprehensive water scheme, but the places in which I am interested are outside that area.

A proposal has been mentioned to the Premier and the Minister for Works and they have given it quite an encouraging reception. What I ask is that they give consideration to providing another water scheme. This State has received assistance from the Commonwealth to put in the four and a half million comprehensive scheme, the construction of which is already under way, but there is a vast area in the northern agricultural areas and Midlands, which is as badly situated for water as is any other place in the State.

When the Mundaring scheme was being contemplated, consideration was given to a proposal to construct the dam somewhere on the Moore River. I do not know whether that was a feasible proposition, but inspectors of the Public Works Department are now making investigations there and further north in the Dandaragan area. If the Commonwealth can spend £200,000,000 on a scheme in New South Wales and finance other huge schemes in Queensland, we in

this State should have some claim for consideration over and above the four and a half millions to which I have referred.

I ask the Premier and the Minister for Works to persevere with the suggestion made to them. The idea is that a water scheme should be installed to serve the area on the western side from Moora in the south to Geraldton in the north and on the eastern side from Ballidu in the south to Mullewa in the north. There is a vast province in that area and though it contains many agricultural towns, not one of them has a reasonable water supply. The towns include Moora, Watheroo, Coorow, Carnamah, Mingewee and Three Springs on the western side and Ballidu, Pithara, Dalwallinu, Wubin, Buntine, Morawa, Perenjori and Mullewa on the eastern side—towns of that nature all the way through to Mullewa. A great part of that area is short of water, but the producers, given the opportunity, would be very glad to avail themselves of a scheme, and I know that their productive capacity would be greatly increased if such a scheme were installed.

Dealing with the development of agriculture, I compliment the Government upon its having refrained from closing down the experimental station at Salmon Gums, and, having its activities extended by opening a sub-station at Esperance, which can be worked by the same staff and plant. In the Esperance area is a huge province, not for cereal growing, but an area where pastures can be established and improved that will be capable of carrying a great number of stock. Though I am going far from my own district in advocating this scheme, I do not want the Government to forget the needs in the area west of the Midland railway line. I have mentioned before in this Chamber that there is an area of some 2,000,000 acres west of the Midland line between Gingin and Dongara. The Government has decided to establish a farm in that area and an area of between 4,000 and 5,000 acres has already been earmarked for the purpose, but I regret that no developmental work has yet been undertaken. Admittedly materials and machinery are in very short supply, many lines being almost unprocurable.

The Premier: Is not there an awakening interest in that land?

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, but experiments are required.

The Premier: I think you are right.

Mr. ACKLAND: When the Wongan experimental station was first opened, the Government of the day did not wait until materials were available, but immediately set to work at clearing and sweetening that poor class of soil by fallowing. Although it is now rather late to contemplate any large area of fallow being prepared on the farm this year, I regret that some developmental work has not been undertaken. I think it was in 1933, or about that time, that Mr. P. D. Ferguson, then member for Irwin-Moore, tried to induce the Government to establish a farm in that district. Successive Governments have done nothing in the matter since. The present Government certainly made land available, but I fear that unless there is some public expenditure upon it, the area will be forgotten and the work not undertaken. I point out that this piece of country is almost in the suburbs of Perth. It is adjacent to a railway; it has a magnificent rainfall and I am positive, from the experiments that have been conducted on private properties, that it has a tremendous potential value.

The area needs Government help in the way of experiments to discover what is lacking in the soil so that people may be induced to settle there in large numbers. When the experimental station was established at Wongan Hills that class of land was held in very low esteem by the people of the State. We know the development that has taken place in the district as a consequence of the experiments. I am one of those who believed in that light land and at one time was laughed at, but I am still of the opinion that the light lands of Western Australia are going to be the most productive in our agricultural areas. With the introduction of legumes and the building up of nitrogen in the soil, it is already astounding the people who are working it. I hope the Government will at the first opportunity provide money to proceed with the development of the land west of the Midlands.

The Premier: Have you developed some of that class of land?

Mr. ACKLAND: A great deal of it, but it is not in the same category as the land west of Moora. The land which I have developed has a rainfall of 15 to 16 inches,

whereas the land of which I am speaking has a rainfall very little below 25 inches, and from there it spreads to a much higher rainfall area. I am afraid that it will prove much more difficult than the light lands at Wongan Hills; but, with its extra rainfall, it will be found to be equal, if not superior, to the land in the lower rainfall area and a profitable grazing proposition, except in the extreme northern end where the rainfall is somewhat less and more suitable for cereal growing.

One other matter upon which I wish to touch is the T.B. testing of cattle which has been carried on by the present Government. Judging from Press reports, there is every evidence of progress having been made in the testing of herds for T.B. The campaign has been particularly intensive in the metropolitan area. It has been somewhat surprising to find that herds in outlying districts have had such a high incidence of T.B. The department had expected that the incidence would be very high in such districts as Osborne Park, Wanneroo and the closer metropolitan area. It has therefore been astonishing to find that even on the Goldfields 50 per cent. of the cattle that were tested were reactors to T.B. On referring to the report of the Milk Board for the year ended the 30th June, 1948, I found that during that year 12,889 cattle were tested, revealing that 2,964 were reactors, and that a total sum of £51,223 was paid in compensation to dairymen whose cattle had been destroyed. I do not know what the position was at the end of the last financial year, but I think it reasonable to presume that the expenditure has been in the vicinity of £100,000. Portion of this money, of course, has been paid by the Government.

I understand that the scheme is financed by voluntary contributions from dairymen who are licensed under the Milk Act and by a pound for pound contribution by the Government. Of course, the salvaged meat would also be of some value and the proceeds of the sale swell the fund. Those figures give some idea of the magnitude of the work done. I ask that the Government continue this good work in order that the results already achieved may not be lost. I understand that some owners have received as much as £2,000 in compensation for cattle which have been destroyed, yet there is no compulsion on them to contribute to

the scheme. One gets a true idea of the value of this testing when it is ascertained that out of a herd of 90 cows in the closer metropolitan area, 78 were found to be infected. In another instance, in a herd of 73 there were 66 infected and had to be killed.

In the metropolitan area alone, in 93 herds of 5,539 cows, 2,246 were found to be reactors. That is 40.5 per cent. It is most encouraging to find that in the second test the percentage was 6.4, which was reduced at the third test to 4.7. I am told that, if the Osborne Park herds be excluded, the incidence of T.B. in cattle at present in the metropolitan area is as low as 2 per cent. I do not wish to weary the Chamber with figures, but I deemed it right to draw the attention of members to this good work. Those who have been associated with it have done a signal service to the whole State. The scheme should be made compulsory; cattle owners should be compelled to contribute to it. The responsibility should not be left to those who have voluntarily entered the scheme and to the Government, which has to subsidise it. There are several items under this heading upon which I would have liked to say something, but I realise other members wish to speak. I do ask the Government, however, to continue the scheme of T.B. testing so as not to lose the benefit of what has already been done.

The Minister for Lands: It will not be lost. We are making provision for its continuance.

Mr. ACKLAND: I also ask the Government to give special consideration to the expenditure at the first opportunity of loan money on a water scheme to serve that vast promised land which I have mentioned, the area extending from Moora to the south, to Geraldton in the north and from Ballidu on the east northwards to Mullewa.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [8.30]: I congratulate the Premier on having such a large amount of money to expend from Loan funds over the coming year. Twelve and a quarter million pounds is a lot of money. But I also agree with the Leader of the Opposition that probably the Premier will find it most difficult to spend the money on something that will be reproductive or in directions that will not

involve excessive costs for materials. The Leader of the Opposition also stated that during his term of office money was not so plentiful. In fact, Governments found it difficult to get sufficient to carry on.

I can remember when I came into this House in 1939, attending a meeting in March of that year, of the members of my Party, after we had been returned to office, for the purpose of electing Ministers. After the Cabinet had been chosen, the first item of general business called related to unemployment, and about six members from the metropolitan area expressed a wish to be heard on the subject. Men were besieging the homes of metropolitan members in hundreds because there was not sufficient money to enable the State to meet their requirements. There was no twelve and a quarter million pounds expenditure anticipated in that year, nor half as much.

So the idea was to ask the Premier to endeavour, when he went to the Loan Council meeting, to persuade that council to give to the State sufficient money to enable it to employ the workless men in Western Australia, married men with big families who were living on the sustenance rate. When the Premier returned from the Loan Council meeting I, as one of the new members, anticipated that he would have had no difficulty in raising something in the vicinity of £30,000 for this purpose, but he told us he could not get one penny from the Commonwealth Government for expenditure in that direction. The Commonwealth Treasurer said, "Money does not grow on trees; you cannot pluck it off trees." Innocent-like at the time, I swallowed every bit of that as being absolute gospel, and was prepared to see that the worst cases—men with big families—were employed for a month, then put off so that somebody else could be employed, with a view to pulling these people through the bad months of July and August, the winter months, when they needed blankets and firewood. But what occurred in September, 1939? War was declared, and the same Commonwealth Treasurer—Mr. R. G. Menzies—announced over the wireless that £50,000,000 was raised overnight to prosecute the war. But they could not raise £30,000 to feed the unemployed and hungry people of Western Australia!

Mr. Fox: Property was in danger!

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. The moment property was in danger, £50,000,000 was raised overnight. They did not pluck it off trees; there was no occasion to do so. The money was there; it did not have to grow. But the hungry and poor of Western Australia could starve, so far as those people were concerned. I sincerely hope that when the Premier spends his money, he will have an opportunity to spend it wisely. I hope he will; but I am fearful that he will not have enough material on which to spend it, and he will probably not have enough manpower. Certainly, his oversea commitments will be great.

The Premier: We placed our orders before devaluation took place, so we are all right for the time being.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope that is so, and that we will not spend our money in the dollar areas but in the soft currency areas. Let us deal with the people who are prepared to deal with us.

The Premier: We will, if we can get the goods.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope we can.

The Premier. So do I.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope that America is not the only country to supply Western Australia with goods. A lot of money could be spent on bettering conditions within our own borders. For instance, there are the railways. I know the difficulties being experienced. The railways are short of locomotives and rollingstock and a lot of other things according to the statement of the Commissioner of Railways: but I think the time has long since passed when we should have taken some notice of the report submitted to the Government by the Royal Commission—Mr. Gibson, from the Eastern States, and a gentleman from South Africa—who inquired into the condition of our railways some time ago. Let us put into operation some of the suggestions advanced by that Royal Commission. It would not be very hard nor very costly.

Take the matter of the transport of wheat from the back country, from Merredin and Kellerberrin, and the country through Westonia and back to Southern Cross! If it is necessary to cart wheat on the loop lines, a train goes through with a rake of trucks. High wages are paid and rollingstock has to be supplied, together

with coal and everything else; and the trucks are taken to the sidings to be filled by the farmers. It is a peculiar fact that everything that belongs to the Government, so far as farmers—and other people—are concerned is of no consequence. The result is that the rake of trucks to which I have referred is not filled immediately, but is left for two, three or even four days. Yet I fail to find that a great amount of demurrage has ever been claimed. The engine returns to pick up the trucks, but they are not filled, and the train returns with half a load.

Mr. Mann: You need not worry about demurrage not being paid!

Mr. TRIAT: They do not pay in all cases. Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. TRIAT: See how the farmer objects when one suggests he is not paying demurrage.

Mr. Mann: Of course he is!

Mr. TRIAT: If the hon. member receives a truck for his pigs and it is not filled, I presume the department will charge him demurrage if the truck is not cleared. But there are many farmers who are not paying. Instead of having trains running on loop lines, let us concentrate to haul on main lines only. Let trucks cart the wheat into bins on the main lines and let the wheat be carried from the bins along the main lines to the metropolitan area and Fremantle. It is possible to bring train after train, carrying up to 700 tons of wheat, along the main lines; but if we have to run round in circles, looking for a truck here and a truck there, we are never going to shift the wheat. Instead of destroying our bituminised roads between here and Kellerberrin by using terrifically heavy trucks carrying 10 to 15 tons of wheat, let it be hauled by rail, and let the trucks transport wheat from the outlying districts to the main line.

The Minister for Railways: And what are they going to do to the roads there?

Mr. TRIAT: What are they doing now? In the dry weather, the country roads will carry any of these trucks.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. TRIAT: I fail to see why not. They cart wool to Leonora, and there is no bitumen road there.

The Minister for Railways: You have no wheat.

Mr. TRIAT: We have carted 40 tons of wool. What is the difference between wheat and wool?

The Minister for Railways: There is no weight in wool.

Mr. TRIAT: I tell the Minister that on one truck with a trailer, 40 tons at a time is brought into Leonora.

Mr. Oliver: But there is no weight in that!

Mr. TRIAT: No, it is light! It is only 40 tons! Fifty tons of bananas have come from Carnarvon without a bitumen road.

The Minister for Railways: On what vehicles?

Mr. TRIAT: On Diamond T. vehicles. The man concerned was pulling four trailers, and the Government had to prevent his putting on an extra one on the ground that it was dangerous. I do not know whether there was any weight in it! But 50 tons of bananas were pulled on a rough road—not built. That is a positive fact, let me tell the Minister! He should be well advised of that sort of thing. I admit that it is not possible to cart goods on back country roads in winter because of the danger of being bogged, but harvesting is done in the dry and not in the wet weather.

I suggest that this means of transport be taken advantage of so that immediately the wheat reaches the bins the trucks can be filled and despatched to Fremantle. I believe that in that way we can overcome our transport difficulties with regard to wheat to a great extent and save our good roads instead of damaging them by carting wheat all the way down to the metropolitan area on big trucks. But when it comes to giving service to the Goldfields, it is not done. We have a new Commissioner—a man who has come all the way from India—and he may be an excellent officer—I do not know—but he has certainly given the worst service to the Murchison Goldfields that we have ever experienced. Today we have the spectacle of one train a week on the line to Wiluna—700 miles. It carries perishables, foodstuffs and passengers. That is scandalous. The best and most progressive centre in Western Australia, within 120 miles of Perth, has a train a day—that is from here to Bunbury. That train is

known as the "Australind" and is something to be splashed on the front pages of the papers.

The Minister for Railways: You will have something better than the "Australind," in a few months' time, to Mullewa.

Mr. TRIAT: We shall have a diesel.

The Minister for Railways: Yes.

Mr. TRIAT: How far will that go?

The Minister for Railways: To Mullewa.

Mr. TRIAT: That is not the Murchison.

The Minister for Railways: I admit that.

Mr. TRIAT: When we get into the Murchison we still go back to the steam train. I have no objection to the steam train, bad and all as it is. It is transport I want. A beautiful train goes to Bunbury every day, and, in addition, a road service is provided by a big, beautiful parlour coach.

Mr. May: Fully occupied, too.

Mr. TRIAT: The one train a week to the Murchison is also fully occupied. The people cannot get standing room on it. Mothers coming down with their families on holidays have no chance of getting accommodation on the train. I point out, too, that they have to spend two nights on it, and not a paltry four hours as is the case between here and Bunbury. Yet the Commissioner thinks the people on the Goldfields will be satisfied with one train a week.

The Minister for Railways: He does not think that at all.

Mr. TRIAT: It is what he is giving.

The Minister for Railways: He has not the engine power.

Mr. TRIAT: He put another engine on the run to Bunbury quite recently. There is an extra train per week to Bunbury.

Mr. May: The midnight train was cut out.

Mr. TRIAT: The member for Collie is parochial enough to stick up for Collie. If he lived on the Goldfields he would stick up for them. He has a wonderful service.

Mr. Styants: It is 120 miles in the daylight.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. The lack of other trains to the Murchison may be due to shortage of locomotives and rollingstock, but whatever it is I have asked the Minister to look into it, and I believe he has given me a sympathetic hearing. If he went to Fremantle he would find Government rolling-

stock lying idle for hours; and, again, no demurrage is being paid. That rollingstock is lying there from 7 a.m. till 6 p.m., until the motor lorries have finished carting. During that time the Government wagons are lying alongside the ships. When the motor lorries are taken off, the Government trucks are used, and no demurrage is paid. Those trucks take 26 hours from the time they get to Fremantle before they return to the marshalling yard. Is that right?

What is the Commissioner of Railways doing? Why is he not inquiring into the position? His own inspectors are reporting it. I have asked the Minister to make an investigation into the position at Fremantle, and he has approved my suggestion. I think the result will show that the Government rollingstock is taking as long as 26 hours to get back to the marshalling yard. The wheat carted from the bins to the boats by motor lorry costs 5s. a ton, but when it is carted in railway trucks it is 1s. a ton. No wonder we do not make money; no wonder our rollingstock is held up; no wonder the railways make a loss of approximately £2,000,000 a year! That is not astounding when these things are permitted to occur right under the nose of the Commissioner and the Traffic Branch. This does not occur out in the wilderness, but at Fremantle within 12 miles of the railway headquarters. I hope some method will be adopted to overcome these shortcomings.

The Minister for Railways: It has already been done.

Mr. TRIAT: The position has not been corrected yet. We have a new service for the Murchison, and I am pleased to know there is to be something extra. We can appreciate that perishables, in the summer, with temperatures of 100 to 110 degrees in the shade, do not last long in an edible condition. The new service is as follows:—

Leave Perth 7.15 p.m., Thursday.

Arrive Wiluna 3.40 p.m., Friday.

A person going to Wiluna has to stay four nights there before returning to Perth. If his business transactions take two days, he still has to remain four days. He leaves Wiluna on Tuesday and arrives in Perth at 10 p.m. on the Wednesday. The department is going to put on a second train which will deliver perishables. With the two trains travelling over the line, which they will do

once a week, the perishables will be delivered—taking Yalgoo as a centre—as follows:—2 a.m. Wednesday by one train, and 11.50 a.m. Thursday by the other. Is not that ridiculous? What is the idea of spacing them approximately 24 hours apart? Surely it is possible to run perishable trains three days apart so that the provision of perishables can be spaced half a week apart. I hope the Minister will take some notice of that.

Another matter which affects the Government seriously is that of electricity costs and supplies. The question of power is important to Western Australia. I am not referring to the breakdown tonight, although it is unfortunate. These breakdowns are happening too frequently. If I were the Minister I would make inquiries to find out the cause, because we are having too many stoppages. Industries are held up and people put out of employment as a result. While electric power is readily available and everything is going smoothly, I consider the Government has done something wrong in imposing on the people an additional 100 per cent. extra cost, approximately. The cost now is about 100 per cent. extra, but not in all cases, I admit.

If it were necessary for the Government to make extra charges to meet its commitments, I would have something to say in support of doing that, but I have pointed out that we can do what we like with our railways and get away with it, but the consumer of electricity in the metropolitan area has no chance of getting away with anything, except paying excessive costs. I do not know the reason for it. I have read carefully the statements made by those in authority, but they cannot say why the costs are so high. I will quote briefly some Press cuttings and then analyse them. The first is from the "Daily News" of the 27th of July last. This has already been quoted by me in this House, but it will bear repetition. It reads as follows:—

Many Consumers Get an Electric Shock.

Electricity accounts for the first quarter of the new power rates are now dropping into letter boxes. Close on the postman's whistle is following a rising chorus of protest. One householder brought his account to the "Daily News" with previous accounts for comparison. His electricity bill for July to October last year—normally the month of highest power consumption—was £1 13s. 1d. His bill for the last quarter came to £2 14s. When

compared with what the power would have cost under the old rates it fell short of the promise made when the rates were increased. The promise was that the increase would cost the average consumer "less than 1s. a week." This householder estimated an increase of 60 per cent. in his bill, and a "more than 1s. week increase."

I take it that person was just an ordinary householder. The article continues —

At a city tearooms the monthly electricity bill leapt from that month's highest ever of £6 10s. 3d. to a staggering new high of £12 19s.

Until then £6 10s. 3d. had been the alltime high. Surely there is something wrong when we were told by the authorities that the householders' accounts would increase by approximately 1s. per week, while in fact they increased almost 100 per cent. The next extract from this article is the gem of the lot. It reads—

Hospitals were also hard hit. One hospital's bill for June was £58 16s. 8d. Calculated at the old rates the bill would have been £36 6s. 3d. This represented an increase of £22 10s. 5d. or 62 per cent.

Those figures cannot be denied. The people of this State are very placid, seeing that they have not, in hundreds, besieged the Electricity and Gas Department with protests against such an increase. Now we will see what one of the Perth City councillors had to say about it. This portion of the article is headed "Story Behind the Story," and reads as follows:—

When the £3,000,000 sale of the City of Perth Electricity and Gas Department was under discussion last year, it was revealed that the State Government was losing £140,000 yearly by selling power to the E. and G. Department under the 1913, 50-year old agreement. Contract price for sale of power was .75d. per unit. At a City of Perth Ratepayers' Association meeting on November 4, 1948, Councillor Vervard said that the E. and G. Department had made a profit of £1,500,000 in 15 years. He suggested that the Government could amply cover its losses by raising the sale price of current by .25d. a unit and gas by 1d. a unit. This would return an extra £100,000 for current and £48,000 for gas. Increases operating from June 1 appear to have increased the Government's revenue by at least 50 per cent. E. and G. made a gross profit of £106,709 10s. 2d. in 1948.

So the profit for 1948 was £106,000 odd and the Government estimates a loss on the same undertaking of £140,000. The Government has now purchased that utility from the Perth City Council and I take it that the undertaking is still producing for

the Government a profit of £106,000 per annum. Therefore the loss of £140,000 will be reduced by £106,000 in the coming year. The Government created a loss for itself by selling 121,000,000 units of electricity to the Perth City Council at the rate of .75d per unit, and the loss was 8,250,000 units, so the council actually paid £25,000 for something it could not sell.

Those figures show that the profit to the Government should be £131,000, and if we subtract that from the loss of £140,000 that the Government claims, the actual loss is £9,000. Councillor Veryard suggested that an increase of .25d per unit would be sufficient, but the Government has raised the figure by 100 per cent. to 1.5d. per unit. I do not think the Government can justify its attitude towards the consumers of electricity in this State, and I hope it will give this matter consideration and ask its officers to go into the question of losses instead of asking the people to contribute £1,500,000—the profit made by the Perth City Council in 15 years—in one year. This matter will be featured at the next election and the people of the metropolitan area will be told the truth in no uncertain terms. I hope the Government does something about it before the next election because the facts will be announced then.

Another matter in which the Government could make a forward move, provide work for our people and produce locally a commodity that is now largely imported, is coal production. Up to the present Collie coal has been considered to be of poor quality. As the member for Murchison explained the other night, people had gradually to be taught how to use it, and at first they did not desire to use it. If one examines a truck load of coal from Collie one will find a quantity of dross, rubbish and dirt in the truck. People in Perth who purchase coal from Collie today purchase 15 per cent. of dirt with it. That is 15 per cent. that cannot be burnt or consumed but the people have to pay for it and are charged freight on it as well. But the coalowner who mines the coal is not the slightest bit concerned because he is in a very happy position. Practically all the coal he can produce is taken by the State Government, and the taxpayers of this State pay for that 15 per cent. of rubbish.

Mr. May: They get 26s. 2d. a ton for it too.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. The hon. member knows something about coal but he does not know very much about the Goldfields.

Mr. May: You would be surprised.

Mr. TRIAT: The people pay for this 15 per cent. of rubbish. That rubbish, when it is put into the machinery in either a biscuit factory, powerhouse or anywhere else, is detrimental to the machines. It becomes clinker and causes damage to the pipes or burners, as the case may be. I suggest to the Government that included in this 121½ million expenditure should be a sum of £40,000 which I understand is sufficient to pay for a plant to clean, grade and blend Collie coal. The owners of the mines should also contribute towards the cost of the plant. Did somebody say No? I hope not because this plant would be of immense value.

When the people purchase coal from Collie it should have a guaranteed B.T.U. value and this could be done if such a plant as I have outlined were installed. Today one buys a truck of coal and the coal might be 9,000 B.T.U. The next truck of coal—the coal might come out of the same bin—might be 7,000 B.T.U. So the consumer of coal actually buys a pig in a poke when he buys Collie coal. If the coal were graded, blended and screened, every ton of coal sold would be at the same B.T.U. rating. It would also be of a uniform size and free of dross and dirt. I am given to understand that the machinery required for this purpose will cost £40,000. The matter has been discussed because some time ago there was an argument between the Railway Department and the Mines Department as to who would be liable for the cost. After those two departments had finished and endeavoured to get over some of the red tape, nothing more was heard and nothing was done.

The Minister for Railways: It is being investigated at the present time but the scheme is not assured of success.

Mr. TRIAT: I am speaking of four years ago when it was being investigated. It was before the present Government came into office and yet the matter is still being investigated.

The Minister for Railways: It has not proved successful yet.

Mr. TRIAT: I am not blaming the Government but I blame the officials in the departments for holding up the works. I think we can give the people of Western Australia coal of such good quality that they will have no occasion to import any from the Eastern States. The ships now used for the cartage of coal could be turned round and used for something else. It would be better than carting coals to Newcastle or coals to Collie, which is the same thing. I presume also that the Minister is aware that the best grade of Collie coal today is somewhere in the vicinity of 9,000 B.T.U.—it may be slightly more.

Mr. May: It is 1,050.

Mr. TRIAT: Very well. We will take that as the highest grade of coal in Collie. I am given to understand by a gentleman from the Goldfields, who is producing coal in Collie, that he can clean it, blend it and then dehydrate it and he is able to get a B.T.U. rating of 13,500. That is an excellent achievement from Collie coal. It is the same coal as is being mined round Collie now, but he is eight miles away from there. This gentleman is going into the matter scientifically and is dehydrating the coal by taking the water content from it. He says that he does not want to cart water to Kalgoorlie, but to transport coal only. I hope the Government will give consideration to that aspect, and when it puts in the plant for the cleaning and blending of coal it will also install a machine to dehydrate it. It might be advisable to send the water up to the member for Irwin-Moore's district because he is so short of it.

I do not want to delay the Committee very long, but I hope the time will come when the Premier of Western Australia will not be budgeting for 12¼ million pounds but for 50 million pounds per year. We can do that by making ourselves progressive and selling our own goods to our people. In that way we can give to the people within our borders goods at a cheaper price and entice a bigger population to Western Australia. The people in this State should be given decent conditions and good houses. I will admit houses are hard to get and I do not know how the people can pay £1,250 or £1,275 for each home built. The ordinary working man cannot afford to pay anything like that sum for a home and I

should think that £1,000 is his maximum. But, with the present-day cost of living, cost of fares, electricity, and everything else, it is most difficult for a man on an average income, with a wife and say two or three children, even to live.

I do not know how the man on an ordinary salary can exist and he certainly could not hope to pay £1,275 for a house. The Premier, with so much money at his disposal, will have to study ways and means of producing a cheaper type of home suitable to the needs of the people of Western Australia. We have the timber and the tiles and everything required to build homes, with the exception of nails. I believe that if Wundowie gets going we will be able to provide the material to make the nails too. I congratulate the Premier on having an opportunity this year to spend 12¼ million pounds and I hope he makes the best use of it for Western Australia.

MR. MANN. (Beverley) [9.7]: I do not intend to speak for very long.

Mr. Styants: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: But I can if the hon. member wants me to. It is very interesting to study the Budget and I am anxious to see what progress will be made with our programme. It has been said that the Government will not be able to spend all the money but there are many worthy purposes to which the money could be put. I presume and hope this Government will see out its term but we have had some rather disturbing moments. Naturally I hope the the Government will be able to spend this money on the development of Western Australia.

Mr. Marshall: It won't be their fault if they don't.

Mr. May: They are pretty shaky.

Mr. MANN: I hope that whatever Government is returned to the Treasury bench next year will have a majority big enough to carry on in a proper way instead of this system of getting by with a majority of one.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We will see to that.

Mr. MANN: It is not possible to get good government that way and I hope that whatever Party is returned will have a decent working majority.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Whichever Party?

Mr. MANN: The Premier has told us that the reason for wanting to close Parliament earlier is because we have two candidates putting up for Federal seats.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: We had to torture that admission out of him all the same.

Mr. MANN: No, he was very honest.

The Premier: There is no doubt about that! Outstanding characteristics!

Mr. MANN: I have not very much to say but I am concerned about two aspects of development. One is the question of water supplies in the country areas. Recently the member for York and myself went to the Minister for Works with a deputation concerning water for the Corrigin, Bruce Rock, Narembeen and Kondinin Road Boards. I can assure members that the deputation left the Minister with disgust because we could not get any satisfaction from him about it. There is a definite feeling growing up today in many parts of this State that there is far too much legislation, or too much control, coming from the southern part of Western Australia. I was concerned to hear that the comprehensive water scheme will go to Mt. Barker. It is quite a long way and yet not many of the eastern parts of the State have been included. The Minister has refused to discuss to any extent the question of extending the water scheme to Corrigin, because the people there voted against the comprehensive scheme.

I did not take any notice of any party or organisation that voted against the comprehensive water scheme, but I do know that there are many farmers who are sorry they did not support the Bill brought down by the member for Northam when he was Minister for Works. That was the best scheme ever introduced into this House since the time of Lord Forrest. It was a sorry day when it was defeated and today the farmers in the drier, and even in the wetter areas, after these three long dry years, realise what a mistake they have made in not accepting that original scheme. I hope the Minister will give some consideration to Kondinin and Corrigin because those areas are entitled to water. I am not saying that merely because I am a member for those parts. I have been a

member for 19 years and I have seen the country grow and the large increase in the number of stock. Those people are suffering acutely from water problems. On the redistribution I will no longer be their member, but if the Government cannot secure the pipes in Australia I hope that they will import them from oversea. These people deserve consideration much more than those in the far southern parts of the State because they have a lighter rainfall.

The other question I wish to deal with is vermin. Some years ago a Select Committee was appointed consisting of the Deputy Premier who was chairman, the Premier, the member for Murchison, the member for Nelson and myself. The committee was ultimately appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the vermin position in Western Australia, and a very comprehensive investigation it was. It took evidence for six months and its members travelled extensively all over the State. One of its findings was that the Government should impose a land tax, including a tax on Crown land, to bring in a total revenue of £80,000 per year, to be spent on the eradication of vermin. Quite candidly, I am astounded that the two Leaders of the Government have not given effect to those findings. When the Minister for Education was in opposition he criticised very strongly the efforts of the Labour Government on this question.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He has forgotten all about it.

Mr. MANN: If he has, I have not. The Premier may be conversant with the great areas of the North-West and the choice country around Pinjarra, but evidently he has no ideas on the question of vermin in other parts of the State. Surely our investigation was not wasted. Is the Government afraid to tax the people of the metropolitan area as was recommended in the findings of that Royal Commission? The Government could take advantage of Consolidated Revenue to the sum of £80,000 to try to alleviate this problem, but apparently it is not going to do it. It has dilly-dallied for two and a half years and it is not game to face up to the question. Why?

Is it of no importance that thousands of pounds a year are being lost to this State as a result of destruction by kangaroos and

emus in the northern and other parts of the State? The Government has asked for increased production and so it is going far afield in the Great Southern areas to develop new and greater pasture areas for the production of stock and food. Those lands could be brought more quickly into production by the eradication of vermin, such as rabbits and noxious weeds, and will also increase production considerably.

Another of the findings of the Royal Commission was that a mobile unit should traverse the country to assist in vermin eradication. I think that a mobile scheme would assist materially to combat the rabbit menace on every holding throughout the State. Farmers are paying £180 per mile for rabbit-proof fencing imported from overseas, as against £60 for the Australian article, as it is impossible to secure supplies for about eight years.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What has happened to the vermin policy of the Government?

Mr. MANN: I do not know. I am probably out of step with the Government and have been so for quite a long time.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: How is this new Party of yours getting on?

Mr. MANN: I shall discuss the question of the new Party on the hustings; probably on my own.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You will have the Premier on the platform with you.

Mr. MANN: I am afraid not. I shall discuss it in my own style.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Are you not afraid that the people will say something about you?

Mr. MANN: No, but I will tell the people that after 14 long years of Labour administration which had no sympathy for the farmers, nothing was done on the vermin question by this Government. I have tried to comprehend the views of the Government on the question of agriculture.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It must be painful to a country member.

Mr. MANN: I have tried my best but cannot do it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why don't you come over here?

Mr. MANN: I cannot do that because I am out of step with both sides of the House.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I think they are all out of step but you.

The Minister for Lands: He is the only one in step.

Mr. MANN: Perhaps the Minister is right. If we can believe the sincerity of the two Leaders of the Government, why do they not tell the people when they are going to give effect to the findings of the Royal Commission?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It was the most urgent thing in the world when they were over here.

Mr. MANN: I agree. I had to earn my living by sweat and toil on the soil.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But do you?

Mr. MANN: I do, but I question whether my colleagues know what hard work is. I have toiled all my life very hard indeed. The Premier has bundles of money. There has been no more fortunate Government than the present one with the funds at its disposal. It could almost make it the golden age with the money it has available. The Government should adopt a broader policy of trying to develop the State and so if I come back to this House I will wait with a great deal of interest to see what steps the Government will take even then.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Which Government?

Mr. MANN: We will see whether the Government will then have a progressive rural policy.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: We will make you Minister for Vermin.

Mr. MANN: Those are the main matters with which I am concerned.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What is the Minister for Lands doing about this business?

Mr. MANN: The Minister for Lands does not deal with agriculture.

The Minister for Lands: The Honorary Minister for Agriculture was preparing a measure when he took ill; it is in preparation now.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Deputy Premier told us that that stage had been reached years ago.

Mr. MANN: It has taken two and a half years to prepare a Bill of this nature. I say the Government does not want to bring it down. It is trying to camouflage the whole situation. That is the point. Should the Government be returned to power after the next election, its composition may be different. It may then include men with a greater knowledge and experience of rural life. One of the troubles from which we are suffering today is that the Government is far too parochial. Its point of view is that of the city and not of the country. Whenever farmers' organisations really take part in the political life of the country, I trust they will see to it that we have more men in the Administration that know something about farm life. Today we have prosperity, and an enormous amount of money is available to the Treasurer. There is such an abundance of wealth that the Prime Minister has been prepared to give the States vast sums of money, and where has that wealth come from? It has been derived purely from the soil. Apparently the Premier is not very much concerned with the position of the men on the land with regard to the vermin menace. I am convinced about that.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And what about the Deputy Premier?

Mr. MANN: I include him as well. If they were really mindful of the position and really in earnest, they would have brought down a Bill 12 months ago.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: The Government has delayed the whole matter.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It was just electioneering.

Mr. MANN: It was not so as far as I was concerned.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No, certainly not.

Mr. MANN: I was very concerned about the whole matter when I was a member of the Royal Commission on Vermin.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: They were only pretending.

Mr. MANN: If it was a matter of electioneering by the Premier and Deputy Premier, it was a disgrace to them and to the Government.

The Premier: But it was not!

The Minister for Lands: Of course not.

Mr. MANN: Then perhaps the Premier or his Deputy will explain the matter. The Premier seems to regard it as a matter for humour, but the public, and particularly the farming community, will not regard the situation as humorous when the next election is held.

Mr. Rodoreda: Certainly not.

Mr. MANN: This sort of thing cannot be put over the people. You cannot fool the people all the time but you may fool them some of the time.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is original.

Mr. MANN: There are many stations in the North that are going out of production on account of the inroads of dingoes and kangaroos.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is right.

Mr. MANN: When vermin sweep further south, other properties will be affected, and more men will have to go off their stations.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is so.

Mr. MANN: With the invasion of rabbits and the resultant diseases, rural interests will suffer increasingly. In addition, there are the noxious plants. They include the one that has become notorious, namely, the Cape Tulip. The Premier, when he was a member of the Vermin Commission, was regarded as the Minister for Cape Tulip.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He was that.

Mr. MANN: That is how we regarded him.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Now he is the King of Pinjarra.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Or rather Baron Harvey.

Mr. MANN: And Pinjarra is badly affected. However, memories are very short. But we have a responsibility to our people.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The farmer from West Perth is going out soon!

Mr. MANN: The farmers will remember all about this. I say very definitely that when my time comes to approach the electors in my constituency, this is one subject about which I shall be very definite. The Government has had ample time in the past two and a half years to give effect to what it advocated so much when sitting in Opposition.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Bill was supposed to have been drawn up last December.

The Premier: It will be a good Bill when it comes down.

Mr. May: The incubation period has been rather long.

Mr. MANN: I have expressed my opinion on the matter. Finally, I want to deal with the new diesel coach, the "Boronia." I have had the pleasure of travelling by it, and it is a wonderful means of transport. The train is a credit to the engineers of this State.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That was done by the previous Government.

The Minister for Lands: Credit is due to the present Minister for Railways, and you know it.

Mr. MANN: I want to be fair. The Labour Minister ordered it and the present Minister has played his part. But the first man to introduce the diesel engine in this State was the late John Scaddan, when a member of the Mitchell Government. I want to give credit to both sides. The present diesel train hauls two coaches and 120 passengers. Recently I discussed this mode of transport with an Englishman who is conversant with the details regarding the construction of similar coaches in England and elsewhere. He says that the present-day diesel engine is capable of hauling four coaches and 300 passengers.

The Minister for Lands: That was a steam coach, was it not?

Mr. MANN: Steam coach!

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Cobb & Co's. coach!

Mr. MANN: Steam coach!

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is the mentality of the Minister!

Mr. MANN: The point made by the Englishman I refer to was that the coaches here are far too heavily constructed. They are heavily riveted and the bodywork is extremely weighty. He suggested that the coaches should be made of very much lighter steel so that, instead of hauling 100 tons, the coaches could take 50 tons but provide much more accommodation. I am sure he is prepared to discuss the matter with the Minister. He has seen trains of the type he spoke of in various parts of the world, and suggests that before any more coaches

are constructed some expert from England should be brought out for consultation, or else some engineer from the State should be sent Home to gain experience in the construction of lighter coaches. I think if that suggestion were adopted, much benefit would result. It would mean that the trains going to outback places like Wiluna and Mullewa would be able to haul much additional freight. Furthermore, with lighter construction many more passengers could be transported. I appreciate that the present coach is excellent. I understand that its use would mean that the journey from Albany to Perth could be reduced by three hours, provided the track was kept clear.

If the diesel trains were placed on the main lines, such as those to Bunbury, Albany, Kalgoorlie and Geraldton, the journeys would be very much quicker and more and better accommodation would be provided for an increased number of passengers. The time has arrived when steam engines have outlived their usefulness for passenger traffic. The modern method is to use diesel coaches, and probably jet-propelled engines may be available in the not far distant future. I am convinced that very soon steam engines will be entirely eliminated, except perhaps for hauling heavy freight like timber, wheat and superphosphate. The Minister might give some consideration to the suggestion and see if the coaches cannot be constructed of much lighter material.

I sincerely trust that the recently-appointed Chief Commissioner of Railways will be able to help the State, because the railway system is in a very bad way. Motor transport has become firmly installed and is doing an excellent job. The Commissioner has no easy task. I hope he will be successful because the people of this State have been crying out for better administration of the railway system. I conclude with the hope that before the debate is finished the Premier, or the Deputy Premier, will tell the people of the State generally and farmers in particular, why the Government is not prepared to bring down legislation to assist the men on the land, both farmers and pastoralists, with respect to the eradication of vermin.

Progress reported.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. R. R. McDonald—West Perth) [9.30] in moving the second reading said: Members will recollect that the original legislation was passed in 1943. The basis of the Act was to enable coalminers to retire at the age of 60 and to provide them with pensions, the amounts of which were set out in the Act, the funds for the pensions to be raised by contributions from the mine-owners, the mine workers and the Government. From time to time three or four amendments have been made to the Act.

The scheme of the Act was that if a miner were not entitled to an old-age or invalid pension he would, broadly speaking, receive in full the amount of his pension from the Coal Mine Workers' Pensions Fund. The Act further made special provision for mine workers who became eligible to receive an invalid or old-age pension. The arrangement was that the miners should draw the amount of the invalid or old-age pension to which they were entitled and the Coal Miners' Pensions Fund would then contribute the balance to make up the amount of the pension prescribed in the Act.

If a miner became entitled to an invalid or old-age pension, it was much more sensible that the Commonwealth should pay him the amount of that pension thereby saving the Coal Miners' Pensions Fund that amount of obligation. Then, when the coal miner had drawn the Commonwealth pension, the Coal Miners' Pensions Fund would step in and pay him such an amount as, with his Commonwealth pension, would enable him to receive the pension prescribed in the Act.

Although the Act appears to be rather a simple one, these matters are slightly intricate, but I hope to succeed in making the position clear. Let me give a concrete illustration. Suppose a miner with no dependants was entitled to a fortnightly pension from the fund of £5 5s. and qualified for an old-age pension amounting to £4 5s. a

fortnight, he would draw the £4 5s. from the Commonwealth and the Coal Miners' Pensions Fund would pay him £1, the two payments together making up the £5 5s. a fortnight as prescribed in the Act.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Would he not be entitled to 30s. income in addition to the £2 2s. 6d. old-age pension?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes. However, the Act provides, by Section 14, that when a man draws an old-age pension—in which event he is entitled to receive extra income up to 30s. a week under the Commonwealth legislation—the Coal Miners' Pensions Fund will not be called upon to pay the miner more than the 30s. a week because, if the fund paid him more than the permissible additional income he could earn, then for every additional amount the fund paid him, the Commonwealth pension would be reduced.

Hon. H. A. Panton: I appreciate that, but you were talking about the fund paying an extra £1 a week.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I gave that by way of illustration. Section 13 of the Act provides that if a miner is entitled to an old-age or invalid pension, then that amount is deducted from the pension he would otherwise be entitled to receive from the fund. The pension fund would pay him the balance required to make up his pension prescribed by the Act after taking into account the amount received by way of old-age or invalid pension.

Mr. Styants: What would happen if he could not comply with the means test?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The hon. member has touched on the point of the Bill. In general, the scheme of the Act has worked out quite well, but in a number of cases at Collie—14 up to the present—a definite anomaly has arisen. It must be borne in mind that if a man is not entitled to an old-age pension by reason of the fact that he has property of such an amount as to disqualify him for the pension, he may receive a pension from the fund in addition to the income he may receive from his private property. Take the case of a miner who has some property more than he should hold to entitle him to the old-age pension in full, but not enough to disqualify him entirely for an old-age pension, the result is that the miner receives a

portion of the old-age pension, and it may be a very small portion. In those circumstances the coalminers' pension fund could not pay him more than 30s. a week under Section 14 of the Act.

Under the scheme of the Act, the fund could not pay him more than that sum per week because, if it did, his Commonwealth pension would be correspondingly reduced. To take some of the specific cases at Collie—actual cases—there is a man who is entitled under the Act to a fortnightly pension of £5 5s. He receives from the Commonwealth by way of old-age pension £1 2s. 9d. a fortnight. By reason of the limitation on outside income which he can receive without affecting his Commonwealth pension, he is not able to draw from the pension fund more than 10s. 6d. a fortnight. The result is that, instead of his receiving a total income from his old-age pension and the Collie miners' fund of £5 5s., equal to the figure prescribed under the Act, he receives only a combined amount from the Commonwealth pension fund and the coalminers' pension fund of £1 13s. 3d. So that he is getting £1 13s. 3d., whereas his pension from the coalminers' pension fund for which he contributed is £5 5s. a fortnight. If he had had a lot of property and was not entitled to any Commonwealth pension at all then there would have been no deduction and he would be receiving the full amount of his pension from the miners' pension fund and still be able to enjoy any private income he would receive from his property.

Broadly speaking, with regard to coalminers who are entitled to pensions under Commonwealth legislation, the scheme of the Act works out equitably and the miners receive a combined sum by way of old-age pension and contribution from the coalminers' fund equal to the prescribed pension under the Act. But there are these cases where—by reason of the full Commonwealth pension not being payable on account of property qualification intervening and by reason of Section 14 of the Act—certain miners are in a very invidious position and receive nowhere near the amount of the pension for which they contributed under the Act. Section 14 provides that the coalminers' pension fund shall not contribute

to an old-age pensioner more than the permissible additional income which such pensioner may earn under Commonwealth legislation.

In the old days, as the member for Leederville will recollect, 12s. 6d. might be earned in addition to the pension; now it is up to 30s. a week. But even so, the effect of Section 14, in imposing this limitation on the pension paid by the coalminers' pension fund, is that a number of coalminers who are pensioners are placed in an anomalous position and are receiving less than the Act intended they should receive.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Are you referring to Section 14 of the parent Act?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes. The effect of this Bill is to repeal Section 14. That means, broadly speaking, that where a coalminer is entitled to an old-age pension he will draw it and the coalminers' pension fund will be entitled, without any restrictions, to make up to him the balance required to bring his combined income from the Commonwealth pension and the coalminers' pension fund up to the prescribed figure under the Collie miners' pensions Act. It sounds rather intricate and members may desire to have a look at the legislation in order to follow what I have endeavoured to convey. In the other States this limitation on the amount payable by the pension fund, which is to be found in Section 14 of our Act, does not apply. There is no such limitation. The result is that the coalminer who is also entitled to an old-age pension can draw from the Commonwealth by way of old-age pension and from the coalminers' pension fund a total amount which will bring him up to the rate of pension prescribed under the coalminers' pensions Act.

Mr. May: Actually, this Bill is to bring our pensions in line with those of the Eastern States?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes. The situation is one which I think was not contemplated when the legislation was introduced originally, but time has shown—as the member for Collie will bear me out, and as the Collie Miners' Union has represented to the Government—that this anomaly has occurred. The additional amount of liability which will be imposed on the coalminers' pensions fund will be

approximately £2,000 a year at the present time in relation to the cases which now exist. It is considered that this anomaly should be rectified, as desired by the union, and in fairness to these particular miners. The incidence of this extra liability will be reflected in the accounts of the coalminers' pension fund and will be a factor to be taken into account at the triennial actuarial valuation or investigation which is to take place after the 30th June of next year. It is therefore desired that we should make this correction in the parent Act this year in order that the information which will be obtained from a liability point of view may be included in the accounts to be examined by the actuary next year because of the triennial valuation.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Will it be retrospective?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It will not be retrospective. That would create some difficulty, I understand, with regard to this particular provision, that is, the repeal of Section 14 and the limitations which it imposes. That repeal, the Bill provides, is to come into force on a proclamation by His Excellency the Governor. The reason for that, I am advised, is that the proclamation will be made at the earliest possible moment, but it is desired to make it at a convenient date so that this legislation will not operate, for example, in the middle of a pension period. It could, by proclamation, be provided that it should operate at the termination of a period and therefore the accounts both of the Commonwealth Pensions Department and the coalminers' pension fund could be ruled off at a convenient time.

The other matter in this Bill relates to a provision that was inserted in the Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act last year. Members will recollect that last year Parliament passed a measure to increase the benefits payable under the Act. In making this increase, on the advice of the Actuary, it was desirable to take certain precautions. One was that the term "mine worker," being the person entitled to a pension under the Act, should not include a person who, being first employed in or about a coalmine in the State after the 7th day of January, 1949, is, when so employed, over the age

of 35 years or fails to pass the prescribed medical examination at the time and place prescribed.

The effect of that amendment was that, as to miners who were engaged in the industry up to and prior to the 7th January, 1949, they had their full rights preserved. Even though they might be elderly men or men not physically fit, yet, as they were in the industry, and although they might only subscribe for a very few years, they would be entitled on retirement to get their full pension. But this amendment said that with regard to newcomers to the industry the fund could not be expected to carry them if they were over 35 years of age or were not reasonably physically fit. In neither case could the fund expect to provide pensions on retirement, unless in the case of incapacity, for a man who might contribute by reason of age only three or four years to the pension fund or, not being physically fit, might be a charge on the pension fund that he should not have been. That was inserted to preserve the stability of the fund as much as possible and in fairness to the other pensioners who might have been in the industry 30 or 40 years and contributed all that time towards a pension.

A weakness in the wording of this amendment of 1948 has been discovered. It is this: That a man may have been in the industry prior to the 7th January, 1949, and may leave it perhaps for five, 10 or 15 years and then come back at, say, the age of 55, in which case he would be entitled to come in on the pension fund though he might only contribute to it for five years. Any man who comes into the industry after the 7th January, 1949, for the first time, cannot qualify for a pension on retirement if he is over 35 years of age; and the weakness, as the Act stands, is that a man may escape that disqualification if he happened to be in the industry prior to the 7th January, 1949, stays away for any time at all, and then comes back into the industry. In that case he is just as big a charge, or likely to be, on the pension fund as any newcomer; but he is outside the disqualification imposed by the Act.

Mr. May: He would not have contributed.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No. He might not have contributed except for a year or two. The intention of the Act is

broadly that those men enjoy the right to retire at 60 on a full pension, who have remained continuously in the industry and have made a reasonably long contribution to the fund on which they are going to draw; and the amendment of last year and that now proposed in the Bill is to provide that where men are over 35 years of age or are not reasonably physically fit, they cannot be allowed to come into the industry and participate in the fund in circumstances where they would not have made a fair contribution to the fund to meet the liability they are imposing on it.

Those are the two amendments in the Bill—the first being to correct an anomaly which is working very prejudicially to certain miners in Collie in relation to their pension; and the second to conserve the interests of the regular miners against people who leave the industry without cause for perhaps an indefinite time or for many years, and then seek to come back unfairly and be a charge on the fund. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. May, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—North Perth) [9.58] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to make three amendments to the Industrial Arbitration Act. The first is to repeal Section 31 which provides—

During the pendency of any reference to the Court, no application for the cancellation of the registration of an industrial union shall be made or received, and no resignation or discharge of the membership of any industrial union or of any company, association, trade union, or branch, constituting an industrial union shall have effect.

This section was inserted first in the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1912.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Are you sure it was 1912 and not 1902?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I understood it was 1912.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I am only looking for information.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: My impression is that it was 1912. I gained that from the marginal note in the existing Act.

The hon. member is probably right. The object of the section, as I understand it, is this, that in the early days of arbitration there was a possibility, when a reference had been made to the court, of inducements being made to employees to resign from the union. Those days are past. It is thought that the court should have jurisdiction to deal with an application for the de-registration of a union, although a reference is before it, in the event of the union's committing breaches of the Act. It can readily be seen at what disadvantage the court might be placed, in the event of a small reference being made to it and a union then going out on strike, or committing some serious offence against the provisions of the Act. The Bill seeks to delete that section.

The next amendment deals with Section 103 which gives the powers and jurisdiction of the court to industrial magistrates so that they may hear offences in the same manner as they can be heard by the court. At present there is no appeal from the decision of the industrial magistrates unless the penalty is imprisonment or a fine of more than £20. There has been expressed to me the opinion that some of the decisions of the industrial magistrates have been unsatisfactory. I was asked to receive a deputation from the A.L.P. in this connection. I feel there should be an appeal from a court of first instance which exercises a quasi criminal jurisdiction.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Did you say the A.L.P. asked for this?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I said it had made complaints against some of the decisions that have been given by industrial magistrates.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It did not ask for a repeal of the section?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. It asked me to receive a deputation in connection with certain decisions which it considered were not correct. As members are aware, there is no right of appeal at present except where the penalty is severe. Therefore the amendment will give the right of appeal from an industrial magistrate's decision to the Arbitration Court itself. If the penalty is one of imprisonment, or over £20, an appeal lies at present to the Full Court of the Supreme Court. The

amendment will merely give the right to appeal to the Arbitration Court which, I feel is the correct one to deal with appeals from the industrial magistrates.

Mr. Needham: Who is dissatisfied at the moment?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I received a letter from the A.L.P. complaining of some of the decisions of an industrial magistrate. The last alteration which is suggested, is the most important one in the Bill. It deals with that portion of the Act that provides for the fixing annually of the basic wage, namely, Section 123. As members are aware, at present an inquiry has to be held each year into the basic wage and the finding of the court comes into operation on the 1st day of July next following the decision of the court.

At the moment a basic wage inquiry is being held by the Federal Arbitration Court. It is thought likely that that court's decision will come into operation before the 1st July of next year. Mr. President Dunphy, on the hearing of the State inquiry this year pointed out that he thought it inadvisable that he should hold a full and comprehensive inquiry when the Federal Arbitration Court was doing likewise, and when the Commonwealth inquiry was to be so wide. As a result, no alteration was made, but undertakings were given by the Government and by the Employers' Federation that in the event of a basic wage increase being granted by the Federal court, the Government and the members of the Employers' Federation would straight away agree to a hearing by the State Arbitration Court rather than wait until the next annual inquiry.

It is thought that there are other employers with whom no such understanding has been arrived at, and that it would be only fair that all employees should have the advantage of any increase that might result from the Federal inquiry, if a State inquiry could be held and its decision implemented immediately. If this amendment is agreed to, the court, after an inquiry in connection with the basic wage, will be able to fix the date upon which the increase shall come into operation, instead of waiting until the 1st July next ensuing after the inquiry.

Hon. A. H. Panton: When you referred to Section 108, was that Section 108 of the principal Act?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It does not make sense to me, because the word "court" does not occur in line 2.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Apparently that is a mistake. It can be rectified when the Bill is in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton, debate adjourned.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd August.

HON. E. NULSEN (Kanowna) [10.15]: I have read the Bill carefully and feel that the amendment was fairly set out by the Minister in his second reading speech. The Act came into operation on the 19th December, 1947, and there has been some little time in which the commercial community could look for any anomalies in the drafting of the legislation. In an extensive Act such as this, one must expect some anomalies and errors that require correction, and the amendments contained in the Bill will achieve that end. I do not agree with a few of the amendments, but I realise that the Bill was brought down for the protection of the public and of shareholders and not for the purpose of inconveniencing or embarrassing the commercial community.

I realise also that the registrar found it difficult, in some instances, to administer the Act intelligently, and some of the amendments were recommended by him to me, when I was Minister, although the Act had not then been brought into operation. I am satisfied that, generally, the amendments will improve the Act. The Bill is a non-party measure and if some of us oppose a few of the amendments, it will not be done on Party lines, but simply in accordance with our beliefs. The Act was introduced to give uniform company law throughout Australia and provide greater protection than the old Act afforded. In the case of some of the adjustments, there

will probably be consequential amendments necessary. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Hill in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 26—agreed to.

New clause:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—
5A. Section forty-six of the principal Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

(7). The provisions of section forty-seven Subsection (8) of this Act are incorporated in this section as though they were set out herein and expressly made applicable to the provisions of this section.

This section deals with prospectuses and certain provisions in connection with advertising are provided for local companies but not for foreign companies and it is desired that the same provisions should apply.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—
6A. Section fifty-three of the principal Act is amended by adding the following subsection:—

(6) The provisions of section forty-seven, subsection (8) of this Act are incorporated in this section as though they were set out herein and expressly made applicable to the provisions of this section.

Section 53 of the principal Act deals with restrictions as to the allotment of shares and it is desired that the provision of Section 47 Subsection (8) of this Act be incorporated in this section as well.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—
6B. Section fifty-four of the principal Act is amended by adding the following subsection:—

(4) The provisions of section forty-seven, subsection (8) of this Act are incorporated in this section as though they were set out herein and expressly made applicable to the provisions of this section.

It is also desired that the provisions of Section 47, Subsection (8) shall be included in Section 54.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I did not hear a word the Attorney General said and I have not the slightest idea of the proposal. I would be glad if he would be more explicit.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I refer members to Section 54 of the Act. After that section it goes on to state that it shall not apply to proprietary companies and then follows a penalty which is provided if the companies act in contravention. I also refer members to Subsection (8) of Section 47 of the Act. There is an exception set out there and it is proposed to add this new clause 8A into Section 54 in the same way as that exception applies under the provisions of Section 47.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

8A. Section 102, subsection (2) of the principal Act is amended by adding after the word "prospectus" in line two the words, "or which has issued a prospectus but has not proceeded to allot upon applications received in consequence of the prospectus, any of the shares offered to the public for subscription."

This again deals with the prospectus and relates to Section 102 and I refer members to Subsection (2) of that section. It is proposed to amend the principal Act by adding after the word "prospectus" in line two, the words "or which has issued a prospectus but has not proceeded to allot upon applications received in consequence of the prospectus any of the shares offered to the public for subscription."

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

18A. Subsection (6) of section two hundred and ninety six of the principal Act is amended by—

(a) Adding after the word "register" in line three, the words "under the provisions of this Act or the repealed Acts;"

(b) adding after the word "aforesaid" in line six, the words, "or in the case of a company which has been struck off the Register under the provisions of the repealed Acts within six years of the commencement of this Act,"

As the section now stands it only covers companies that are struck off under the new Companies Act, and does not apply to any companies that were struck off under

the old Act. This clause is desired, if the shareholders wish, to enable a company that has been struck off under the old Act to be reinstated.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

20A. Section three hundred and thirty-four, subsection (4), of the principal Act is amended by substituting for the words "a registrar" in line three, the words, "any person."

Section 334 of the Act deals with the application to file balance sheets. Subsection (4) of that section provides:—

This section shall not apply to any company which, by the law enforced in the country or State where it was incorporated is not required to file with the registrar its balance sheet.

In some countries there is no such person as a registrar and therefore it is desired to delete the words "a registrar" and insert in lieu the words "any person."

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I desire a little clarification on this. When this says "any person," does it mean that in effect or are there some qualifications?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, it means that in different countries there is no registrar but there are other persons who are holding similar or like positions and where in such cases it is not required to file a balance sheet with such persons then it is not required in this State.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

22A. The principal Act is amended by adding after section three hundred and sixty-eight, the following section:—

368A. Notwithstanding anything in the last two preceding sections, where a prospectus complying with those sections has been issued, it shall not be necessary in any advertisement of that prospectus in a public newspaper to insert the particulars or matters required by those sections, except those with respect to the date, the fact that a copy has been duly filed, the names, descriptions, and addresses of the directors or proposed directors, and the number of shares subscribed by them, respectively, and with respect to the minimum subscription on which the directors may proceed to allotment, provided that the advertisement—

(i) states—

(a) that the advertisement is an abridgment of a prospectus;

(b) that copies of the abridged prospectus and the full prospectus have been filed with the Registrar;

(c) where in the City of Perth in the State, copies of the full prospectus and forms of application for shares may be obtained; and

(d) the primary object with which the company was formed;

(ii) states that applications for shares will be received only on one of the forms of application referred to, and, as the case may be, either endorsed upon or annexed to, but detachable from, the full prospectus; and

(iii) does not contain anything to which the said requirements apply, and which is not in the prospectus, or is inconsistent with the prospectus.

Section 368 requires prospectuses to be advertised, and the amendment will enable an abridged prospectus to be published instead of the full document.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Why?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Because it is too expensive to publish the prospectus in full and it is considered that its appearance in an abridged form is quite sufficient.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister has submitted a number of amendments, some of which are of a far-reaching nature and the Committee has had very little explanation of them. All the Minister has done is to read what appears on the notice paper, and members can do that for themselves. There is an obligation upon the Minister to explain them. It is all very well to say that the advertisement of the prospectus in an abridged form will be satisfactory. What virtue is there in that, apart from the saving of money to the company?

The Attorney General: That is the effect.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Is the company the only party to be considered? The members of the public have their rights and they are entitled to information. Should a prospectus be published in an abridged form and someone be induced thereby to apply for shares, which he would not have done had the prospectus been advertised in full, what would be the result? The Minister should give some reason why an amendment such as this should be accepted.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The explanation is that which I have given, and is simple. It does not require anything further.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Who asked for it?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was asked for by the Chamber of Commerce, and that is why it has been submitted. These amendments were all carefully investigated by a committee of the Chamber of Commerce, and some of them were requested by the registrar.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Has this been referred to the Institute of Accountants?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, and also to the Institute of Secretaries. All the amendments have been approved by them. It was a combined committee that considered them.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [10.47] in moving the second reading said: This Bill provides for a number of road closures. The first deals with that affecting portion of Macauley-street, Bunbury. The State Housing Commission has acquired certain land at Bunbury which is at present vested in His Majesty. Re-subdivision of the area has involved the closure of a small portion of Macauley-street, about four chains in length, which becomes unnecessary, as a new roadway has been provided from Kelly-street to Ecclestone-street.

The next closure concerns portion of Road No. 312 at Fremantle. The State Housing Commission made arrangements with the City of Fremantle to acquire portion of the municipal endowment lands, for which purpose provision has been made in the Reserves Bill. Subdivision of the area into home sites involves the closure of portion of Road No. 312. Adequate provision for

roads has been made in the design for the subdivision of the area. The next concerns portion of Butterfly-street, Kalgoorlie. The addition to the North Kalgoorlie school site reserve No. 7467, of an area of one rood 7.4 perches, involves the closure of a portion of Butterfly-street. The school site reserve is below the usual area and extra playing ground is badly needed.

The Bill proposes also the closure of portion of Derby-street, Perth. On the application of an adjoining holder, Mr. A. R. Rowarth, the city of Perth has recommended the closure of the north-eastern end of Derby-street as shown coloured blue on the plan. The Town Planning Commissioner has no objection to the closure, which has been recommended by the Surveyor General. The land within the road is Crown land and the question of its alienation will be decided in due course.

The next proposal is the closure of portion of Melville-parade, Como. In constructing a bituminised portion of Melville-parade, Como, between Cale and Henry-streets, the South Perth Road Board deviated the road through the board's freehold property known as the Olives Reserve. Melville-parade has been widened by resumption from the road board's land to include the deviation, which has improved the alignment of the road and has rounded off the sharp corner of Lot 202. It is desired to close the portion of the road coloured yellow on the plans with the intention that the land contained therein be declared a reserve for recreation and classified as of Class A.

The closure of portion of East-parade in the city of Perth is also proposed. By Section 10 of the Road Closure Act, 1948, it was intended to close the whole of that portion of East-parade between Gardiner and Zebina-streets, but through the omission of certain essential brackets in the printing of the Act, a small area was excluded from the desired closure. This clause will rectify the omission and will enable the Crown to issue a grant to the City of Perth of the whole area of the road as originally intended.

Finally the closure of portion of road No. 3324 at Mahogany Creek in the Mundaring Road District is proposed. The small triangular portion of road No. 3324 coloured

blue on the plan was previously portion of Greenmount suburban lot 281, and was donated to the Crown by the then owner of the lot for the purpose of truncating the corner. The Mundaring Road Board considers the truncation excessive and has requested that the area be reserved for a hall site. Provision has been made for a standard truncation of the corner as indicated on the plan. The present holder of lot 281 has concurred in the proposal. Any member desirous of investigating the proposals, will find the particulars and maps available to him. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 23rd September, 1949.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Seed wheat, as to price for local purchases	2427
Egg Marketing Board, as to personnel and marketing cost	2428
Steel production, as to utilisation of Colliie coal	2428
Prices control, as to overcharges for meat at Norseman	2428
Electricity supply, (a) as to report on breakdown	2428
(b) as to inquiry by Parliamentary Committee	2429
Bills : Companies Act Amendment (No. 2), recom.	2429
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r., Com.	2439
Western Australian Transport Board (Validation), 2r., remaining stages	2444
Bush Fires Act Amendment (No. 3), 2r., remaining stages	2451
Marketing of Apples and Pears (No. 2), 2r.	2451
Liquid Fuel (Emergency Provisions), Message, 2r.	2457
Footwear Regulation Act Amendment, 2r.	2464
Reserves (No. 2), 2r.	2466
Brands Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r.	2468
Bread Act Amendment, 2r.	2469
Adjournment, special	2472

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

SEED WHEAT.

As to Price for Local Purchases.

Mr. BRAND asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Has it been brought to his notice that several farmers in the Mullewa district who had a complete failure of crops owing to drought conditions and pests, were compelled to purchase seed wheat for the present season's cropping at 10s. per bushel?

(2) If these facts have not been brought under his notice, will he institute inquiries to ascertain the position and if found to be as stated, take steps to subsidise the growers concerned to the extent of the difference between the price paid for seed wheat and the home consumption price of wheat which such growers are compelled by State legislation to accept when selling wheat in normal seasons for stock feed or human consumption within Australia?