

cessive sessions for the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate medical facilities, hospitalisation and the nursing profession. I am sure that an inquiry along the lines suggested by those motions would have given the Government a fund of information that would have proved of material help and guidance in its future activities in matters of public health.

I hope the Government will realise its ambition and be able to raise the school-leaving age. There are many other matters related to education that need some attention. I appreciate the difficulty of building schools, owing to the shortage of materials and the urgent need for homes, but there are many smaller matters that could easily be attended to. At the East Victoria Park school the sewing mistress is endeavouring to teach children their sewing exercises and lessons in rooms that have no electric light. During last month the children and the teacher were struggling to sew materials in light that was totally inadequate, yet the cost of installing electric light in those rooms would be comparatively small.

Hon. C. B. Williams: No wonder we lost the Victoria Park election!

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: That may be one of the reasons for it. It is really a bad thing, because the teacher with whom I discussed the matter suffered from severe headaches and eyestrain as the result of those lessons, and I am sure some of the children are having their sight permanently impaired, all for the want of the expenditure of a small amount of money. I think material and workmen are available for such matters as that. The unscientifically constructed desks are in need of replacement by more up-to-date types. Among the suburban schools that I visit from time to time I find many blackboards placed in bad positions and not lit to advantage as they could be with artificial light.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You are a member of Parliament, not a schoolmaster.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I am very much interested in the welfare of the children of this State.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The schoolmasters should know their duty.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: There are many small matters that should be dealt with to

improve the conditions in our State schools matters that would not cost a great deal of money. The sanitary conveniences could be dealt with, to the advantage of the health of the children. What is perhaps soon to be regarded as a hardy annual is again referred to in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech—that is, some legislation to deal with the Legislative Council. I shall oppose any suggestion of a referendum being held on the same day as an election for the Legislative Assembly. I hope the Government will not reduce our political outlook to the same low standard as prevails in Commonwealth circles. I shall certainly oppose any suggestion of a referendum being held on the same day as a Legislative Assembly election. I think the Lieut.-Governor's Speech was exceedingly well delivered by the Commissioner and I have pleasure in supporting the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 7th August, 1946.

	Pa
Questions: Public Service, as to accumulated long service leave	1
Rural Relief Fund Act, as to consultation with Commonwealth for writing off amounts	1
Water supplies, as to Pingrup dam, cost, etc.	1
Sewerage, as to extension to new homes, Claremont electorate	1
Perth Hospital, as to completion and accommodation	1
Land settlement, as to forestry area rights	1
State Shipping Service, as to reduction of fares and freights, etc.	1
Address-in-reply, sixth day	1

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

QUESTIONS.

PUBLIC SERVICE.

As to Accumulated Long Service Leave.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

1, How many permanent officers employed under the Public Service Act have accumulated (a) three months, (b) six months long service leave?

2, Will he take steps to see that long service leave which is due will be taken as far as is practicable so as to give continued employment to temporary officers?

The PREMIER replied:

1, (a) 509. (b) 202.

2, The question of clearing leave with the least interruption to the conduct of Governmental business is receiving earnest consideration.

RURAL RELIEF FUND ACT.

As to Consultation with Commonwealth for Writing off Amounts.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

1, In view of the fact that the moneys made available to the States by the Commonwealth under the Act No. 23 of 1935, were granted to the States and provision made for any repayments to be also deemed as money granted to the States, why is it necessary for the State to consult with the Commonwealth as to writing off the outstanding amounts under the Rural Relief Fund Act, 1935?

2, If it is necessary to consult with the Commonwealth as to the writing off in bulk of the amounts remaining due, why has it not been necessary to consult with the Commonwealth as to the writing off in 363 individual cases of the amounts due by the farmers included in this number?

3, If it has been possible without such consultation to write off the amounts owing by 363 farmers, why is it necessary for such consultation to take place in regard to the writing off of the amounts due by the balance of 3,370 farmers?

The PREMIER replied:

1, 2, and 3, A legal opinion has been given which gives rise to doubt as to the State's power to write off the advances made

under the Rural Relief Act without Commonwealth approval. In view of this opinion, it was decided to consult the Commonwealth before taking action to make further amendments to the Act.

If the hon. member so wishes, the appropriate papers can be made available for his information.

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Pingrup Dam, Cost, Etc.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Works:

1, Has the work of constructing the new dam at Pingrup been completed yet?

2, If so, what is the total capacity of the dam?

3, Is the dam wholly below ground level, or partly below and part above?

4, What amount (in cubic yards) of earth had to be taken out?

5, What was the cost—

(a) excavating the earth;

(b) waterproof lining;

(c) roofing?

6, What time was occupied in doing the work mentioned in Question 5 (a), (b), (c)?

The PREMIER replied:

1, No.

2, 2,000,000 gallons.

3, Wholly below ground.

4, 13,100 cubic yards.

5, (a) £1,825 2s. 3d. (b) This has been only partially completed; cost to date is £1,803 17s. (c) This has been only partially completed; cost to date is £1,076 14s. 4d.

6, (a) 5th July 1945—15th November, 1945. (b) This has been only partially completed. (c) This has been only partially completed.

SEWERAGE.

As to Extension to New Homes, Claremont Electorate.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Works:

Is any provision being made to extend sewerage facilities to the new homes being constructed in the Claremont electorate, and in particular to those in the lower levels of Swanbourne, and in Graylands?

The PREMIER replied:

The work of extending the sewerage to serve the major portion of the Graylands area is in progress and it is anticipated will be completed in December, 1946.

The Allen Park area of Swanbourne cannot be served by gravitation. A pumping scheme to serve this area has been designed for future consideration.

PERTH HOSPITAL.

As to Completion and Accommodation.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Health:

1, What progress is being made towards completion of the new Perth Hospital?

2, When will it be ready for occupation?

3, What number of patients will it accommodate when completed?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, Rapid progress is being made, but serious delays are being suffered regarding delivery of mechanical and hospital equipment. At this juncture it is not possible to say when the hospital will be completed.

3, The portion now building will accommodate 271 patients as well as outpatients, x-ray surgeries, clinics, central sterilising and main kitchen for whole hospital.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

As to Forestry Area Rights.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Forests:

1, Has he given any consideration to the requests made by a deputation of parliamentary members and a member of the forestry area of farmers, that certain forestry rights be granted to the ingoing settler regarding the area he occupies?

2, If so, with what result?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes. The problem was discussed on the ground last week between representatives of the farmers and the Conservator of Forests.

2, Farmers are to consider further suggestions of the Department to meet their requirements.

STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

As to Reduction of Fares and Freights, Etc.

Mr. RODOREDA (without notice) asked the Premier:

1, Has the Government arrived at a decision in regard to the promised reduction of freights and fares on State ships?

2, If so, from what date will the reductions, take effect?

3, Has a decision been reached with regard to the proposal for landing petrol at all North-West ports at a price equivalent to that prevailing at Geraldton?

The PREMIER replied:

1, 2, and 3. These matters have had constant consideration by the Government and an announcement is to be made in the very near future. I would point out to the hon. member that all over the world fares and freights have been considerably increased and not decreased. In fact, I understand that the Fremantle-Singapore rate has gone up from the pre-war rate of about 35s. per ton to approximately 120s. per ton today, and the oversea freights have increased in almost all instances by 100 per cent. above pre-war rates.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Why not pay an extra subsidy?

The PREMIER: In spite of that, the Government desire to provide a subsidy for residents of the North-West and will, in spite of the extra cost, keep its promise to reduce freights and fares to those living in the North. Some difficulties have been experienced with regard to the port rate in connection with petrol. It is not an easy matter to deal with, but I am hopeful that an announcement will be made shortly respecting a new schedule to apply as from the 1st October.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. TELFER (Avon) [4.38]: It is my duty to add my condolences to those already expressed with regard to the very sad bereavement sustained by His Excellency the Lieut-Governor and Lady Mitchell, together with their family. I congratulate the Premier upon having had the courage to

spend money to meet essential requirements. His courage has been duly rewarded seeing that he was able to report to us last night that the State is to get a refund from the Commonwealth authorities. We know now that credit was available for the purpose of winning the war, and that has afforded proof to us that never again must finance be allowed to control the wants of the people. The control of credit must always be the prerogative of a Government to enable it to carry on all the necessary amenities and provide the facilities requisite for the people, and also to allow public works to be inaugurated when unemployment is rife. Soldiers who have been rehabilitated owe much to the Government in consequence of the establishment of the Rural and Industries Bank. That institution is one of the bright spots in connection with soldier settlement matters, particularly in view of the loans already made available by it to men engaged in business, farming and other operations.

Soldier settlement is perhaps not proceeding as quickly as it should; but we must bear in mind the tragedy that occurred after the 1914-1918 war, when it was a case of "rip, tear and bust" to get the men settled on the land. What, however, was the position 10 years afterwards? Seventy per cent. of the soldier settlers left their holdings, broken in spirit and in pocket. Therefore it is our duty to make haste carefully. I firmly believe that there are not sufficient sheep and farmlands available in the State for the larger scheme. We should give greater consideration to the advance of £1,000 which is being made available through the Rural Bank; representation should be made to the Commonwealth authorities to increase the advance to £2,000, as everything possible must be done for the men who saved Australia from invasion. Housing is a major problem. While good progress is being made with Commonwealth homes, still greater effort is required. I am expecting good results to accrue from the Government's action in appointing Commissioner Wallwork to investigate the bottleneck associated with housing. We may hopefully anticipate that within the next few months we shall have the necessary material to overcome that bottleneck, and that the building of houses will be stepped up 100 to 200 per cent.

Better houses are wanted by the staff of the Goldfields Water Supply. Some of the

houses at the pumping stations are sub-standard, and this remark applies also to some of the other Government departments. A big percentage of the public wish to have homes built according to their own architectural design, either through the Workers' Homes Board or by private contractors. It is extremely desirable that greater facilities should be afforded to such people to enable them to build the homes they desire. We must bear in mind that the erection of houses in the country will have two results. First, additional houses will be available to city dwellers; and, secondly, the erection of suitable houses in the country will lead to decentralisation. I congratulate the Minister for Education on the excellent work he has done; may he continue to help the Treasurer to incur another deficit. School buses in the wheat areas are functioning very well and are essential in order to bring about consolidation of schools, which will mean higher education. Additional technical classes and junior high schools are also required in the country. While the action of the Minister for Education in making available £15 annually for children in hostels or boarding houses who are receiving education is appreciated, it would be a gracious gesture if the Treasurer could increase the amount to £25 a year.

Mr. Needham: Say £30 a year!

Mr. TELFER: That would be better still. I hope steps will be taken to erect hostels in country districts where school buses are not available. I also hope that the school-leaving age will soon be increased to 15 years, and that a sufficient number of teachers will be available this year to bring about that desirable reform. We all recognise that the primary producer is the foundation of our economic structure. Our primary industries should be stabilised, as that is for the good of the community; and it is the responsibility of any Government to see that the people on the land secure suitable markets, adequate water supplies, good roads and educational facilities for their children. The Government deserves credit for the report which it asked its departmental officers to make on the meat question. I refer to the Midland Junction saleyards and abattoirs. The report is a sound one and I hope that the recommendations made will be adopted and facilities provided for the farmer, if he so desires, to sell his meat

on the weight and grade basis. The Minister for Works deserves the thanks of the farming community for the £10,000,000 water scheme he proposes to initiate, and I hope he will be successful in obtaining the grant of £5,000,000 which he is seeking from the Commonwealth Government, so that the work may be begun very soon.

Mr. Thorn: You ought to make a pretty good speech by the time you have finished congratulating all of the Ministers!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TELFER: It does not hurt a bit; I can take it.

Mr. W. Hegney: The Opposition does not like the truth.

Mr. TELFER: They cannot take it. I hope the Minister will bring the acreage charge on water down to 4d. per acre and the water charge to 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. I consider the farmers' debts adjustment debts should be cancelled. The farmers are rightly entitled to that concession. It would be some recompense for the great hardships which they have endured. They suffered greatly from the law of supply and demand and the "smash and grab" tactic of a certain class of the fraternity. Our main roads, semi-main roads and other roads require considerable attention. Bitumen for the principal country roads is essential. Greater authority should be vested in road boards and other semi-governmental authorities, and their financial aid should be increased in harmony with their increased responsibilities. This is necessary to bring about decentralisation and to make for a contented and happy rural population. With regard to transport, the Railway Department seems to have had greater criticism than has any of the other State departments. This is owing to a wrong policy having been followed in the past, when it was sought to make the department a trading concern instead of an instrument of State development. The railways are part of our economic life and are not a trading concern. No business concern would dream of building some of the developmental lines that have been constructed by the State. Those lines were justified, but they cannot give financial returns from a profit point of view. However, they do bring economic life blood to

the metropolitan area. Therefore, this utility should not carry the costs of interest, etc.

It is useless to deny the many shortcomings of the railways, and I sincerely believe that Ministers fully realise the position, and that the department is in for a thorough overhaul and reconstruction programme. I hope that no limit will be set, but that the best service for the community will be the objective. The Diesel coaches are doing yeoman service and I trust that the new Diesel equipment will soon arrive, and also that the permanent way will be greatly strengthened so that we may have an over-all speed of 40 miles per hour instead of the present 25 miles per hour. Our railway stations, including the central station, are ugly, drab affairs which need sprucing up. From conversations I have had with the Minister I understand that a thorough link-up with motor transport is probable. I refer him to the splendid success that South Africa has had with united transport. I hope that a major link-up is achieved. If it is, a large portion of our trade will still remain with the department, otherwise it will drift elsewhere. The general community should carry the interest cost of the department. The railways, and other Government departments, are suffering badly for the want of modern equipment. This matter should be investigated and rectified.

On the industrial side, the major cry from the country today is for amenities and comforts. Employers will find that the giving of decent conditions to employees is dividend-paying. If employers do not give these facilities the Government should make them do so. The immigration question needs special attention. Immediately after our soldiers have been rehabilitated we should encourage immigrants, because Western Australia needs five-fold its present population. I now offer another congratulation to the Government and that is on the establishment of the Rural Bank. The Commissioner and staff are doing an excellent job, and posterity will thank the State Labour Government for establishing this institution in 1945.

Mr. Mann: You—

The Premier: That makes you squirm.

Mr. Mann: You are scratching backs all the time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TELFER: The Tourist Department has been remodelled, and it has the scope to bring upwards of £1,000,000 into this country. If we want to develop our tourist trade we should look to our hotels, beauty spots, etc. Last night the member for Subiaco spoke of boards, controls and subsidies. I disagree with many of her statements.

Mr. Thorn: She does not read her speech, anyway.

Mr. TELFER: Before the establishment of the Milk Board, the milk industry was a slave industry for children.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: The children are still under-nourished.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TELFER: When wheat was sold at 1s. 6d. per bushel, what was happening in the country? The women were wearing clothes made of wheat sacks and the children were wearing clothes made of flour bags.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I do not believe it.

Mr. TELFER: I tell the truth!

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I have not seen it.

Mr. TELFER: It is a pity the hon. member did not go into the country in those times.

Mr. Abbott: That was the world market price, and everyone knows that.

Mr. TELFER: Yes, manipulated.

Mr. Mann: And a Commonwealth Labour Government, too.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TELFER: Those conditions killed many women simply because they did not get decent medical attention at the proper time. What is more, these conditions broke up hundreds of homes. Last night I heard John H. Teasdale's name mentioned here. That gentleman stands in opposition to merchants handling wheat. He is wholeheartedly for the co-operative movement, and it is he who did, and I believe rightly so in the circumstances at the time, advocate a restriction of wheat growing.

Mr. Abbott: He does not approve of the present schemes, though, does he?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TELFER: He suggested that restriction scheme and 90 per cent. of the

farmers today still want stabilised wheat-growing.

Mr. Mann: Are you not a capitalist yourself? Are you not a merchant of Merredin in a very large way living on the farmer?

The Premier: The farmer is living on him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TELFER: At 6s. a bushel the cost of wheat in a 2lb. loaf of bread is—

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: One penny.

Mr. TELFER: No, it is 2d. We have heard a lot about potatoes. I can remember when potatoes in the South-West were not dug simply because it was not worth doing so. I heard of apples being 6d. a lb. in Perth, where they are under control, yet in Melbourne, where there is no control, they are 11d. a lb. Before there was a control over eggs some farmers took as little as 4d. per dozen for them.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Those people have the advantage—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Subiaco has already spoken on this debate.

Mr. TELFER: People are getting eggs most times at 1s. 6d. and 1s. 9d. per dozen.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Eggs are 2s. 4d. and people cannot get them.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the member for Subiaco to keep order and allow the member for Avon to be heard.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I am sorry.

Mr. TELFER: The candling of eggs is very necessary; it gives the public eggs and not chickens. We in Australia are fortunate in that we get 20 eggs for every one that people get in the British Isles. Control of prices has given this country additional advantages. In the first world war corrugated iron went to £76 a ton, whereas during the last war it has been kept pegged down to something under £35. Food and clothing have, by controls and subsidies, been kept, probably, 50 per cent. lower than they would otherwise have been.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: They cost more than the people can pay, at any rate.

Mr. TELFER: Perhaps so! Interest is at 4 per cent. and 5 per cent. If interest rates were not pegged what would they be? Some would be 8 and 10 per cent. Some months

ago the control over bicycle tubes was lifted. Since that time kiddies in the country have not been able to get them.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You cannot eat them in any case.

The Premier: Motor tubes are hard to get now, too.

Mr. TELFER: Bicycle tubes do not leave the city. I firmly believe in subsidies. We were paying about 1s. per lb. subsidy on tea.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: One shilling and two pence.

Mr. TELFER: Clothing is also subsidised. That keeps the costs from rising. Bags for wheat and flour are subsidised from approximately 24s. down to 15s. and super-phosphate is being subsidised roughly 30s. per ton.

The Premier: The member for Subiaco does not approve of that.

Mr. TELFER: These things do keep down the costs. Even if it is £10,000,000 or £20,000,000 that is spent in subsidies, it is the life-blood of the man on the basic wage. It gives him a decent living. When the farmers are doing well, the whole community does well, and we have full employment.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: We have not full employment.

Mr. TELFER: If anyone wishes to start another 1931 depression, all he need do is to throw the farmers' produce on to an open market and let the merchants and racketeers have an open go at it. The result of doing that would be that we would be back again to the position of bankruptcy, unemployment and all the things that come forward with them. The control of prices and the subsidising of production certainly take away from the wealthy, but they allow the poor a reasonable living.

Mr. Abbott: What a fallacy that is!

Mr. TELFER: The Labour Party is not perfect. It makes mistakes, but for every mistake it makes it cancels out 20 methods of marketing or the money racketeering of others.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It certainly cancels out everything worth while.

Mr. TELFER: I speak feelingly on these things, because I have tasted what it is

like to be down in Poverty Lane, but I have made a success of farming and storekeeping. As one connected with a business, I welcome moderate controls and hence I say, "May the Labour Government long continue its good work and approved methods of moderate control of prices."

The Premier: And a subsidy for dairy farming.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [5.3]: I am certain that all of us meet during this session with pleasure that has been denied us ever since 1938, because this is the first session since that time when there have not been, either wholly or in part, war-clouds over us. The sincere wish of all members will be that never again, at least in our lifetimes, will we be afflicted with a holocaust such as almost overcame the world in the last half dozen or so years. The war having concluded, I feel it is necessary for Australians to display an Australian outlook during these peacetime years such as they did—though not nearly to as great an extent as they might have—during the war. I think we are far too parochial in our outlook. It would appear that Australia has in fact become a nation before her people are prepared for it. I do not intend to enlarge on that point other than to suggest that surely, after all these years, it is time that an Australian flag flew from the mast-head at Parliament House. I understand that the Australian flag has never flown there; why, I do not know, though I have heard several reasons suggested. Surely we are not in any way ashamed of the Australian flag.

There is no suggestion of disloyalty to the Mother Country, because of course the Union Jack comprises part of the Australian flag. We have a flag of our own which is distinctive in character and which symbolises the nationhood of Australia, of which our State is a part. It is known and recognised the world over. Recently, when the Victory Parade was being held in the streets of London, were it not for the fact that the Australian troops bore the standard of their own country, they would have passed unrecognised, but immediately the millions of lookers-on noticed the Australian flag, there were cheers, and a general display of enthusiasm. Surely we, the Parliament of Western Australia, could without any

difficulty make the change or, if members in certain parts of the House feel that there is some sort of slight in that to the Mother Country, perhaps both flags could be flown above Parliament House.

It is suggested that the reason why we have the Union Jack, and it only, is because the Constitution under which we operate—since amended in certain respects—was inherited from the British Parliament, but after all we are not an historical society. We are part and parcel of the Australian nation and accordingly I believe, and strongly urge, that the Australian flag should be flown from the masthead over Parliament House.

Mr. Mann: What flag flies at Canberra?

Mr. GRAHAM: That interjection suggests that at least one member might make greater use of the gold pass with which he is issued. Another matter to which I desire to refer, on account of the gibes from members of the Opposition, both in this House and outside, is the question of Communism. Nobody can deny that attempts have repeatedly been made to associate the Labour Party with the Communist Party—

Mr. Thorn: Are you referring to flags?

Mr. GRAHAM:—in an endeavour to create the impression that by some mysterious means the Labour Party is subject to the influence or domination of Communists. The chief spokesman along those lines is the Leader of the Opposition in the Commonwealth Parliament, Mr. Menzies. Notwithstanding the fact that he says the almost identical words with monotonous regularity, nearly every week, somehow or other, those references—which have no news value, apart from having no truth value—appear in the Press, probably with the idea that if repeated sufficiently often people may be prone to accept them as statements of fact.

Mr. Thorn: They accept them now.

Mr. GRAHAM: Some people do! What are the facts? I say that those utterances of Mr. Menzies and of other members of Parliament are lies. The persons making them know perfectly well that there is no truth in them.

Mr. McDonald: Did not Mr. Thornton represent the Australian Trade Union movement in London?

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course, and that had nothing whatever to do with the Australian Labour Party. I would point out, for the edification of members opposite, that the Constitution of the Australian Labour Party insists that any person entering its ranks must sign a pledge that he is not a member of any other political party, including the Communist Party.

Mr. Thorn: And a lot of them signed it.

Mr. GRAHAM: That may be true, but I throw it back to members on the other side of the House to tell me—yes or no—in their own good time, whether their parties insist on such a precaution.

Mr. Doney: There is no need to, in our case.

Mr. GRAHAM: Again, we can recall many instances of where the Labour Party has expelled persons who betrayed the pledge that they had signed.

Mr. Doney: There are a few thousand more that the Labour Party should have expelled.

Mr. GRAHAM: Persons who have been found to be members of the Communist Party. Again, the task is upon members of the Opposition to demonstrate whether they have taken any precautions to exclude Communists and when—as undoubtedly they have—certain members of that political faith have joined those parties, to tell when, where and how many of them have been expelled from the Liberal Party or the Country Party.

Mr. Abbott: Name one!

Mr. GRAHAM: The member for North Perth would be more familiar with members of his party than would I. We might ask some other pertinent questions; first of all, from where do the Communists receive their funds? They appear to have unlimited amounts of money. The books and returns of the Labour Party can be scrutinised, and the figures ascertained. So far as money expended on propaganda generally is concerned, it should be common knowledge that there is more expended in Western Australia by the Communist Party than by the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Labour Party. From where does the Communist organisation get its funds? It certainly does not get them from the Australian Labour Party. If it were possible to ascer-

tain the facts, I think that, in all probability, it would be found that certain persons who subsidise heavily the Liberal Party and other Conservative organisations at the same time finance the Communist Party, with a view to that organisation being a menace and a source of annoyance to the Labour Party.

Mr. Thorn: Is that the best you can do?

Mr. GRAHAM: That is borne out by the fact that in the great majority of cases it will be found that Communist candidates oppose Labour members, in the main, rather than members of the Opposition parties.

Mr. Abbott: Have they ever supported the Liberal Party in opposition to the Labour Party?

Mr. GRAHAM: If there were anything at all in the suggestion that there is some sort of league between Communists and Labourites, then obviously Labour candidates and members would be left alone, and the Communists would concentrate on the other seats. The Labour Party does not, and I hope never will, treat with any other political party, whether it be of the Left or the Right. The Labour movement formulates its own policy and depends upon its own strength. We discard entirely any suggestion that we are associated with any other political party. Just as there have been these reckless and untrue statements made about the domestic organisation of the Labour Party in Australia, so there has been a great deal of distortion on a number of other questions. One which has occupied rather a prominent place has been the matter of employment and unemployment. There is a tendency to make believe that a problem of unemployment exists in Australia at present. My remarks will be associated with Western Australia, but the same story is true of the whole of the Commonwealth.

Western Australia has the proud distinction of having had a higher percentage of enlistments than any other part of the British Empire. As a matter of fact, 75 per cent. of the males in Western Australia aged between 18 and 45 enlisted for service. That represented a total of 78,000 men, to which must added 7,500 females who also offered their services and were accepted. Now this is the remarkable position that within the short period of 10 months—that is, since October of last year when demobilisation actually commenced in earnest—75,000 men

have been discharged from the services and practically all of them have found employment. They have been found employment and generally established in civil life. To be fair, I admit that we can find points that may be criticised, but taken by and large this task—the greatest ever undertaken in the history of the State and undertaken by those who have been contemptuously referred to as bureaucrats, planners and dreamers—has been carried out successfully and has worked smoothly. The position today is that there are 1,300 ex-servicemen who are drawing the unemployment allowance.

Mr. Leslie: What about those who are not?

Mr. GRAHAM: That number represents only 1.7 per cent. out of a total of 75,000 who have been discharged. In addition, there are 1,300 males—it is a coincidence that the figures are the same—who are not in receipt of the unemployment benefit. This makes a total of 2,600 who are registered as unemployed at the present time. This is 1½ per cent. of the employable males in Western Australia. From records that I have scrutinised, I gather that there never was a time in the history of the State when the percentage was so light. At the outbreak of war there were 6,780 males either in receipt of sustenance or employed upon relief work. The average for the years 1937, 1938 and 1939, which we can regard as normal years, a period between the depression and the outbreak of the recently-concluded war, was approximately the same, namely, slightly under 7,000, which represented 4 per cent. of the employable males. That there should be only 1½ per cent. unemployed at present is a remarkable tribute to the plans of the Federal Labour Party that have been implemented and have worked so smoothly. It has been suggested by interjection by the member for Beverley that there should be no unemployment.

Mr. Mann: Of course not!

Mr. GRAHAM: That sounds very effective as a debating point. Sir William Beveridge, the author of the Beveridge Social Service Scheme in Great Britain, estimated that even in prosperous times in Britain, it could reasonably be anticipated that for one reason or another there would be at least 3 per cent. of the working population unemployed. Yet here in Australia

these bureaucrats, as they are called, have done this remarkable job of reducing the figures to 1½ per cent., a figure that so far as I can ascertain has not been improved upon at any previous time in Western Australia's history, and this at a time when we are confronted with all sorts of difficulties owing to the shortage of essential supplies.

Regarding the 1½ per cent. of unemployed, I wish to say something that should be of interest to the member for Beverley and any others who think along the same lines. It is essential, whilst it may be regrettable, that there should at all times be a reserve of labour. There are casual workers and seasonal workers, and if it were not for this reserve of manpower, I feel that those people engaged particularly in the primary producing industries would be in a very sorry plight indeed.

Mr. Abbott: It is pretty tough on those in reserve.

Mr. GRAHAM: It may be, and that is why the Labour Government made some sort of provision for the people engaged in seasonal occupations. I ask members to ponder what would be the position in the matter of fruit picking, potato digging, harvest operations, shearing and so forth if it were not for the existence of a reserve of casual labour. If every person were established in a permanent job and fully occupied, there would be nobody offering for work when the seasonal jobs came around, and I venture to say there would be an agitation by the member for Beverley and others for some sort of governmental action, possibly a conscription of labour, in order to provide the poor unfortunate cockies with the requisite assistance.

Mr. Mann: We cannot get farm labour at present. Men will not go out into the farming areas.

Mr. GRAHAM: That statement is made by an hon. member who only a few days ago was complaining because a few people were unemployed. The hon. member cannot have it both ways. Apparently the job of finding work for our people has been done so effectively that there are insufficient to go around the Beverley electorate and relieve the shortage there.

Mr. Mann: I will refute your statement by and by.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member will have an opportunity to do so. Even for the 1½ per cent. of unemployed, there are other extenuating circumstances. Quite a number of those men are physically unfit and are unable to undertake anything but the lightest of work. That would account for a limited number of them. There is a further percentage of those few unemployed who are suffering on account of old age but are not yet qualified to be placed on the old-age pension. Because of their age, however, they are unable to undertake any particularly hard or strenuous work.

Members, together with many of the public generally, probably have an idea that unemployment today is based upon the terms and conditions that unfortunately operated up to only a few years ago. Unemployment today is a totally different matter. Whereas in the bad old days the accumulated savings of a man had to be exhausted before any sustenance could be paid, and possibly many a treasured possession had to be disposed of, under which system he was eligible to receive the very limited sum of 7s. a week, the sum provided today for a family man is £2 10s. per week in addition to which there is the child endowment of 7s. 6d. for each child after the first one. Consequently, unemployment today has not the terrors it had previously. In addition there is no need for a person without work to exhaust his banking account, however large or however humble it might be.

There is another difference. Formerly, if employment was offering in the country or at a great distance from the home of the person seeking work, he was told there was a job at a certain place and was compelled to travel there and accept it. Otherwise he suffered the penalty of losing his sustenance money. The position today is that, though it is not possible to give every person seeking employment a job right at his back door, consideration is given to family responsibilities, to the matter of the education of the children, to any sickness in the family and so on. Thus there is a totally different approach to the question from that which operated only a few short years ago.

There is one other word I have to say about unemployment and this concerns the

women. There is no unemployment problem whatever so far as they are concerned; on the contrary, there are far more jobs offering than there are women and girls prepared or in a position to accept them. I say, therefore, that the Commonwealth Labour Government, with the assistance of the State Labour Government, has done a job that can be said to be remarkable, in that in ten short months 75,000 persons have been discharged from the services and practically all of them placed in work, in addition to the thousand or two displaced owing to the closing of munition works, the cessation of war contracts and so forth. Therefore, those who are contemptuously referred to as bureaucrats deserve the highest commendation, and the people should be exceedingly grateful to them.

There is also the vexed and contentious question of taxation. Because certain parrots have been repeating a certain cry, it is necessary to state the facts in connection with this matter. First of all let me say a few words about uniform taxation. It has been implied that the Commonwealth Government has broken a promise, that solemn undertakings were given that uniform taxation would be applied for the duration of the war and a complete financial year following the end of the war, and that therefore it is dishonest on the part of the Commonwealth to seek to continue that particular measure. The Bill that was passed enforcing uniform taxation was terminated 12 months before that course of action was really necessary; it could have been continued until the 30th June, 1947.

This is the position: A conference of representatives of the States was convened. Upon the advice of a committee, the Commonwealth Government sought the concurrence of the States to implement uniform taxation. Every one of the States opposed the proposition. The Commonwealth, nevertheless, determined to pursue the matter, as in fact it did, by introducing legislation in 1942. The fact that the States were not partners to any agreement and that, therefore, no undertaking could possibly have been given is borne out by the action of four of the States, of which Western Australia was one, actually contesting the validity of the legislation before the High Court. From the

point of view of those who disagree with uniform taxation it was perhaps unfortunate that that course was taken, because there was then revealed to the Commonwealth Government and the public generally something which I venture to say they never before suspected: that is, that such a measure could be given effect to at times other than during a war; and that, in fact, the Commonwealth Parliament has had authority to give effect to such a statute if it desired at any time throughout its history.

I trust I have made the point that as there was disagreement on the part of the States, there could never be any undertaking which would be valid by the Commonwealth Government, because any agreement that was sought, any undertakings that were given, automatically fell by the wayside when all the Governments of the several States stated their opposition and refused to agree to the particular proposition. It is true that the preamble of the Act states that the operation of uniform taxation shall be limited. The Government not only honoured that undertaking but in fact terminated the proposition 12 months before it was necessary. But since that time new legislation has been introduced and whether we like it or not uniform taxation has come, I venture to say, to remain with us. On the part of taxpayers generally I feel there will be no tears shed on account of the fact that they have only one taxing authority instead of two.

Mr. Doney: What do you think made six Governments object to it in that case? Why did they bother to protest?

Mr. GRAHAM: In answer to that question, it only bears out what I stated in my opening remarks: That there is a narrow parochialism, that the concern is rather for what might suit a particular parish pump than what would best serve the interests of the people of Australia.

Mr. Doney: The argument appealed to all the Premiers.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Federal Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Menzies, has been making all sorts of glib statements about an overall reduction in taxation of 40 per cent. The cry is that if the Liberal Party is returned to power this will be done. As things are at the moment, the truth is, of course, that the Commonwealth Gov-

ernment has already made reductions in taxation ranging from 47 per cent. on the lower incomes to 20 per cent. on the higher incomes. That Government is making such concessions as are possible in the circumstances.

Mr. McDonald: That includes the reduction made last year.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is true. That includes reductions made from the very high rate of taxation that operated during the intensive war years. The Commonwealth Labour Government has done as much as it possibly could in the circumstances. I want members to appreciate a few of the circumstances. Costs arising out of the recently concluded war, for the financial year 1946-47, will be approximately £140,000,000. That sum is made up of several items which include £50,000,000 for interest and sinking fund payments. Would Mr. Menzies suggest there should be a repudiation of those amounts?

Then there are war pensions totalling £10,000,000. Would Mr. Menzies and his followers suggest that war pensions should be reduced? There is deferred pay amounting to £15,000,000. Should there be any reduction of that amount to servicemen? For rehabilitation of ex-servicemen there is a sum of £25,000,000. Is it suggested that the treatment of ex-servicemen is too generous and there should be some diminution of the amount to be made available in the current financial year? Liabilities to Britain will entail a sum of £20,000,000, and U.N.R.R.A. commitments total £12,000,000. Surely there is no suggestion that we should refuse to meet our obligations to hard-put Britain! Then we have lend-lease payments totalling £8,000,000. Again would Mr. Menzies suggest that we should dishonour our payments to America?

Mr. Abbott: Are you suggesting he has proposed that?

Mr. GRAHAM: No! But if there are to be the tremendous concessions he proposes to give the taxpayer by way of reduction of taxation, there will have to be substantial savings somewhere. I am pointing out that here is a commitment of £140,000,000 for this financial year, and I ask in what particular is it possible to reduce that figure?

Mr. Seward: It was the criticism of the Opposition that brought about this reduction.

Mr. GRAHAM: The sum of £140,000,000 will have to be found. That is the commitment and the responsibility.

Mr. McDonald: And it will be found easily.

Mr. GRAHAM: If it will be found, well and good. In any case it is the responsibility of Mr. Menzies to indicate how it is to be found.

The Premier: He is going to give people cigarettes for 7½d.

Mr. Seward: Wait till he is Prime Minister.

Mr. GRAHAM: He will probably lower the price of cigarettes until 8 p.m. on polling day, and then everything will be forgotten. Such statements appearing in the Press and made elsewhere are just cheap-jack electioneering tactics, and I doubt very much whether they will influence anybody.

Mr. Thorn: You will not have any doubts after September.

Mr. GRAHAM: This tremendous commitment of £140,000,000 arises out of the war. There are certain other facts. During the financial year 1946-47, social service benefits will amount to £82,000,000. Prior to the war the cost of social services was £16,000,000. We have therefore an increase of £66,000,000 to provide in this respect. Is it suggested by Mr. Menzies or by his supporters or by those who are apparently fooled by these fine words, that any of the social services which are now available to the people should be reduced? It is interesting to recall those which have been brought into operation since the outbreak of war. There is child endowment and the maternity allowance on the basis now operating.

There are hospital benefits, unemployment benefits, sickness benefits, widows' pensions, funeral benefits, tuberculosis benefits, housing rental subsidies, and so on. There is an extremely long list. If it were permissible to wager in this Chamber, I would bet that even if it be the intention of Mr. Menzies and his supporters to reduce taxation, they will make no suggestion that one single

penny of that £82,000,000 will be taken from the recipients of those benefits. "We will reduce taxation," says Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Seward: He has done it, or he has made the Commonwealth Government do it.

Mr. GRAHAM: If the member for Pingelly derives any satisfaction from that foolish interjection he is entitled to enjoy it, but it bears no resemblance to fact. The position apparently is—and we gather this from Mr. Menzies' statements, though there is nothing very forthright about them—that Mr. Menzies would reduce taxation but simultaneously impose national insurance on a contributory basis. In other words, he might remit 5s. a week to a worker in taxation, but would immediately impose this compulsory contribution in respect of national insurance.

Mr. Abbott: With no means test.

Mr. GRAHAM: Therefore there would be no remission of the liabilities that the working man or anybody else would have to meet.

Mr. Abbott: And no means test.

Mr. GRAHAM: And no means test. For very many years there was a means test, and it remained for the Commonwealth Labour Government to take the initial steps for the removal of the means test.

Mr. Abbott: At Mr. Menzies' suggestion.

Mr. GRAHAM: For many years the Liberal Party in Australia made suggestions without doing anything, but in a few short years the Commonwealth Labour Government has given effect to far more reforms than have the conservative parties in the 30 odd years they occupied the Treasury Bench, with a majority in both Houses. The two commitments to which I have referred total approximately £205,000,000 per annum, and when it is remembered that the total taxation collections of the Commonwealth Government before the war were £74,000,000, and that there are additional commitments to the extent of £200,000,000 odd to be faced in respect to the two matters I have mentioned, some idea can be obtained of the problem connected with a reduction of taxation. We may ask ourselves how heavy is the burden of taxation on even those in receipt of lower incomes. It is quite easy to talk in general terms, but a little careful thought and analysis are certainly revealing. I do not think I am being unfair when I

suggest that the average income of the workers is somewhere in the vicinity of £300 per year.

Mr. W. Hegney: That is pretty high, too.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes; but it will at least serve to demonstrate my point. I think it can be said that the family of the average working man—and his family is usually larger than the average of the whole community—would comprise approximately three children. Two is the all-Australian average, but the average for working people would be higher. At any rate the figure will serve my purpose. Under the taxation which is being levied as from the 1st July of this year, a person in receipt of £300 a year, and having a wife and three children, would pay £12 in taxation, which, of course, judged by pre-war standards is still a considerable amount, bearing in mind family responsibilities. But there are other factors that are conveniently overlooked. That man would receive, now that the war has ended, £39 in child endowment alone. There would thus be a profit to him, arising from that one social service, of £27 as compared with what he received before the war.

It has been estimated that when all of the social services are taken into account—that is, the reasonable expectancy during the worker's life of a certain period of unemployment and illness requiring attention in hospital, old-age pension, and so on—the benefit totals £69 2s. So the man would receive £69 and would pay in taxation £12. There is therefore a profit to that man of £57 a year as compared with the situation before the war. To be fair, if the tax is paid—that is the debit side so far as the man is concerned—full and ample consideration must be given to other advantages that are received. It is a point of interest that this credit in favour of the taxpayer applies to all taxpayers who are in receipt of up to £10 a week. Even the present steep rate of taxation cannot be adjudged by any fair-minded person as being too severe, or as crippling to the nation generally or a deterrent to the workers so far as applying themselves to their jobs is concerned. Those thoughts are largely figments of the imagination.

Even if this high taxation had been such a crippling burden to the people, how does it come about that the deposits in the sav-

ings banks alone for the last four years have increased by £400,000,000? There have been millions of deposits in the trading banks, and millions of pounds have been invested in war bonds and saving certificates. It is impossible to estimate the millions which have been hoarded, placed under the carpet, put into an old sock or something else by jittery people and others who were endeavouring to evade taxation. There has also been a tremendous repayment of debts outstanding. That is borne out by the statement that during the war farmers reduced their indebtedness by approximately £60,00,000. If taxation were so heavy and imposed such a burden on the people, how is it conceivable that all these millions of pounds have been paid by citizens of Australia and all these millions of pounds have either been saved by them, invested by them or used by them in paying off old debts which they could not pay off before—for the tendency so far as indebtedness was concerned was in the opposite direction?

I trust that every attention will be given by the State Government to ensure that the proposals for the standardisation of rail gauges throughout Australia—that will of course affect the East-West line—are implemented and that they will have its full support. There is a general impression abroad that the Western Australian Government is half-hearted on this question. I feel it would be a tragedy if the work were not persevered with, for it is in the interests not only of Western Australia but the Commonwealth as a whole. The chief point of criticism is that it is so many years too late that the work was being talked about, before an indication was being given of a sincere endeavour to proceed with it. So far as I am concerned this work should be proceeded with irrespective of its cost. We cannot afford to do without it. Those who have any idea of the terrific complications and hold-ups that occurred, particularly when heavy materials and vehicles were being transported across Australia, would not hesitate to support the proposal.

Perhaps I am young and not fully initiated in many directions in politics, but I say frankly that I never heard any opposition to this proposal until such time as the Labour Government of the Commonwealth indicated that it was in earnest in doing something about it. It occurred to me that

there were certain interests, shipping companies, airways companies and so on who feared that if there was a comfortable service straight through from one end of the Commonwealth to the other in the form of a convenient modern rail system of transport, without the necessity for the heart-breaking changes of gauge, there would be an attraction to the people which does not exist at present when it comes to a question of travelling any great distance.

Mr. Seward: Do not forget the Defence Department. That is against it.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not forgetting that. The department is a Commonwealth responsibility. The Government of Australia is prepared to pay an overwhelming portion of the cost which would be incurred in the construction of the new line between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle.

I regret that the State Government did not take advantage of the golden opportunity afforded during the war because of the air transport situation to institute its own air service in Western Australia. Not only would such a step have been in accord with the general principles and the platform of the Party to which I am proud to belong but it would have saved the situation with which we are confronted today. So far as transport in the metropolitan area is concerned, we know the higgledy-piggledy methods, the complications, the duplications and the overlapping that existed because the Government of the day allowed private bus companies an open go in omnibus transport. The Government is now faced with a situation that will require a great deal of tact and care to sort out satisfactorily. Air transport in Western Australia and in other parts of the world is only now beginning to come into its own. Although it has only just started in Western Australia I feel that here was a glorious opportunity for some organisation to plan and undertake aerial transport and communication in this State instead of allowing first one and then another company to conduct the service. Possibly in 10, 20 or 50 years it will be left to some succeeding Government to straighten out a situation which may have unwittingly been created today.

A great deal of attention is being given to the creation of interest in tourist traffic and catering for the trade which it is hoped will develop in Western Australia, as soon

as we return to comparatively normal conditions with regard to accommodation, transport and so on. I notice with regret that the Government has decided to allow the two lodging places at Yanchep, the Yanchep Inn and Gloucester Lodge, to be made available to private people instead of the Tourist Bureau being put in charge of those establishments. The first and foremost consideration of the bureau would be on behalf of those who were travelling, those who were visiting the State.

If the Tourist Bureau is to be the medium for inviting people to Western Australia it should have at its disposal the necessary accommodation in those centres to which visitors are likely to disperse. Unfortunately these two living places have now been made available to private licensees and so I believe a glorious opportunity, perhaps a humble beginning for greater things, has been missed by the Government. There were a number of matters of a more or less parochial nature I had intended to discuss. Whilst I have not, I hope, travelled all round the world in the course of my remarks, I have spoken at some length, and out of consideration to members will not proceed much further. There is one question I would like to deal with. I believe that what is required in Australia to-day, apart from the broadening of the outlook of Australians, is some form of re-orientation of our thinking processes. We are too much inclined to retain old ways, to repeat the old shibboleths which have no relationship to the facts as they exist to-day.

I notice that even during the short period of this session there is apparently a great deal of difference of opinion concerning the question of money. Where is the money to come from? The feeling is apparent in certain quarters that now the war is over difficulties are going to be encountered in regard to money matters. The obvious answer is that had the war continued for another six years money would have been found for all the requirements of war. No strategic undertaking would have been neglected, no war project would have been overlooked merely because of the shortage of money. The measuring stick would have been the resources that were available to Australia by way of material and the requisite manpower for the tasks. Money would not have been the consideration at all. If only we could

get our mental processes working so far as the financial aspect is concerned, and imagine that the war was still on, works would be undertaken because they were necessary. It is not my intention to embark upon a discourse on the intricacies of high finance. A perusal of the records of discussion in Parliament on that topic tells me that that has been undertaken on many previous occasions without a great deal of success.

Surely there are certain facts which reveal themselves to all members and these should give them a different approach to the problem than they had many years ago, otherwise the intervening years will have passed without any accretion to their mental powers or any value being derived from the experience of those who will not have changed their outlook during that term. There is a belief in many quarters that the workers exist to supply the wants of industry. I prefer to put it the other way, that industries exist to supply the requirements of the people. Our endeavours should be directed towards providing the highest standard possible for the people rather than towards exercising any great concern as to what may or may not be the effect upon the financial stability of any particular industry. Industries are maintained on a basis of the costs which might be levied against them. I feel that the employers could make a very substantial gesture towards the working people.

I noticed in the Press during the last couple of days that certain employers refused to discuss a particular matter with the workers and declined to accede to their request, saying that the question was one for the Arbitration Court to determine. The whole basis of our industrial law is one of conciliation. Surely it would be far better for the employing section from time to time, without waiting for an agitation on the part of the workers and creating all the elements for discord and stress and possibly stoppage of work, to take the initiative and grant some concessions. The whole industrial struggle of the world has been caused by the creation of wage slaves, people seeking to get something better from those who were in a position to give it, namely, the employers. The position resolves itself into the fact that the working man is seeking to get a better return for his services. That could only come from the employer.

Mr. Abbott: Not at all; it could come from the rest of the employees.

Mr. GRAHAM: It comes from the persons responsible for the conditions under which the men work and for the payments they receive at the end of the week. Unfortunately, there is no new order with regard to the employing sections of the community. On the other hand, we are told from time to time that the workers include people that are generally slackers and that there are too many agitators amongst them. We are told that the men are not playing the game.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Are you a worker?

Mr. GRAHAM: I would remind members opposite in particular that those at whom they heave bricks at the present time are those who 12 months ago were the heroes who were receiving the plaudits and cheers of the people, led possibly by the section represented by members opposite. It is surprising to find that those who were heroes then when they put their bodies between the enemies and our homeland, are now regarded as agitators and slackers.

Mr. Abbott: You are the only one who has suggested that.

Mr. GRAHAM: It has been suggested.

Mr. Abbott: Yes, by you.

Mr. GRAHAM: It has been suggested by those who roundly condemn the workers on that score. Many of those workers, 78,000 of whom joined one or other of the Armed Forces, are members of trade unions.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Were you one of them?

Mr. GRAHAM: There are workers in Western Australia who are now described as slackers and are regarded as contemptible who formerly received the encomiums of the public, and they certainly do not deserve the epithets that have been hurled at them by some people.

Mr. Seward: I do not see any badge in your coat.

Mr. GRAHAM: What did the hon. member say?

Mr. Seward: I said that I did not see any badge in your coat.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is a contemptible interjection.

Mr. Seward: One on the lines of what you have just said.

Mr. GRAHAM: It is a contemptible interjection by a member who should know better. He knows perfectly well that every person in Australia occupied the role that was assigned to him. It was not a matter of the individual's personal choice whether he went into one or other of the Armed Services or remained at some other post.

Mr. Seward: Then why do you talk the other way about?

Mr. GRAHAM: If the hon. member wants to know the reason I did not join up—

Mr. Seward: I do not.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am glad of that, because he would not have been told, but he would have been given another type of answer altogether. There have been a number of industrial stoppages, prominence to which has been given in the public Press. People have been served up with provocative statements that have made for the embarrassment of Labour Governments, which occupy practically all the Treasury benches of the Parliaments throughout Australia. There has been criticism regarding the so-called irresponsible officials who are said to be leading the workers into indulgence in irresponsible acts, such as they have undertaken. As one who has had something to do with industrial troubles here and who is at the present moment filling the position of president of the Perth Trades Hall, I know there have been threatened industrial disputes and stoppages of work—thank goodness, we do not have very many in Western Australia—particulars regarding which have never reached the light of day.

I can state without exaggeration that a large percentage of disputes is taken in hand and settled by the very people who are so frequently roundly condemned in the Press and in public utterances. We prevail on the men to allow wiser counsels to rule and to return to work, following upon which we devise ways and means of securing the redress of grievances without recourse to extreme action. Therefore, these people who are so trenchant in their criticism of Trades Hall and its officials, have little knowledge of what goes on and are unaware of the time and energy devoted to the task of preventing any unnecessary dislocation of industry so that the State's progress may

continue, if possible, without interruption. Because there is a certain amount of discontent in the community today and because people have been promised all sorts of things and have the right to expect to enjoy something new and better, those of us who have been elected as leaders for the time being and who have been sent here on behalf of the people of this part of Australia must be fearless, courageous—

Mr. Abbott: And truthful.

Mr. GRAHAM: Apparently some of the facts I have given, supported by figures, now revealed to the member for North Perth for the first time, are exceedingly distasteful to him.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: But they are not true!

Mr. GRAHAM: I leave it to the hon. member to refute the statements I have made. There devolves upon us a duty and we should not be afraid to embark upon a new course. I trust that if Parliament should err at all with regard to legislative action, or the Government should err in administrative actions, the erring will be from the standpoint of venturing too far rather than of not proceeding far enough. Great problems remain to be solved. The people are impatient and expect persons occupying responsible public positions to do something about it. Unless persons in those positions are willing to do something about it, they will unwittingly but effectively do much to undermine the structure of democracy, which is the last thing any one of us would desire.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [6.7]: It is only too true, as stated in His Excellency's Speech, that "in common with the rest of the world, this State faces serious problems due to the disruption of industry, trade and commerce inevitably arising from six years of war." Further on in the Speech the following appears:—

Ministers fully recognise the heavy responsibility which rests upon the community to re-establish in civil life those whose service and sacrifice contributed so much to our national preservation.

I fully appreciate that that is so. I also appreciate that that duty rests primarily on the Commonwealth Government. Personally I do not think that this State has done all that was possible to further that objective.

I think it must be admitted that, whether justifiably or not, there is a good deal of discontent among ex-Service personnel who are being rehabilitated. One of the most prominent sources of objection arises from those who are awaiting settlement on the land. For the last 12 months they have been waiting to get on with the job, and have not been able to do so. No serious effort has been made at any time during that waiting period, to utilise the services of these men in the vocation they are seeking to enter. I do not see why the ex-Servicemen could not have been placed on farms and have commenced their training during the time they were waiting for the allotment of their respective holdings. I have received a letter from one such man who much against his wish, is at present residing in the North Perth district. In the course of his letter he says—

I have had an application in for a dairy farm since October last. I have been informed that my application was accepted and that I have to have two months' training. Since that, nothing but silence. Would you be so good as to help me to push my claim through for some definite answer as to how long I shall have to wait before being installed on a farm? I am also writing to Mr. W. V. Fyfe tonight. Thanking you in anticipation.

I suggest that men like the writer could easily have been engaged in training on a dairy farm. I am perfectly sure that if dairy farmers had been encouraged to accept such men for training, they would certainly have done so and in those circumstances the ex-Servicemen would have received very considerable advantage that they will not derive from the short period of training it is apparently intended to give them. It might be necessary to grant a small subsidy to recompense dairy farmers for the time and labour devoted to training the men, but that would be quite worth while and would have avoided much of the discontent apparent at present. Then again, there is a good deal of discontent amongst those who are hoping to be placed in skilled trades. The rehabilitation officials whose duty it is to try to place these men in suitable avocations have met with considerable difficulties in Western Australia from the various unions.

Mr. W. Hegney: That is not true.

Mr. ABBOTT: The unions here have not been as helpful as they have been in the other States. One point is that when a man has done his preliminary training and at-

tains the requisite 40 per cent efficiency, he is sent out to learn his trade. He has to do four years' service, irrespective of the success he may achieve in his training. A man may prove himself a perfectly efficient tradesman in two years, but he has to undergo training for the full period of four years before he can be admitted to the appropriate union and given an opportunity to work where and how he likes.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. ABBOTT: I was referring to the fact that trainees in Western Australia are receiving less favourable treatment than those in the other States. The same terms should have been granted here as are granted in other parts of the Commonwealth and not less favourable terms.

Mr. W. Hegney: How are they less favourable?

Mr. ABBOTT: They are less favourable in that trainees, after they have achieved full qualification and ability, still have to serve a further term before getting their independence and membership of a union, which is necessary before they can get work.

Mr. W. Hegney: What rate of pay do they receive?

Mr. ABBOTT: The same rate is paid everywhere, but trainees here do not get their liberty as do those in the other States. Many of the men would prefer to go where they like, have their union ticket and have a say in the affairs of the union, instead of having to wait for long years as they do under the conditions prevailing in Western Australia. Trainees in the Eastern States, as soon as they become 100 per cent. qualified, are permitted to join the union and become free men. I had thought that the Government might use some influence with the industrial organisations to get for trainees here terms at least equal to those granted to trainees in the Eastern States. Perhaps the Government has a reason for not doing so.

Mr. Thorn: It has.

Mr. ABBOTT: No doubt at the right time the Government will tell us the reason, but the present position does not seem to be either fair or right. It may be that I am wrong.

Mr. W. Hegney: I think you are.

Mr. ABBOTT: I want to know why a trainee who has achieved 100 per cent. efficiency should not get his ticket. Why should he have to wait a further period?

Mr. Fox: How is he going to get any more than 100 per cent?

Mr. ABBOTT: That is the point. He cannot do so, and why should he have to wait?

Mr. Thorn: He could not get into the Lumpers' Union if he was 200 per cent.

Mr. ABBOTT: The next question on the subject of rehabilitation is that of housing. There are many ex-Service personnel, some married and some wishing to marry, who have no homes and have no immediate prospect of getting homes. This is very regrettable, but we realise that it is extremely difficult to provide homes for everybody. Still, I do not think the Government has done all that it could have done. The theme of my address to-night is "Leadership." I consider that the Labour Party should be led by the responsible Ministers in this House and not by Trades Hall. I do not want Ministers to be a shadow cabinet; they should be the leaders of the movement. Having been placed by the people in positions of authority, they should lead and not be led.

Mr. W. Hegney: How would you arrange that?

Mr. ABBOTT: I will tell the hon. member.

Mr. Fox: This will be interesting.

Mr. ABBOTT: As is well known to all, the worker in the building trade, for some reason or other, has not been able to give the same output as he gave before the war. As a result, war service homes are costing a lot more and are being erected at a slower rate than they would have been before the war.

Mr. Needham: Do you imagine that that is a fact?

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes. Records available show that the average bricklayer in pre-war days laid 700 to 1,000 bricks per day of eight hours. At present he lays 300 to 400 in the same time. These figures may be verified anywhere, and no doubt many members on the Government side know better than I do the truth of that assertion. Thus there has been a drop of 50 per cent. in the out-

put of the work done, which adds to the cost of the building. This statement applies not only to bricklayers but also to workers throughout the building trade.

Mr. Withers: What would be the effect of that on one building?

Mr. Thorn: Work it out for yourself!

Mr. ABBOTT: I cannot understand the reason for this low production effort unless interests inimical to the welfare of the country have some influence over the workers. It should be clear to everyone that a go-slow policy pays nobody. This is where I consider the Government might have done something. The whole matter resolves itself into one of leadership. I am of opinion that the bricklayer and the carpenter in this State are as good citizens as any other member of the community and that, provided they receive the right encouragement and advice, they will render service to the community as well as anyone else. But, I ask, is the tradesman getting the right advice? Is he being appealed to in the right way by the right people—the people he respects? Has there been any suggestion made by the Government that such tradesmen, in the present time of acute difficulty, could serve the community better by trying to do per man what they did before the war?

Mr. Thorn: Do you think the high taxation has discouraged them?

Mr. ABBOTT: It might have. I have a great respect for the Australian workers. I would not draw any distinction between them and members of this House. True, some of them have a little more ability than others, but they have good ideas if they are only led aright. However, I say that the leadership is not right. I regard the members of the Cabinet as being the responsible people to lead the State and to lead these people. Why does not the Government tell them what it thinks? I have not seen one statement by the Premier or by any other responsible Minister to this effect, "Men, it is up to you to do your best to get these houses erected. By helping in this way, you will be serving the community and doing a good turn to your party, yourselves and everyone else." I have not seen any exhortation along those lines in a public address or anywhere else. Surely this is something the Government might have done! The Government should have given a lead and

pointed out to these men that it was their duty to give a little more to the community in these times.

Mr. W. Hegney: Is that all you have against the Government?

Mr. ABBOTT: I have a great respect for some members of the Government, and I think they could do a little more along the lines I have suggested if they were not dominated by the industrial unions and the industrial party. Consider the cost of building! In 1934 a five-roomed brick dwelling cost £960. In 1944 the cost had gone up to £1,365, an increase of 40 per cent. in ten years. I am quoting official Commonwealth figures.

The Minister for Justice: Materials have risen in price very considerably.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am going to show the proportion now. The cost of labour for a five-roomed brick house in 1934 was 25 per cent. and the cost of material 75 per cent. Under existing conditions, the cost of labour is 40 per cent. and of material 60 per cent. Whereas in 1934 labour cost £240, today it costs £564 for a five-roomed brick dwelling. As I said, I do not think the Government has done as much as it should have done to remedy that position. Nor has the Government accepted the responsibility for it. The Government appointed an adviser. Mr. Bond is the Government's adviser in building matters. Is the Government satisfied with his advice and opinions? No! The Government appoints an outside man, a legal gentleman for whom I have great respect, but I do not think legal men possess universal knowledge. He is to tell the Government what it should do. Is not that a farce? The Government can get all the advice from experts that it requires, yet it appoints a legal gentleman for whom, as I said, I have great respect, but who is not a trained builder, to tell the Government that building is not proceeding today as it should be. Can anyone say that that is right?

When speaking to the Speech last session I had something to say about tuberculosis, which is one of the most serious diseases with which the community has to contend. We are told by medical authorities that the disease could be stamped out in 20 years if sufficient money were provided and sufficient care taken. That statement may or may not be correct; but until we get other advice we must accept it. We know that tuberculosis

is a highly infectious disease. We also know that it is not considered to be an inherited disease but it occurs from generation to generation in the same family. I am told by those who know more about the disease than I do that the reason is that, although the child is infected, it does not develop the disease until many years afterwards, and before it has become apparent in that child, he has grown up, become a parent, and infects his own children. That really is a dreadful state of affairs.

The Minister for Justice: That is recognised and the department is now doing everything to stamp out the disease. We have entered upon a long programme.

Mr. ABBOTT: I urge the public to give the Government every support in stamping out this disease. When speaking last year on the subject I said that it had been shown that 150,000 people who were called upon for service with the Armed Forces in America learned for the first time that they were suffering from this disease. That surely points out how necessary it is to provide every possible facility for the public to be examined. A question on the subject was asked in this House recently, and the Government replied that it hoped to have travelling clinics made available so that every person who wished to do so would have the opportunity to ascertain whether he had contracted this disease or not. I do not know what the intentions of the Government are, but I would like this examination to be made free of expense, like immunisation for diphtheria. If that cannot be done, the charge should be as low as possible, say, 6d. per person—a nominal charge.

The Minister for Justice: It should be made compulsory for everybody to be examined.

Mr. ABBOTT: The Minister is probably correct.

The Minister for Justice: The examination would have to be an annual one, of course.

Mr. ABBOTT: Or every two or three years, but annually for preference. It is well known that the principal treatment for this complaint is rest and freedom from worry. I have been told by medical practitioners that many men who have contracted the disease feel they cannot take that rest; they say they cannot go into a hospital or a

sanatorium because they have their families to consider. Yet though they are in bad health and liable to infect persons around them, they continue with their work and sacrifice their lives in a last effort to make provision for their families. That is very wrong as well for the unfortunate man as for the people whom he continues to infect.

Mr. Needham: The Commonwealth Government is trying to arrange for that man to get full pay.

Mr. ABBOTT: I would suggest some form of insurance so that the person infected could be compulsorily retired and receive sufficient money to support his family in the way in which it had been accustomed to live. Some form of insurance might be arranged whereby a man could pay a premium according to his means, or he could be taxed, and the allowance he would receive would be great or small according to the payment he made. In that case there would be every encouragement for such a man to seek the rest and the benefit that retirement would give him.

The Minister for Justice: In time I think that will have to be a Government responsibility.

Mr. ABBOTT: I think so too.

Mr. Graham: A little more taxation!

Mr. Thorn: You are an expert on that!

Mr. ABBOTT: I think it very wrong that in food shops men who are highly infectious are still permitted to serve food and handle eating utensils which other people must use. I hope the Government will do something in this matter in the near future.

The Minister for Justice: I assure you the Government is very serious in its effort.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am very pleased to hear it. I come to the vexed question of taxation.

Members: Ah!

Mr. ABBOTT: Taxation is a necessary course in our modern civilisation. We all realise that we cannot escape it. It is a well-known fact, however, that when taxation is too high it defeats its own end, because the incentive to earn is absent. I think it is generally admitted in this House today that taxation is on that basis at present. Many men in business have slowed up because it is not to their advantage to do too much trading. The same thing can be said of the professional man. Even the

worker on lower wages finds himself in a similar position; he is not keen on working overtime, earning money by the sweat of his brow, when he knows it will be taken from him to an extent he considers undue. He would rather not do the extra work. Something must be done to try to re-create the incentive to work and it can be done by a reasonable reduction in taxation. In spite of what the member for East Perth says, I believe it can be done. It would be very foolish of me, for I am not an economist or a trained accountant, to say that this can or cannot be done; but many clever men in the Commonwealth say it can be done, and I hope it will be, and the sooner the better.

Mr. Graham: It has been done.

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes, to some extent. I hope it will be done to a greater extent. The advisers to the party I follow say it can be, and I believe it can be. We know that at the moment this House has not a great deal of say in the form that taxation assessments take.

Mr. Rodoreda: No say at all.

Mr. ABBOTT: No, except that we might have some influence with the Commonwealth Government. This Government is treated with a certain amount of respect by the Commonwealth Government and any suggestion put forward by it is given consideration. The matter does to some extent concern this Government. I refer to the fact that consideration should be given to encouraging people to lay out income on work which will constitute a permanent improvement to the natural resources of the country. Take such a scheme as the prevention of erosion! Money spent on prevention of erosion should not be a capital charge.

I remember that the Minister for Lands, when he was Minister for Mines, told this House with a great deal of pleasure that a company with large resources had decided to explore portion of the northern part of the State for oil and to expend a large sum of money. A special Act was passed in that connection and a certain amount of work was done, but the company has ceased operations. I have been told that this is not because the venture showed no possibilities of success or because they were disappointed with what they had found out. The work was stopped because the company found that

every penny spent in exploration work was deemed to be a capital expenditure, and they could not afford to throw away tens of thousands of pounds of capital for results that were very contingent. Surely that sort of work should be encouraged by allowing expenditure in connection with it to be treated at least to some extent as portion of the trading expenditure. It is regrettable that thousands of pounds that might have been spent will not be available for that reason.

I have yet to be convinced that this Government has done everything possible to promote the secondary industries of the State. Whatever the reason, it must be admitted that no State in the Commonwealth has made so much progress in secondary industries as has South Australia. I suggest—I know it will not be agreed to by those on the other side of the House—that the reason is that the State had a very painstaking Liberal Government for some years.

The Premier: That is quite wrong.

Mr. Withers: We will not have that.

Mr. ABBOTT: I did not think members opposite would! However, that Government did two things. First of all, it made every possible concession that could be made to new industries in the way of reduced freights, cheap water, cheap land and provision of houses. Secondly, having done that, it took pains to advertise the fact. It had a representative—and not a part-time one but a very active representative—in Melbourne for a number of years, a very able man named Mr. Wainwright.

The Premier: That State being only a night's journey from the biggest populated centre of Australia would not matter much, you think?

Mr. ABBOTT: I think it would matter very considerably. Nevertheless, I say that what was done has been materially to the advantage of that State. I do not say that we could have secured all the industries South Australia secured, but I do maintain that we might have secured some. Just lately I had a discussion with a man who had been sent from England to take over an industry that has been in operation in Melbourne for some time. He intended to enlarge the concern considerably, so he went to the Secondary Industries Board and asked their advice. They said, "You are here in Melbourne. There are two other States you could go to—

South Australia and New South Wales. Go and talk to Mr. Wainwright." He went to Mr. Wainwright, and an appointment was made for him with Mr. Playford. Mr. Playford said, "We want your industry. Tell us what you need." And when he was told houses would be needed, he said, "All right, we will get them for you."

Mr. Withers: Did they ask the Western Australian Government the same question?

Mr. ABBOTT: No. I asked him why he did not think of Western Australia. He said, "The Secondary Industries Board never mentioned Western Australia. It just did not occur to them." That is what I complain about. I do not say we could have got this industry, the products of which are highly valued, but it might possibly have come here. Why do we not get the same consideration as the other States? Why have we not somebody over there to do a bit of advertising and urging on our behalf? We need a commercial traveller, the same as everyone else, and that is what we should have. I would like to see offices in Melbourne and Sydney established for the purpose of encouraging secondary industries and also tourists to come here. The money would be well spent. Until that is done, I shall not feel that this Government has done everything it could do to encourage secondary industries.

I listened with considerable interest and a good deal of enjoyment to the speech of the member for East Perth. I thought it was very ably delivered. I did not approve of everything he said. My main objection was that the speech had a tinge of the intolerance of youth. Perhaps when the hon. member has as many grey hairs as I, he will be able to regard things from a more tolerant point of view. If there is one thing this world needs today, it is sympathy and tolerance.

The Premier: A little introspection.

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes. For a man to get up and suggest, as the member for East Perth did—for he was looking at me and those of my party—that we have no respect for the Australian worker, is to do a very wrong thing and to make a very wrong suggestion. As far as I am concerned—and I am sure the same applies to the other members of my party—I have the greatest respect for the Australian worker. We think he is a good chap and we know that, when appealed

to, he does a good job. But when there is intolerance and he is wrongly led, he, like other human beings, sees things from the wrong point of view. The hon. member asked why the employer did not give better conditions to his employees. I suggest it would be wrong for an employer to do that.

Many employers have a monopoly and it would be easy for them to provide better conditions; but who would pay for them? Not the employer, but the consumer and the general community! It would be very easy for Amalgamated Collieries to give better conditions to their men, but who would pay? The Railway Department and, through the Railway Department, the consumers! It would be very easy for the phosphate company to provide better conditions. It does not matter to them. The bigger the turnover, the bigger the profit. But who would pay? The farmers! It would be easy for the Government to give railway employees better conditions. The Government would not suffer but the consumer would. So today it comes down to this—

The Premier: It is easy to give concessional rates on superphosphate and other things.

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes, and who pays for them?

Mr. Withers: It is met by subsidies.

The Premier: The member for Subiaco does.

Mr. ABBOTT: Possibly she does to some extent, and the Premier also. The only just way is to have some body to hold the balance of justice between different sections of the community. The right body to do that is the Arbitration Court. But I think that the Arbitration Court does not function correctly at present. It was established about 40 years ago when conditions were such that the law of supply and demand was the sole principle applying to our economic life. It was therefore thought advisable that there should be a scale of justice between the employer and the employee. But that condition does not exist today. There is so little margin between the cost of production and the cost to the consumer that it is not worth worrying about. We have to consider what one section of the community should receive as against another section. That principle should be applied to the Arbitration Court, and the parties in a matter before that tri-

bunal should be sections of the community—asking for better conditions—and the community at large. I would, therefore like to see the Act amended so that that principle could be carried out. By so doing one section of the community would apply to receive better conditions, and the remainder of the community would be represented by a Government nominee with a trained staff to assist him. It is ridiculous to think that one man—a judge—has sufficient time to get out all the necessary data which should be available, if he is to do justice between different sections of the community.

Mr. W. Hegney: That is brought out in evidence before the court.

Mr. ABBOTT: Not at all. As a result of present conditions the employer may say, "It does not matter to me. I have a nice little monopoly. I will pass it on. Why should I not give my employees a bit more, no matter whether it inflicts an injustice on the community as a whole?"

Mr. Withers: Why should he pass it on when he is making huge profits?

Mr. ABBOTT: He is not today, because of price-fixing.

Mr. Withers: The Amalgamated Collieries have made huge profits.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ABBOTT: The Amalgamated Collieries have not made huge profits for many years. They have only made the profits allowed to them by a commission appointed by the Government.

The Premier: You do not think they are not trying to make profits?

Mr. ABBOTT: Of course they are. Who is not trying to do so? But no commercial concern can make undue profits today, and that would come out in evidence. But the main point is that one section of the community is appealing to the court that it is entitled to a higher rate of remuneration, or better conditions, while at the same time, the rest of the community would be represented so that the facts, that would affect the issue, would be put before the court. I also think the present basis of the Arbitration Court should be changed, because the thought now is that the employer is trying to get everything out of the employee and the

worker, on his part, is trying to get every thing he can out of the employer. That idea should be dropped.

Mr. Withers: Who is going to be the first to drop it?

Mr. W. Hegney: Do you believe in profit sharing?

Mr. ABBOTT: Of course I do. So would like to see the Act altered, firstly, so that the community could be properly represented before the court, and secondly, so as to do away with this feeling of intolerance that was exhibited today by the member for East Perth. After all, 90 per cent. of executives today have comparatively little interest in the huge concerns they run. They are managers and it is members of the general public who own the shares in the businesses they control. It helps the executives to give a bit more to the employees, but if the business is a monopoly they would not be justified in doing so. It would be easy for the Colonial Sugar Refinery to give to its employees a little extra and charge it to the community. I do not think it can be disputed that the proper principle is that of arbitration between one section of the community and another. I have a further complaint to make.

Mr. Withers: They are not complaints surely?

Mr. ABBOTT: Well, I have one. I feel that the Government has not given proper consideration to the use of pulverised coal in our railway locomotives. This is not a new idea, because as far back as 1933, when Dr. Herman gave his report on the coalmining industry of this State, he advised that a proper investigation should be made into this matter. Dr. Herman, in paragraph 19 of his report of 1933 had this to say—

The Commission is of the opinion, however, that a more definite statement is warranted regarding the prospective use of pulverised Colliery coal for locomotive purposes. The use of pulverised Colliery coal on a locomotive properly designed for pulverised fuel would probably reduce its coal consumption by about 3 per cent. If eventually the whole locomotive system were to be converted to pulverised fuel there would be a saving in the Railway Department's total fuel bill of a corresponding amount, representing approximately 80,000 tons of coal and over £100,000 per annum. The perennial controversy as to the relative economic values of "hard" and "soft" coal would cease because there is very little doubt that the economic values for locomotive use would then be very closely proportional to cal

orific values. The chief troubles of weathered coal would become a thing of the past. "Soft" coal mines would hold their own again with "hard" coal mines. The dangers of grass fires from locomotive sparks would practically disappear.

Paragraph 200 states—

The above substantial list of prospective advantages of using pulverised fuel naturally calls for information regarding the present status of the pulverised fuel locomotive. The W.A. Railway Department has devoted some attention to the possibilities of using pulverised fuel locomotives. The Chief Mechanical Engineer anticipates that before long 20 new locomotives will be required. This Commission urges that before these locomotives are purchased a very complete investigation—probably involving inspections abroad by a specially qualified officer of the Chief Mechanical Engineer's branch—should be made in order to determine whether, among the quite numerous designs that have been evolved in England, Europe and in America, there is or is not one that could economically and efficiently be adapted to Western Australian conditions. Without awaiting such inquiries in connection with new locomotives, there should be completed, as far as is practicable in Perth, designs for conversion to pulverised fuel of such of the present types of locomotive as seem adapted for such conversion. The initial steps in the latter work have already been taken by the Railway Department.

If possible, I would like to hear from the Government what has been done in that connection. The saving of 30 per cent. of our coal bill is not a small matter, and I would like to know whether the Chief Mechanical Engineer approves of this scheme or whether it has been condemned by him. Is it because he disapproves of it and the Government has accepted the Commissioner's advice, that apparently nothing has been done? Is the reason that behind the scene some union has felt that it would be inadvisable to introduce the use of pulverised coal?

Mr. Styants: We would need mechanical stokers for it.

The Premier: The member for Collie says that that is not coal; it is tripe.

Mr. ABBOTT: I think the Government has shown a weak stand in the matter of the Garratt engines. They are engines that have apparently been used with some success on our own railways. I have no knowledge that the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Railway Department has condemned those engines, but they are not being used to the extent to which they could be used.

The Premier: He created that engine; he would not condemn it.

Mr. ABBOTT: We know that the union objected to the Garratt engines, though what their grounds were I do not quite know. I would have thought it the duty of the Government to decide the question by asking, firstly, whether those engines were mechanically sound, and I would have expected it to take the advice of the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

The Premier: He invented it.

Mr. ABBOTT: He did not, though the Garratt engines were built under his supervision.

The Premier: He was responsible for the drawings of this particular engine.

Mr. ABBOTT: The Garratt engines are of a design that has been well known for years.

Mr. McDonald: What happened to poor Mr. Garratt?

Mr. ABBOTT: It is just like the Australian guns, built in Australia.

The Premier: You would not ask the judge to be jury also?

Mr. ABBOTT: Surely if the Government has lost faith in its adviser it should sack him.

The Premier: We would not ask you whether your law is sound.

Mr. ABBOTT: If the Premier wanted legal advice he would go to the Crown Solicitor.

The Premier: I would go to the member for West Perth.

Mr. ABBOTT: That is a compliment to the member for West Perth. If the Garratt engine is mechanically sound, the next question is should the engine-drivers receive some special payment for driving them? I would have thought the proper authority to advise on that would have been the Arbitration Court. But the Government has employed a legal man, with no mechanical training. I have the greatest respect for Mr. Justice Wolff, who is an able lawyer and a distinguished judge, but he has not a mechanical training. I think the Government should have employed a technical man to decide this issue, but that was not done. As a result of that the Government, for some months, has been deprived of the use

of a number of these engines, as they have been stowed. I understand that because of some argument with the union, if any repairs had to be done of a major nature they would not again use the engine. I am told that engines were repaired in a few days but have been lying idle for months while they have been badly needed. That was published in the report that I read in the paper.

Mr. Styants: You cannot always believe what you read in the paper.

Mr. ABBOTT: I take it this was a copy of the official report. In the Minister's own report it is said that 214 locomotives were in good running order at the 31st March last, while there were 189 at the end of March, 1945, so the number has come down during that year.

The locomotives stowed include 10 Australian standard Garratt engines off traffic for repairs, the carrying out of which was in abeyance pending the result of the Royal Commission's inquiry. The loss of the services of these engines had been severely felt.

So the Government allowed the union to bluff it into stowing these badly needed engines for months.

Mr. Styants: They broke down so often that they stowed themselves away.

Mr. ABBOTT: That is not a fact.

Mr. Styants: It is a fact.

Mr. ABBOTT: Will not the member for Kalgoorlie agree that many engines that were ready for immediate use were stowed away because of that argument?

The Premier: You might be a good member for North Perth, but you are no judge of locomotives.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am no judge of locomotives.

The Premier: I thought you would admit that.

Mr. ABBOTT: The community today must realise that it is only by the joint and willing efforts of every member of the community that a higher standard of living will be possible. While any section of the community feels it is being exploited and dominated by any other section that objective cannot be achieved. It therefore behoves everyone who has the interests of the country at heart to spread the gospel of

willing service and co-operation. My Party believes that both executives and workers are necessary, and that they should be friends. It favours the principle that wages should be the highest and conditions the best that any industry can afford, subject to justice being done to the community at large. I would commend to the Government the views stated by Mr. F. P. Walsh, Economic Adviser to the New Zealand Government, who states—

Nothing should be allowed to interrupt the productive system. We cannot afford to have stoppages of production. Machinery exists in the Federation of Labour and in the Government for the settlement of industrial disputes. This machinery is adequate, and is there to be used.

Later in his report he continues—

Every time a stoppage occurs, not only are wages lost, but goods are lost which are essential to the attainment of a higher standard of living—our primary objective.

Later he said—

Unless the goods and services are being produced, it is not possible to distribute them. It is Labour's responsibility to work for the maximum production of goods and services, and anything which stands in the way of this is contrary to the best interests of the movement.

I hope the Premier will take an opportunity to show his concurrence with that point of view. All means are available to ensure that there is a fair distribution of the national wealth once it has been created, and every step should be taken to ensure that this wealth is produced. Only thus can we possibly give Australians that high standard of living to which they feel so justly entitled.

Probably the Premier may find some difficulty in inducing those who have placed him at the head of the Labour Party to believe in these principles. I agree with the Minister for Lands when he states that Labour organisations have developed on altogether wrong lines and that they have no discipline within their constitution. That is the real shortcoming of the industrial movement today. With him I hope that someone will take up the task of educating not only the young ones industrially, but also the older ones. I further agree with him in his statement that, until we get someone big enough to lead the Labour movement, we are going to have a continuance of industrial

trouble. I feel sure that I am stating his views when I express the hope that such a leader will soon be found.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [8.22]: I listened with considerable interest to a speech which was a vocal demonstration of attempts that have been made by printed word over the last few years to give an entirely misleading point of view—not through actual mis-statement—of the state of affairs that exists today. I was interested particularly to hear of attempts that are supposedly being made to try to pluck superficially from the breast of Labour this communistic carbuncle that has firmly embedded itself in the flesh of that movement. It will take more than reiteration of professed attempts to dissociate the Labour movement from the Communist movement; it will take an effort somewhat similar to that made in Victoria recently when a drastic surgical operation was suggested. But this might have resulted in the loss of great and valuable support for the Labour movement, and therefore it necessitated a hurried visit by the Prime Minister to Melbourne to interfere with the surgeon's knife.

Mr. W. Hegney: Where did you get that information?

Mr. LESLIE: That information is authentic and is fairly generally known. While I believe there are men in the Labour movement who are now sincerely desirous of getting rid of what I call the deep-dyed, red carbuncle, the day was when they clutched it to their breasts because of the benefit it would give them.

Mr. W. Hegney: When was that?

Mr. LESLIE: Labour never dissociated itself from Communists with any definiteness, and evidence of insincerity is apparent today. What was done at Fremantle? Mr. Healy got the Communist support. We find that, while there are those who profess to have nothing to do with the Communist movement, there is yet a disinclination to cast this infection aside. To do that is going to require a drastic operation. I do not know whether there are many members of this House who have had experience of a carbuncle, but it sets its tentacles in the flesh as an octopus would,

though at first it is not painful. The Labour movement found that this carbuncle was not painful at first. Now it is.

Mr. J. Hegney: I have had a carbuncle and know what it is.

Mr. LESLIE: The hon. member will find one in the Labour movement now. I am glad to say that at no time have we been obliged to deny association with the Communists. Everyone knows only too well that the wall protecting us from these self-seeking sections of the public is too high.

Mr. Withers: You have too many alliances now without joining up with another party.

Mr. LESLIE: We have no alliances. Instead of Labour's merely professing to dissociate itself from the Communist organisation, it needs to take definite action. I am afraid there is no likelihood of such action being taken this side of the Federal election, and, if it comes afterwards, it will be too late. By that time the carbuncle will have devoured the Labour body.

I was interested to hear tonight the most gloriously misleading statement that could be imagined. Unemployment, said the member for East Perth, has not the terrors now that it had previously.

Mr. Doney: Except for the man that is unemployed, of course.

Mr. LESLIE: I suggest that this is given the lie direct by the propaganda appearing in the newspapers almost daily over the signature of the Prime Minister, in which he appeals to the employers to provide work for at least one particular section of the community. The Prime Minister is appealing for the co-operation of employers.

Mr. Withers: It is only an appeal to the employers.

Mr. LESLIE: Why should that be necessary if unemployment has lost its terrors and is non-existent, as the member for East Perth said? The hon. member used figures to make a picture based on entirely wrong premises. Certainly before the war there were people drawing sustenance from the State Unemployment Office, and the number drawing benefits today—either the re-employment benefit from the soldiers' rehabilitation section or the unemployment allowance—was compared with the number draw-

ing benefits previously. The numbers, of whom there is no record in the office of the Commonwealth Employment Service—men who are not claiming unemployment or re-employment benefits—are quietly ignored for the purpose of leading people into an attitude of complacency. But there are 5,000 or 6,000 that the hon. member did not account for, and not merely the 2,000 receiving benefits.

The true figures of unemployment cannot be obtained merely by taking the numbers of those who are drawing the unemployment allowance. Before that allowance is paid, the applicant must produce his bank pass-book and give his history. There is a means test. Any person with an ounce of pride does not want that unemployment allowance if it is subject to a means test; he feels he has the right to it, as he has paid for it. He does not want to humble himself to ask for what is denied as his right. That is the position today. There are ex-Servicemen, justly entitled to the re-employment allowance, who have not claimed it. There is one point upon which I agree with the member for East Perth. He said that demobilisation had proceeded smoothly. It certainly did, because it was part of a military precision machine. Once the men got away from that military machine, however, they missed its precise action. They found that the plans which had been prepared for them by men with big ideas dealing with the post-war period were grand plans, excellent plans, but that they had so many limitations that it was impracticable to apply them.

The need today is not for misleading statements nor for misleading propaganda with which the community is being flooded. The need is for honesty. Dissatisfaction exists because of misunderstanding, because for years past the people were led to believe that certain things would be provided for them, that the terrors of unemployment would not exist after the war. I suggest to the member for East Perth that he accompany me a few times as I go round meeting ex-Servicemen. He will then know whether the terrors of unemployment exist or not. The post-war reconstruction training scheme will provide evidence proving that the terrors of unemployment exist in the heart of the average man in Australia today, although I allude in particular to ex-Servicemen.

Those men, because of fear of the future and of the dire consequences of unemployment, are anxious to get training which they believe will—God help them in their misunderstanding—guarantee them an income for the future. They are out for one thing only and that is a ticket in a union which is a close preserve. That is their object; that is their desire. They say, "If we can only get a union ticket, we are set." They do not mean a ticket in the A.W.U.; anyone can get that, as that union deals with the reserve class of labour. Just as those men were reserves in time of war, so are they now to be reserves in peacetime; but the selected few for whose security they fought all these years are going to be maintained in their privileged positions protected by closed unions.

Mr. Fox: Nearly all our soldiers were unionists.

Mr. LESLIE: Members of the A.W.U.! I grant the hon. member that.

Mr. Fox: There were members of other unions as well.

Mr. LESLIE: But the latter were in the minority.

Mr. Fox: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: I do not wish the member for East Perth to believe that I am attacking him particularly. I am speaking of the propaganda that has come forward during the past three or four years and that the people have accepted to such an extent that it is now ingrained in them. A state of dissatisfaction exists not among those who are enjoying what they won during the war, but among those who are not. In the Speech the following appears:—

Ministers fully recognise the heavy responsibility which rests upon the community to re-establish in civil life those whose service and sacrifice contributed so much to our national preservation.

I am fully in accord with that, but unfortunately the community will never accept that responsibility if we keep reiterating the talk that we heard tonight about everything in the garden being lovely, that God is in His Heaven and that we should not worry. The position today justifies concern; it justifies action on the part of the Government. I deplore that the Government has not seen

fit to take action to ensure that there shall be a better sharing of opportunity, than has prevailed in the past few months. The Lieut.-Governor put the position correctly in the paragraph of the Speech which I have just quoted. The member for East Perth said last year that he did not like the word "reconstruction." No more do I—nor the word "re-establish"—because it means that the object is merely to put a man back in the position which he previously occupied. I am prepared to concede that at no time during the war was any specific statement made that there would be a reward to the Serviceman or Servicewoman for his or her war service.

Mr. Watts: One vast vague promise!

Mr. LESLIE: That is correct. At no time was it specifically said that there would be a reward. But why has it been necessary for Governments to reiterate the statement in connection with post-war schemes, post-war training and re-establishment? They had instructed the officers in the departments to make the troops understand that none of the schemes was a reward for service. Does that not imply that the statement they made, the propaganda they issued, the promises they made, implied a reward? Now they say, "We are going to draw it back. All you are entitled to is re-establishment. If you were a pick-and-shovel johnnie you go back to the pick and shovel. If you were a sustenance worker you will be reinstated as a sustenance worker. If you happen to be one of the fortunate ones belonging to a close-preserve union (such as the member for South Fremantle alluded to), you will be re-established there. That is all you will get." And yet for six long years we have been speaking to these men about a new order, freedom from fear, freedom from want! It is time the people woke up.

I make this appeal to the Government, to throw in its lot in an endeavour to get the community to realise the truth of the statement in the Speech that a heavy responsibility rests upon the community at least to re-establish in civil life those whose service and sacrifice contributed so much to our national preservation. I regret that up to the present I have not seen any effort on the part of the State Government to ally itself with endeavours that have been made to re-establish, and even get a little better for, the wonderful men and women who gave their

services to the country. Western Australia has a better record than has any other State in regard to its enlistments. As the member for East Perth said, the State stands high not only for the number of its enlistments but also for the service given by those members in the Forces, a record which is acknowledged everywhere. I think it only right that the State Government should at least, if for no other reason than to endeavour to capitalise on what the manhood of this State has done, do all it can to secure for them a just reward. The Government has that obligation. I do not want the State Government to do what the Commonwealth Government is doing.

In reference to post-war plans, to post-war reconstruction and re-establishment, our biggest trouble is that the Government of Australia has shelved its responsibility on to other bodies to implement its plans, to put into effect the picture that it painted for the troops and for the people of this country. Not only are the ex-members of the Forces suffering but everybody else is suffering. There is a housing shortage and shortages exist everywhere in production. Go down the street and try to buy a suit! What do you get? There are plenty of dressing gowns—any amount of them—but not a suit of clothes. Try to buy a felt hat! There are plenty of women's hats, but not a yard of felt to make a decent hat for a man.

[Mr. Rodoreda took the Chair.]

Mr. Thorn: You cannot even buy a shirt.

The Premier: There are plenty at Narrogin, I believe.

Mr. LESLIE: There are plenty of fancy ties, but no shirts to put them on. The whole country is suffering in this post-war muddle because Governments have passed the buck, because they are passing the responsibility to other people—on to committees and organisations and academic gentlemen, on to anybody except themselves, so that they cannot be made blameworthy for the rotten consequences that their planning has brought about. They have left the decision as to what is going to happen to ex-members of the Forces, who went away when they were under 21, to a selfish section of the people. They are to say what is going to happen to these young men in the post-war period. They will either be relegated to the unskilled

class or, if they are fortunate, will be put to learning a trade. They are the young people who are worried about unemployment. They are the ones who fear the future. They went away at the most impressionable age, when they drank in pictures of the future—what the Leader of the Opposition earlier called nebulous promises. They were convinced by them and today they are heart-broken because of the absence of anything tangible.

I believe that the people of Australia, the people of this State, are sufficiently big-hearted and big-minded to be willing to share responsibility, to do everything they possibly can to see ex-Servicemen and women not only re-established but reaping a portion of the promise of reward that was held out to them. I believe they are big-hearted enough to do it if they are told straight out what is expected of them; but they are not going to do it, unless they are brought to realise their responsibility and they will not do so while people continue to put across the sort of thing we heard tonight. That sort of thing is not only said by those who should be responsible members of the community but is also stated in printed pamphlets, dodgers and posters issued literally by the ton.

Mr. J. Hegney: There must be an election shortly!

Mr. LESLIE: We have had tonight a classic instance of how something may be said with the idea of misleading people yet without any actual mis-statement being made. The member for East Perth kept talking about social benefits and in particular about child endowment, which was brought in during the war. When the words "during the war" are used they remind many people of the Labour Government, but our friend quite forgot to tell the House that it was the Menzies-Fadden Government which, three months before the Curtin Government took over, introduced child endowment.

Mr. Needham: The Labour Government increased it.

Mr. LESLIE: That is all right. It is easy to increase something. More important still, the member for East Perth quite forgot to tell us that it is the employer who provides child endowment through a tax that he pays—the payroll tax—or part of it, a consider-

able part of it. Why not give somebody else credit for doing something instead of endeavouring to mislead the people all the time? I suggest it is time there was some change in the ideas not only of the member for East Perth but of some of those who are associated with him. He spoke of the Arbitration Court providing the highest possible standard of living or comfort for the workers.

Mr. J. Hegney: What is wrong with that?

Mr. LESLIE: Nothing, except that he still sticks to the old idea that a big fat pay envelope means good comfortable living. What the hell is the good of money when you cannot spend it? It is not how much money one gets that counts but how much one can buy with the money one gets. What is the good of £100 a week if one cannot buy sufficient eggs and butter? What is the good of the Premier's salary when he cannot even buy a suit of clothes? What is the good of mine when I cannot get one? It is time that the members on the other side of the House got away from the old ideas. Let us see if we cannot set up an Arbitration Court that will say, "We are going to provide you with a decent standard of living. We are going to see you get the things you need and we are going to maintain a high standard of comfort for you in goods, not merely money." Instead of union secretaries being concerned about causing industrial turmoil which, on the member's own confession, they put right before the stage of disruption is reached; instead of these things engaging the attention of the Arbitration Court, it should be pointed out to union members that unless production is made possible they and their fellowmen are the ones who are going to live at a subnormal standard. That is the task of the Labour movement today.

Mr. J. Hegney: Who is producing goods except the workers?

Mr. LESLIE: Who is stopping things from being produced?

Mr. Mann: The communists!

Mr. J. Hegney: Nonsense!

Mr. LESLIE: Misleading statements must cease. The greatest need we have in Australia today is for somebody high in authority to have the intestinal fortitude to be

honest and tell people what are the limitations on their getting what they were promised; and why.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: We are going to do it because we did not hold out promises.

I want to deal very briefly now with soldier land settlement. I might be expected to make a long dissertation on this subject; but the Premier and the Minister for Lands know the extreme dissatisfaction that exists concerning the present position. My only complaint here is that I think our Government should have been honest and told the people where the fault lies in connection with the holding up of the land settlement scheme. If that had been done we would have gone a long way further than we are today. I know very well that some of the blame lies at the door of the Commonwealth Government and that, on the other hand, that Government can say the blame lies at the door of this Government. If there had been honesty on the part of our own Government—which I would have expected—we would have made greater progress. I am sorry the Minister for Lands is not present, but I trust that what I am about to say will be brought to his attention.

I hope that in the allotment of these farms to the soldiers under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme there is going to be no ballot. If it is found necessary for these farms to go to a ballot then I trust that a form of selection will take place so as to give some priority to those who have farmed in the district where the farms are situated. The ex-Service applicants for properties are rather concerned about this question. The Government has acquired, for settlement purposes, properties adjacent to farms owned by farmers who have sons who are applicants under the scheme. If an applicant in such cases could receive some priority in regard to the allotment of the farm in question he could be assisted by his father as well as being able to assist himself materially by his knowledge of the peculiarities of the district and the methods to apply. From inquiries I have made I know that the inability of the Government to acquire single farms, and even larger properties capable of subdivision, is due entirely to the fact that the prices offered are far too low.

I do not suggest that the Government should rush helter-skelter into purchasing land and farms, and so inflate land values. But there is a happy medium, and I think that the present method adopted by the Government in attempting to acquire farms is quite the opposite to inflation. I know people who are willing to offer their farms to the Government for soldier land settlement, but because they have learned of the method of valuation applied to neighbouring properties they feel that if they do offer their farms and the Government valuers deal with the properties on the same system of valuation as has applied elsewhere, the properties will be found to be valued at such a low rate that, if the farmer is a debtor to the bank, the bank will immediately question whether it has an equity. I know that happened in one case. I do not know what was the bank's valuation of the property, but it considered that it had a jolly good security when it advanced the man up to £3 an acre. The soldier settler valuers valued that property at £2 10s. an acre for their purposes. That is 10s. an acre less than what the bank advanced. When that fact became known other farmers who had stated they were inclined to help said, "No, I cannot afford to do so." The bank, in this case, certainly took no action, but at the same time that is going to the extreme in deflating land values, and it does not help in the acquisition of single farms or of properties suitable for the settlement of more than one man.

Mr. J. Hegney: They would be expert valuers.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, but their basis of valuation is wrong. The bank advances money on what it considers to be the productive capacity of the farm, as well as the securities on the property. The bank system is a reasonable one. It takes into consideration the personal equation, naturally, and also whether an undertaking is capable of meeting the interest and eventually repaying the debt; and the banks are pretty conservative these days. If the bank was content to advance £3 an acre its valuation would be a reasonable one and for sale purposes that property should have been valued at least at £3 10s. The R.S.L. at its annual conference, has several times brought forward the suggestion that some control should be exercised

over the sale of farm lands to other than ex-Service men. The reply has always been that it is not a practical proposition. I want to draw the attention of the Minister for Lands, and the Premier, to Act No. 5133, an amendment to the Soldier Settlement Act, passed by the Victorian Parliament on the 27th May this year. Section 5 states—

(a) Any sale of farming land (the municipal capital improved value of which exceeds One thousand five hundred pounds) to a person other than a discharged soldier shall, unless the Minister after consultation with the Commission consents to the sale, be void and of no effect.

(b) Such consent shall be given or refused within twenty-one days after application in writing by the vendor for such consent is made to the Commission, and if not so given or refused within such time shall be deemed to have been so given.

Paragraph (c) defines the term "farming land." Paragraph (d) states—

This subsection shall apply with respect only to sales made after the commencement of the Soldier Settlement (Amendment) Act, 1946, and before the thirty-first day of December, One thousand nine hundred and forty-six.

Our main worry has been that land has been disposed of to people who, we consider, should have only a secondary or tertiary consideration in the acquisition of land in Western Australia. I do not like to use the word "foreigners" because some are not foreigners in the strict sense of the word although they are of foreign extraction, but the people to whom I refer include also those who, because of their fortunate circumstances during the war, are in a position to acquire land, to pay big prices for it and to dodge the Sub-Treasury in doing so. While they are doing that they are stopping the ex-Service men from getting on the land. If the Closer Settlement Act, which was passed last year, could have inserted in it a section, similar to the provision in the Victorian measure, it would be a means of meeting, what is today, a source of considerable dissatisfaction among ex-Service men. I ask the Government to give serious consideration to the insertion of such a section. We feel that the country for which we have fought has been kept free for someone else who should not be here at all.

I want to speak for a moment on the question of subsidies—and the House remains dead

silent? I do not support the particular reason given last night by the member for Subiaco in describing her objection to subsidies but there is much in the subsidy question that gives farmers, who are concerned in receiving the subsidies, cause for considerable objection. A point that is lost sight of and one that the member for Subiaco who after all was speaking for an essentially industrial electorate, failed to submit is that the subsidising of primary products is actually a subsidising of wages. The only purpose for which we have subsidies of farm produce is to keep local selling prices down so that the purchasing of that produce is within the power of the wage earner. It is for that reason that the farmers object to the principle of subsidies. They do not object to the subsidy itself, but to the principle. Subsidies are necessary to fit into the national economy the basis of which today seems to be to subsidise everything. Wages are directly subsidised. The moment the cost of living goes up the Arbitration Court awards the worker an extra shilling or so per week. The manufacturer, the controller of industry or the importer has the power to subsidise himself by adding rises in costs on to his selling price, but the primary producer does not fit into the picture because he has no power to increase his price according to the rising costs imposed on him by the national economy through the increase in wages and other costs. He objects to that because it is what the people on the other side of the House and the industrial electorate of the Subiaco electorate consider spoon feeding. They lose sight of the fact that if it were not for the subsidy they would not get the farmer's product at the price for which they are getting it.

I hope it will be more widely realised that the farmer is not receiving charity in the form of a subsidy, but that the people generally are subsidising themselves. We can say that it is a matter of avoiding inflation or deflation but, distasteful as subsidies are to the farmer, he must fit in with them because that is our national policy. Nobody would be happier than the primary producer to see subsidies go out, and that he was not left, as he is, to the mercy of any Government that happens to be in power. With an orderly marketing system, under which the price at which he sells would have

relationship to his cost of production and a reasonable return, that would be the end, for the farmer, of any suggestion of subsidy and charity.

Mr. Fox: How would the economy get on with an over-production of wheat?

Mr. LESLIE: The farmer asks for orderly marketing, which would enable him to dispose of his goods in his own way. If he liked to produce his goods so that the market was glutted, that would be his own fault, but by giving him power to set up a marketing organisation to control what is his own, just as wages are controlled today by the worker, the need for subsidies would be removed. When the worker's costs increase he can go to the court and demand an increase to meet the higher cost of living as a right. The manufacturer has the right to put an extra penny on a packet of biscuits or a tin of jam, and the farmer asks for the same right. He will not cut his own throat by over-production.

Mr. Fox: He would be in for a bad time.

Mr. LESLIE: He could not be in for a worse time than he is today, when Governments take his produce from him and give him no say in the disposal of it, and tell him what he is to get for it, pocketing the balance. The member for South Fremantle would not suggest or accept the suggestion that has been put up under the wheat stabilisation proposal if a similar suggestion were made in regard to the wages of the worker. There it is proposed that farmers should, out of their own money, provide a reserve fund to meet the possibility of losses in the future. The same principle might be applied to the man who works for wages. The Government might say to him that in order to protect himself against a possible drop in wages in the future, everything over £5 should be taken from him and put aside for the time being. That is what is suggested to the farmer, and then it is said that he is getting a subsidy.

Mr. Fox: You are making it hard.

Mr. LESLIE: We are endeavouring to get the Government to make it reasonably easy for the farmer to carry on.

Mr. Fox: They are being treated better than ever before.

Mr. Mann: The member for South Fremantle should try it.

The Premier: You admitted tonight that you are a poor farmer.

Mr. LESLIE: So much has been said about wheat stabilisation and subsidies in the papers in recent times that some members, particularly those who are not personally interested in the land or in close contact with the problems of the man on the land—

Mr. Fox: I have had close contact with men on the land over more years than you have.

Mr. LESLIE: The member for South Fremantle has a few more grey hairs than I have, but I do not know that he has had closer contact with the man on the land in that time.

Mr. Mann: It is nice to know that the member for South Fremantle is a friend of the farmer.

Mr. LESLIE: I suggest that the members of the Government read and study and endeavour to apply to those in other circumstances what is attempted to be applied to the farmer. If that were done, I am satisfied that we would get reasonable consideration. The point that is lost sight of by them is that because a man is not swinging an axe at present it cannot be taken for granted that he has not done so. I can assure members on the other side of the House that most members on this side have been wage workers at some time and understand the working man's problems perhaps better than some of the members who profess to serve that section of the community only. I started work at 7s. 6d. per week.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. Needham: You were overpaid.

Mr. LESLIE: I think I was better paid then, for that job, than I am in any job today. I wish to commend the action of the Government in removing to some extent the acreage restrictions in the so-called marginal areas. I can only hope that is an indication that the responsible officers have realised that in classifying the country arbitrarily as marginal, as has been done, they made an error, and that their judgment in the past was wrong. I believe the day is not far off when all restrictions on cereal growing in that area will be removed. I believe it is impossible to carry out what the Government

has in mind, namely, to make it a stock-raising area, if limitations are attached that will mean a reduction in the area of cultivated land.

Doubtless the Premier will agree that if we are to maintain the fertility of our land and avoid soil erosion while keeping down pests as well, it is essential that these areas should be cultivated, and it is unreasonable to expect people to cultivate unless they get a reasonable return for their energy in undertaking the task and for the money that they spend in that direction. We can introduce whatever compulsion we like, but unless there is reasonable reward for the service rendered, which is the basis of living conditions everywhere, they will not do the job. I am very pleased we have obtained that extension from what at one stage looked like no acreage at all to 250 acres for wheat growing. There is a point to which I ask the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture to pay some attention. I think they are aware that the position regarding farm machinery is absolutely desperate today. Strong representations must be made by someone in authority, not by ordinary members of Parliament alone, in order to improve the position and meet the demands that exist today for the replacement of old machinery or the purchase of new farming implements.

I wish to refer certain matters to the Minister for Health and one concerns the hospital benefit fund payments.

Mr. J. Hegney: Are you referring to the hospitalisation scheme?

Mr. LESLIE: Members can refer to the matter under whatever title they may choose. I am concerned with the fact that, on the one hand, we have the Commonwealth Government telling us what grand people they are because they have provided a hospital scheme for us under which we will get free beds and at the same time we have the State Government making capital out of it. That position is apparent in many of the hospitals. Formerly, most of those hospitals in the country districts had no intermediate or private beds. The Minister for Health smiles, but he knows what I say is correct. Every bed was a public bed. When the hospital scheme was introduced, it meant that every bed in those hospitals was open to patients free of charge. That was

no good to this Government. It imposed a burden on the hospital fund and meant that the hospitals locally would be better off. In effect, it meant that the fund would become top-heavy. The result was that many beds that were really public beds were set aside as private or intermediate beds, and thus the number of public beds available was limited. That is the position existing to-day. There is more to it than that.

I have in mind an intimation that was issued from the department controlled by the Minister for Health which indicated the attitude to be adopted by those responsible for administering hospital affairs. As a result of this, when a patient goes to a hospital and the doctor, the matron or someone else in charge happens to know that the man is in reasonable financial circumstances, they say to him, "Come in, Mr. Jones. You do not want a public bed, do you?" That immediately puts the patient in the position of being a pauper should he insist on his rights and claim a public bed. Some intimation should be given to the hospitals intimating that everyone is entitled to a public bed. As I interpret the position, everyone is entitled to a public bed, but an individual can get a private or intermediate bed if he so desires. I do not think anybody should be placed in the position of being regarded as a pauper, polling on the community should he insist on being provided with a public bed. However, that is the position that prevails to-day, and it is up to the Minister's department to issue instructions to all hospitals making the position quite clear, and if that is done as a result of my representations to-night, I shall indeed be very pleased. The hospital authorities should be told that public beds are available for everyone on demand with intermediate or private beds if desired.

Mr. Doney: Is the Minister ready to make that promise?

Mr. LESLIE: He will not make any promise.

Mr. Doney: I thought he was going to make one.

The Minister for Health: I will have an opportunity to speak at a later stage.

Mr. LESLIE: With regard to the budgetary position, a deficit of £912,559 was disclosed at the end of the last financial year. It is impossible to say to what extent we agree with the Premier with regard to the

direction of the expenditure that was in excess of his estimate, or the causes of that expenditure. In view of the fact that he has persuaded the Commonwealth Grants Commission to agree to reimburse the State, we can withhold criticism with regard to incurring the deficit. There still remains the question, however, of whether the money has been spent wisely. That remains to be seen. I am more than pleased to find that the suggestion I made a couple of years ago has been found acceptable by the Government. My suggestion to the Government then was "Hang the expense! Needs must come before means. If we cannot find the means to meet the needs, the Commonwealth Government will jolly well have to do it." I congratulate the Government upon at last having appreciated the fact that some wisdom can emanate from the Opposition side of the House.

Mr. J. Hegney: You consider it was wise expenditure.

Mr. LESLIE: I do not say the expenditure was wise; I say it was a wise move.

The Premier: The hon. member flatters himself if he thinks the Government took the hint from him.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.18 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 8th August, 1946.

Address-in-reply, sixth day	PAGE 185
-----------------------------	------	------	------	------	-------------

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.33]: At the outset of my remarks I desire to say how much I feel personally the loss of Sir John Kirwan from this House. He was always a friend to me. I shall never forget on my first appearance in this House the way he made me feel that I was welcome and offered me all the advice possible. To you, as his successor, Mr. President, I offer my congratulations and hope that you will be spared long to occupy that office.

To the Chief Secretary I offer my congratulations on his appointment as Agent-General. In my opinion, nobody has so well earned a respite from parliamentary toil as has Mr. Kitson. I think it would require a man of herculean mental and physical capabilities indefinitely to carry on the work in the manner in which he has done since I have been a member, and long before that. I would seriously suggest to the Government that when a successor is appointed, considerable thought should be given to the amount of work laid upon the shoulders of any one man.

Unfortunately this policy is being adopted in many other governmental avenues. It strikes me as extraordinary that senior officers of the Public Service—I refer particularly to three men, Mr. R. J. Dumas, Mr. A. J. Reid and Mr. A. E. Clare—should be called upon to take on their shoulders responsibility for so many enterprises of the Government. I do not know how it is possible for these men to carry out all the tasks that are being allotted to them, and I would suggest very seriously that the monumental amount of work they are being asked to undertake is too much. I do not know how many committees and boards each of those three men have been appointed to, but the number is considerable. When one finds that the Director of Public Works has now been appointed to the Rottnest Board of Control, one wonders why there should be a need for one man to be appointed to all these avenues of service.

I often wonder what time Mr. A. J. Reid can devote to his work as Under Treasurer when I realise the number of other tasks that are imposed upon him. I have seen Mr. Reid working long and well on the Perth Hospital Board, which takes a considerable amount of time. If all his other appointments call equally upon his abilities, he is greatly overworked. It is not in the