

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 7th July, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Construction at Kwinana.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many houses have been completed under agreement with the oil company at Kwinana?

(2) How many of these houses are occupied?

(3) Of the commitment of 1,000 houses, how many is it anticipated will be completed by the 1st October, 1954?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 529.

(2) All houses built for Australasian Petroleum Refinery Ltd. are, upon completion, taken over by the company, which then allocates the homes. Whilst the State Housing Commission has no official knowledge, it is understood that approximately 276 of these houses are occupied. Because of recruitment of staff by the company it is anticipated that a much greater proportion of homes will be occupied in the near future.

(3) At the request of the company, the erection of 300 of the 1,000 homes has been deferred. It is anticipated that 607 homes will be completed by the 1st October, 1954.

(b) As to Number of Houses Completed.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) In view of his statement that in some country centres the building rate has been doubled, will he give a detailed list of such towns on the basis of completed houses?

(2) How many houses were completed by the State Housing Commission for the year ended the 30th June, 1954, in—

(a) country;

(b) metropolitan area?

(3) What number of State houses were completed in Port Hedland, Broome, Derby, Carnarvon, for the year ended the 30th June—

(a) 1952-53;

(b) 1953-54?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Country centres where the building rate has been approximately doubled on the basis of completed houses are as follows:—

	1952-53	1953-54
Armadale	5	12
Bridgetown	3	11
Brookton	1	4
Bruce Rock	4	8
Busselton	6	12
Cunderdin	3	8
Donnybrook	2	8
Geraldton	52	85

	1952-53	1953-54
Kalgoorlie	4	7
Katanning	12	24
Margaret River	5	8
Merredin	3	14
Mullewa	1	2
Narrogin	23	35
Northam	38	60
Northampton	3	8
Pingelly	2	4
Pinjarra	1	6
Rockingham	4	7
Trayning	1	2
Wagin	5	8
Wundowie	2	6
York	5	9
Kwinana	51	590

Houses were completed at the following centres during 1953-54 where no houses were completed during 1952-53:—

	1953-54
Augusta	2
Balingup	3
Ballidu	1
Bindi-Bindi	1
Byford	1
Carnamah	1
Dalwallinu	6
Gin-Gin	1
Glenorchy	1
Greenbushes	1
Hamilton Hill	34
Greenmount	3
Jardee	1
Jingalup	1
Koorda	2
Cowaramup	1
Karlgarin	1
Kelmscott	2
Maddington	1
Mahogany Creek	1
Maida Vale	1
Mingenew	3
Palgarup	16
Pemberton	1
Pingrup	1
Tammin	1
Safety Bay	1
Tinkurrin	1
Walpole	1
Yalgoo	1

(2) (a) Country	1,473
(b) Metropolitan	2,080
	<hr/>
	3,553

	1952-53	1953-54
(3) Port Hedland	2	4
Broome	-	-
Derby	5	5
Carnarvon	7	6

(c) *As to Mc Ness Housing Scheme.*

Mr. HEAL asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Are there at present any homes being constructed under the Mc Ness housing scheme?

(2) If so, in what localities?

(3) What is the future policy of the Mc Ness housing scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) The Mc Ness Housing Trust is at present examining its financial position with a view to deciding the future policy regarding further building.

FISH.

As to Decision on Marketing.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Fisheries:

Following the special conference of representatives interested in the fishing industry, called by him recently, could he indicate whether any decision is anticipated regarding the establishment of a system for the disposal and marketing of fish?

The MINISTER replied:

This matter is still receiving attention.

AGRICULTURE.

As to Development of Geraldton Hinterland.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What areas in the hinterland of Geraldton, if any, are being developed for agriculture?

(2) Is it Government policy to construct roads and means of communication into such areas, in order to encourage private enterprise to take up this land for immediate development?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Approximately 150,000 acres of plain country between Wongoondy Estate and the Greenough River.

(2) The procedure in these matters is that generally any need for roads into unalienated country is put forward by the local authority concerned on the one hand, or in the case of large areas of land being developed under the war service land settlement scheme, by the particular department concerned.

Requirements are then assessed by the Main Roads Department and funds provided from time to time as may be necessary to improve progressively the road access to these new areas.

TRANSPORT.

As to Buses on Bedford Park Route.

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he inform the House when sufficient buses will be provided to deal efficiently with the passenger traffic offering along the Bedford Park via North-st. route?

The MINISTER replied:

The service now provided is sufficient to handle economically the passenger traffic offering along North-st. If and when it is found necessary to augment the service, the request will be considered.

ROADS.

As to Rehabilitation of Guildford-rd.

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) (a) Has any decision been made regarding the next stretch of Guildford-rd. to be rehabilitated?
- (b) If so, what section?
- (2) (a) When is it likely that the section between the Mt. Lawley subway and Grosvenor-rd. will be commenced?
- (b) Does he agree that this section is in need of reconstruction more than any other section?
- (3) If the answer to No. (1) (a) is in the negative, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) Yes.
- (b) Ninth Avenue to Grosvenor-rd. and Garratt-rd. to Slade-st., Bayswater.
- (2) (a) The part of this section between Ninth Avenue and Grosvenor-rd. will be commenced next autumn.
- (b) The widening of the sections selected is considered to be the most urgent work.
- (3) Answered by No. (1).

EDUCATION.

(a) As to East Maylands School and Adjacent Swamp.

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Works:

As the Minister for Education has agreed that the swamp adjoining the East Maylands school is a menace to the health of the children attending this school, as well as constituting a physical danger, will he take steps to have this swamp drained, and if so, when can it be expected that this work will commence?

The MINISTER replied:

When it is known what, if any, funds are available for drainage works, priority of this work will be determined in relation to other urgent drainage works.

(b) As to Promotion of Trade Class Instructors.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Education:

With reference to amendments to regulation 205 under the Education Act, will he state—

(1) What avenues for promotion are available to instructors of trade classes?

(2) Is there an avenue for promotion to instructors-in-charge from branch to branch of technical education or from technical school to technical school?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Instructors of trade classes may advance to a higher salary range if they pass certain educational requirements appropriate to their work. In addition, one instructor may be appointed instructor-in-charge if there are three or more instructors working at a centre. Such positions are filled by advertisement.

(2) The avenue for promotion would depend on there being sufficient instructors working in a particular trade for the appointment of an instructor-in-charge to be justified in accordance with the requirements stated above. Such positions could be filled from anywhere within the technical service.

(c) As to Erection of Swanbourne School Luncheon Room.

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

(1) Does he approve, in principle, of the erection at the Swanbourne School of a luncheon room to adjoin the existing Oslo kitchen?

(2) Does he reject the erection of a room for this purpose other than one designed and erected by the P.W.D.?

(3) Is the department prepared to finance the cost of a P.W.D. room thus erected, in respect of any balance above the £1,100 now held by the parents and citizens' association for the purpose?

(4) If not, do the children go without their proposed luncheon room?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) It is understood that the Swanbourne Parents and Citizens' Association is conferring with the Architectural Branch, Public Works Department, as to the type of building proposed to be erected.

(3) The Government's subsidy in meeting the cost of erecting such buildings is limited to £200.

(4) Answered by No. (3).

(d) As to Teachers' Away-From-Home Allowances.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Have any changes recently been made in the allowances paid to teachers living away from home, in reduction of excessive board and lodging charges?

(2) If so, when were such changes made?

(3) What were the allowances before the changes, and what are the new allowances?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Changes have been made recently and operate from the 1st July, 1954.

(3) Under the previous scheme the department paid board in excess of £2 15s. per week for teachers whose salaries were less than £800 per annum. This subsidy was payable for twelve months in any one locality.

The new regulations are:—

Single Teachers.

Excess board over £5 per week up to a maximum of £1 per week subsidy to teachers outside a radius of 30 miles from the Town Hall. Provision is made for the Minister to approve special cases within this limit but outside the metropolitan area. The subsidy is payable for a maximum period of two years with a maximum of one year in any one locality.

Teachers with salary less than £900 per annum may qualify.

Married Teachers.

If such teachers are transferred and have to board while seeking a house, they may obtain a subsidy of £4 per week for a period up to three months. Only teachers outside the 30-mile radius may qualify, except in special cases.

(e) *As to Carnarvon School Additions.*

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Education:

Will he advise the House if any additions are to be made to the Carnarvon state school during this financial year?

The MINISTER replied:

Additions to the Carnarvon Junior High School have been listed on the 1954-55 list of buildings required, but this list has yet to be arranged in order of priorities in accordance with the loan funds allocations. It is therefore not yet clear whether the additions will be erected during this financial year, but it is hoped that they will be included.

(f) *As to Completion of Narrogin High School.*

Hon. V. DONEY asked the Minister for Education:

What is the approximate date on which construction, fittings and accessories in respect of the Narrogin High School are expected to be finalised?

The MINISTER replied:

It is anticipated that Narrogin High School will be ready for occupation in October.

(g) *As to Communists at Teachers' Training College.*

Hon. V. DONEY asked the Minister for Education:

Is it the intention of the Government to shortly take corrective action with respect to complaints of infiltration of communist students into the Teachers' Training College and of the likelihood of subverse activities by those students?

The MINISTER replied:

This matter is still under Government consideration.

AUSTRALIAN LABOUR PARTY.

As to Spelling of "Labour."

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that "Hansard" reports of debates in this Chamber use the spelling "Labour" in referring to the Australian Labor Party?

(2) Will he request the Government Printer to adopt the traditional spelling as used by the Labor Party?

(3) Will he also request the daily Press to use the same spelling?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) (2) and (3) The registered name of the organisation is "The Australian Labor Party" with the word spelt "Labor." I might add that I should think that when the title of a registered organisation is used, the name should be spelt in the way it is registered.

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Comprehensive Scheme, Financial Responsibility, etc.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What is the Commonwealth's and what is the State's financial responsibility in connection with the comprehensive water supply scheme?

(2) Of these amounts, how much has been spent by each to date?

(3) Is it a fact that steel plate ordered for the comprehensive water supply scheme amounts to 13,118 tons, of which approximately 6,723 tons have been delivered?

(4) Has any of the steel delivered for the comprehensive water supply scheme been used for other purposes?

(5) Does the 13,118 tons of steel plate ordered represent all the steel that the moneys made available for the project will purchase?

(6) If not, have orders been placed for steel up to the tonnage that available funds will procure?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Commonwealth and State share equally up to a total expenditure of £4,300,000. Under the present arrangement any additional expenditure must be met by the State.

(2) Commonwealth—£1,141,561.
State—£1,141,561.

(3) No. Broadly the position is—

(a) Steel already installed in pipe systems—16,000 tons.

(b) Steel awaiting fabrication, in transit, or on wharf in New South Wales awaiting shipment—2,150 tons.

(c) Being rolled July-August—1,350 tons.

(4) Any delivered specifically for the comprehensive scheme has not been used for other purposes.

(5) The steel ordered, as listed in No. (3), represents all the steel that could be financed from the moneys made available from time to time in the loan programme.

(6) Answered by No. (5).

CAUSEWAY.

As to Opening of Rotary, Western End.

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Works:

When is it anticipated the rotary at the western end of the Causeway will be opened for use by traffic?

The MINISTER replied:

By the end of this year.

PRODUCTION COSTS.

As to Tabling Rural Bank Chart.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Does the Rural Bank keep a chart or graph showing increases in production costs?

(2) If so, what period of years does it cover?

(3) Will he lay a copy of such chart or graph on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) From December, 1948, to December, 1953.

(3) Yes.

In connection with this matter, I have here not only the production chart required by the hon. member, but also one showing the trend in the dairying industry, and particularly the trend in the value of wool income. I ask that these be placed on the Table of the House for the information of members.

STATE ENGINEERING WORKS.

As to Allocation of Government Orders.

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

(1) In view of the answer given to my question without notice on the 1st July, 1954, regarding the State Engineering Works, and addressed to the Acting Premier, could he give an estimate of the amount of additional work per annum that will be diverted from private industry to the State Engineering Works as a result of the changed departmental attitude?

(2) Will the work be of a special kind to use up the capacity of certain machines, or of a general nature?

(3) If to use up the capacity of certain machines, which machines in particular?

(4) How many additional employees are envisaged at State Engineering Works as a result?

(5) Is any expansion of the State Engineering Works in hand, or envisaged?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Insufficient information is available to give an estimate.

(2) It is anticipated that work will be of a general nature.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) Not known. Would depend on volume and type of work coming in.

(5) Yes. Normal programme expansion.

TRAFFIC.

As to Measures to Combat Drunken Driving.

Mr. LAPHAM asked the Premier:

In view of the increased number of convictions for drunken driving each year—

(1) Does he intend to introduce additional punitive measures to combat this menace?

(2) Has the Government considered the advisability of reducing the alcoholic content of intoxicating liquors?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) This matter will receive consideration.

(2) No.

BAYSWATER BUS SMASH.

As to Instituting Inquiry.

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

(1) Is he aware of the bus smash at the railway crossing which took place this morning at Bayswater?

(2) If so, will he have an inquiry instituted to ascertain—

(a) if this service is being run efficiently;

- (b) whether the tramway or railway road bus service should take over this route?

The Minister will recollect this service was the subject of a deputation to him last week.

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) I am aware of the unfortunate accident which took place at this crossing. In answer to the question I would say that this service has been the subject of inquiry on two occasions during the past 12 months, and only minor deficiencies were found. It is not considered that this service should be taken over by the Government because of inefficiency.

MIDLAND JUNCTION ABATTOIRS.

(a) As to Invitations to Opening.

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

(1) Is he aware that no representative of the Opposition parties in Parliament was extended an invitation to attend the opening of the new Midland Junction abattoirs this week by the Minister for Agriculture?

(2) In view of the fact that the former Minister for Agriculture, Sir Charles Latham, following on the good work done by his predecessor, the late Hon. G. B. Wood, was so closely connected with the planning and development of the abattoirs, does he not think it extraordinary that no invitation was extended to him?

(3) Will he take steps to ensure in future that where circumstances are similar in regard to other functions, greater care is exercised by the Minister responsible?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) The list of invitations was prepared by the Abattoirs Board.

(3) The Government would consider it reasonable in regard to functions of this sort to invite a representative of the Opposition to be present.

(b) As to Reported Industrial Dispute.

Hon. A. F. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Am I correctly informed that there is a strike or industrial dispute at the Midland Junction Abattoirs? If so has the slaughtering of meat stopped and what is all the trouble about?

The MINISTER replied:

I have no knowledge of a strike or an industrial dispute at Midland Junction. Only yesterday I was at the abattoirs and had a talk with members of the board, the manager and the men, and everyone appeared to be happy and satisfied with the arrangements in existence. If anything has occurred today I have not heard of it.

(c) As to Making Inquiries.

Hon. A. F. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Will the Minister make inquiries because, if I am correctly informed, the trouble started today?

The MINISTER replied:

I certainly will.

(d) As to Awareness of Minister for Labour.

Hon. L. THORN (without notice) asked the Minister for Labour:

Is he aware of any industrial dispute at the Midland Junction Abattoirs?

The MINISTER replied:

No. When I am acquainted with it, I hope to meet the position.

Hon. L. Thorn: I thought you would.

(e) As to Slaughtering Charges.

Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Will he assure the House that a full inquiry will be made as to whether it is preferable to charge per lb. weight than per head in respect of slaughtering charges before regulations Nos. 19 and 23 made under the Abattoirs Act, 1909-1952, laid on the Table of the House on the 30th June, 1954, are allowed?

The MINISTER replied:

Full inquiries were made as to the method of collection of slaughtering charges before the gazettal of regulations 19 and 23 under the Abattoirs Act, 1909-1952.

STATE FINANCE.

As to Year's Results.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

I notice by tonight's "Daily News" that the Treasurer expects a surplus of approximately £100,000 for the financial year just ended. Has he any additional information that he is prepared to give the House at this stage regarding the financial position generally?

The TREASURER replied:

I am afraid that the Leader of the Opposition is misrepresenting the "Daily News."

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Was it a deficit?

The TREASURER: Yes. The figures for the financial year which ended on the 30th June showed a deficit of £102,679, compared with a Budget estimate of £88,095.

The estimated expenditure was £43,549,548 and the actual expenditure £43,248,519. The estimated revenue was £43,461,453, and the actual revenue £43,145,840.

The railway figures for the year were very disappointing. The actual railway expenditure was £14,356,056 as against an estimated expenditure of £13,935,000, or an increase on the estimate of £421,000. The actual railway revenue was £11,376,870 as against an estimated revenue of £12,457,000—an actual revenue of £1,080,000 less than was estimated. The railway deficit for the year was £2,979,186.

The main increases in the State's total revenue for the year, as against the Budget estimates, consisted of—Income tax re-imbusement, £50,000; Stamp duty, £277,000—I think that the winning bets tax made a healthy contribution to that sum—probate, £47,000; Lands Department, £100,000; timber, £50,000; Metropolitan Water Supply, £81,000; trading concerns, £88,000; and Treasury miscellaneous, £54,000.

In all the circumstances, the over-all result of a total State deficit of £102,679 was considered satisfactory.

BETTING.

As to Altering Nature of Tax.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

Has the Government given any consideration to repealing the betting tax or changing its nature from a collection on winning bets to a collection on turnover?

The TREASURER replied:

The Government has given some preliminary consideration to the points raised by the hon. member. The position is being further investigated.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Future Repairs, Fremantle Bridge.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Transport:

Last week, he informed the House that further extensive repairs will be necessary to the Fremantle bridge after five years. Will he now inform the House on what portions of the bridge these extensive repairs will be necessary after five years?

The MINISTER replied:

Existing timber beams and piers on the 15 feet timber spans at the Fremantle end of the downstream bridge will require extensive renewals.

(b) As to "Privilege Travel" Cost, Perth-Bunbury Road Service.

Mr. MANNING (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What travellers are concerned in the item "privilege travel" in the financial statement of the railway road service?

(2) What is the estimated value of "privilege travel" on the Perth-Bunbury route for the year ended the 30th June, 1954?

(3) What is the reason for the considerable increase in the value of "privilege travel" over the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

The MINISTER replied:

The hon. member gave me a prior indication that he intended to ask the question and I have obtained the following information:—

- (1) Employees of the Railway Department and their dependants.
- (2) £3,250.
- (3) Easement of the restrictions which apply to the use of privilege tickets on bus services. At one time railway employees while on leave and their dependants were not permitted to travel on road bus services, but that restriction was considerably eased last year.

(c) As to Diesel Electric Service, Perth-Bunbury.

Mr. MANNING (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the estimated operating cost per passenger mile of the diesel electric service Perth to Bunbury?

(2) Will the service be "A" class only?

(3) What fare will be charged on the diesel—

- (a) per mile;
- (b) Perth-Bunbury.

The MINISTER replied:

Again I had prior indication of the nature of the question and have obtained the following information:—

- (1) Cost per passenger mile, fuel and wages only, and based on full carrying capacity of unit—.22d.
- (2) One class only.
- (3) Second class fares—
 - (a) 2d. per mile;
 - (b) 18s. 8d.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [4.58]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [4.59]: I should like to say a few words before the motion for the third reading of the Bill is put to the House. On reading the report in the Press this morning, I noticed that it might convey to the public that the Opposition had agreed to the amendment carried last night at the instance of the Minister. That is not so. The amendment as agreed to does not meet the wishes of the Opposition.

It is true, as the Minister explained on two or three occasions, that he had adopted some of the phraseology contained in the amendment put forward by the Opposition, but he added certain words, and those words have made a considerable difference to the amendment as originally presented by the member for Dale on behalf of the Opposition. We think those amendments gave both protection to tenants and some justice to landlords and that they represented a move along the road towards general decontrol.

There was, on Clause 17, considerable debate between the Minister and the member for Dale, and I think the differences of opinion were important. In our amendment we suggested that the magistrate should be given a definite time in regard to evictions and we thought the period should be four months. We devoted a considerable amount of thought to that portion of the Bill and felt that no undue hardship would be caused when we agreed to that period. After all, four months is a fairly long time.

The Minister, however, secured the insertion of the words "from time to time" and certain consequential amendments, but as pointed out by the member for Dale last night, the addition of those words can mean anything and I feel that the position is now worse than it was and that there will in future be more confusion than existed hitherto. In fact, I believe that the acceptance of the words "from time to time" in the amendment moved by the Minister opens the Act to a much wider extent than was the case previously.

Clause 20 dealt with retrospectivity and it was unfortunate that debate did not ensue on that clause. The member for Mt. Lawley rose to offer objection but the Acting Chairman of Committees ruled that he had put the clause and that no further debate could take place on it. When I suggested, by way of interjection, that the clause should be recommitted, the Government indicated that it was not prepared to recommit the Bill in order to deal with it. I say now that the Opposition is opposed to these provisions for retrospectivity.

Another matter is the question of leases, and during the Committee stage the Minister undertook—I think while we were dealing with Clause 4—that he would examine the position as to whether the Government would be prepared to exempt from the legislation, leases which are, after the 1st August, 1942, entered into for a term exceeding 12 months. I would now ask him if this proposition has been rejected or is he prepared to give further consideration to it. Surely the time has arrived when leases of reasonable duration which clearly define the relationship between landlord and tenant should be encouraged, as I think members will agree that long-term leases are in the interests of tenants. I do not want to see this Bill go to another conference.

The Minister for Housing: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Minister and I are in agreement there.

The Minister for Housing: Definitely.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not think the need should arise, but let it be remembered that most of these amendments were agreed to in this House on a basis of 20 votes to 19—a majority of one in each case. This Bill will soon go to another place, where there is sure to be a considerable amount of debate on it. We cannot expect the Legislative Council to act just as a rubber stamp. I hope that a very reasonable attitude will be taken and that every endeavour will be made to see that the measure is dealt with reasonably.

Personally, I trust that the Government will not take up the attitude that because it has debated the measure in this House and has rejected certain amendments moved by the Opposition, that is to be its final stand. If that attitude is to be adopted, I can see difficulties ahead and I feel that we must be prepared to accept amendments made by another place. I feel sure that they will be made and I believe they should be weighed carefully by the Government. If we are to reach agreement on this Bill, we will have to give full consideration to any amendments made by another place and be prepared to accept some if not all of them, as that is the only way in which we can reach a reasonable compromise on this legislation.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In reply to the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry, but the Minister has not the right of reply on the third reading. That is the Standing Order.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [5.7]: As there is one subject upon which I desire to congratulate the Government, and as that is such a rare event, I will deal with it first. We are all very interested in the oil discoveries in Western Australia and I congratulate the Government on having decided to send overseas the Minister for Mines and Mr. Telfer in order to see what other countries are doing in relation to oil. I am interested particularly in what has been done in the province of Alberta. I believe I was the first in this House to suggest that such a visit should be made and at that time I said that the party should consist of more than just the Minister and Mr. Telfer. I again suggest to the Premier that he select from this side of

the House one of the younger members who are likely to attain Cabinet rank at some time in the future.

Mr. May: When will that be?

Mr. ACKLAND: After the next general election. Although it would cost £500 or £600 to include an extra member in this overseas party, I feel that if a member from this side of the House accompanied the Minister, they could probably come back to Western Australia with one policy—I believe it would be something revolutionary—which would then receive a much better reception in this Parliament and in the State generally, particularly if they were unanimous about the action that should be taken for the control of oil in this country. I make the suggestion in all sincerity and I think the Government has done a very wise thing already in deciding to send the Minister and the departmental head overseas before bringing down legislation to control the oil industry.

Another matter mentioned in His Excellency's Speech, and to which I desire to refer, is the fact that the Government has purchased 55,000 acres of land on the York-rd from the estate of the late Mr. Roy Inkpen. Some years ago during the regime of the previous Government I suggested that some of that type of land be used for soldier settlement. It is so near transport and so close to the Midland market that there were lots of advantages in working that land rather than in going so far afield as has been done in the case of some of the Government's land purchases. Since that time I have secured some of that land for myself. I am sorry that the Minister for Agriculture is not present as I wanted to address my remarks to him in particular and gave him notice of my intention of doing so.

As one with more than 45 years' experience in agricultural districts, who thinks he knows something about the way to improve land, I believe that in working this part of the country the recognised procedures have to be somewhat revised as it is a very expensive job and one which must be tackled along lines different from those applicable to ordinary wheat country. I earnestly recommend to the Government that it should not think of putting men without capital on this land but should rather place them on country such as that of the Esperance Plains, which is much more easily and cheaply brought into production than is the redgum and whitegum country met with on the Inkpen estate.

If we place a man without capital there, he will not be able to carry the expense of bringing the land into production. I know there are many people with a limited amount of finance—perhaps £3,000 or £4,000—who could begin to improve that country and then, rather than hand it over to the war service land settlement scheme,

I think the job of assisting these settlers should be given to an institution such as the Rural & Industries Bank.

I know that the war service land settlement organisation is given credit for having done a better job here than in other parts of Australia—I believe that to be true—but in a case such as this, where the overheads must be kept down to a minimum, I believe that this unwieldy organisation, with its director, sub-director, inspectors, pannikin bosses and intermediaries, right down to the man on the land, would make it impossible for the settler to meet the costs.

There is no need for this country to be divided up into large areas. I believe there may be 25 per cent. of it not suitable for improvement because of the roughness of the country or for other reasons, but I am convinced that there is room for 70 settlers, with approximately 600 acres of pasture country each in that area, and that on those terms they would eventually make a very good living. I speak from personal experience in this matter and also with knowledge of a young man living within three or four miles of this property. He has only 500 acres and is carrying 1,200 sheep, together with a little over 20 cattle, and he sends away to market each year 200 or 300 turkeys. All except the grain for the turkeys is grown on the property; yet that man has only 500 acres of land under cultivation. I have made those suggestions to the Government because I have had some personal experience of this area. I have had many years of farming experience but despite this fact, I had to alter my views when I tackled this type of country.

The Premier: I have been most interested to hear what you have had to say.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have a notice of motion on the notice paper regarding the North-West, and I want to make some passing reference to it at this stage. I believe that there are tens of thousands of people in the South-West Land Division of this State, and at least 30 or 40 members of this House, who know as little as I knew about the North-West until I made a trip to that area. I know little about it now, but I realise that it is a country for which something must be done. So I suggest to the Premier that if there are sufficient members of this Chamber, and another place as well, who are willing to take advantage of the generous concessions made by the State Shipping Service, a trip could be made to the North-West next year. It would be easy to work out an itinerary for the various ports, and I am sure that if members made this trip they would become better informed of conditions in that part of the State.

Mr. Norton: Why not go by road?

Mr. ACKLAND: It is quite possible that, because of the short time that State ships spend in some of the northern ports, some

portions of the trip would have to be made by road. I do not suggest that this would be a joyride, and members should contribute something towards the cost. Only last year we passed legislation which we were told would enable members to see something beyond the boundaries of their own electorates. I do not for one minute suggest that the cost of this trip should be met by the Government; in fact, I think very little expense would be involved because I believe there are sufficient people in the North-West who are only too glad to arrange itineraries. At least, that was my experience after visiting the area.

My intention is to speak at some length on the wheat situation this evening although I know that I have spoken on this subject on many occasions previously. However, I make no apology for bringing the matter up again because we have had so many ill-informed opinions aired and so much hot air spoken about the wheat industry. The other evening, one member made such a ridiculous speech on this subject that I did not bother to interject; I left my seat in the House so that I would not be goaded into having something to say. I claim to have as much knowledge of the wheat industry as anybody in this House because for 45 years I have grown wheat. For many years I was a member of the farmers' industrial organisation, and for nearly 20 years I have been connected with the handling and marketing of wheat in Western Australia. Many of the things which I said in this House previously have now come home to roost, and it will be remembered that I always opposed the International Wheat Agreement. What I prophesied would happen, has happened and, while the Australian Governments were willing to enter into the International Wheat Agreement, the grower made a great sacrifice and, as a result, there was a ready sale for wheat disposed of under that agreement.

We were brought into it firstly by the Commonwealth Government. Its members persuaded the growers—and the growers agreed by referendum, I will admit—to enter into a wheat stabilisation scheme. On paper, the Government made some guarantees that it would do something for the growers under circumstances which could never exist. But the Government wanted another ace in its pack, and when America and the United Kingdom trotted out the International Wheat Agreement, under which wheat would be sold for a number of years at a price which was higher than the guaranteed price, the Government did its best—and was successful—to persuade the growers that the International Wheat Agreement would be to their advantage. It was certainly to the advantage of the United Kingdom because she was able to buy wheat at many shillings below its then value, and the value that it looked likely to be for some

years, judging by the trend of the war. It was of great advantage to the United States of America and Canada because, of the three selling nations of the world, only one, Australia, was in the sterling bloc.

At that time there was difficulty in some countries in obtaining credit in dollars and so it was all to the advantage of these countries to put Australia on exactly the same footing as they were. Under this agreement, there were three sellers and approximately 40 buyers; the three sellers bound themselves to make available certain quantities of wheat over a given period and at a given price, between a maximum and a minimum. Under the agreement, the three sellers were bound to make the wheat available, but of the 40 buyer nations not one was under any obligation other than to put in writing its approximate needs over that period.

It sounds silly, but that is exactly what happened. There was compulsion on the one side but the buyers could buy their wheat anywhere they liked. While we were selling wheat at 15s. and 16s. a bushel under the International Wheat Agreement, the world price was 19s. to 21s. 6d. There was no difficulty in selling International Wheat Agreement wheat. But, with the policy of the United States of America—which was to subsidise its growers in the vicinity of £A1 a bushel—and with the policy of the Canadian Government—which was to guarantee its growers at least the price paid under the International Wheat Agreement—there was such a surge of wheatgrowing in those two countries that gradually a huge pile of wheat accumulated in the world.

We found that when Great Britain became conscious of this fact, as she did two years ago, she decided to get out of the agreement at the expiration of the period. A good deal of abuse has been hurled at the United Kingdom for its action; but it was just good business. She realised that the International Wheat Agreement was no longer of any use to her because no longer did it give her the right to buy a cheap commodity. She could go onto the open market and undercut the International Wheat Agreement price; and that is exactly what she has done. While the United States of America was paying its growers a subsidy of approximately £A1 a bushel, and Canada was paying her people about 16s. a bushel, the Australian grower, through his own stupidity and through the influence of various Governments of both colours, contributed £220,000,000 over the last 11 years towards the economy of Australia and the world. Those figures are factual and can be produced. I have them in my possession but the period I am permitted on this debate will not allow me to quote them.

I am quite willing to admit that over another 11-year period the Australian people contributed £26,000,000 towards the

wheatgrower by way of a subsidy and flour tax. This occurred during the period 1930-1941, but from 1942-1953, the Australian grower made a gift of £220,000,000 to the consumers. Only the other day I read an article in the paper which stated that the wheat pack sales were most disappointing. The article stated that Australia had sold only 52 per cent. of her crop, Canada 52½ per cent., and the United States only 49 per cent. The trouble is that practically the whole of the Australian wheat came under the International Wheat Agreement but, during that period, huge stocks in America were sold on the open market.

With regard to stabilisation, this had always been one-way traffic until recently when the Federal Government decided that it would make quite sure that the wheat industry remained reasonably firm. Immediately we found that the Victorian Government—the only one of the six States—against the wishes of its own growers, decided that it would not be a party to the proposition. It is necessary for only one State to stay out to make the plan unworkable from a national point of view. The other evening we heard a good deal about the price of wheat, but I say that the wheatgrower of Western Australia and Australia generally has done a yeoman share in trying to keep the price of wheat within reasonable limits. He has given to the Australian people the huge sum of money I mentioned. He has, by improved cultural methods, increased the average yield per acre in Western Australia from 11 bushels to something over 13½ bushels. This year I believe it is a little over 14 bushels to the acre, but on an average it has risen to 13½, an increase of 12 per cent. which, of course, is taken into consideration in the cost of production. In this State, he has, by the co-operation of all farmers, conducted a handling organisation which, as regards its economy, is the envy of the world.

The Minister for Lands: Do not you think the formula to decide the cost of production is reasonable from the farmer's point of view?

Mr. ACKLAND: The farmers have. I know, accepted it. But I can point out something wrong with it; there are expenses that occur and which are not covered by it. But the farmers have accepted it over the years. We find that although the wheatgrower has been so generous—in my opinion, foolishly generous—his efforts are not at all appreciated by the people who have received the greatest benefit from them. I have before me a letter which appeared in one of the papers quite recently where the chairman of the Poultry Growers' Association complains bitterly that he is afraid that the poultry growers of other countries will be able to purchase their poultry requirements much cheaper than can the people of this State.

I do not wish to burden the House with a lot of figures but I would like to point out that in 1946-47 the f.o.b. price for wheat was 9s. a bushel and the poultry grower paid 4s 11½d. The following year the price was 14s. 4d. a bushel and the poultry grower paid 5s. The next year it was 11s. 4d. a bushel and he paid 6s. 3½d. The year after it was 13s. 3d. and the poultry grower paid 6s. 8d. a bushel. The year following the price was 12s. 11d. and the poultry grower paid 7s. 10½d.

Then in 1951-52, when the overseas total return to the grower was 13s. 2d. the poultry grower paid two prices, namely, 7s. 10½d. and 10s. a bushel. Since then he has been put on exactly the same footing as the rest of the consumers of wheat products in this State. If there is any move to reduce the cost of wheat production—and the same applies to the reduction of all costs—it is the responsibility of the rest of the community. I will tell the House later how, by one action of the Railway Department and the Minister for Railways, the cost of production of wheat has gone up 7d. a bushel. We will deal with that later.

I would say it is impossible for a wheat-grower to reduce his costs when he has to pay so much for the commodities he buys. It may be interesting to know that I bought my first harvester in 1909. I did not have any money to pay for it, but the firm gave it to me on 3½ year terms. I took delivery of it in October and paid the first instalment in the following March. That harvester cost £90 spread over 3½ years. It was the best machine turned out in Australia at the time. If anybody tried to buy a similar harvester today it would cost £1,800. While in 1947 the basic wage was £4 5s., today it is £12.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What is the price of wheat?

Mr. ACKLAND: It has not gone up in proportion to the basic wage over that period. In the years prior to World War 1, I sold my wheat for 3s. and 3s. 6d. in bags. There was more money to be made out of that than there is out of growing wheat at 12s. 7d. a bushel today. There are hundreds and thousands of farmers in the same position at the moment. I had no money, but the price of that commodity improved my farm to the fine property it is today.

If there is any other way of reducing costs, not only in the production of wheat but of every commodity it will have to come from the trade union movement, from the manufacturer and from the distributor. If it does not, we will have nothing to sell overseas except wool. If members think that wheatgrowers can be forced to grow wheat uneconomically, they have another think coming. The wheat-growers may have done that in 1930, when the more wheat they grew the more

they got into debt. Today, however, they are no longer at the beck and call of financial institutions.

The Minister for Lands: They could not have done too badly.

Mr. ACKLAND: If it is not profitable for him to grow grain, he will not grow a bushel more than is required for the needs of the people of Australia.

The Minister for Mines: Will he do that?

Mr. ACKLAND: Of course he will. He is the most patriotic of all people in Western Australia.

The Minister for Lands: The timber workers are not bad either.

The Premier: You are making the member for Roe happy.

Mr. Oldfield: They are no different from anybody else.

Mr. ACKLAND: That is the type of interjection I would expect from the member for Maylands. They are businessmen and they will not be prepared to do anything that is not reasonably profitable. They will be prepared to make the same concessions as any other section of the community, but in future they will make no more.

I have here a copy of a letter which was received by the Farmers' Co-operative Company from the Under Treasurer. I do not intend to read all of it but I would like to read the following paragraph:—

The action of your company in claiming the actual cost involved instead of the higher amounts allowed under the agreement is very much appreciated and exemplifies the spirit of public service that has been so evident in all your company's dealings with the Government.

This referred to the costs that the handling company was allowed to charge for handling wheat away from bins. At no time have they charged the full amount they were allowed under an agreement with the Government. Exactly the same thing applies in their agreements with the Australian Wheat Board. But what do we find? We find Western Australia today in a very bad position inasmuch as we have a huge carryover of wheat from last year.

It was necessary for us to find some extra storage if we were to accommodate the normal season's wheat requirements. Provision had been made at Albany and Geraldton. At Geraldton arrangements were made to accommodate 179 per cent. of the normal crop and at Bunbury and Albany 153 per cent. But it was necessary for that company to have some extra storage in the Fremantle zone. Accordingly it approached the Government and asked for some facilities at Fremantle.

The Minister for Works: Did you approach the Government in the first instance or the Fremantle Harbour Trust?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do know that the Government, or at least the Fremantle Harbour Trust, had already made arrangements with an oil company to have the piece of land in question; it was an agreement entered into with that concern. Though this is quite understandable, it is not a difficult matter to pump oil in pipes a few hundred yards further, but it is a very difficult job to send wheat from one unsatisfactory spot to another. The Harbour Trust said to the company, "You cannot have that land. But at your expense we will bulldoze a sandhill into the sea and we will charge you the cost for it."

That cost has increased each time we have received a letter dealing with this matter from the Harbour Trust, and they have said, "You can build your temporary bins on that sand, which was in the sea." I had a look at that sand and where the bins were supposed to be built. The day I was there the water would have been up to one's knees. But in the letter from the Harbour Trust it was stated that they would charge this amount of money but would take no responsibility if the bins were washed away during the winter storms. However, I have some sympathy with the Government in relation to this matter, but I have no sympathy at all with the railways and the Minister for Railways in the attitude they have adopted.

There has been an increase in freight charges of 35 per cent. No farmer has any objection to meeting a reasonable increase in costs but we strongly object to the Minister for Railways and the Railways Commission fixing a 35 per cent increase on freights for country people, while making an already unprofitable suburban train service more unprofitable by putting on more trains to run empty in order to give their engine drivers and their crews a little more work to do. The first action taken by the Minister for Railways was to put on 600 extra men. He said that a great number of them were necessary.

But after increasing freights by 35 per cent. the Minister puts on a great many more trains, to run more empty than they were doing, without any increase in the suburban passenger fares. However, I do not desire to proceed with that matter at the moment. I want to revert to the storage position. When it was found that the company could not get storage facilities at Fremantle it placed two alternatives before the Commissioner of Railways. The first was that intermediate storage should be placed at Koojeddah.

For the information of members, I may explain that Koojeddah is near Baker's Hill. This was something that was suggested during the war as being a good place to store wheat because from there to the port bigger trains could be run and it would be away from the area of bombing. It was

then suggested that a bin should be put in at Midland Junction, where one was subsequently established.

The Minister for Lands: You know—

Mr. ACKLAND: I know it all; I will tell the Minister the whole story if he will let me. I do not propose to be unfair.

The Minister for Railways: It will be the first time in history.

Mr. ACKLAND: I know how much the hon. member assisted as Minister for Agriculture. I will not forget that.

The Minister for Lands: I was going to say that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. could have had a site at Fremantle without reclamation if it had agreed to accept a slightly narrower building.

Mr. ACKLAND: The company had to erect the building that would hold 5,000,000 bushels of wheat. That could not have been done on the site proposed. If the Minister will look at the plans of the pipelines, he will see why it could not have been done. I am not going to be put off my stride in this way. We did apply to have the storage bins put in at Koojeddah or Midland Junction. Do members know what these bushrangers were going to do to the wheatgrower? They were going to charge him 7.3d. per bushel extra for trucking in and out of the bin at the intermediate siding at Koojeddah, or 5½d. extra in and out of the bin at Midland Junction; but the company said, "We will have none of it."

The company wrote to the Minister and to the paper, and got in touch with the Farmers' Union. It said, "We cannot give you any assurance of being able to handle your wheat this year because we cannot make a reasonable and satisfactory arrangement with the Railway Department." This is where I think the Minister for Agriculture came into the picture; and, I believe, the Premier too.

The Premier: Now, now!

Mr. ACKLAND: I am not trying to soft-soap anybody.

The Minister for Railways: It is a pity you do not stick somewhere near the truth.

Mr. ACKLAND: I wish the Minister had stuck to the truth when answering my question.

The Minister for Railways: What you have said up to date is a fabrication.

Mr. ACKLAND: It is not a fabrication; I have the correspondence.

The Minister for Railways: I do not care what you have. You have nothing so far as the Minister for Railways is concerned. I was never consulted.

Mr. ACKLAND: Is not the Minister the head of the Railway Department?

The Minister for Railways: I say that I was never consulted on the matter. You

have told the House I was consulted, but I knew nothing about what you had mentioned.

Mr. ACKLAND: If the manager of a business firm—

The Minister for Railways: Never mind about hedging! You have told a pack of lies so far as the Minister for Railways is concerned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ACKLAND: Who has the floor, Mr. Speaker? If a departmental head of a business firm does something which is wrong, the manager has to take the responsibility. In this instance, because of an Act of Parliament which we passed in 1947 or 1948, we know very well that the Minister for Railways is not in charge of the Railway Department.

The Minister for Railways: I know that you altered the Act to produce the opposite effect—to stop the Minister from having control. That is what you did.

The Premier: That is quite right.

Mr. ACKLAND: The position is this: When it became so apparent that the farmers would not be able to deliver their wheat, there was immediately a change of heart, and the wheatgrowers were charged the reasonable rate of 10s. a truck in and out of Midland Junction. But there is a limit to how much the Railway Department can continue increasing these rates and expect the wheatgrower to compete with world prices. In 1947 the cost of carting a ton of wheat 150 miles was 13s. 3d.; today it is 39s. The cost per bushel is 1s. now as against 4.3d. previously; and, if the Railway Department could have got away with what it desired, it would have charged twice as much to pull a truck of wheat in and out of the siding as was charged to pull it from Wongan Hills in 1947—

The Minister for Housing: The department was going to charge what it cost.

Mr. ACKLAND: —a distance of 132 miles.

The Premier: Did you take this matter up with the Minister at the time?

Mr. ACKLAND: It is taken up by the manager of the farmers' company.

The Premier: Was it taken up by him with the Minister at the time?

Mr. ACKLAND: I cannot answer that question.

The Minister for Railways: Was the Minister for Railways approached by C.B.H.?

The Premier: At the time?

Mr. ACKLAND: I cannot say; but I do say that the responsibility for what is done by the Commissioner of Railways must be carried by the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: Why did you not approach the Minister and give him an opportunity of knowing something about it, instead of coming here and blaming him for doing things about which he was never consulted?

Mr. ACKLAND: I have here in the "Readers Digest" for June, 1954, an article, a portion of which I would like to read to the House. I believe that comments made in this article are very applicable to Australia today. It deals with conditions in France, and begins as follows:—

Our State is threatened in its authority, its independence and its efficiency. Our economy has only partly attained the level of our foreign competitors.

What I am now about to read deals with housing, and I will get back to other matters in a moment. The article states—

The housing situation is deplorable. In 1952 the number of rooms built per 1,000 inhabitants was 27 in Germany, 24 in England—and only 9 in France.

The article gives the reason for the lag in France, and states—

It is time to recognise that it was rigid rent control that blocked the construction of new houses. Most housing now being built takes the form of co-operative apartments—not subject to rent control—at prices only the rich can afford.

It is generally conceded that the troubles of France have been brought about by its unstable political situation. It is a fact that from 1871 to the present time—a period of 83 years—there have been 117 Governments in France and only 10 have served a period of two years.

During that period, until the debacle of 1940, France was the second richest country in the world, and it had the second largest colonial empire. It held its head very high amongst the peoples of the world. However, this is what I want to get at most particularly, and what I think is so applicable to our own State—

In great part of the French crisis is moral. Too many Frenchmen have developed the habit of seeking Government protection. Industrialists, already protected against domestic competition by cartels, want the Government to shield them against foreign competition by high tariffs and restrictive quotas. The peasants want Government subsidies to enable them to buy the highly-priced French manufactured goods. The workers want the Government to supplement their inadequate wages with generous family allowances and other social benefits, while demanding at the same time, the closing of the borders to foreign labour, even when it is needed for expansion of the French economy.

I believe that. The article also states—

In the present plight of the French economy, German competition would certainly be damaging. Someone has wittily remarked that French-German integration—the base for European integration—would be much easier if the Germans would get up an hour later and take an hour more for lunch.

Until there is some realism throughout the whole community of the necessity for production, and of giving value for services rendered, we are going to take backwards steps in this country; and, instead of the railways having 30,000,000 to 40,000,000 bushels of grain to carry, they will be carting much less and, possibly, only the 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 bushels needed to feed the people of this State. I say that it behoves the other side of the House more than it does us to see that the position is rectified.

I want to say something with reference to water. I am appreciative of the fact that the Minister for Works recently visited my electorate and gave the people there some hope that something would be done in this regard, but I say the Minister is a little off the beam when he gives priority to city, rather than country dwellers.

The Minister for Works: He does not do that.

Mr. ACKLAND: Well, this is the Minister's statement in "The West Australian" of the 10th June last—

The State's water supply needs were given the highest priority according to the finance available, the Minister for Works and Water Supplies said yesterday.

Further on we find this—

Mr. Tonkin said that the Government considered it essential to ensure adequate water for the growing metropolitan population.

I do not think that anyone in the metropolitan area last year was hard hit with regard to water.

As far as I know, there was no one who suffered restrictions apart from the fact that sprinklers could be used for only four hours a day—two hours in the morning and two in the evening. That, I think, is a very small disability to put up with when we hear what the country people, who find the money necessary to run this State, have to contend with today. The Minister went on to say—

Metropolitan water restrictions in the past summer had not been due to storage shortages in the hills reservoirs but to inadequate pipelines to bring down all the water needed. Steps were being taken to remedy this inadequacy.

In regard to the country scheme, Mr. Tonkin said he hoped that the first stage of the comprehensive agricultural water supply scheme would be completed in five years from now.

I know a promise has been made to the people of Wongan Hills, but members may be interested to know what happened there last year; and it is typical of what is happening in many other country towns. The Minister has a copy of a letter that I have here, but I do not intend to read it but to say that last year the people of Wongan Hills paid 10s. per 100 gallons to have water carted to their homes—and they could not always get it—and others, who live in the town, went out on Mondays to do their washing at some of the properties where the farmers were more fortunate in having a better supply. A beautiful school has been built in Wongan Hills. It is seweraged, but earth-closets have to be used through lack of water. There is hardly sufficient water for the sewerage system at the hospital.

Mr. Lawrence: When was that building erected?

Mr. ACKLAND: Some 18 months ago, and it was expected that the water scheme would have been established then. I am not blaming the Minister for Works for what has happened at Wongan Hills. He knows what has gone wrong there, the same as I do, but the Minister and the Government would be showing a better appreciation of the position in Western Australia if they saw that these things did not happen. I suppose that other members on this side of the House could also mention towns in heavy-rainfall districts, as well as in light-rainfall areas, that are in the same position.

I wish to deal with some answers given me recently by the Minister for Transport as a result of some questions I asked. I was instrumental in having an inquiry made into allegations of bribery in the Transport Board. These bribery charges were not proved, but I have here some extracts from the Royal Commissioner's report which show that there was a great deal of suspicion against one of the officers in particular.

The Minister for Railways: There is always a lot of suspicion in your mind, too.

Mr. ACKLAND: In April last, I asked the Minister some questions which I knew were misleading but I do not think the Minister knew that they were. I am of the opinion that the answers were given to him by one of his departmental officers, so last week I asked further questions with reference to Mr. McPherson. The Minister stated, in reply to one question, that Mr. McPherson was no longer occupying the same position, but to the next question I was given the answer that his salary had been increased because of the position which he then held.

As far as I know, Mr. McPherson is still chief inspector of the Transport Board, but is doing some other work. When his position was reclassified, he received not only the amount of money which was suggested by the Minister but also, I believe, a sum of money that was made retrospective; and he is due for another £25 rise in the not too distant future.

Mr. Lawrence: What have you got against McPherson?

Mr. ACKLAND: What I have against anybody who I believe is dishonest.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Is not a man innocent until proved guilty?

The Minister for Education: Why do you not say this outside, instead of under privilege?

The Minister for Railways: He is not game to say it outside.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The Royal Commissioner's report was enough to justify—

The Minister for Railways: He exonerated McPherson.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We might suspect a lot of you people, but we cannot prove it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ACKLAND: Mr. Speaker, I have some extracts here which I was able to take from the Royal Commissioner's report and which are most illuminating. I want to say this, that there was not a feeling of confidence in the Transport Board. I regret very much that the Premier did not have, as I believe he was going to, an inquiry into the allegations respecting super carting during last year. When Mr. Jones, of another place, and I, asked for this inquiry, we expected to get the evidence which was required to prove our case from information regarding the allocations of super.

I know of two men in my electorate who bought trucks from the gratuity money they received when they came back from the war and who, for two years, received a very fair and equitable distribution of super carting, and then suddenly they got none. I went down myself and saw Mr. Howard and told him the position. He immediately gave them two or three loads. That happened in dozens of instances—that is, that when a member of Parliament went along, as I did, the men immediately got the super they needed.

Mr. Moir: Were you not improperly using your position?

Mr. ACKLAND: Possibly I was, but they were men who had a right to some allocations. When we pointed out that a man was not getting a fair deal, action was always taken. I told Mr. Howard what was going on—

The Minister for Housing: I think you are under suspicion now.

Mr. Oldfield: Did these men buy their trucks for wheat or super carting?

Mr. ACKLAND: Some for wheat and some for super. In his report the Royal Commissioner said—

There is no doubt that the super-phosphate section of the Transport Board bore an unenviable reputation amongst carters generally, and for reasons I shall give later, justifiably. Day after day, as the figures corroborate, the same carters were obtaining the bulk of the work running in some cases into thousands of pounds a year. At the same time, others who called very many times at the board were merely told that there were no loadings available, which was untrue. Not unnaturally, even in the minds of the fairest men, some suspicion must have been aroused that bribery, undue favouritism or the like was taking place.

I am not at all satisfied with the evidence of a single officer of the superphosphate section of the Transport Board.

I must therefore give McPherson and Blair the benefit of a very grave doubt.

Graham's story has given me considerable worry because he was quite an impressive witness and I don't think he was out to harm McPherson. He was called on subpoena and gave his evidence most unwillingly. If he did give McPherson the sum of £5 he certainly blamed himself and not McPherson. On his own story, however, he offered a reward which under Section 83 of the Criminal Code it was illegal for McPherson to accept. He is accordingly an accomplice, there is no corroboration of his story and it is just possible I might be doing McPherson an injustice in relying on it. I am bound therefore to give him the benefit of what I may call a very grave doubt.

The Minister for Housing: What about you doing the same?

Mr. ACKLAND: No, and quite a lot of members on the Government side know the truth, too. They know, as well as I do, what was going on in the Transport Board. I say that while the Transport Board is composed as it is at present, it will not have the confidence of the people who do business with it. I go further and say that Mr. Howard was told many times of what was going on, but apparently did not even make an effort to find out for himself. I believe he was quite incapable of holding down the position of chairman of that board.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member's time has expired.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [6.10]: Having listened to the speech of the member for Moore I trust that when he deals with the matter that he has on the notice paper he will do a better job than he has done in this debate on the Address-in-reply. I do not know whether I am in order in passing these remarks—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The member for Moore should know something about the subject. He saw it all by candle-light, and from the ship.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Yes. I happened to be on the ship with him and there were various ports he did not call at, but he is a full bottle on the North now, according to his remarks. I was born there and I think I know something about that part of the State. I believe the debate on the Address-in-reply was introduced so that members could air their views and castigate the Government or praise it, as the case might be.

The Minister for Housing: The latter, I think.

Mr. RHATIGAN: I will deal with the Minister for Housing first. I believe that the Housing Commission has done a wonderful job in the North and sincerely hope it will continue with the good work. The mishap at Wyndham was a bit unfortunate, but I hope it will be rectified within a very short time and that the houses being built there will soon be completed.

Next I will draw the attention of the Minister for Education to a question relating to these houses in Wyndham. Originally three houses were to be built there for applicants who approached the State Housing Commission, but now the Education Department has stepped in and taken one of them. The first applicant approached the commission in 1948, and the action of the Education Department in having taken one of the three houses from us will mean a great deal to one family in that part of the State.

Departments that have officers stationed in the North should provide accommodation for them and not step in and take over Housing Commission homes. We had sufficient applicants in Wyndham to prevail upon the commission to build three homes there, but now the Education Department has stepped in. Owing to the influx of children to that centre, that department decided to turn the house originally occupied by the teacher into another schoolroom and that necessitated the provision of a house for the teacher, with the result that the department has commandeered one of the houses which we thought would be available to the local people.

I compliment the Government on the steps taken in planning for and surveying that part of the Kimberley district which is uninhabited, with a view to turning it into properties that will eventually

add considerably to the production of Western Australia. That is a step in the right direction and one which should have been taken many years ago. I will now quote from a newspaper dated the 4th February, 1954—

The droughts of the last year will cause the big meat suppliers in the North to drill many bores this year. This was stated by Vestey Bros.' John Vestey when he passed through Fremantle yesterday on his return to South Africa. Mr. Vestey has already spent three years in Australia working in Queensland and in the Northern Territory as a jackaroo.

I would remind members of the long term of the leases held by Vestey Bros. in Western Australia and the Northern Territory and it strikes me as surprising that it has taken Mr. Vestey, or rather his son, all this time to realise that bores are the answer to the problem in the North-West and in the Northern Territory.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Before tea I was referring to the vast million-acre properties in the North and I cannot stress too strongly the detrimental effect that these properties are having on that area. I was born in the North and I know from personal experience how the tentacles of the octopus have gradually dragged in the smaller properties and formed these vast million-acre properties which, in my opinion, are the ruination of the North.

Generally speaking, these properties are in the hands of absentee-owners and I doubt if I could point the finger at one where the owner resides and manages his own property. But I could name a dozen in the East Kimberleys alone where the owners are absent all the time and the profits are sent overseas. Earlier this evening the worthy member for Moore spoke about a parliamentary party travelling by boat to view the North. In my opinion, that is ridiculous because the North cannot be viewed out of the porthole of a boat.

Mr. Norton: That is true.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Looking round this Chamber, I can point to only one member, the member for Fremantle, who has ever travelled overland through that district.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: Oh, no! Somebody else, too.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Then I must apologise to you, madam! Over what portion did you travel?

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: I am not telling you.

Mr. RHATIGAN: I will quote Cockatoo Sands as an example. If the hon. member has travelled over that area I raise my hat to her. Those sands are not the nightmare they used to be because of the good

work done by the Main Roads Department. Today one can travel over those sands in a quarter of an hour but it used to be a nightmare 17 miles, as my friend from Fremantle knows. I would say that he is the only member of this House who would have any knowledge of that area in the old days.

Hon. L. Thorn: Could you do it on a pushbike?

Mr. RHATIGAN: No, and the hon. member could not do it in a rowing boat either.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is quite right.

Hon. L. Thorn: Of course, the shearers used to do it on pushbikes.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Of course, we do not have any sheep in those areas; we have cattle only, and one must have a horse and not a pushbike if one wants to round up cattle. We read in the Press where bores have been put down on the stock routes so that the cattle can arrive at the two meatworks in a decent condition. The only bores that exist on some of these million-acre properties are those put down by the Western Australian Government in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government. You, Mr. Treasurer, are providing water for the owners of these vast areas.

There is no doubt that water from these bores is necessary for travelling stock but I hope that the Government will get some remuneration for opening up the country for these people who are sitting well out of Australia and obtaining profits from the country they are ruining. I have no objection to bores being sunk; they are necessary. But why should these people utilise them without the Governments of Australia obtaining any return? I think the Government would be well advised, in choosing bore sites, to consult a practical Kimberley cattleman. The departmental engineers have not the faintest idea of what is necessary or where the bores should be situated.

The Main Roads Department has done a wonderful job both at Cockatoo Sands and on the road near Hall's Creek. It used to take an empty truck two hours to travel over this section but now it takes only 35 minutes; this is part of the route over which the Redex trial drivers will travel. There is still a lot more to be done to the roads in the North, but the department is to be congratulated on its efforts so far. The portion between Wyndham and Dillon Springs, some 48 miles, is now in excellent condition and is considered to be a main highway. I would like to see the improvement extended for another 80 miles to Turkey Creek. If that were done we would have a road over which politicians could reasonably travel.

During his speech the member for Moore said that a parliamentary party should travel in the "Koolinda" and have a look at the North. I suggest to the Treasurer

that he send the heads of Government departments, together with any politicians who wish to make the trip, by truck during the months of January and February. This would give them an idea of conditions in the North. The people in those areas do not cry about necessities; they do not cry about increases in railway freights or in anything else for that matter. They are paying dearly for everything they buy; they are battling to live under difficult circumstances and any help given by the Government is greatly appreciated.

I read in the Press where the member for Fremantle is crying out about the establishment of a high school in his district. I have not been a member of this House for very long but my cry will be for an increase of the living-away-from-home allowance granted to people who send their children south to boarding school. I understand that the people in the farming areas receive £20 per annum. But probably they have a railway station within 10 or 20 miles of their properties. Parents in the North get the magnificent sum of £60 per annum. The original amount of £50 was of some value to them. Of course, because of the high cost of living, the present allowance is of some assistance but it cannot compare in any way with the original grant. I trust that the Minister for Education will give this point every consideration.

People in the North who are paying for the education of their children in the metropolitan area are not wealthy; they are not all station-owners. They are people on wages or managers of these vast properties. Invariably they have no right to erect even a stockyard, without reference to Canberra, England or somewhere else. They are battling to live, and every consideration should be given to them.

The one free trip a year that is given to schoolchildren whose homes are in the North is also of great assistance to parents and in the past I have expressed my appreciation of that amenity. Nevertheless, I am hopeful that the Government will see fit to grant two free trips a year instead of one. Great hardship is placed upon parents in the North who send their children to boarding-school in the metropolitan area. Speaking on behalf of civil servants, I can safely say that not one of them could afford to do that.

With regard to medical services, people who become sick in the North are often ordered south for special treatment. One person who injured his hip in Derby was ordered to come to Perth to receive special attention. It was found necessary to take two seats out of a plane in order to fly him south as a stretcher case, and the cost to that man was £60, which is the equivalent of two fares.

He was in hospital for some months and had to pay his fare back, which was £30, so that was a total of £90 that man had to

pay in fares alone, apart from his hospital expenses. I will admit that he could afford to pay this huge expense, but how would he get on if he could not? He had to pay the cost of two seats in the plane, despite the fact that other seats were vacant.

The Minister for Health: When a man cannot afford to pay in such circumstances, the department is prepared to assist.

Mr. RHATIGAN: I am pleased to hear that. To return to the State Housing Commission, I am sorry the Minister for Housing is absent, because I wish to compliment him on the homes that have been built in Derby recently. I am pleased to say that those that have been erected this year are a vast improvement on those that were built in previous years. However, I do not blame the previous Government for that.

Hon. D. Brand: Is that a result of the experience gained in building them?

Mr. RHATIGAN: I do not blame the previous Government for the type that was built in former years. The fault was probably due to a lack of foresight on the part of the Minister for Housing at that time.

Mr. Ackland: Do you think that the houses that were built by the Housing Commission compare with those at Cockatoo Island, which were erected at a lower cost?

Mr. RHATIGAN: I do not know the cost of the houses at Cockatoo Island.

Mr. Ackland: They cost £3,500 and they are let at a rental of from 28s. to 30s. a week.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Of course, the hon. member spent about 12 hours on Cockatoo Island and four hours at Derby, and he knows all. I know that the houses at Derby are an excellent type, but I hope the Minister will, in some way, find a means of reducing the high rents that are being charged, not only for those at Derby, but also for the houses at other ports and inland towns. They are a necessity and we could not do without them. Nevertheless the rents are excessive because the people who occupy them are only workers on no more than the basic wage.

I can quote several examples of the high cost of living in the North, but I will not weary the House with all of them. I will cite one, however, which concerns two stone of potatoes sent from Derby to Hall's Creek. The cost of those potatoes in Derby—and they are an absolute necessity—was 13s. and to air-freight them to Hall's Creek cost £1 1s. 9d. They are not covered by the air subsidy although these were forwarded during the period when that subsidy operated. Therefore, some consideration should be given to the high cost of commodities in those parts.

If members care to peruse the schedule of the State Shipping Service it will be found that during the wet period, that is, December and January, boats do not call

frequently at either Wyndham or Derby. Therefore, the only means of transporting potatoes is by plane. No boat can call in at these ports for months on end. As I have said, the only transport available is by air, and on the figures I have just quoted, potatoes cost 9d. per lb. The same applies to onions and, overall, this makes the cost of living very great for the people in the North.

I would like the Minister for Works to give serious consideration to building a concrete bridge across the Fitzroy crossing. The floods that have occurred there this year have been due to the phenomenal April rains, but they could occur again. It is essential to keep that bridge open to enable traffic to cross. There is also the Langi crossing on the road from Derby to Broome. This old bridge has, I think, had it. It is obsolete and needs to be raised much higher. It was all right in the days when it was first installed. But it has served its purpose. It is time that matter was looked into and looked into seriously.

It is also very necessary to establish a branch of the Rural & Industries Bank in the North, but as far as I know that bank does not extend its operations beyond Geraldton. Yet when I peruse some of the reports and balance sheets of the Rural & Industries Bank of Western Australia, I find the following reference—

In 1921 there were over 300 luggers at Broome fishing for pearlshell. Since then there has been a steady decline in the industry, due mainly to the cost of production, low market, inexperienced divers, and the 1939-1945 war. The industry is now on the up-grade and, for the 1952 season (March to November), 21 luggers were working the pearlshell beds. The luggers' total tonnage is 346 tons and the value of the boats and equipment is £836,000. The number of persons employed was 189.

In 1952, 303 tons of pearlshell were lifted for a return of £176,882, an increase in value of £2,450 on the 1951 season. The average prices per ton were £583 15s. and £544 respectively.

If that industry is not the greatest dollar earner in Australia, I should say it is the second greatest, and one which is worthy of consideration.

Unfortunately, however, assistance cannot come from the State Government but from the Commonwealth Government. Accordingly I hope that some special consideration will be given by way of taxation exemption to these people who are operating up in the North. While on the subject of taxation, I sincerely hope that something will come out of the visit of the Minister for the North-West, together with that of the special committee to Canberra last year, to deal with this subject. I trust the Prime Minister has granted such taxation concessions.

I wish to compliment the Government and the Minister for Native Affairs on the increase in the amounts provided in respect of children who are attending missions or any other institutions in the North. When I was last at the Native Affairs Department the amounts allocated to the missions throughout Western Australia, if my memory serves me aright, were 9s., 10s. 6d., and 12s. 6d. When the Hawke Labour Government was returned, the amount was increased to 22s. 6d., and a couple of months ago I remember reading in the Press that it has again been increased to the same figure as given to white children under the child welfare provisions which, I think, is in the vicinity of 34s.

That is a great step; it is a good step in the right direction, and I cannot compliment the Minister and the Government too much in relation to it. It is a very worthy thing. I know that these institutions have been battling against almost insurmountable odds to clothe, feed and educate these kiddies. The difference shown between first, second and third-class missions has always puzzled me; I could never understand the differentiation. No member can tell me that a mission nearer to transport should receive a higher amount than a mission out at say, Drysdale, Forrest River, Kunmunya or any other outlandish area. Accordingly, I compliment the Minister on the increase. It will be of great benefit to these people who are doing a remarkable job.

A while ago I read in the Press that Bulla Bulla station was being handed over to the Lands Department. In my opinion that is a step in the right direction, because it is not conceivable that a department such as the Department of Native Affairs could hope to run a cattle station profitably. A few years ago, I think in 1948-49, this station did show a profit. But since then it has been carried on at a loss, and I think the transfer indicated is a step in the right direction.

I would like to impress on the Government that if this place is to be disposed of, it should not be handed over to the octopus that is controlling the North at present. I hope the place will be surveyed and cut up; it is not a job for a person in St. George's Terrace to decide how this should be done. The number of cattle on it has to be taken into consideration. I do trust that the property will not be disposed of as a whole—that is, as the million acre property it is now.

In passing, I would like to pay a tribute to the Australian Inland Mission for the marvellous work it has done. All last year I pressed the Minister for Health for a dentist to be sent to the North-West portion of the State. But apart from a period of six weeks I was not successful in securing the services of a dentist. Due to the co-operation of the Minister and his

department, however, the A.I.M. sent up a dentist and a mechanic and they are doing excellent work at present.

Dealing now with the rating of dwellings in the North, in one case a house was valued at £1,500, and could be insured for only £450. So it would seem that there is something wrong. Although my complaints have not been many, they have been fairly varied as they relate to the North. I would like to add that if the Government continues as it has been doing, the progress there will be very satisfactory, despite the fact that visiting members may see the North out of the port-holes of various boats that may visit the area from time to time. I would like to ask the Premier to send a party of members up to the North and it would be a good thing if they were sent between January and April when they would see the North in its true form. This period is not the tourist season and members would get some idea of the problems that confront the people in those areas. I also trust that the heads of Government departments will be sent up to the North during the summer months.

HON C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont) [7.59]: I desire to make a few observations on the Address-in-reply. I would like to couple my remarks with a Royal occasion and a statement by the Prime Minister and from these two different matters perhaps make a proposal to the House.

The Royal occasion I refer to was the function held at Parliament House to honour Her Majesty's visit to this State during the polio epidemic. There was a good attendance of members, and the gardens were used because of the polio precautions. As a result of the efforts by the House Committee and officers, we all agree that a very fine job was done. However, from Her Majesty's point of view, coming in under a blaze of lights up to the rostrum and looking around the scene, she would have seen a loyal audience in a beautiful setting of gardens and lawns so suited to the beautiful climate of Western Australia.

Had Her Majesty looked up, she would have seen the ragged bricks of the incomplete Parliament House. These have stood for 50 years in that condition, ever since I can remember seeing the building. On one occasion, a few days before he passed away, the late Mr. Collier said to me, "One of the things I wish we had been able to do was to complete Parliament House." I would like to bring home to members that we have delayed this matter too long.

Now that the State is facing a great and glorious future, which could not have been envisaged by those who originally erected this building, surely we are justified in completing the construction of Parliament House. I make the suggestion without any thought of party politics. No move has

been made by either side of the House for a Canberra Government and the abolition of the State Governments. There is no excuse for this State to delay this project.

With the enormous growth of population anticipated in the next few years, with talk of a population of a million people for Perth and the great industrial development that is envisaged, we cannot allow Parliament House to remain uncompleted. I press the present Government and the Opposition to ensure that before Her Majesty comes here again, there will be a completely constructed Parliament House. It is one thing talking about it from the Opposition side, because we have not to find the money. About 20 years ago, during the depression, when we, the electors from Claremont, talked about a new monetary system, we were dubbed as cranks. I hope this will not be done now.

Tonight I am suggesting a way of finding the money to complete Parliament House at no cost to the Government and without involving any novel scheme or any new-fangled idea. It is a very simple proposition. Looking at the suggestion from the electors' point of view, over the last two or three years they have been fed up and disgusted with the number of elections at which they had to vote. They are being swamped with elections—Federal Senate, Federal House of Representatives, State Assembly, and State Council. They are fed up to the teeth.

So the electors, more than anyone else, would welcome a longer term for a Parliament. From the point of view of members, I wonder if they would support the proposal for a longer term of office! I wonder if Opposition members would support this move! I have not found anybody who objected. Only the other day, the Prime Minister of Australia, as I said in my first remarks, was in agreement with that opinion. He also was fed up with the short term, and supported a five-year Parliament.

The five-year term of office is not novel. It is novel in this State because we have not experienced it. The House of Commons has a five-year term, the Tasmanian Government has a five-year term, and the famous province of Alberta in Canada, which caused so much talk in the financial world, also has a five-year term. I spoke earlier about completing this building without cost. It can be done by a simple arithmetical calculation. The cost of an election, roughly, if all seats are contested, is £25,000.

Therefore, in every five-year period the Government would make a saving, and in 15 years the Government would have saved £50,000. So there is the money. Members only have to support the idea, and the money will come in. In 15 years, with sinking fund and interest, the cost would be repaid. In the end, the net result would be that the building would be completed,

Parliament would have a five-year term, and the electors would save their shoe-leather and a lot of time.

Mr. O'Brien: That is a very progressive idea.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: We should also contact our Federal conferees and ask Mr. Menzies to carry on with this suggested proposal. I would ask the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party to contact their Federal colleagues to urge the adoption of the five-year reform throughout Australia and so save hundreds of thousands of pounds, which could be used for better purposes.

The Premier: Do you consider that the electors should not be able to get at us more than once in five years?

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: Some of us have heard the frightening expression, "Initiative, recall and referendum." Those who advocated that policy were the few people who hoped to hold their parliamentary representatives in ropes, to drag them out every three months just to see if they were there and to see how they voted. Apart from those few cranks, the public generally are tired of the frequent elections. Therefore, I suggest as forcibly as I can to the Government and the Opposition that they should adopt the five-year term by arrangement with all parties, in conjunction with a similar move in the Federal sphere.

In reply to the Premier's interjection, I would say that no Government has in the past had a chance in three years to do a job. In the first year, the time is devoted to rehashing election promises; in the second year it gets down to business, and the third year is spent preparing for the hustings again. It gives no parliament a chance. After all, the House of Commons has existed for hundreds of years. It has tried long and short terms for a Parliament, but for a very long time now it has had a five-year term. Can we do better than to follow it example? As there are no interjections on the scheme for financing the completion of Parliament House, I trust the idea of the longer term will be approved in the direction I have suggested, whereby every three years the cost of an election would be set aside in the Treasury towards the completing of this beautiful building.

I shall leave that subject because I intend my remarks to be brief. I see no sense in speaking for a full hour if the matters I wish to deal with can be disposed of in less time. There is another matter that concerns me and other members of the Opposition greatly. For many years we have felt anxiety about the future of the less developed States such as Western Australia from the fact that there is no real Federal programme to deal with big public works. Every year as members are aware, the Loan Council deals with loan expenditure for the States. In a

country of the size of Australia and with the enormous growth and development that is taking place, there will be public works of far greater dimensions than can be undertaken by a struggling State such as ours.

We know from the example of the Grants Commission what can be done by an unbiased body to assist the undeveloped States so far as their revenue items are concerned. I think it is agreed that the Grants Commission has been an unqualified success, and on many occasions has helped this State to progress in a manner that never would have been possible other than by secession. In my opinion, the Grants Commission has proved to be the answer to those who favoured secession. Public works of huge dimensions are needed, and for their construction there is no provision in the Constitution nor is provision envisaged. I was pleased to find in the policy of the Prime Minister and also in the remarks of the Leader of the Federal Opposition reference to a Federal scheme for public works.

Let us look around and consider what it being done in Australia today. After nearly 50 years of argument and bickering, there eventually arose the Snowy River power scheme. That is the sort of work I have in mind. That came about only after great argument, heart-burning and delay; there was no single body to say that this was one of the vital works that must be proceeded with.

When the Grants Commission visits Perth, as the Premier knows, we have a body composed of unbiased men to consider our needs, and we have lived to see the day when the money allotted to Western Australia has grown from a very small sum to something like £8,000,000 or £9,000,000 a year, and nobody has quarrelled about it. The realisation of the Federal scheme seems to be much nearer now because we have not only an industrial development body, but also a Minister for National Development in the Federal sphere, and we also have had the speech of the Prime Minister.

I am not quite clear about the full import of his remarks; we shall have to see what they mean in practice later on. What interested me personally was that there was no idea of trying to dictate to the States what they should do or the order in which they should construct public works. That has always been a matter for the decision of the States. The object is rather to determine which large national and Federal works comparable to the Snowy River power scheme should be undertaken next and, when undertaken, the money for their construction should be poured out without any more bickering or any more politics entering into consideration. I still have hopes that the proposal to set up a committee consisting of Federal and State representatives will prove to be something along the lines that some

of us have had in mind. It would be a body to say whether the time had come for such works to be undertaken.

We have been told in reports about the damage done by cockatoos on the dams in the North-West and that because of them rice could not be successfully grown. To me it seemed like stalling but I live in the south and was not in the north to find out. Still, whether we decided that dams should be constructed on the rivers in the North-West or whether we should open up the Nullabor Plain by means of modern methods from the United States of America, where experiments are being made to obtain unlimited quantities of fresh water by utilising power from the sun and where the ex-President, Mr. Truman, obtained a vote of £700,000,000 for that job, it is undertakings of that sort I envisage. These works are too big for a State to handle and are matters for the future but they could be dealt with by a Federal committee on the lines suggested, which could investigate the various proposals quite apart from politics so that the progress of the country would not be retarded.

We have not as much time as we would like to open up this country. As recently as the last two weeks, an Indian potentate was here and he spoke about bringing dark people to Australia. I believe that the Federal Minister has pointed out very clearly that he will not tolerate any talk against the White Australia policy and would not consider bringing in thousands of coloured people because of the effect that their admission would have on our standard of living. It is possible for a private member like myself to say quite sincerely that I cannot see why a country which is experiencing such an enormous growth of population without any sort of control being exercised, a country, too, that cannot feed its people, should turn our country into another like theirs, where the people have to chalk lines on the floor so that each family may occupy its own section to live in while others live on the pavement.

We do not want anything of that sort to occur in Australia. Through the Colombo Plan an effort is being made to build up those places and bring the population down to dimensions conformable to the food that can be grown. Having spoken on that question, I am anxious to see what the Prime Minister will propose under his plan for Federal works, which I still hope will be to choose the most important works in Australia. From such a plan we would gain much, and the more people that come here, the greater will be our future in every direction.

There are many local questions calling for attention in the Claremont district, as indeed there are in every electorate. I do not believe that much good is gained by bringing them forward during the debate on the Address-in-reply or, indeed,

in this Chamber at all. I find it better to bring them before the notice of the Minister concerned for in that way one generally gets satisfaction. To deviate from this rule slightly, I wish to pay a tribute to the Minister for Labour for the action he took to deal with certain nuisances at Claremont.

During the term of the previous Government, when measures to amend the Factories and Shops Act and the Health Act were being considered, members endeavoured to introduce a provision relating to the dust and smoke nuisance, and a point was raised whether "noise" could be included as a nuisance. We desired that the Government should have power to intervene under the Factories and Shops Act. The nuisances at Claremont did not emanate from a factory, but I daresay there was similar trouble elsewhere in the metropolitan area where people installed power saws and operated them over the 24 hours to the annoyance of residents. The neighbours have no redress unless they like to take a fairly expensive jaunt through the Supreme Court for an injunction. In these circumstances we tried the Minister for Labour to see what would happen. Frankly, we did not have much hope but he put the fear of God into these people. He sent inspectors down there. I do not know whether they had any right to interfere because the people were operating in sheds at the back of their homes. The Minister now has two or three of the people that I am concerned with looking for new territory.

Mr. May: Has he done anything about the roosters?

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: That is referring back to last session. A lady who was concerned with this noise nuisance at Claremont was so satisfied with what was done that she gave me a packet of cigarettes and a cigar, and a nice letter; and it was the Minister who was responsible all the time! I was rather sorry about that as it was hard luck for him. He lost the cigar! This shows that the electors are very grateful for what is done for them.

Someone interjected about a rooster. I should tell the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who referred to roosters last session, that he did so at a time when it was very much out of order to refer to them because we were discussing a motion to support a Federal member in an effort to get some defence provided for the western coast. At that time oil had not been discovered, but within a few weeks the discovery of oil came about, and that gave more point to the motion.

In order to discount my enthusiasm, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out that when he first came to the House he found me discussing roosters. But he did not say that the rooster discussion was relevant to the Bill before the House, as it was, because it was a Bill

dealing with the Egg Board. I now make my personal explanation. It is important when discussing these matters to keep to the subject before the Chair.

The issue there was not just a big joke, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition might think, although it might have been a joke in another sense. Perhaps I look like a rooster myself. I do not know what I look like side on. The Egg Board knows today, if it did not know then, that eggs which are natural and virgin last for weeks, and if those are the sort of eggs that come forward the Egg Board will survive, but if roosters are allowed to get among the poultry, the Egg Board will be ruined because the eggs will not last. There is quite a lot in that point. I agree with the Premier that this House is far too dull and a few slight outbreaks of humour will not do it any harm.

I think the Police Force should be increased quite a lot. Here we have a large territory and whilst a small force might be a fine advertisement in regard to our being law-abiding, we have only to read reports in the Press on different occasions or look at the statistics to learn that our Police Force is really too small, because it is smaller per head of population than many others in the world. There are for instance many thousands of police in Paris and also in New South Wales, but we have not yet reached our first thousand in this State.

With the number of migrants coming here and the development of the country that is now taking place, I feel there is a need for a big increase in our Police Force and I trust that consideration will be given to this question. When I was on a select committee inquiring into gaols a few years ago, I discovered that there were nearly as many people in gaol as there were policemen. We should have a better ratio than that. Connecting my remarks up with local affairs, I was sorry to find that no money was to be spent this year on the building of a new police station at Claremont which is one of our oldest suburbs. The Claremont electoral seat was first established 50 years ago.

The Premier: It is one of the most peaceful, too.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: Yes, but the police station is now too small for the work that has to be done there. The officers there are worried. That station is a hornet's nest of discontent. The Minister admitted quite frankly in his answer that a new police station is necessary, but we have to wait until new districts are catered for. Therefore I ask the Government to realise that a large Police Force for the State is necessary and that the building of police stations is also needed.

I have a couple more matters which can be brought in with some value, I think, before the speech is shunted into the verbal graveyard of "Hansard." The

first is a matter which we have all seen in the Press in the last few months. There has been some propaganda throughout the world to the effect that cigarette smoking is causing cancer of the lungs. As a result, some people are getting a bit windy and going on to a pipe for a few weeks, and then coming back again to cigarettes.

While I am not going to discuss that question as it is not my business, there is a large consensus of opinion to the effect that the increase in the number of ulcers in lungs is not necessarily due to cigarettes or tobacco but to the terrible fumes which are continually being poured into our cities as a result of the enormous increase in motor traffic and, in particular, the diesel engines which throw out the terrible black smoke.

Mr. May: Who brought them here?

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: If there is a good point there, I hope the hon. member will make it. I have not got it in my head at the moment. An invention of great interest to all motorists is now being perfected in America. Recently in a periodical an article appeared to the effect that this invention would take all the kick out of the exhaust gases from cars, which is to say that it would take all the monoxide out and leave a clear exhaust which would harm nobody.

In addition, the inventors are now working on a similar article for diesels. This is so important that I would like the Minister for Police to consider the question of offering a substantial reward for the first person who can exhibit and prove the value of an exhaust or muffler to displace the present muffler which causes all this trouble. People who live where there is much of these exhaust gases are being poisoned. I am one of these victims as I live in a slight hollow and I get all the fumes when the breeze comes from a certain direction.

The Premier: You are looking remarkably well.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: Probably the monoxide in my blood is showing up. People who are affected with it go pink, so I am told. In this matter we have a very big problem and I think the authorities would find it worth while to encourage people to fit exhausts of this type to their cars; and also to diesels where it is possible. I hope this will be done the moment that such exhausts or mufflers are on the market. This is something that we should not ignore because people in high places think that much of the trouble that occurs in lungs is due as much from what we breathe as from what we smoke.

Finally I would ask the Minister for Works: Does he really think the city is getting a fair crack of the whip in the matter of road construction and finance,

as compared with what is paid out on our main roads? Every day, whether travelling on foot or by car, one can see what is happening in the metropolitan area where roads are being asked to carry enormous buses which soon cause the development of potholes. Such potholes are filled in by the local authority concerned, but appear again within a very short time.

An instance I have in mind is that section of road used by the Alfred-rd.-Servetus-st. bus service, which is also largely used by military traffic. I have not been able to find out, without asking the Minister either by question here or at his office, how the agreement was arrived at under which money is spent by the Commonwealth Government, on the one hand, and the Main Roads Department or some other source, on the other hand, to help the local authority try to deal with this heavy civilian and military traffic.

I might add that a great part of the military traffic consists of enormous overloaded vans. The road I speak of is quite close to the Cottesloe golf links and the rifle range. The bad potholes that develop in the bitumen road are much more destructive to cars than similar holes would be in a gravel road. I do not think the authorities concerned are able to cope with the position, and I do not think the Commonwealth is paying out sufficient money to compensate the Claremont and Nedlands Road Boards for the damage that is being done. I support the motion.

MR. JAMIESON (Canning) [8.32]: I wish to take advantage of this debate to mention a number of matters connected, directly or indirectly, with the Canning electorate, but first of all I desire to compliment the member for Claremont on his having taken up the cudgels in an endeavour to have the Parliament House building completed. I took the opportunity to inquire from you, Mr. Speaker, last year, as to the possibility of having additional amenities provided for the public galleries.

Of course, we realise that the House Committee cannot go ahead with any work for which it has not the finance, but the answer received was anything but satisfactory, in that it stated that it was felt that any additional amenities provided for the convenience of the public at present might be in the way of future extensions for this building. As we do not know when the future extensions are to take place, I feel that the amenities mentioned should be made available to the public now. In addition, I believe that members are also deserving of further amenities.

I recently said to one member, who has been in this House for as long as has the member for Claremont, that no workers—other than members of Parliament—are working under the same conditions now

as they experienced 30-odd years ago. In that I referred to the lack of rooms in which members could interview electors or conduct any other business connected with their parliamentary duties. The member for Fremantle, to whom I was speaking, said that things had improved. He added, "When I came here we did not even have this room," and there he referred to the room which was originally that of the Assistant Clerk of the Assembly.

If progress is to be that slow, it will be a long time before members are given further amenities, but I hope that the tempo will be speeded up in the next few years. I feel that if we were to take advantage of the suggestion of the member for Claremont as to how to raise money for this work, something might eventually be done. I am convinced that the Government was ill-advised in agreeing to build the railway from Fremantle to Kwinana which, in my view, will do nothing but create an additional bottle-neck.

Members are aware of the traverse of that line into Fremantle. It is anything but advantageous to a railway system to have such a bottle-neck as that, and I feel that the money to be spent there could have been far better expended in providing a connecting link somewhere near Cannington, so that goods to be conveyed to Fremantle could be sent through the Spearwood area. The railway from Kwinana to the vicinity of Cannington is in the blue-print stage, and will probably be built eventually, but I repeat that the money now being spent will simply be money down the drain. I believe there is some agreement to provide that service for the industrial establishments at Kwinana, but had the Government placed before them the facts relating to this other railway that I have mentioned, I think that they would have been willing to compromise, realising that it would be in their best interests in the long run.

Members are probably familiar with the early Stephenson plan, and I think there will be something of the same nature providing for a marshalling yards in the Newburn area. That would tie in well with the other line I have mentioned, as against that being built along the coast, which will be of very little use in the long run.

The next matter with which I wish to deal is the zebra stripes painted on the diesels. In the last few weeks there has been an increasing number of accidents between vehicular traffic and the diesels. Although that can be explained to some degree by the greater number of diesels coming into traffic at the present time, I suggest to the Minister that the departmental officers were ill-advised in painting the fronts of the diesels in zebra fashion with the colours that have been used. While it is fairly well established that one of the best colour combinations for

the printing of notices and so on is black and gold, or black and any shade of yellow, that does not mean it is the best combination to attract attention.

I had an experience recently at the East Guildford level crossing when looking towards the sun and the overhead bridge, of seeing an approaching diesel which practically merged into the light and shade of the Guildford station. I feel sure that there must be some other set of colours, perhaps white and red striping or some other combination, which would be far more striking to the eye than is the black and gold colouring now used.

The Minister for Railways: A number of drivers of road vehicles are colour blind.

Mr. JAMIESON: That may be so, but it would not help them to see if the colours were black and gold.

The Minister for Railways: They might not see any colour.

Mr. JAMIESON: That is so. I sincerely hope that a copy of Professor Stephenson's report will shortly be made available to the House, so that we will have some idea of the final decision regarding the marshalling yards in the metropolitan area. This is vitally necessary before any future development takes place in or about the eastern suburbs.

Turning to housing, I would say that there is as much Housing Commission work undertaken in my electorate as in any other area. With the development of new areas, there are all sorts of problems regarding the provision of amenities. The Housing Commission has been allocating homes on the basis of hardship, and as a result, most of the people who occupy the new areas have fairly large families. Most of these projects are being undertaken in virgin areas and there are no amenities other than a school with a sandy playground. I appreciate that we have to crawl before we can walk, but some consideration must be given by the Government to the provision of kindergartens and other necessities to cope with the large number of children. At present most of the local authorities are endeavouring to cope with the problem.

At times I have had to approach officers of the Housing Commission regarding eviction cases because I have been advised that certain officers were not as polite as they might have been. I suggest to the Minister that it might be possible to transfer some of the officers who come into contact with the public because, after a time, these officers develop what might be termed a sadistic outlook, and consequently cannot cope with the young men and women, or older people, who interview them. Instead of being polite, they become a hard-bitten, uncivil type of servant and that is not right when dealing with the general public. If such officers could be transferred, it would be for their own good and for the good of the public. No

one likes to be placed in a position where he has to send people away dissatisfied and in time it tends to make him disgruntled.

I compliment the Housing Commission on the establishment of its advisory bureau. At this section, for a small fee, people can buy a complete set of plans and specifications and this is something the people have wanted for a long while. It will help those who are willing to help themselves. A number of different designs are available and nobody could go away dissatisfied. Among all the plans available there is sure to be one that would be acceptable without the home builder being forced to consult an architect.

In some instances the commission has acquired land a fair distance from the city area. This has necessitated longer lines of supply for water and electricity. But in some of those areas we find decrepit poultry farms with one house and poultry sheds on a block of 18 acres. In one case I can recall there are two farms such as that next door to each other and yet further out the commission has purchased land for a new housing project. Surely the Government can plan its areas so that it can resume these unsightly blocks and prevent them from being situated in good housing districts. If that were done, we would not have this hotch-potch development which has taken place in some instances. Local authorities, too, are penalised because they are forced to provide the money for building roads out to these new areas, whereas if these unsightly blocks could be resumed and the areas consolidated, roads could be provided without further unnecessary expenditure.

I asked a question regarding local authority boundaries and I was told that a report would be made available in due course. We should make a snap decision on a matter such as this, and I hope that when the Local Government Bill, which has been promised for later in the session, is introduced, local authority boundaries will be readjusted. If that is done, everything will be cleaned up in one fell swoop.

Last week I asked the Minister for Works a question regarding the streamlining of the banks of the Swan River. In reply the Minister said that of the 80 miles that were presumed to be tidal foreshore, some 10 miles had so far been reclaimed. I also asked whether the Minister considered that the streamlining or reclaiming of the river banks materially assisted in flushing the river and helped in minimising pollution. The Minister's reply was—

Yes, but there is also necessity to preserve natural beaches and foreshores.

While that may be all very nice for those who would like beaches and foreshores, it is not possible, with housing projects, to keep these foreshores in their natural state and the streamlining of such areas is much more important than the preservation of beaches and foreshores.

For instance, take a place like Crawley Bay which, as I knew it in the early days, had a pleasant sandy beach that was reasonably clean. It has now become more or less a cesspool of accumulated rubbish and a sleepy hollow on the river bank. Members know of other bays on the river, such as that at the bottom of Mill-st., where scouring is necessary to keep the river clean and free from disease and infestation associated with pollution. This will happen if we continue to have these stretches of still water along the river banks.

When the recommendations of Professor Stephenson are published, I think it will be found that he will make the suggestion that the river flow should be speeded up, and the only way we can do it if we are to continue the damming of the water on the upper reaches of the river and its tributaries is to eliminate the still-water sections and make the river stream narrower.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you think that the elimination of the shallows will do away with the algæ?

Mr. JAMIESON: I think it would help, to a great extent.

Hon. D. Brand: I agree.

Mr. JAMIESON: If these shallows were filled in, as is being done in the Causeway area, it would prevent the obnoxious smells that emanate from such spots, and the sooner it is done the better. The Minister has stated that the only available dredge is doing as much work as it can at present with the funds available, and the necessity for an additional dredge is not warranted at the moment. We appreciate the difficult financial position but, as soon as funds become available, serious consideration should be given to the acquisition of another dredge to put in hand these various reclamation works.

At the moment, the department has only reclaimed about 10 miles of a total of 80 miles of the river bank that have to be dealt with, so when this work will be finalised I do not know. Possibly it will be some hundreds of years before it will all be cleaned up, at the present rate of progress. I would like to suggest to the House that the overall town-planning scheme that will be placed before us very shortly should be the subject of some legislation so that the by-pass arterial roads to and from the city shall be put into operation as soon as possible.

Nearly every night in the week, I have to travel across the Causeway at the peak period, and the traffic congestion is nearly as bad now as it was when the old Causeway was being used. This problem will not be alleviated in any way until such time as other arterial roads to by-pass this bottleneck are constructed. The bridging of the river is tied up with this problem and in the very near future the Government will be forced to provide not one

additional bridge across the river but perhaps two, or even three, between Guildford and Fremantle.

Hon. D. Brand: Main roads funds would be largely used for that purpose.

Mr. JAMIESON: They might be. Probably they would have to be boosted considerably, but it must be appreciated that this work must be done with our ever-growing rate of population.

I now wish to refer to the bus services operating in the eastern suburbs. Many of them are far from satisfactory. There are more than the usual number of complaints about them and this is admitted by the Transport Board. The people in those areas are being only partially served by buses that have become antiquated. There are some, such as the Kalamunda and Riverton services, which have reached the stage when they are serving a much greater population than was ever anticipated.

While I agree that the operators of these services are doing everything possible to provide the necessary buses, they find that the capital they require to do this is far too great for them to find if they are to keep adding to their fleet in order to maintain the full number of buses required to cater for the additional traffic. Therefore, I consider that the Government will have to extend its services into these suburbs so that the necessary buses may be put on the route.

Most of the companies now operating are having a financial struggle and, from the information made available by the Transport Board, they are not making very large profits. As a result, I feel sure that they will be only too willing to hand these routes over to the Government in a few more years. All new routes should be allocated now to the Government service and the people in the eastern suburbs would then enjoy a transport system similar to that now operating in the Bayswater area where the people had to suffer an inadequate service for many years but now have one of the best in the metropolitan area.

Some time last year, the Minister for Health, in replying to a deputation introduced by me and the member for Victoria Park, gave an assurance that he would give some consideration to the establishment of a hospital east of the river. While this may not be an urgent necessity, it is vital that a site should be selected and reserved for its construction because the area is growing so rapidly that none will be available in the next few years. I therefore suggest to the Minister for Health that he should review this matter with the idea of reserving a suitable site until such time as funds are available to go ahead with the hospital construction.

While on the subject of hospitals, I consider that the Government should, to a greater degree, find some means of controlling the supply of building materials.

I think I mentioned last year in this Chamber that far too many shops and factories are being built to the detriment of housing expansion and other necessary buildings. One instance is the South Perth community hospital which is crying out for bricks that are not available and yet, along Stirling Highway, Canning Highway and other main roads, can be seen thousands of bricks being used for the construction of shops and factories.

I consider that hospitals, infant health centres and the like should have priority over shops and factories for the building materials that are available. The Government, should, in some way, prevent this waste of materials which are being used for the building of garages and so on instead of being diverted to the erection of buildings for worthy causes. On the question of conservation of building materials, perhaps some innovation could be sponsored by the State Saw Mills or some other governmental branch, to deal with the question of timber being cleared for building purposes. After a talk with the Minister, I understand that certain action is being taken particularly in regard to land settlement where millable timber is being taken off many of the areas.

The same attention is not being given to the housing areas close to the city where quite a lot of logging could be done that is not being undertaken at the moment. It is true that it could only supply small length scantlings and pickets, but, knowing the tremendous shortage of pickets for fencing purposes, I feel it would repay the attention of the Government to recover such small logs.

I notice in the Governor's Speech reference to certain electric power installations being carried out and these have extended into the south-western part of the State. I would like the Government, however, to undertake a plan of finalising all the local areas around the city within, say, 20 miles of the G.P.O. whereby anybody in that area could be connected to a power main. This has spread out far too much in some directions and not enough in others, and a consolidation of the electric supply position is warranted at the moment.

The Minister is, I think, in agreement with me on this matter and when finance becomes available he will, no doubt, endeavour to help these people who are, and have been for some time, within seeing distance of electric lights, but have not been able to receive any power. Mention was also made in His Excellency's Speech of the four new high schools that are proposed. I feel that the one in the central Belmont area should possibly be proceeded with immediately these have been completed.

As I have said before, this area is growing very fast, and between the Helena River, Armadale and the Canning River

are to be found probably one-sixth of the State's population. Besides which, the high school in Kent-st., Victoria Park, is providing for that entire area and for some others as well. Children attend the high school in Kent-st. from the Fremantle districts and from areas further afield. Some even come in from the country and board with relatives in Victoria Park for the purpose of attending this institution. This district deserves another high school. The site selected in the central Belmont area should be built on and the work should be proceeded with immediately, with a view to providing an additional high school.

I was pleased to note from the Governor's Speech that there are 800 odd teachers at the Teachers Training College. Despite the remarks concerning the possible infiltration of communists into the college, I feel that in the main we are turning out very capable and useful types of citizens as teachers for the Education Department. The number that would possibly be interested in some foreign ideal or government would be very small, and I do not think we would have much need to worry about them, as they would be dealt with in the same way as most others are dealt with in other walks of life.

The matter of Argentine ant control is also referred to and I feel that the Government must make an effort at this juncture to do all in its power to eradicate this pest. I have no doubt that the necessary steps are being taken in this direction to control the spread of the ant which has taken place so quickly throughout the city and suburbs. The measures adopted had a fair amount of success in South Perth, but unfortunately the ridding of the Argentine ant was blamed in the South Perth Como area for the increase in the fly pest during last summer. It would appear therefore that with the ridding of one we have the other coming back. We must be constantly on our guard with a view to combating such pests.

Mention is also made in His Excellency's Speech of the introduction of amending legislation in relation to the franchise for the Legislative Council. I sincerely hope that we will be able to alter the present set-up in order to secure a wider franchise to permit many more people to exercise the vote in connection with the Upper House. We have a tremendous legislative programme before us. A great number of Bills dealing with a wide variety of matters will no doubt be submitted to the House. With proper planning and the expert advice at our disposal, it may be possible for us to build the State into a prosperous portion of the Commonwealth that we will be proud to administer as representatives of the people.

On motion by Mr. Perkins, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.