

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The sordid side could be kept from publication.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The sordid side of some criminal offences is much more demoralising.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I agree with that, too.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not read the reports of divorce cases.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are sophisticated!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: As one grows older one gets sophisticated. It all depends upon the company one keeps.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Is that why you came here from another place?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If I am entitled to answer interjections, I would say that I came here because there appeared to be no better place to go to.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is a compliment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have found it a nice spot. I have been well received and I hope that my stay will be a long one.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I feel that we shall get on very well together. If we get on as well as we have up to date, I shall be satisfied—and I hope members will, be too. That is my contribution to the Address-in-reply debate. I wish to congratulate the Ministers, who have taken on a big job, but they do not want to get the notion that theirs is the only opinion.

The Honorary Minister: You are a nice one to talk like that!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In Western Australia there are many people anxious to help. That is the co-operative spirit of the people of the British Empire and it will get us out of our difficulties. We still have a difficult task ahead of us. I would not like to see the Old Country fail; I would give my last shilling and would work until I could toil no longer to prevent it, and I think my sentiments are shared by every true Australian. Let us give the Old Country whatever help we can to assist her to rally. She may be passing through a temporary phase, but her people are tightening their belts. Let us join with them and make sacrifices equal to theirs.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.54 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 26th August, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

As to Tenders for Supplying Locomotives.

Mr. STYANTS (on notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

In the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of the 26th July he is reported to have said that since his Government took office, orders had been placed for about 65 locomotives. If correctly reported, will he inform the House of the following details:—

- (1) Classes and numbers of engines involved in each class?
- (2) Dates tenders were called for each?
- (3) Dates tenders were accepted?
- (4) Names of successful tenderers?
- (5) Approximate dates of delivery?
- (6) The date that tenders were called for the 25 PR locomotives, the contract for which was recently signed?
- (7) Date tenders were accepted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 55 locomotives are on order, classes and numbers being:—(a) PR, 25 locomotives; (b) 4-8-2 light rail, 30 locomotives.

(2) (a) Quotations were sought through Agent General by cable dated the 17th October, 1946; (b) In view of the necessity for early augmentation of light rail locomotive stock, approval was given on the 7th July, 1947, to placing an order for the light rail locomotives, subject to right of cancellation following report of Royal Commissioner on Railways.

(3) (a) Cabinet approved acceptance of tender on 24/3/47, subject to confirming approval of incoming Government; confirming approval given on 3/6/47, and order placed by cable dated 11/6/47; (b) verbal order placed with local agent on 16/7/47 and confirmed on 18/7/47.

(4) (a) North British Locomotive Company Ltd.; (b) Beyer Peacock & Co.

(5) (a) Original delivery quoted was to commence September, 1948, at rate of three per week, but subsequent advice is that delivery is unlikely to commence before mid 1949 at earliest, owing to delay in acceptance of quotations; (b) 1950.

(6) Answered by number (2) (a).

(7) Answered by number (3) (a). Also 10 PR class engines are to be built at Midland Workshops.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to Completing Roleystone Extension, etc.

Mr. WILD (on notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In view of the residents of Roleystone having gone to all the expense involved in having their houses, shops, churches and other premises wired for electricity, following on the erection of the main transmission lines 18 months ago, and that grave inconvenience and loss is being suffered, will an assurance be given that every effort will be made to obtain the necessary insulators and cross arms, etc., and that when these are obtained the work will be completed?

(2) If not, on what work is it proposed to use the next quantity of insulators, etc., received and when will such assurance be given in respect of Roleystone?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Insulators are in very short supply, and maintenance of existing transmission lines must be given first priority. Completion of the Roleystone extension will be made before any other major transmission line extension is undertaken. Every effort is being made to obtain the necessary insulators and equipment.

(2) Answered by (1).

EDUCATION.

As to Shortage of Teachers, etc.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (on notice) asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the article in "The Daily News" of the 19th

August, headed "Misled and Sorry," in which it was stated that the wife of a British migrant from India had been "most rudely received" by an Education Department official?

(2) In view of the shortage of teachers, why was it not possible to utilise the services of the lady concerned?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes—since notice of this question was received. The official of the Education Department, however, denies that any applicant has been most rudely received. It is presumed that the case in question is that of Mrs. Huston, a married woman recently arrived from India, to whom the whole position was explained in a friendly and courteous manner including the fact that the Department could not be expected to move its permanent staff out to the country leaving the best positions in the city and urban areas for the benefit of teachers from elsewhere and, further, that no married woman under the present Act can be permanently employed by the Department. The official in question is well known to the member for North-East Fremantle and his knowledge of him would indicate that it is extremely unlikely that anything but courtesy would be extended to any inquirer.

(2) After the explanation of the above facts, and others relevant, the usual employment form was obtained which must be filled in by all applicants, and it is understood this has not been returned.

KINDERGARTENS.

As to Government Assistance.

Mr. GRAHAM (on notice) asked the Treasurer:

(1) What is the total financial assistance at present being granted to kindergartens?

(2) What is the basis upon which such payment is made?

(3) Is it intended to increase the amount?

(4) If so, to what extent?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

(1) Amount paid for financial year ended the 30th June, 1947, £904.

(2) £2 per capita.

(3) Yes, pursuant to a decision made early this year the assistance is being doubled, but at present further assistance on a different basis is under consideration.

(4) Answered by (3).

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Metropolitan and Goldfields Consumption and Charges.

Hon. E. NULSEN (on notice) asked the Minister for Water Supply:

(1) What is the daily consumption of water used from Mundaring Weir through the Goldfields pipe line?

(2) How many gallons of water are delivered to Norseman daily?

(3) What is the metropolitan consumption of water per day?

(4) What is the charge per 1,000 gallons at Norseman?

(5) What is—

(a) Rebate—domestic, business, dairying, gardening and mining;

(b) Excess—domestic, business, dairying, gardening and mining, at Norseman?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) In 1946/47 average consumption 6,100,000 gallons per day; maximum consumption 8,170,000 gallons per day.

(2) Average consumption 220,000 gallons per day; maximum consumption 280,000 gallons per day.

(3) In 1946/47 average consumption 27,718,000 gallons per day; maximum consumption 48,423,000 gallons per day.

(4) and (5) Rebate—6s. 8d. per 1,000 gallons. (Rebate does not apply to mining services.)

Excess—Domestic—If rate paid before 10th March, 5s. per 1,000 for first 5,000; if rate paid after 10th March, 6s. per 1,000 for first 5,000; all water exceeding first 5,000, 3s. per 1,000 gallons.

Excess—Business, dairying and gardening, 10s. per 1,000 gallons.

Mining—Flat rate on consumption, 10s. per thousand gallons.

Special Agreements and Prices—Street watering, Road Board park, 7s. per 1,000 gallons.

Norseman Hospital—Excess, 3s. per 1,000 gallons.

Standpipe—15s. per 1,000 gallons.

Vegetable Concession (subject to approval), expires 31st December, 1947—

Ordinary Domestic prices for excess consumption equivalent to excess consumption for 1941 (5s. or 6s. for first 5,000 gallons) with maximum of 5,000 at higher price; balance of excess in any year over and above excess consumption for 1941, 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons; if service unmetered in 1941 the first 5,000 gallons in any year charged at 5s. or 6s. and any further excess at 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons; if no excess consumption in 1941, all excess each year at 2s. 6d.

Norseman and Central Norseman Gold Mines—First 1,108,000 gallons, 10s. per 1,000 gallons (each 4-weekly period); balance consumption each period, 7s. per 1,000 gallons.

There have been no substantial changes in these rates for the last three or four years.

T.B. EXAMINATIONS.

As to Infected Dairy Cows Destroyed.

Mr. HOAR (on notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

On the 21st August he supplied figures showing the number of T.B. infected dairy cows destroyed in the metropolitan area during 1933-47. Will he now go back to the commencement of the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act and tell the House how many T.B. infected dairy cows in the metropolitan area were destroyed between 1927 and 1933?

The MINISTER replied:

From the commencement of the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act in January, 1928, to the end of December, 1935 (the previous figure related to the period commencing 1st January, 1936), 920 head of cattle were slaughtered.

BANKING, NATIONALISATION.

As to Source of Compensation Funds.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Acting Premier:

In view of recent Press reports to the effect that the Prime Minister refused to disclose to the Premier of South Australia information as to the source from which is to come the £100,000,000 required to nationalise banking in Australia, will the Acting Premier endeavour to obtain from the Prime Minister information as to where this money

is not coming from, namely—

- (a) Surplus revenue that should have been returned to the States under Section 94 of the Constitution;
- (b) credits by foreign countries not disinterested in the ruin of Australian democracy.

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

I think I had better answer the hon. member by saying that the matter will receive consideration.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Acting Premier and Tonnage of Imports by Ship.

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning): I desire to make a personal explanation. On the 20th August a question asked by the member for East Perth regarding tonnage of shipping received in this State during the periods January-February-March and April-May-June, respectively, was answered to the effect that in the first period 89,095 tons were imported and in the second period 76,177 tons. A letter has now been received from the General Manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust regretting that it was discovered that an error had crept in through certain ships' cargoes not having been included, and the correct figure for the April-June quarter of the year, as actually received at Fremantle during that period, was 83,700 tons.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Brand, leave of absence for one week granted to the Attorney General (Hon. R. R. McDonald—West Perth) on the ground of urgent private business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the 21st August.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [4.45]: It is not my intention to indulge in the usual felicitations because I believe they have already been overstressed. Rather do I feel inclined to say that my wishes in respect of the matter are that the time in office of yourself, Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees and Ministers opposite shall be

just as long as one political opponent would wish of another. My general impulse is one of expressing thankfulness to my electors upon their returning me for a further term. Apart altogether from one's desire to serve one's State and country, it is in the case of many of us a matter of extreme personal concern that we be returned on account of economic conditions and livelihood. The periodical approach of an election is one that conjures up fears of perhaps the worst happening. On the last occasion quite a number of members were unsuccessful in their attempt to secure re-election to Parliament. Having before me the spectacle of so many new faces, it is only natural that my thoughts should revert to the period just over four years ago when I first stood in this Chamber.

I recall how seized with enthusiasm I was at that time, how strong was my idealism and general desire to serve. I am not suggesting for one moment that the latter desire is in any way dampened, but at the same time a few years in this House as a member of this Parliament does teach us certain things. My experience has been—I interpolate here with an intimation that a great deal of my remarks will be spoken in a general sense, not wishing directly to criticise either the late Government or that which has recently been elected to office—that a private member does little else so far as Parliament itself is concerned than make speeches, further representations and make approaches to others generally. It is denied such a member actually to do things or to make decisions, and accordingly it is only a matter of time before there comes, I should say, over every member, unless he is particularly fortunate in some respects, a feeling of futility and frustration.

It is my considered opinion that private members should be given greater opportunities to perform certain functions. I will have something further to say with regard to that point later on in my address, going beyond what I have already stated, admittedly in sketchy fashion. I come to the point where I ask myself whether or not it is really worth while making a contribution to a general debate such as that which is now proceeding, because of the extreme doubt as to whether or not any real or official notice is taken of ideas and suggestions that are submitted by individual members. I suppose no harm is done in

one's making a further attempt. Accordingly there are ways in which, I am going to suggest, certain matters could be improved for the general welfare of the State.

There is just one point I would like to mention apropos of my previous remarks, and it is that the Government might give some consideration to the appointment of Assistant Ministers. I appreciate that such a procedure would prove of value only to those members who sit on your right hand, Mr. Speaker, but at the same time in politics it is inevitable that there will be a turning of the wheel, in consequence of which the step I suggest might be indirectly of some benefit. I am not speaking only from the standpoint of remuneration, but have in mind the fact that such men could play some part directly in the affairs of State. At the present moment the first intimation that a private member has of work to be undertaken in his electorate is, all too often, an announcement in the morning paper. That applies equally, of course, with regard to work which directly affects his electorate irrespective of the fact that it may actually take place outside its borders.

If there were Assistant Ministers, there would be a greater opportunity for members to take a direct part in the State's affairs and in administration generally. Furthermore, on those occasions when Ministers were away in other portions of the State or elsewhere in the Commonwealth or when misfortune should strike one or other of them, necessitating their admission to hospital, there would be Assistant Ministers who would be familiar with the working details and administration of their departments, and there would not be the interruptions that are occasioned at the present moment. I recall an incident when a deputation to a certain Minister was arranged. Before it could be held the Minister responsible for the department was struck down with illness and his portfolio was accordingly transferred temporarily to another Minister. The deputation upon a certain morning was ushered into the office of the acting Minister, who confessed quite frankly that he did not know the first thing about the matter upon which the deputation was seeking to make representations to him. I emphasise that if we had Assistant Ministers such a position could

be overcome. In addition, I think the newly-appointed Ministers already to some extent feel that they are being overburdened with work and in many cases are required to attend to details which could be left to an Assistant Minister, thus leaving questions of major policy and more important matters to be dealt with by the Minister himself. I make that suggestion in the hope that the Government will see fit to consider it and perhaps give effect to a decision on it. If that decision were favourable I am certain it would redound to the credit of the members of the Government and assist in the better working of Parliament and of Government departments.

During the course of my remarks this afternoon it is not my intention to agitate the handle of the parish pump, nor is it my intention to make any reference to the electioneering that took place in the recent campaign. So far as I am concerned, that election ceased on the 15th March and all of us are now taking preliminary steps or laying the foundation for a campaign to be waged later on. My attitude will be that should the members of the Government err in any degree I shall not hesitate to be critical of their actions. I may have something to say in one or two connections dealing with that aspect this afternoon, but I shall take every available opportunity to remind the members of the new Government of the many promises and rash statements which they made to the public if they fail to keep those promises.

Perhaps it is customary for members of an Opposition to run to extremes at election time. If that be so, then they did so with a vengeance at the last election, but I make no criticism of the Government or its supporters on that score, except to say that the members of the Government will be constantly reminded of the statements made by them, and probably made in anticipation that there would not be a change in the position of the parties. However, they have become the Government and are now placed in the position of having to honour the promises they then made. The only exception I desire to make in connection with the recent election is to mention the slighting references of the member for Victoria Park to a pamphlet which I issued during my campaign. He sought to ridicule the pamphlet on the ground that there

was a picture of Parliament House on the front cover. There was no pretence about that, of course, because no-one would be so absurd as to think that I was endeavouring to claim credit for having erected the building. I pointed out to my constituents that Parliament House was the place to which they had elected me and to which I was seeking re-election, and that I had escorted some hundreds of people over the building and explained to them the functions of Parliament and other matters appertaining to Parliament generally.

I certainly did not resort to the device—perhaps because of its doubtful advantage in my case—of having a photograph of myself on the front page; and if I may refer to the member for Victoria Park, he published a photograph which, to all appearances, was taken some time in the last century. He is probably smarting from the blows which he suffered at the hands of the ex-Minister for Works, who exposed his hollow claim to responsibility in a large measure for the action of the Government in commencing the construction of the new Causeway. The member for Northam told the electors of Victoria Park, as he had a right to do, that not one representation had been made to him in that connection by the present member for Victoria Park. How I came into the picture I do not know, except perhaps that the member for Victoria Park is, in essence, the member for the Perth City Council, and because I, as the member for East Perth—this is not anything singular with respect to myself—was responsible for initiating certain moves that were finally given effect to by the Perth City Council, which provided facilities for the people whom I represent. The member for Victoria Park knows perfectly well that a State member does make representations and does initiate movements that are ultimately dealt with by local governing bodies, by State Government departments and in many cases by Federal departments. Naturally, in submitting one's claims to electors, a member takes advantage of mentioning those matters with which he was associated.

Mr. Read: The City Council did those things.

Mr. GRAHAM: I did that, and no more. The City Council did those things, of course. As I said in my opening remarks, a private

member of this Parliament in fact does not do things. He makes representations to various authorities which have the final say and, then there are certain instrumentalities which actually do the work. If I am successful in having postal facilities provided in the electorate of East Perth, surely to goodness I am not expected by the member for Victoria Park to rise at eight o'clock in the morning, set about laying the foundations and then laying the bricks and completing the other portions of the building! That is too ridiculous for words!

Arising out of the elections, we have had certain criticism, unfortunately quite warranted, of the state of the electoral rolls. I say nothing about the permanent officers of the Electoral Department. I have heard on various occasions the methods that are employed by casual persons who I understand are appointed by the department from time to time to undertake a canvass of the rolls. On this occasion I had direct evidence of the procedure that was followed. Apparently a canvasser went to a local corner shop and asked the proprietor who lived next door and who lived several doors up and so on. He made his check from that one building instead of, as was his bounden duty, going from door to door and making personal inquiries as to who resided in the houses. The work was done in this casual, haphazard manner. Is it therefore any wonder that certain persons' names were wrongfully struck off the rolls and all sorts of wrong information given to the permanent officers of the Electoral Department?

The electoral rolls are the keystone of our democratic system because, unless people are enrolled to vote for us, any kind of result might be obtained. This work is so important that, in my opinion, members of the permanent staff should be constantly engaged in the task of enrolling persons and cleansing the electoral rolls. I say that should be done more or less as an interim measure. But I feel that the time is long overdue when Western Australia might, with advantage, follow the procedure which is adopted in quite a number of the other States at present, where the Federal electoral department is the enrolling authority. While it is quite simple to us, electors become confused because of the number of electoral cards it is necessary for them to fill in. If

there is a Federal election to be held, they check the roll and find their names on it. Consequently when the State election takes place six months later and they discover that they are not enrolled they are amazed. They are not aware of the fine distinction between the Federal and State rolls.

If there were a single enrolling authority—and, after all, the Commonwealth electoral department has the advantage of postmen going from door to door and noting changes of address for postal purposes—there could be a much closer check than it is possible for us to make unless we have a tremendous special staff attached to the State Electoral Office. As that system is in vogue in certain States, I feel that the Government might give consideration to such a procedure here, so that one enrolment would suffice for State and Federal elections. Of course, our own department would be responsible for the conduct of an election here, just as at present; but the rolls would be based on information secured by the Federal authorities. It would make the job far simpler if, as has been suggested by a number of speakers, there were co-terminal boundaries. I mentioned this matter in the House some years ago and discussed it with the Chief Electoral Officer for the Commonwealth, and he informed me that there would be no great difficulty in amending the sub-divisional boundaries of the Federal electoral divisions to conform to our State electorates.

As the Government has already intimated its intention to carry out a re-distribution of boundaries, I feel that if there were a consultation with the Federal authorities it could be mutually agreed that the boundaries should be co-terminal thus overcoming the confusion that exists when a person may be in, say, the North Perth State electoral district but in the Maylands sub-division of the Perth Federal electorate. All these different names and titles are confusing and we should endeavour to overcome the difficulty that exists.

I wish to make some observation with regard to this place in which our deliberations occur. I do not desire to be misunderstood, but I feel that some steps should be taken to have Parliament House completed. I realise there will have to be a long-range plan, but preliminary measures could be undertaken. From inquiries, I learn that it would cost somewhere between £350,000 and

£400,000 to complete this building in accordance with the original scheme. Of course a suggestion that such work should be undertaken at present can be counted out of court altogether. But it is 43 years since the building was erected. What is now used as the front is, in fact, the rear. In the future front of Parliament House there is a galvanised iron structure where the greater proportion of our staff works. Bitterly cold in winter and tremendously hot in summer, it has been in existence for 43 years; yet it was supposed to be a temporary structure! It is, of course, somewhat worse now than when it was built. There are rough bricks jutting out in various parts of the building waiting to receive additions; and there are many scraps of hoop-iron hanging from the building and blowing in the breeze, waiting to connect with the balance of Parliament House when it is put under construction.

Hon. A. H. Panton: So is the foundation stone.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes: there is a foundation stone approximately ten yards from the front of the building. Surely it was the intention when the first bricks were laid that some day Parliament House should be completed. The facilities in this place are extremely poor, as everybody knows. I have mentioned the plight of members of the staff in the corrugated iron structure, which is a disgrace to the institution. The Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition are in a little lean-to on the right hand side of the building. That lean-to is constructed of asbestos and corrugated iron. There is such a shortage of accommodation that there is only one common room for members. The thought of 50 members of this Chamber endeavouring to find space in order not merely to assemble and pass the hour of the day, but to do writing and telephoning and study and the rest of it, is too ludicrous for words.

It becomes necessary for a member who has work to do—and speaking for myself, a member has ample work to occupy his time—to conduct something in the nature of a hunt around the building to find a quiet spot. There are some rooms upstairs, but occasionally there are Royal Commissions and Parliamentary inquiries taking place in them and there are Party meetings being held; and certain other rooms belong to officers of Parliament. The other day I sought in vain for a place in

which to undertake a certain research. Finally I had to go to the library. But in the library were a number of the staff. It was during their luncheon period and they were gathered around the fire. There were several members present as well, and from the adjoining room there was noise emanating from members enjoying a game of billiards. The position, generally, as members are aware, is most unsatisfactory. There is only one room in which members can see constituents, and we have witnessed the spectacle of members conducting interviews in the halls and the passages or out in front of the building on the footpath. Parliament has a certain dignity and members have a certain importance in the community. It should not be necessary for half a dozen different conferences to take place in one single room. I realise, as I stated, and as I now emphasise, that any additions to Parliament House cannot be undertaken immediately. There are other difficulties, too, of which there is no need to make special mention. All members are well aware of them.

My proposal is that the Government should each year set aside a certain sum of money so that in any one year there would not be a heavy strain upon the finances of the State in respect of the completion of Parliament House. What that figure should be, can be determined by somebody more competent than I. Perhaps it could be £10,000 or £20,000 a year and the work might be put in hand in stages. It would as everybody agrees be some little while before the work could be undertaken. As a beginning, it would be necessary to demolish the corrugated iron structure which is used by the staff generally, and considerable work would have to be done to provide accommodation for that staff. Thereafter it might be possible to add a room or two as money was placed in the fund, and in course of time the refinements or some of the better appointments that are necessary could be added until the building was finally completed. I feel that unless some start is made the building will never be completed. As the amount involved is fairly considerable, unless an annual allocation is made, the work is likely to be still further postponed, until we shall reach the time when that temporary iron structure, which was erected 43 years ago, will be celebrating its centenary.

There has been a good deal said in this Chamber, and through the columns of the

Press, about building materials. I have reached the stage where I desire to say a few words regarding the Honorary Minister, because her name has been most prominent in connection with this matter. Because of astute campaigning, the impression generally is that some remarkable results have been achieved, owing to the work and influence of that Minister, in the bringing of considerable quantities of material to Western Australia. I have asked a number of questions in this Chamber and have received answers to them. In the first instance those answers revealed that many months ago—as a matter of fact last year—there were officers specially appointed by the then Government to do all in their power in various capitals in the Eastern States—and the answers to my queries reveal which States they visited—in order to secure greater allotments of materials for Western Australia.

The Premier informed me that the final authority for shipping allocation to Western Australia was the Australian Shipping Board. Yet, whilst he may not have said so in so many words, without any question the inference or the suggestion to the public generally was that the new Honorary Minister was responsible for the quantities of goods that were being shipped to Western Australia. So I was, astonished at the answer to a question I received last week. That answer has been corrected this afternoon by the Acting Premier; but in any case the figures still reveal that a lesser tonnage of shipping arrived at Fremantle from the Eastern States during the first three months of the term of office of this Government, as, against the final three months of the Wise Government. Therefore, it appears that there has been something in the nature of a vaudeville with a particular Minister clowning and making this pretence that her super efforts were responsible for bringing tremendous supplies of goods to this State; whereas, in fact, there has been a diminution in quantity of the materials received from the Eastern States. That is revealed in the answers supplied by the Acting Premier.

The Honorary Minister: Of the tonnage, not the supplies.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not appreciate the fine distinction. The fact remains there has been a lesser tonnage of materials arriving from the Eastern States than previously. Yet all the propaganda issued by the Hon-

orary Minister served to make people believe that otherwise was the case.

The Minister for Lands: You are missing the main point. She provided for essential materials to come here, not toys.

Mr. GRAHAM: I realise that it is a simple matter to interject in generalities. I have before me a schedule setting out in detail the various items of building materials, machinery and so on shipped. I had the return especially prepared so that I would know what the situation was. I made inquiries from the Fremantle Harbour Trust and, in this House, from the Premier, and so I feel that I do know a little about the matter. It will come as a shock to the people of Western Australia to learn that, after all this trumpeting, the results have been meagre indeed, and that there has been a falling off in the volume of supplies reaching this State. I also asked a question about building permits. It was answered—this experience is not unusual—in a different form from what I had anticipated, but among other things it revealed that the number of permits issued for new buildings in this State for the three months ended the 31st March of this year was greater than for the three months ended the 30th June last, which disclosed a falling off.

The Chief Secretary: It was necessary, as too many permits had been issued.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Labour Government, which was so trenchantly criticised for its inactivity in matters related to the supply of materials and commodities to Western Australia, had a better record than that of the new Government, and the number of new permits issued revealed that, in the final quarter of the term of the Labour Government, more permits were issued for new buildings than in the first three months of office of the new Government.

The Chief Secretary: Without any regard to the supplies of material available.

The Minister for Lands: Or to the finishing of the homes.

Mr. GRAHAM: We must be fair in that regard. The State Housing Commission has an authority which, as far as I am aware, is not subject to influence by members or Ministers in the granting of permits.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I wish that were so.

Mr. GRAHAM: We make representations, but it is left to the discretion of the Commission whether or not a permit is granted.

The Chief Secretary: Not entirely.

Mr. GRAHAM: The same personnel, presumably working in accordance with the same general formula, in their wisdom issued permits for 587 new buildings in the quarter ended the 31st March, and 580 in the quarter ended the 30th June; this after all the trumpeting that we have heard about what the new Government is doing. It will have to make better efforts and show greater results than we have witnessed up to date. Whether the fault is that of the State Housing Commission or not, I think I am echoing the sentiments of the great majority of members in saying that I am extremely dissatisfied with the work that is proceeding at present. There appear to be cases of utter hardship listed, which may receive favourable consideration after three months, six months or some still more distant period in the future, while there is a number of persons who, to my certain knowledge, have no claim to houses—and who would have no valid claim for the next five years—but have secured permits. I have my own ideas as to how it is done. I realise that it is extremely unfair to make general statements of this nature, and therefore I will pursue the matter no further.

The Chief Secretary: You have already pursued it too far.

Mr. GRAHAM: One should be prepared to quote actual instances, and I could do that, but I refuse to make myself a policeman.

The Honorary Minister: Do it!

Mr. GRAHAM: There is something radically wrong at present.

The Chief Secretary: Are you accusing the Commission?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am making no accusations at all, but I do make the assertion that practically all members are dissatisfied with the conditions at present obtaining, and I desire to see some rectification of the position.

The Minister for Lands: Were you satisfied with the position up to the 15th March?

Mr. GRAHAM: No. I have stated that the bulk of my remarks this afternoon

would be made—unless I specifically intimated otherwise—without any comparison of one Government with another. My statements in this regard have perfect application. I suggest that two members of Parliament be co-opted to the Commission. I have been told some alarming stories by persons who should be in a position to know, one of whom confessed that he had been a party to practices which, to say the least of it, are not all that could be desired, though he said it was necessary for him to do what he did in order to continue in business. These stories may be completely without foundation, but I know of cases of persons having secured houses when, to my mind, they should not have been able to do so, and when, on their own admission—in some instances—permits should not have been granted to them. How they achieved results favourable to themselves is not for me to say at this moment, but there are other people living, four or five families, with children, in one house, while a father, mother and three or four children are living in one room. There are people living in caravans, and yet for them the position appears to be hopeless.

I hope and trust that everything is being conducted under the aegis of the State Housing Commission. I realise that the Commissioners themselves cannot watch every detail of the proceedings. We, as members of Parliament, are the ones to whom approaches are made by our constituents, and we are criticised when they are unable to obtain satisfaction, so I think we should play some part in the matter. It should be possible for a member from the Government side of the House and one from the Opposition side to have access to the files, to see what types of persons are receiving permits, and to check them against the types that are now receiving consideration. Those members should be able generally to satisfy themselves that everything is being done fair, square and above board, to use the term generally applied. If my suggestion is adopted by the Government, I hope and trust that such members as are co-opted will be given full authority to scrutinise the files, attend at meetings of the Commission and generally to keep in close contact with what is being done.

Hon. A. H. Panton: To whom would they report?

Mr. GRAHAM: I feel that in the first instance it would have some effect on the officers of the Housing Commission. If matters generally were not being dealt with on a satisfactory basis, they could be ventilated freely in this House, and there would be somebody akin to other members who could, on their behalf, make inquiries and check the records, in accordance with the facts as known to members. I will not dilate further on the matter, but think some consideration should be given to it.

The bulk of my remarks will now be related to the vexed and difficult problem of transport and traffic matters generally. I preface what I have to say by the statement that at no stage will I plead for better transport in my own electorate, but will deal with the matter on a general basis. The time has arrived when courage and a bold policy on the part of the Government are required, irrespective of the political colour of the Party occupying the Treasury bench. The position is rapidly going from bad to worse. One could easily say that it is necessary to widen all the streets of Perth in order to resolve many of our difficulties, but I will make some suggestions that I think might help to overcome certain bottlenecks and provide a solution to many of the problems with which we are at present confronted.

It is not necessary for me to emphasise existing difficulties. It is well known that both in and beyond the immediate city block it is practically impossible for anyone to park a car for more than 15 minutes. Some member will probably interject to say that one is lucky to find space in which to park a car for even two minutes. As this is the position obtaining now, some idea may be had of the traffic jams that will occur when there are still more vehicles on the roads. One can easily visualise that in the future traffic will have practically to be banned from the inner metropolitan area or, if not that, then there will have to be a ban on parking within the immediate vicinity of the chief city block. That would constitute a tremendous handicap to business enterprise and individuals generally who, in the course of their daily work, must enter the city to do their shopping, and so on. We must ask ourselves what obstructions at present in the streets could reasonably be cleared away.

On analysing the matter closely, I wonder whether it is either necessary or desirable to have permanently reserved on the highways spaces for taxi vehicles. After all, if anyone seeks to commence some other business enterprise, he first establishes himself in his own premises, on his own block of land. As there is a great deal of "huntin' and shootin'" at present in the case of street photographers operating on the pavements—which are the pedestrians' thoroughfare—I wonder whether private taxi owners after being given reasonable notice, should not be asked to provide their own parking accommodation. After all, certain of them—Essential Taxis, for instance, which I think is the largest concern of all—have their own rank, and there is nothing difficult about calling a taxi. There are plenty of public telephones in prominent positions, and in any case a walk of a couple of hundred yards would be all that would be necessary, in most cases, to hail a taxi. But they are there, permanently occupying specially reserved spaces for 24 hours of the day. I believe that, with advantage, the private taxis could be eliminated from the streets so far as permanent parking is concerned. The streets should be available for traffic to pass to and fro and for limited periods to come to a state of rest in order that business might be done inside adjacent premises.

My remarks about taxis apply equally to trucks. Wellington-street is one of the most busy thoroughfares in the metropolitan area. Yet from Queen-street to William-street there is a whole line of trucks and goods vans generally which have special parts marked out for them. To occupy those parts is their sole prerogative throughout the hours of the day and night. Again I say that persons who engage in business enterprises should have property of their own. Most of those trucks, admittedly, are doing business with the Railway Department, but here again I suggest that perhaps the department itself could run a fleet of trucks.

I see no reason why a person, say, at Narrogin, should not be able to consign an article to a person, say, at Walcott-street, Mt. Lawley, the train to bring it to the central goods yards or parcels office and a truck operated by the department to complete the delivery. At present the consignee receives a note of advice or the matter is

left to the discretion of private operators as to whether or not they convey the goods to their destination. Surely the Railway Department should endeavour to increase its facilities and services by conveying goods from the point of origin to the point of destination without having other interests obtruding at some stage of the journey. Some thought should be given to this idea, but, in the first instance, I am concerned with clearing the vehicles from permanent stations in congested thoroughfares of the city.

The Minister for Railways: You will find that will be done in the very near future.

MR. GRAHAM: I am pleased to have that assurance. Until there is a widening of the main streets of the city, there will be no real solution of the traffic problem. I appreciate that street-widening would be a tremendous undertaking and one that would have to form part of a long-range plan, but I have a suggestion to make which might go part of the way and would not be tremendously expensive. At any rate it would be a great boon to the business community, to pedestrians and to users of the roads. In the corner of this Chamber I have had several diagrams displayed which may assist members to follow the point I am endeavouring to make. To be explicit and to demonstrate what I intend without using diagrams is an exceedingly difficult matter.

The position at present is that we have only one street in the city block worthy of the name, namely, St. George's-terrace, which is approximately 100 feet wide. Murray, Barrack and William streets are 66 feet and Hay-street is about 53 feet wide. When we consider that these streets have 10 feet on either side, a total of 20 feet, taken from the roadway to provide footpaths, we find that Barrack-street has only 46 feet of roadway and the footpaths are very narrow. My suggestion is that there be resumed from the ground floor of abutting buildings a strip approximately 15 feet wide, this portion to be used for footpaths. The upper floors of those buildings would still obtrude over that space of 15 feet, but the pedestrians would utilise as footpaths the areas which at present are roughly occupied by the shop fronts. The owners of the buildings would have to sacrifice 15 feet on the ground floor, but other storeys would not be interfered with. Because of the height of buildings and their original construction, this would probably necessitate providing a colonnade for

each new footpath, instead of having verandahs unsupported by posts, as seems to be the tendency nowadays.

If we reflect upon the General Post Office, we can visualise the situation, for there we have what is tantamount to an inner footpath. My suggestion might not be necessary in the case of Forrest-place, but in the other streets I have mentioned, the footpath would extend 15 feet into the inner portion of the buildings. Under this scheme valuable space would be taken from adjacent businesses, but the situation that prevails is desperate and is becoming worse yearly. The longer the tackling of this problem is delayed, the more congested will the streets become until we shall be compelled to a great extent to ban the traffic of those operating in the central block.

My ideas could be explained more fully on another occasion, but the result would be to make Barrack, Murray and William streets, for example, the width of St. George's-terrace, except for about three feet. The footpaths, instead of being 10 feet wide, would be 15 feet wide, and the pavement carrying the vehicular traffic would be 66 feet instead of 46 as at present. In other words there would be an overall increase of 50 per cent. in those thoroughfares. If that were done, we would have something reasonable in the way of streets and it would be possible to introduce electrical flashing signs, such as other capital cities have, for the regulation of traffic. Their installation is impossible here owing to the narrowness of the streets, impossible because vehicular traffic could not be permitted to take the right-hand turn as is done in other cities. Perhaps these matters could be investigated, but I believe I have suggested a way out of the difficulty and something that could be done for a fraction of the cost that would be entailed by a complete resumption and demolition of the fronts of all the buildings in the main streets of the central block.

In conjunction with this idea—and it has a direct bearing on traffic problems and general congestion—is the fact that the streets of Perth were designed to accommodate buildings of limited height. Natural features such as the river on the south and the railway station on the north compress the city area, and the tendency is for the city to grow vertically instead of horizontally. Therefore it is necessary to impose

some limitation on the height of buildings, not an arbitrary height but such as might be determined by some authority based on a formula. If my ideas are worth anything, I should limit the height of a building frontage to the width of the street. In a street 66 feet wide, the maximum height to which the frontage of a building could be erected would be 66 feet. Then it would be necessary to have a break equal to half of the width of the street, 33 feet, before the next storeys were built. The frontages of buildings accordingly would take the form more or less of steps and stairs. In this way the height of buildings could be regulated and the narrower the streets were, the less would be the height of the buildings.

There are other factors. In a narrow street where the buildings rise directly from the street alignment, there is only a very short period of the day when any direct sunlight penetrates. This point was brought home forcibly to me when I visited Melbourne and found that what had originally been rights-of-way had become main thoroughfares, and perhaps for only one or one and a half hours in the day was there any direct sunlight in them. As a consequence, in narrow streets from which buildings of eight or 10 storeys rise directly, the air is unwholesome and they are usually damp and invariably dark because of the shadows. What I have offered are merely suggestions—a private member can do no more than offer suggestions—but they may contain a nucleus of ideas for easing a situation that is becoming daily aggravated so that the lot of pedestrians and of people using vehicular traffic may be relieved.

The increase in the number of vehicles on the roads has unfortunately been accompanied by an increase in the number of accidents. In certain directions I consider that improvements could be effected. For instance, many motorists rely upon the horn, and this tends to create a false sense of security and a general state of carelessness. By making free use of the horn, a motorist approaching an intersection will proceed without slackening speed. I have no wish to parade myself as a model, but I do not use the horn of my car more frequently than about once a fortnight. I repeat that there is a tendency amongst motorists to proceed without checking their speed, relying entirely upon the use of the

born. Apart from the effect of the constant noise of tooting upon people generally, I believe that if steps were taken to limit the use of the horn, it would make for more careful handling on the part of motor-drivers. I was given to understand that traffic police could intercept motorists in Tasmania if they used their motor horns excessively, and that those horns were used only on rare occasions.

Mr. Nimmo: They are not allowed to use their horns at all.

Mr. GRAHAM: That must be too bad if there is a vehicle in front of another and will not give way by going to the side of the road. At any rate, some diminution of this trouble, which causes so much carelessness, could be put into effect with results that would be generally favourable. I have been staggered in recent months when I have paid particular note to the number of vehicles which have had only one light. I refer to trucks, buses, cars, and bicycles of various sorts. It is inevitable that from time to time a headlight will fuse, and a man may have to complete his journey with only one light. The suggestion I am going to make could be extended over a number of years, but I am certain it would have the result I desire, namely a reduction in the number of accidents that occur.

All vehicles should be equipped with twin lights. Cars have two headlights. I am particularly concerned at the moment with motorcycles and pushbikes. The reason why so many accidents occur is that when one light is seen coming toward one it registers in the mind as that of a motorcycle. Too late the motorist may realise that the one light is the only light on an approaching truck. He swerves suddenly to the left if he has time, but in doing so he may perhaps strike trouble on that other side. If motorcycles were compelled to carry twin lights and bicycles were similarly equipped, that danger would be obviated. People would know that if a vehicle of any description was approaching and had only one light on it, it must be regarded as a danger signal. One company manufacturing motorcycles did equip its vehicles with twin lights. They should be placed sufficiently far apart to prevent their having the appearance of one light a little distance away, and arranged in such a form

that they were distinguishable as two lights. Surely it would be a warning to motorists if only a single light was approaching. No such warning is available under present conditions.

If any member were to motor through the metropolitan area for half an hour, taking whatever route he liked, I feel sure he would encounter on the main highways no less than half a dozen licensed vehicles which had only one light showing. They constitute a perpetual menace.

The Minister for Railways: The police have been asked to take that matter up strongly.

Mr. GRAHAM: I submit this suggestion in the hope that something will come of it and the present position will be improved. I also suggest that to minimise the danger factor the traffic authorities might in the licensing of vehicles insist that the cab of the driver on the right hand side of the vehicle should extend at least as far as the outside of the table top of the truck. At present many trucks have a small cab in which the driver sits. The sides may extend perhaps 2ft. on either hand. If the truck is loaded with goods it is impossible for the driver to give any signal to those behind him, and also impossible for him to have any idea of whether any traffic is approaching him because he can neither see nor be seen when giving a signal. If that suggestion were carried into effect it might prevent a number of accidents.

I also suggest that trucks should not have tail lights in a position approximating the rear axle but at the rear extremity of the table top of the truck. The trouble is particularly noticeable where there is angle parking. Any person approaching in another vehicle on a dark night and seeing a vehicle in front of him estimates the amount of clearance he has, whereas because of the position of the tail light he does not observe the overhang of the top of the truck. It would not be a hardship to insist that the tail light is put where I suggest. In many instances if a vehicle is parked parallel to the kerb the driver of a passing vehicle considers there is sufficient space between him and the stationary vehicle to enable him to pass without danger of contact, but actually there may be three or four feet of the vehicle that extends on to the roadway and if another

vehicle is approaching and the driver swerves to avoid it, he may easily strike the protruding part of the truck.

Many pushbikes have no tail lights at all. Apparently it is sufficient for them to have reflectors, or "cats' eyes." In my opinion, however, all such bicycles should be equipped with tail lights just as is the case with four-wheeled vehicles. These bicycles are a constant hazard to everybody. During the blackout periods of the war the authorities insisted on a white disc four inches in diameter being placed, immediately behind the right reflector, so that it would show up clearly. That should be insisted upon now and possibly the rear mudguard should also be painted white. If these suggestions are adopted I feel sure they will lead to a reduction in the number of road accidents.

It appears that the maximum period for parking in the city is 15 minutes. That is altogether too short. It is impossible for any person to get through his business in that period and conform to the regulation. I suggest the time be extended to an hour. If every motorist conformed strictly to the regulations there would be a constant procession of cars on the move. That would not only be embarrassing to other people who were doing their business, but it would clutter up the streets. If vehicles were allowed to park for an hour they would stay in that spot for that period until the occupants had concluded their business.

So far as the right-hand turn is concerned, I think there is a tendency for that to be overdone. It looks quite nice to see two lines of traffic going in opposite directions with no traffic cutting across. One thinks an excellent job is being done and that the traffic is being cleared two or three times faster than would otherwise be the case. Members will realise, however, that in order to get from one point to another it is often necessary to cross half a dozen intersections at least. Although one may appear to be proceeding speedily across the intersection, one really is crossing a number of intersections instead of only one to reach a given point. It would be interesting to ascertain what difference there would be on a particular day in the week when right-hand turns were permitted compared with the time when they were not permitted. Appearances are often deceptive.

I understand that representations are to be made, if that has not already been done, to the Minister for Transport for a reversion to the original tramway stops. I hope he does not succumb to those representations. It is no hardship to ask people to walk an extra few yards to reach a public conveyance. If the trams have to make twice as many stops as at present it will take them so much longer to complete their journeys. Already a ridiculous amount of time is occupied in reaching the city by tram from outlying parts. The change-over to the old stopping places would also affect the volume of service in that it would inevitably be reduced.

The Minister for Railways: The representations have not yet been made.

Mr. GRAHAM: I hope the Minister will not agree to the request if it is made.

I wish now to say a word or two in connection with the Causeway and would address my remarks in particular to the Minister for Transport. It would be a tragedy if tram tracks were constructed over the new Causeway. I am not criticising anyone or attaching blame to anyone.

The Minister for Railways: It is a very timely discussion.

Mr. GRAHAM: I understand the Causeway is to cost about half a million pounds and that the Commissioner of Railways says it will be a decade before trams, generally speaking, can be put out of commission. My view is that it will take longer than that. The tendency today is towards petrol-driven buses or trolley-buses. Surely we can exert every effort of which we are capable to overcome the situation where there will be tram tracks put across the Causeway, with their unsightly overhead wires and all the other accompaniments of the tramway system. Trams would lead to a general dislocation of traffic over that most important section of our main highways.

The Minister for Education: Trolley-bus lines and poles are equally unsightly.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes. The economic circumstances would have to be taken into consideration, as to whether it is not better to use the natural fuel, that is to say coal or power generated therefrom, than to use fuel brought from overseas.

The Minister for Education: It might be better to use trams. They are performing an efficient service in Melbourne.

The Minister for Railways: Trams have their place.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes. I believe it will cost an additional £15,000 to buttress and strengthen the section of the Causeway concerned to enable it to take trams over the river, compared with what would be the position if ordinary forms of transport were used. I also believe it would cost £10,000 to lay down tramlines over the new Causeway. I want to see the situation overcome. We must have some regard for the thoroughfare on the other side of the Causeway. The member for Victoria Park will agree that tramways are not only cumbersome but immobile because they must adhere to a fixed position on the rails. Trams cannot proceed to the kerbs and pick up and set down passengers there. There is usually a tremendous procession of vehicles behind the trams passing over the Causeway, and the length of the Albany highway is almost invariably congested because of the tramway service. That is a position which should not obtain.

I want the Government to strain every nerve and sinew as well as its financial resources in order that it may enlarge its fleet of petrol-driven buses or its fleet of trolley-buses to serve the people on the other side of the river. I am doing this chiefly out of consideration for the Causeway, which I do not want to see defaced, and in view of the other inconveniences dependent upon the tramway system; for if the power goes off they all stop, or if one vehicle breaks down, it interferes with the whole schedule. I want to see these buses instituted. I understand that at the peak period, between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., there are 16 trams in commission plying backwards and forwards between Perth and Victoria Park, and there are eight working on the route to South Perth. It has been estimated that it would take 26 trolley-buses or petrol-driven buses to serve Victoria Park, and 13 to serve South Perth, if the trams were eliminated.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do not Victoria Park trams go to Subiaco?

Mr. GRAHAM: Some do. But we can deal with all those things in due course, though I do not want to be more extensive than I have been up to date. What I have said would mean that practically 40 new buses or trolley-buses would be required to

service people on the other side of the river. It should not be beyond the capacity of the Government to procure those vehicles. Even at the height of the war it was apparently possible for private bus companies to secure new vehicles. There has been, in certain directions, an easement of the situation and if the Government were to proceed with the venture in a whole-hearted way, I feel it could get the necessary vehicles—a total of approximately 40—to eliminate trams travelling to the southern suburbs and the unsightly overhead wires that exist, although I am not so concerned about them. I definitely do not want to see tram tracks over the new Causeway, however. I mentioned that we would require 40 new vehicles of the type in use. But if the Government were to embark on the use of semi-trailers, such as the greater number of the private bus companies are now operating, or double-decker trolley-buses such as I have seen operating in South Australia—

The Minister for Education: The double-deckers are very slow.

Mr. GRAHAM: They may be, but they would be faster than the trams are at present, particularly taking into account the tremendous waits at the loops and so on, speaking with particular reference to the southern suburbs but also with reference to Osborne Park and other places. If larger vehicles were used, it would mean that the number would be approximately the same as the number of trams displaced. At the peak period, 24 are used now, so 24 larger vehicles would do the job. Those vehicles are more silent and travel more rapidly, and consequently a more frequent service could probably be provided. Instead of a citizen living on the other side of the river taking three-quarters of an hour to get into town, he could do it in a considerably reduced period. I feel it is worth while to make an effort to institute buses or trolley-buses, so that we shall not have tramlines going over the Causeway. The trams thus released from duty could be used to replace some of those that, I understand, are falling to pieces, and perhaps to supplement the timetables operating elsewhere at present.

The Government operates a petrol-driven bus service to City Beach at week-ends and holiday periods, but it is impossible to provide a service to the full extent required. If more petrol buses were put into commis-

sion, those which were used only at peak periods could be employed at week-ends and on holidays to supplement the City Beach service. In addition, I learn from certain local governing authorities who happen to possess buses that they are able to derive a constant revenue from the use of those buses during slack periods by hiring them to sporting bodies desiring to travel to various places on Saturdays and Sundays to take part in sporting fixtures. Some of our buses could be used at particular times outside the peak period to take parties of visitors on tours of different areas. The Minister for Transport knows how popular is the hills train service conducted on Sundays. Buses would not be limited in the same way as trains as to the places to which they could travel, and would consequently be even more popular.

There are one or two other matters to which I wish to refer. I appreciate quite fully that the Government did not express any opposition to a 40-hour week, as certain people have sought to make out in a number of places, with which, incidentally, I have been associated. The Minister said that this Government was not opposed to the shorter week, but questioned whether the present was the proper time to shorten hours. I want to be quite clear in the matter. I think the Government made a psychological error in transferring its affections from the counsel who had been engaged by the previous Government, to counsel opposing the application of the 40-hour week. I know that it has made no difference whatsoever, because I understand the information from Western Australia was purely factual and statistical. The same evidence would have been given no matter to which counsel the Government gave its blessing. But that transfer immediately created the psychological feeling, which does not require much fostering, that the new Government of this State is against the worker. That is so because one of its first actions was to oppose the 40-hour week. I want to see the best possible done for the State and the people living in it at the moment, and let us hope we can lay a few foundations for the future, too.

The Government made a psychological blunder here. There was no need to change counsel, and if it had not done so there would not have been any criticism by the worker. There is a tremendous suspicion

that anti-Labour Government and constituted authority are against the interests of the worker. I feel that if specific leads were given, the working people would appreciate their responsibilities. I know that a thorough investigation is being made into the 40-hour week, but I feel that we, too, as a Parliament can do something in the matter. I can speak only of the State Parliament because I have no influence in the Federal sphere, and in any case its authority in industrial matters is extremely limited or, at least, doubtful. I suggest that if members opposite feel that the workers are not doing all that they could—and I am expressing no opinion on the matter—some inducement might be offered to them.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Suppose—and this information could be easily ascertained—the per capita output of the workers of Western Australia—and I would prefer to see this on a Commonwealth-wide basis—is so much at the present time, say 100 units, the workers could be told that if their per capita production reached 102 units or 105 units or some other figure, their hours would be reduced. Of course, there is a responsibility resting upon the management in this regard. I would like to see the hours reduced immediately to 40, but at the same time many people say, perhaps with a certain measure of justification, that a sudden drop like that would interfere with our economy, and severely limit production. If the premises be true—I could finish quicker, perhaps, if conversations between members were not so audible to me—that a reduction of hours from 44 to 40 is too great, it could perhaps be done in stages by making the working hours first of all 43, then 42, then 41 and ultimately 40. I am seeking a form of compromise, or some way out. If the employers say rigidly, "We cannot stand any reduction in hours," and the workers say, with vigour, "We want a 40-hour week immediately," and the Government is a little afraid of the situation, then we should see if we can do something to make the workers responsible. They could be given some system whereby they could earn for themselves the 40-hour week—at least in part—and there would be no great reduction in working hours.

I desire to refer to one other matter, but I realise that I have spoken far too long in the estimation of members, and certainly much longer than was my intention when I rose. Probably there will be an amount of disagreement with some of the views I have expressed. It is only natural that there should be some difference of outlook between members, otherwise we would not be sitting on opposite sides of the House. I sincerely hope that some notice will be taken of at least some of the points I have made so that one private member can have the experience—and believe me it will be a new one on me—of playing a part in this Parliament and being more than merely a messenger for the constituents he represents.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 till 7.30 p.m.

MR. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [7.30]: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I desire to congratulate both you and the Speaker on your promotion, and the Government also, on its ascent to the Treasury bench. I think I am right in saying that its success at the last election came as a great surprise, not only to the Parties represented in this House, but to the people of the State generally. I thought—and I believe that many other members, at least on this side of the House, thought—that the indifference displayed by the electors at the election was an indication that they had confidence in the existing regime, but, as events turned out, we found that the bird of hope was once more on the wing. I always thought, when we were discussing the question of a reform of the franchise for the Upper House, that we put up a good case. That case rested upon the fact that the working class people of Western Australia were very much disadvantaged by the franchise that applies to that House but, as the result of the last election, the people of Western Australia have added to our irritations by returning, on an adult franchise, a Government comprised—in the majority—of Liberal and Country Party representatives and, as a consequence of that, this State is now exposed to all the disadvantages that are supposed to arise from a single chamber form of Government.

When the Labour Party is in power in this House the only House of Parliament that really matters, in the final analysis, is the Legislative Council, but when a Liberal-Country Party Government occupies the Treasury bench the only House that matters is this, the Legislative Assembly. I was pleased to see that the Government included in the Cabinet the member for Subiaco, the Honorary Minister, although I question the wisdom of that inclusion. I question it on these grounds, that Lady Asquith, in her book entitled "Off the Record" stated, "Eventually women got what they wanted, the franchise. What have they done with it?" It may be said that women are not sufficiently educated to become famous as members of the House of Commons. "Women can never be sufficiently educated to become first-rate politicians," Lady Asquith said.

The Honorary Minister: Only mothers of men.

MR. SMITH: Can we see a woman becoming Prime Minister of England? I cannot imagine a greater calamity than that those isles should be under the guidance of a woman at No. 10 Downing Street. The qualities required in a Prime Minister are a balanced judgment, a power of deliberation, to be open to reason and, above all, to suspend judgment. The cleverer a woman is—Lady Asquith says—the less likely she is to suspend judgment. Reason, she said, is not a strong part of a woman's intellect. Intuition, perhaps; prejudice, often; courage, always. A woman is less human than a man, Lady Asquith says, and—as the writer in "The West Australian," who quoted that extract from Lady Asquith's book, said, "Who am I to dispute such an authority?" The disputation of Lady Asquith's contention now rests with the member for Subiaco, the Honorary Minister in the new Government. I will say this for her, that I have a great deal of respect for her ability and courage. I think she has that something about her that Emerson calls character, which begets an expectation that will out-run her performance.

Mr. Yates: She will do us.

MR. SMITH: There is nothing to laugh about in that, and there is nothing insulting in it. As a definition of "character" I would prefer that of Emerson to any other that I have read. I suggest that the State of

Western Australia is now in for a taste of petticoat government, because I well appreciate her strength of character and remember how she dominated the Liberal Party when she sat on this side of the House, and dictated its policy in respect of boards of control and other important matters. I am glad the hon. member insisted upon having a seat on the front bench.

The Honorary Minister: I am glad I did, too.

Mr. SMITH: It is a striking example of her courage. She will now be able to read her speeches without any interruption from the Speaker, a privilege that is not extended to us in these lower sections of the House. I am not opposed to members reading their speeches in this Chamber. I should like to see an alteration of the rule in that respect, because I consider it would be far better to listen to something that was composed and written with great care and deliberation and with the assistance of experts—if members like people with a facility for phrasing—than to have to listen to some of the attempts that I and others make in this House extempore in the hope that the Speaker will not interfere with us too much if we make some reference to our notes.

Several members have spoken during this debate about the position occupied by an ordinary member in this Chamber. I was rather intrigued with the reply given by Professor Murdoch recently to a question, "Is Parliament too powerful?" I was intrigued, not only with its literary construction, but also with the perspicacity he displayed in connection with the rights and privileges of private members. I shall not read all of it, but here is an extract—

When our young member was elected, he thought—

I do not know whether the Professor was thinking of the member for Middle Swan—or at least his mother thought he was about to become one of those who make the laws of the land and command the applause of listening senators by his eloquence. Alas! He soon discovers that Senates neither applaud nor listen to him, if he combined the gifts of Demosthenes, Cicero and the two Pitts. Modern Senates are beyond eloquence;

How well we know it!

—they prefer the solid qualities—

Such as the Premier possesses, I should say.

—of such a statesman as the Duke of Devonshire, who performed the remarkable feat of yawning in the middle of one of his own speeches.

I think those observations are perfectly true. Prof. Murdoch, to my knowledge, has never been a member of Parliament, but he has a fairly good insight into its general set-up. As a private member, I realise that I have not very much authority—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Has Parliament the authority?

Mr. SMITH:—and very little influence. However, I do not want to discuss that aspect at the present stage. Joseph Chamberlain once said when addressing a meeting of Unionists at Birmingham—

There must be ups and downs in politics.

I can safely say that any Government that endeavours honestly to grapple with the great problems of its time will lose a certain amount of support, and that that is why the Labour Party lost a certain amount of support at the recent election, sufficient to lose the Treasury bench, because it was grappling, during its term of office and during the terms of its predecessors in the 14 years that has been bruited about in this debate, with the great problems of its time.

During the election campaign "The West Australian" had a theme running through its leading articles about the things that were left undone and pointing out that some of the decline in the conditions of social services must naturally be attributed to the great contingency of war. But some of the decline extended even further back. "The West Australian" used to say that there was very little excuse for that, but there has been a good excuse for the administration of the Labour Government and decline—if members like to put it that way—of social services right through the whole of its 14 years of office. Members know what the position was when Labour took over in 1933 after three years of a National-Country Party Government, when the only work provided for unemployed men was the digging of grass out of gutters, in most instances. Members know the general financial set-up in Australia at that time and in subsequent years. The member for Sussex referred to the banking policy of the Labour Government. The control of this country financially during those years—

Mr. Bovell: Failed!

Mr. SMITH:—was in the hands of Sir Robert Gibson, Chairman of the Commonwealth Bank Board, consisting of representatives of financial and commercial interests, the commercial interests being represented in one instance by a pig farmer, and he is supposed to make deductions from the discussions that take place on the questions of financing public works in Australia during the depression!

The Minister for Lands: Where is your authority to criticise? Who are you?

Mr. SMITH: Where is my authority? My authority is Sir Robert Gibson's own actions, because he told the Governments of that day that he would only finance them for public works to the extent of £7,000,000. Subsequently, as a result of pressure, not only from the Governments but from the people, he was compelled to increase that sum to £21,000,000. Do not ask me where I have my authority to criticise these people! I refer the Minister to the results of such policy at the time and in subsequent years.

The Minister for Railways: It is easy to be wise after the event.

Mr. SMITH: I remember that in this State we sat down to a Cabinet meeting with a list of approved undertakings, every one of which had been investigated. The estimated cost of those undertakings was £5,000,000 and they included the rehabilitation of the railways, the building of schools and works of that nature. The cost of the undertakings we had in front of us was £5,000,000, but £1,600,000 was the amount made available for the purpose of initiating them. When the Minister for Railways publicly announces that some of the things which will be revealed by the present Royal Commissioner will be hair-raising, I will tell him one thing the Royal Commissioner will not reveal, and that is where the Government of that day could have obtained the money to do any better than it did.

I can remember when the Minister for Employment, or the Minister for Labour, as I think we called him then—the member for Northam—was worried—in 1938—because of the increase of unemployment in the State in that year. Over 7,000 men were on Government relief work or on the dole. Why was there an increase in unemployment? Because there was decreased employment in the timber and the housing industries, about which there is so much complaint today. In

1939 the figures were even worse. In 1940, notwithstanding that the war had then been proceeding for several months, unemployment was higher than it had been since the year 1936. It was 10.5 per cent. of the reporting trade unionists in that period. So, when people ask, why did not the Labour Government do this, that or the other during its 14 years of office, I reply that it was due to the fact that the Government was grappling with great problems at the time, that there were thousands of hungry men and women in the State looking for work which the Government had to provide, with very slender resources. In consequence, the Government was compelled to initiate and carry out works in which the proportion of labour was as high as it could possibly be and the proportion of materials as low as it could possibly be.

Getting back to the question of the authority and the influence of private members in this Chamber, I have represented a goldmining constituency for the past 15 years. During the whole of that period no representations whatever have been made to me about the difficulties with which the goldmining industry might have been contending by the employing section of the industry—by the Chamber of Mines. The employing section did not ask me to protest when the Commonwealth Government cut out the gold bonus under the Financial Emergency Act. I had no representations made to me to try to induce the Labour Government to abolish income tax under what we called the State uniform tax when the Government of the day taxed the mining industry on its profits to the extent of 3s. 10½d. in the pound; nor did I have any representations made to me nor did I enter into the discussions on the State gold profits tax.

I have had no representations made to me as to the liquidating of goldmining companies for the purpose of transferring their registration from London to Australia to avoid paying British income tax which those on the London register are now paying. I had no representation made to me as to the transfer of one mine that was bitterly complaining of the British Excess Profit Tax of 100 per cent. which hit it so badly. I do not blame the Chamber of Mines for that. I was quite friendly with the late secretary of the Chamber; he used to welcome me when I went to see him, but he never sent for me. I know the present secretary, but I blame

neither him nor the Chamber for not making representations to me, as they knew they could go direct to the Minister for Mines, who would be flattered by the fact that they had approached him direct. They know I have little or no authority as a private member; they know the general set-up of Parliament; they know the influence that a private member has in the general construction of a Government and the Houses of which it is comprised, and the day will come when the people will realise it, too. Then some changes will have to be made.

Because the Chamber of Mines makes no reference to me as to the industry, I am not aware of the fact that it is now in a desperate plight. I would be aware of it if I took notice of such unreliable authorities as, say, the Mining Editor of "The West Australian" or other people who are engaging in propaganda in connection with the industry at the present time for the purpose of giving a stab in the back to the Commonwealth Government and for another reason, too, that the member Mr. Magnet will appreciate; and that is the fact that the employees in the industry will be going into the Arbitration Court next month for a new award. I get my information from other sources and I find that the estimated value of the gold for 1946 was £6,640,069; that the gold received at the Mint totalled 618,963 fine ounces; that the gold reported to the department was 618,607 fine ounces, an increase on the previous year of 148,700 ounces; and that the tonnage of ore reported during 1946 was 2,194,477 tons, an increase on the previous year of 457,885 tons. The dividends paid during 1946, most likely on the 1945 profit, were £713,926, an increase on the previous year of £255,447. Right throughout the war period the Lake View and Star paid a dividend of 37½ per cent. on its capital, and quite recently it reported in the Press that it hoped soon to be able to restore the 50 per cent. formerly enjoyed by the shareholders.

I hear from time to time that the Commonwealth Government does not look at the goldmining industry in the right perspective. I would like to know what the right perspective is. I hear members arguing that they should get a gold bonus and that the Commonwealth Government should abolish the gold tax in the interests of the

goldmining industry; generally, that the Commonwealth Government should do something in connection with the goldmining industry, as though it had done nothing. Quite recently the Australian Mines and Metals Association issued a report in which it said that the mining industry is now free of sales tax on all equipment and supplies for actual use in mining and treatment operations, including equipment for the transport of raw materials between the mines and treatment works, and of the finished products, to the wharf, railhead or site of first storage.

The directors of the Australian Mines and Metals Association have reported that these concessions give them greater freedom from sales tax than since the sales tax was introduced. Special war import duty was abolished and ad valorem taxes have been reduced on mining machinery and, in some cases, abolished altogether. After referring to apparatus and machinery for use in mining operations and in the treatment of products of those operations having been exempt from primage duty for a number of years, the report concludes—

Therefore it can be said that both as to customs duty and sales tax the present position is satisfactory.

I referred a little while ago to the fact that under the State income tax mining companies paid 3s. 10½d. in the pound on their profits. Under the uniform Federal tax they do not pay anything at all. Goldmining companies are free of tax under uniform taxation, and it is probably the only industry in Australia that is free of such tax. I know that the base metal industry is not. I know, too, that I represented the workers recently on a mining panel which the Commonwealth Government set up and which was comprised of both Federal and State representatives. Naturally, the question of taxation was discussed by that panel. Some representatives of the mining industry in Australia who are pretty expert on this question of taxation made out a very good case on account of their ability in connection with depletion allowance for the base metal mining industry, and representations were made to the Commonwealth Government in that connection. No representations were made to the Commonwealth Government on that occasion in connection with the gold tax.

No voice was raised by any representative advocating the abolition of the gold tax. They knew the wonderful concession it is to be free of income tax under the uniform taxation laws. I think all of us know what a wonderful concession it would be. I know the goldmining industry is hit pretty heavily—that is, those on the London register—in connection with British income tax. The Commonwealth Government is not responsible for that. I notice from the Mines Department's reports that in the year 1903 the average tonnage raised and treated per man employed in the industry was 104.30 tons. I will not read the figures for all the years, but in 1936 it was 162.57 tons; in 1943, it was 406.30 tons; and in 1945, it was 362.85 tons. I do not know what was the figure for 1946 because I have not been able to get the Mines Department's estimate of the number of men employed in the industry.

If those figures mean anything—I do not say they do, but if they mean anything—there is a clear indication in them that there has been increased productivity in the goldmining industry as a result of the introduction of the shorter working week. The costs, some people say, are much lower in the goldmining industry in Western Australia than they are even in South Africa where black labour is employed. I have often heard the efficiency of the Australian miner remarked upon in this Chamber and elsewhere; that he would compare more than favourably with miners in any other part of the world. But of course I was never a tool sharpener, and I have never pushed a truck in the mining industry so I am not supposed to know too much about it and its 70 or 80 different vocations of which the member for Mt. Magnet could speak, or its wide ramifications about which some people know everything there is to know. So I have to quote authorities, and what I am about to quote comes from the "Mining and Commercial Review" of March of this year. It is an article by Morton Webber, a member of the Institute of Mining Engineers. He is a man of whom we can say what we like, but he is nobody's fool. The "Mining and Commercial Review" realises that because it frequently publishes his articles, and in this one, which appears on page 16 of the March issue we find the following:—

Some years back the writer claimed that the form of gold costing was unsatisfactory. He claimed that annual accounts should clearly state the cost of producing the fine ounce or the dwt.; that submitting costs per crude ton of ore did not present the picture. Gold mine A could present a low cost per crude ton, the B mine crude figure might be higher. Yet the B mine could produce the gold ounce cheaper than mine A, notwithstanding a higher crude cost. People even closely associated with the industry are of opinion that the mining costs of the Rand mines are the lowest in the world. If gold costing was based on the method of costing in copper and lead mines of the United States and Canada, that is, on the unit of metal produced, the object of the business, it will be found that the cost of producing gold, by the major gold mines of Australia is considerably lower than South Africa.

I do not think the mining industry is in the desperate position some people allege. I do not even agree with the circulars issued from time to time by the Chamber of Mines, advocating an increase in the price of gold. I do not think the arguments are logical. The circulars are badly composed and written by someone with a rather poor idea of economics. A recent one drew attention to the fact that when America increased the price of gold from 20 dollars 67 cents to 35 dollars it had a wonderful effect on the depression then existing because of falling costs and falling prices. But you cannot raise prices without raising costs. That was the purpose of the American Government at that time. The idea, under its New Deal legislation, was to try to cushion the worst effects of the depression by raising the price of gold in that country from 20 dollars 67 cents to 35 dollars, and the President of that country was given the authority to raise it to 40 dollars if he thought it necessary. But that alteration was made on a falling market. It was to cushion the effect, not of rising prices and rising costs, but of falling prices and falling costs.

The goldmining industry got the benefit of that rise almost immediately, but its effects on prices and costs were not immediate. It was some time before they were felt in the prices and costs of other commodities. The goldmining industry got the benefit during the whole time that prices and costs were struggling to rise under the influence of the increase in the price of gold, which is what ultimately happened, but it would not be the remedy at this stage to increase the price of gold because prices and costs are rising. When it was done

they were, of course, falling, and it was the logical thing to do in the circumstances. Reference has also been made to the necessity for a free market for gold. The fixed price of gold is the sheet anchor of the industry's prosperity. If there were a free market, instead of gold being £10 an ounce it would probably be £10 a lb. Gold is bringing £20 an ounce in Bombay, at present, but what has that got to do with it?

If every country in the world offered its great gold holdings and flooded that market, how much would gold be in Bombay then? The price of gold is what it is today, and what it always has been, because it is a controlled commodity with a fixed price. As I said before, it is the sheet anchor of the prosperity of goldmining, and those interested in the industry know it. I understand the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie to say that the gold tax was imposed on all gold whether those who won it were showing a profit or not. Naturally, that is not the case. Since it first came into operation in 1940 some £4,072,110 has been collected by way of gold tax, but there have been refunds made amounting to £941,131. What are these refunds for, I would like to ask the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie? On what basis and for what reason were they made?

Mr. Kelly: That is only one fifth, anyway.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. SMITH: That does not matter. Refunds have been made to prospectors where the reward of their efforts has been less than 25 ounces, and to companies who, during the year in which the tax has been imposed, have not shown a profit. In my opinion the Commonwealth Government is most anxious to assist the mining industry generally throughout Australia; not only the goldmining industry but the base metal mining industry too. Some questions as to whether the Commonwealth Government had set aside a sum of money for the rehabilitation of the goldmining industry were recently answered in this House by the Chief Secretary, but although his answers were factual they did not present the whole picture of the Commonwealth Government's interest in the goldmining industry, and in its rehabilitation.

During the war the Mines Department of this State sent out a questionnaire to various mining undertakings, asking the managements to give an estimate of their possible requirements for rehabilitation after the war. The Mines Departments in the other States did likewise. As the result of that action the Mining Panel had before it what might be called a rough estimate of the probable requirements. It was not an estimate made after a thorough investigation by mining officials, but one based on requests made by the managements of mining propositions generally. When the Commonwealth Government saw the figure which was over £300,000, it said, "We will not set aside £300,000 to cover these possible and probable requirements. We will fix no limit whatever to the amount of money we are prepared to advance for the rehabilitation of the goldmining industry." The requests put forward are first investigated by officers of the Mines Departments of the various States, and of the Bureau of Mineral Resources, which is a Commonwealth Government set-up.

The officers of the Departments of Mines and of that Commonwealth bureau are working and acting in co-operation in the investigation of the requests for loans for the rehabilitation of the industry. The Commonwealth Government has also set up an inter-departmental committee, as a kind of preliminary body. It has been set up, in tentative fashion, to consider the recommendations of officers of State and Commonwealth departments to that body, on which the Treasurer is represented, for advances subject to the conditions laid down. The Commonwealth Government has a sincere and real interest in the mining industry throughout Australia, but there are difficulties in its way. The various States are jealous of their rights to mineral resources within their boundaries.

When the Commonwealth Government wanted to call the Bureau of Mineral Resources the "Bureau of Mines," objection to that nomenclature was raised by several States. A little thing like that upset them, so the representatives of the Commonwealth Government and of the Bureau of Mineral Resources have to walk warily, not like a cat on hot bricks, but like a cat on bricks some of which are hot. The member for Leederville well knows that there are difficulties in the way of getting what some people might regard as the full measure

of co-operation between this Commonwealth set-up—the Bureau of Mineral Resources—and the various State Mines Departments.

When we come to tackle the problem it is found to be not as easy as it looks. When people talk to me about the Commonwealth Government not looking at the mining industry in the right perspective, I feel it is time to say something in its defence. I think that the Government which preceded the present one had a hard row to hoe, and that the new Government will probably find things much easier. Whether it finds things easy or tough, I am satisfied that ultimately, just as time and circumstances operated against the Labour Government, so will they operate against this one.

The Minister for Lands: That is a certainty.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [8.27]: I feel diffident in rising to speak after the fine oration delivered by the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe. At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I desire, with other members, to congratulate you on your accession to the Speakership. I am sure you were as much surprised at your election to your present office as the Premier was at being elected to his position. I do not think either you, Sir, or the Premier, had the slightest idea that those would be two results of the election.

The Minister for Lands: I do not think you had the slightest idea that you would be sitting on that side of the House.

Mr. FOX: It was a race, with the outsiders getting home by a neck. Had it been possible to enter a protest you would have been disqualified for doping at least some of the voters. Much has been said of the propaganda circulated during the election campaign. A great deal of it referred to the so-called housing muddle. The present Government knew quite well that the maximum effort was made by its predecessor. It knew it could not do more if it attained the Treasury bench. It led some of the house-hungry people to believe that it would build them houses quickly. Those people have had time in which to think, and they now realise that it cannot be done. Though the Government may fool the people for a little time, retribution will overtake it just as it did the Mitchell-Latham Government in 1933.

Let us see who is responsible for the housing muddle. The Commonwealth Government, the National-Country Party Government, although it was supposed to be a Country Party Government, did nothing for the primary producers during its 27½ years of office. In 1925 it passed a Bill providing £25,000,000 for housing. They knew the condition of housing throughout Australia. A Commission had sat and had set out the housing conditions in all the States. Within a mile of the Melbourne Town Hall there were thousands of sub-standard houses—houses without wash-troughs or wash-basins, slums of every description. The same thing existed in all the States and exists today. But nothing was done. What a good opportunity there was during the depression to catch up with housing requirements. The Government could have built thousands of homes instead of employing men on the streets to pull up grass, as the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe said. The housing position should never have been allowed to get into such a state.

But that is not all the story. The Workers Homes' Board was established in 1911, but never had borrowing powers. Although there were thousands of pounds of trust funds in Perth that the board could have used, it had not the power to do so. Bills had been passed by this Chamber to empower the board to borrow, but time after time they were thrown out in the Upper House. That was responsible somewhat for the lag in housing. What could have been done during the depression? What could the Labour Party have done had it had unlimited money at its disposal, if the Housing Trust had had money? There were only the rents coming in from houses built from 1911 onwards.

Even worse than this was the fact that, in 1937, the Labour Government secured the passing of a measure to authorise the building of houses for letting. Houses of four or five rooms could have been built at that time for £500 to £540 and let at 14s. 6d. to 16s. 6d. a week. At present similar houses would cost £900 or £1,000 to build. However, another place—perhaps I should call it the abattoirs—rejected it. We shall have to work overtime sending up Bills if that Chamber this session is to maintain its record for kill-

ing. That House threw out the Bill in 1937 that would have enabled the Government to build houses for letting. Had that measure been passed, we would have had two years of intensive house-building operations, which would have assisted greatly to overtake the lag in housing. Consequently, instead of the Labour Party being responsible for the lag in housing, it is due entirely to the National Government in the Federal sphere and to the members opposite who had their representatives in control in another place.

During the election campaign, I had a fair amount of time to read the newspapers and study the photographs that were published. I believe that the present Government is the most-photographed Government we have had in the history of this State. In fact I believe that Clark Gable would be jealous of it.

The Chief Secretary: Because we are doing something. That is why.

Mr. FOX: I have not noticed the Chief Secretary's photograph.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Because of his looks.

Mr. FOX: When coming into town one morning a friend, who is a good supporter of the present Government, asked me whether I had seen the photograph of the Cabinet published in that day's paper. I do not think the Minister for Works was in the group; he seemed to have been cut out.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Perhaps they did not want to spoil the picture.

Mr. FOX: I do not think he would have spoilt it. I saw a picture of him once taken on an open plain, and it reminded me of a picture published during the war, depicting a soldier on a hill-top saying to himself, "Will they ever come?" My friend remarked, "This is a fine picture, I am proud to be a member of this Party. It has its roots deep in the soil of Britain." I replied, "It is very nice of you to say so, but the Labour Party also has its roots deep in the soil of Britain and for centuries has never changed its name at all. It would never have survived but for the fact of its being based on something solid—honesty and humanitarianism." I asked him to turn to the next page and look at another picture. I believe I have it amongst my notes.

The Minister for Works: It will not help you one way or another.

Mr. FOX: I do not suppose it will.

The Minister for Lands: It will help to make up a speech.

Mr. FOX: I am afraid I have mislaid it. It was a photograph of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer marching through the streets of Dorset at the head of a procession celebrating the centenary of the Todpuddle martyrs. That was a case of some farm labourers being prosecuted for forming a trade union. They formed a union in the summer of 1833. The agricultural labourers of the Dorset village had received notice from the employers that their wages, which had averaged 9s. 4d. a week and had been reduced to 8s. and then to 7s., were to be further reduced to 6s. a week. In order to resist the reduction, two brothers named Loveless formed a friendly society of agricultural labourers. This brought the Tory Party to arms and it set about finding means to combat the movement.

The Chief Secretary: How many years ago was that?

Mr. FOX: I am not going to be interrupted by the Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOX: The men were prosecuted for having formed a trade union and sentenced to transportation for seven years. Although they were entitled at that time to form a trade union, an old Act passed in 1797 was invoked and they were charged with having taken an unlawful oath. In reality, it was an action to check the growth of trade unionism. In reply to the Chief Secretary's interjection, I might inform him that his Party is descended from that Party of 1833. He is the same as he was then, though meliorated a little by time and necessity.

The Minister for Works: Good solid argument!

Mr. FOX: When the proposal for the 40-hour week was made, we could realise how strongly opposed to that innovation the present Government would be. I have heard apologies made for Ministers, but I shall give one or two quotations from newspaper reports to show the attitude of the new Government to the 40-hour week.

Mr. Styants: Do not be too hard!

Mr. FOX: This is a statement by Mr. L. L. Carter, Secretary of the Employers' Federation. I might mention that, during the previous election campaign, Mr. Carter was organiser for the Liberal Party, but the Party discovered that it had made a tactical blunder by employing him in that capacity

and did not appoint him to act in the recent election. Mr. Carter was reported as follows:—

Reduced hours should not apply to Western Australia because it was at a great disadvantage compared with its competitor States. There was a deliberate go-slow policy in certain Western Australian industries. He mentioned the coal mining, timber and building industries. The State Government, which was in an unsound financial position, was not in a position to grant a 40-hour week.

In an unsound financial position! The Leader of the Opposition has told the House of the legacy he left the new Government—

The Minister for Railways: We know all about that.

Mr. FOX: —a policy of public works and a Treasury overflowing. In the "Daily News" of the 11th April, 1947, under big headlines we find the following, "Western Australia Will Oppose the 40-Hour Week." The article reads—

The new Liberal Government is expected to withdraw its support from the 40-hour case today or tomorrow.

The "Daily News" had some inside information! The report continues—

Mr. Sholl, who is appearing for certain employers, said that if the 40-hour week were granted by the court he would ask that the Western Australian employers be excluded for special economic reasons.

They are dying very hard! The following appeared in "The West Australian" of the 16th April—

Western Australia's changed attitude to the introduction of a 40-hour week was announced in the Federal Arbitration Court today by Mr. D. C. Williams. "Western Australia is no longer in favour of a 40-hour week."

The "West Australian" must have had some definite information from the Government to make a statement of that kind. On the 16th April, 1947, the following appeared in "The West Australian":—

A change in the Western Australian Government's representation in the 40-hour week case before the Commonwealth Arbitration Court was announced yesterday by the Minister for Labour (Mr. Thorn). He said that Mr. K. Ashkanasay, K.C., who was representing the Victorian and Tasmanian Labour Governments at the hearing, would no longer represent the W.A. Government. Instead, the State would be represented by Mr. D. C. Williams, who is also appearing for the South Australian Government.

The change in counsel follows new instructions on the State's attitude to the 40-hour week claim consequent on the recent change

of Government. Previously, with the Wise Government in office, the State joined with the New South Wales, Victorian and Tasmanian Government in supporting the 40-hour week claim without apparently any qualifications. Last week, however, the new Minister for Labour, announced, in effect, the withdrawal of unqualified support by the State. He said it had been decided to take the attitude that the introduction of the shorter week should be left to the court to decide when the time was opportune. In view of housing and supply shortages the Government did not consider the present was an opportune time. Mr. Thorn said that Mr. Williams, in stating the opposition of South Australia to the 40-hour week, maintained that its introduction was not in the public interest at present.

The time is never opportune for any improvement in the conditions of the worker. Employers in New South Wales have stated their intention of appealing to the High Court on the constitutionality of the 40-hour week Act passed in that State. Those are some of the statements made in "The West Australian," which is the organ of the present Government and which maps out its policy. So there we have the attitude of the State Government on the 40-hour week.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The leopard cannot change his spots! It is the same old policy!

Mr. FOX: They are the same as the party was in 1833. They have the same policy. I have been an industrialist for the greater part of my life, as has the member for Leederville and other members on this side of the House. We have had to fight like hell for every little concession we have got. The 40-hour week is one of the best amenities we could get, because we have no opportunity of adding to our wages in the way that some members on the opposite side of the Chamber can add to their incomes. Incidentally, the member for Geraldton said that the job of a member of Parliament should be a full-time one. I do not know what he is going to do about it. I think that most members on the opposite side of the Chamber have at least two occupations, but that is by the way. Had the war not intervened the 40-hour week would have been general throughout the world.

The Chief Secretary: No-one is objecting to the 40-hour week.

Mr. Styants: Not much! Not that you would notice!

Hon. A. H. Panton: What a tale!

Mr. FOX: Even Mussolini introduced the 40-hour working week in Italy.

The Chief Secretary: I think it an excellent idea.

Member: Where is Mussolini now?

Mr. FOX: It does not matter. He introduced the 40-hour week. Surely, if it were good enough for Mussolini to do that, we ought to do it also.

The Minister for Works: You are getting sounder and sounder!

Mr. FOX: I know the Minister for Works would not be in favour of a 40-hour week.

The Minister for Works: No-one is raising any objection to it.

Mr. FOX: What about the statements I read from "The West Australian" and the "Daily News"?

The Minister for Works: Read them again.

Mr. FOX: The Government must have given definite instructions to oppose the 40-hour week. The Government said, "Whether you like it or not, it has to go."

The Minister for Works: We leave it to the Arbitration Court.

Mr. FOX: The 40-hour week was brought in in America in 1933. Before then America had a 36-hour week in some industries.

The Chief Secretary: The men work piecework in America, 35 hours a week.

Mr. FOX: They do not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Less conversation, please.

Mr. FOX: In some industries in England the men work 40 hours.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What hours do the lawyers work?

Mr. FOX: They do not work at all, except points. The 40-hour week is one of the few amenities that workers are looking forward to and they are justified in doing so. The great advances in science and machinery justify them in looking forward to it. As I came to town this morning I saw a machine which does the work of 40 men. It was shifting sand to form an oval at East Fremantle. Other machines are doing the work of 100 men. In Melbourne recently I was at a glass works and saw a machine in which the material was put in at the top and came out as glass bottles at the bottom. The machine even stacked the bottles.

The Minister for Railways: Did it fill them?

Mr. FOX: That obtains in many other industries. It is only natural to look forward to the shorter working week so as to give the men additional leisure. That is the only way they can get it.

I wish to say a few words on the housing problem. I suppose I have been to the Workers' Homes Board as often as most members of Parliament. The Fremantle district is a crowded area, with sub-standard houses. There has been an influx of population there of late and many people in the district have been married. The member for Kalgoorlie told us there were 4,000 marriages in the State last year and my district had a fair proportion of them. I was sorry to hear some members say that they had approached the Premier with a view to getting an allocation of houses. I do not think any member should approach a Minister in order to get him to induce the Housing Commission to allocate a home for anybody. Despite what some members have said in this Chamber, I think the Housing Commission is doing an excellent job. No Ministerial influence should be brought to bear by any member in order to secure a concession for a constituent. I have never approached a Minister while the Labour Government was in power on this subject, and I hope that any Minister who is approached on the question of housing will turn a deaf ear to any such request and say that the Housing Commission is there to deal with applications on their merits. I think that is the fairest method.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I got more sympathy as a private member than I did as a Minister. I can say that honestly.

Mr. FOX: Doubtless some people may have got houses to which they were not entitled. One is sure to find such instances where there is a big undertaking; but, so far as those in control of the Housing Trust are concerned, I have complete confidence in them and am content to leave to their discretion the allocation of houses as they think fit. I do not agree with the policy altogether. I did not agree with it while the Labour Government was in office. For instance, young married people, even if they have no children, should be given an opportunity to get a home of their own. I know how difficult it is. There are thousands of

applications, but I know of young married people, with no children, who have been married four and five years and have been unable to secure a home. Many young women do not care to have children while living in rooms or with their in-laws. That is a very bad start for a young couple. They should not be compelled to live with a mother-in-law, not that I would say anything derogatory about a mother-in-law. Mother-in-law are about the average, as good as anybody else; that has been my experience.

If young people are away on their own they get a sense of responsibility which makes them more competent. I think they should be able to get out and create a home of their own. We are losing population in this way. I might mention another instance in which I put up a strong case for an unmarried man to get a home. He is 35 years of age and engaged to a girl of 29. He has all his furniture made and is capable of doing all the inside wood-work himself. Both he and the woman are getting past the prime of life. I think the fertility of women decreases after 32 or 33, so he has not much chance of having a very big family. People in circumstances like that should be given homes. He is so situated that he cannot take a wife home to his family. I tried to secure consideration for him on two occasions. I did my level best, but the board turned down the application. It may have been right. The board said that there were thousands of other more deserving cases where there were three or four units in the family—sometimes more. I know that to be correct, because we are putting up such cases from Fremantle nearly every day.

We have people coming to us who are living under very bad housing conditions. At the same time, I think the Commission as it is constituted at present is a very good one. We have Mr. Reid as chairman. He has occupied the position for a long time. The other members are Mr. Harler, a civil servant; Mr. Clare, Principal Architect; Mr. Bryan, a master builder; and Mr. Coram, representing the building trades. The latter is a plumber and knows a lot about building. They all know a good deal about the subject. Only two are paid salaries, and the amount is small. I know the housing position is very

difficult, and this Government is going to have a very hard job to live up to its promises which are impossible of fulfilment. People come to me day after day and say, "We thought we were sure to get a house now the new Government is in office. It made a lot of promises." I reply, "A lot of you will have quite a long wait yet! You have no chance of getting a house for years to come." Members opposite know that just as well as do members on this side of the House.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You know what the Minister for Works promised them.

Mr. FOX: Yes, I know.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He promised that two-unit families would get a house.

Mr. FOX: Yes.

The Chief Secretary: So they will!

Mr. FOX: That has not eventuated yet, though there may be some odd cases where some two-unit families have got homes. But I often question whether they should have got them. I do not know what is behind it, but I have no complaint to make of the administrative work of the housing authorities.

A matter to which the member for Northam referred was the retirement of Mr. Schroeder from the Children's Court. I very much regret that the Government took that action. He was a man who brought a wealth of knowledge to the position he occupied. He was very sympathetic to children who came before him, especially first offenders, and was very good at advising them. I know there are many first offenders who appeared before him, and who have never since been charged in that court. I am sorry to see it has been hinted that a legal man is to be put in control of the court. If there is one place where we need commonsense and understanding, it is in the Children's Court, and we are not going to get those things from the legal profession. Their whole teaching is in the opposite direction. It is not like the teaching of Mr. Schroeder, which was to uplift people. He has endeavoured to do that, and he had many more years service in front of him. The Government made a mistake in retiring him,

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I suppose they will put a relation in his place.

Mr. FOX: Yes, I suppose so. I think when the member for Geraldton was speaking he hinted that Mr. Schroeder might be a relative of the member for Northam; but he missed on that, so he said that Mr. Schroeder was living in Northam. He missed on that also. I do not know what other subterfuge he then put forward. What he did not say was that the Minister for Health has appointed his brother-in-law to the position of magistrate in Kalgoorlie. He evidently forgot that. I have no complaint to make about that, either.

The Minister for Railways: The Minister for Health?

Mr. FOX: Yes.

The Minister for Railways: He did not.

Mr. FOX: In the Legislative Council. If it was not his brother-in-law it was his nephew or some other relation.

The Minister for Works: He did not appoint him.

The Chief Secretary: I thought it was the Attorney General who did that sort of thing!

Mr. FOX: The hon. member got up and censured the member for Northam for appointing Mr. Schroeder, but he did not refer to the appointment of Mr. Draper to the position of magistrate in Kalgoorlie.

The Minister for Works: The Minister for Health did not do that.

Mr. FOX: A relation of the Minister for Health has been appointed, whether he did the appointing or not. He influenced the Cabinet to appoint him.

The Chief Secretary: The appointment was made on the recommendation of the Attorney General.

Mr. FOX: We know all about that! I was going to say, when I was so rudely interrupted, that it is hard to find men like Mr. Schroeder. I know only one other I have met in the last nine or ten years, and that is the gentleman who was formerly in charge of the Swan Boys Home, Mr. Birch. They are two men whose equal in dealing with children it would be very hard to find. When Mr. Schroeder was in the Children's Court in Fremantle some years ago, the Navy refused to enlist a young boy because he had had a conviction recorded against him. I did a bit of kicking up on his behalf, but Mr. Schroeder came in afterwards and, as

a result of his intervention, since then the Navy has waived its objection to taking boys who have Children's Court convictions. It was noticeable that Mr. Schroeder did not impose a penalty on first offenders but let them go and gave them good advice. I have been in the court often and seen him talking to boys and girls.

Mr. May: As a first offender?

Mr. FOX: No, just a looker-on. I have been before the court on industrial matters a few times. I suppose anybody who has been a union secretary can hardly have escaped that, because in such a position one cannot do much before being hauled up by the powers that be and asked to answer questions as to why he did this or why he did that. I noticed that recently there was a letter in the paper from a gentleman who signed himself G. Burgoyne. He referred to some honour being given to a gentleman who had done something in the way of suggesting the construction of the pipeline from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie. I had heard rumours that a knighthood was to be handed out to this gentleman for making the suggestion that this pipeline should be constructed. He made that suggestion on the 25th November, 1895. I was personally acquainted with a man named Talbot, who lived at Mulline near where I once resided, and who wrote to the papers in 1894, on the 8th March, suggesting—

The Minister for Works: Why not address the Chair instead of the member for Collic?

Hon. A. H. Panton: He wants to get his name in "The Daily News" as well as you.

Mr. FOX: I should think the Minister would leave it to the Speaker to call me to order instead of usurping his functions.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: A well-merited rebuke!

Mr. FOX: On the 8th March, 1894, Mr. Talbot wrote to the papers and suggested that a pipeline should be run from the coast to Kalgoorlie, and John Marr, on the 4th September, 1894, also wrote to the papers. He suggested that a series of pumping stations should be established between Mundaring and Kalgoorlie. It was on the 25th November, 1895, a year and eight months later that Nat Harper, whom I knew many years ago, made the same suggestion at a dinner at Kanowna. If any honours are to be handed out I would like to see them go to the people most entitled to them.

If the Government is thinking of distributing honours it should ask the Historical Society to look up its records to see who is responsible for the first suggestion that it would be a good scheme to pump water from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie in order to supply the Goldfields. I have no objection to such an honour so long as it goes to the person most entitled to it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Would this Burgoyne chap know anything about it?

Mr. FOX: I think he would.

Mr. Grayden: Why not take it on the evidence of Sir John Forrest?

Mr. FOX: We are admirers of his. He was a great Western Australian. I have been over a lot of the country that he traversed, but I do not think the hon. member would manage it because he would probably die of thirst. Sir John Forrest was not only a great statesman, but a wonderful explorer. As I have said, I have travelled over a lot of the country that he went through, but when I was there it was well watered. The Goldfields had extended and we were able to travel over the country in a horse and sulky, and the horse was able to find its way back if we were not able to. The hon. member must not insinuate that we have not a great admiration for Sir John Forrest.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair.

Mr. FOX: I want to say a few words about the fishing industry. Before the Labour Government went out of office it had on the stocks a Bill to be introduced this session. This is one of the most important industries in Australia but unfortunately there has been no organisation among the fishermen. Many of them are Italians and Slavs, and only a few are Australians. It is an industry to which the Australian does not take too kindly on account of the hardships. It is not a very nice occupation. In the month of July we have rain and blowy weather, and rough seas. These things make the industry very hard for those engaged in it. Up till 1943 or 1945 there was no organisation at all, and then an attempt was made to organise, but unfortunately those in the towns away from Fremantle, where there were only a few fishermen, compared with Fremantle, could not agree on the question of voting. Those in the outports wanted to have the same voting power as the fishermen at Fremantle where there are

about 400 engaged in the industry. As a consequence there are at the present time two associations of fishermen, namely, the League of Professional Fishermen, composed of fishermen at Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany and Denmark, and other places, and then there is the Fremantle body. But they all agree on one thing, that they want a board. Even the wholesalers in Perth agree on that. All the fish in Western Australia is controlled by five people. The reason they are in favour of the board is, I suppose, their fear of a co-operative society being formed, which would leave them high and dry.

We in Australia consume a very small quantity of fish—about 20.7 lb. per person per year. The biggest part of that is imported. Only about 9 lb. of local fish, per head of population, is consumed annually. The price of fish is very high, and I believe that if we had a board, and the fishing industry were better controlled, we could create a better fish market. With the idea of giving the fishermen a kick-off in 1943, the Commonwealth authorities co-opted the local fisheries inspector, and one or two others, and they fixed the price for fish. They based the price on the assumption that all men in the fishing industry were earning an average of £7 10s. per week throughout the year. The fishermen say that not 15 per cent. of those engaged in the industry earn that much throughout the year, and when we consider how boisterous our winter is we can readily understand that £7 10s. is a bit too high. Even if they do earn that much it is a very low wage for men whose boats are worth from £1,500 to £2,000, and I know of one party whose boat is valued at £5,000. So, not much was allowed for the depreciation of their boats and gear. I hope the present Government will give some consideration to the question of establishing a board in order to give the fishermen of Western Australia an opportunity to build up their markets and make a decent livelihood.

The member for Victoria Park deplored the fact that a very large take of crays had been removed during the last six months or so. Well, crayfish are plentiful from New South Wales around to Geraldton, and cray-fishing has been going on for the last 50 or 60 years. I do not know whether previously anyone had gone into it on the same scale as the people of Fremantle, but I do not think

there is much fear of our crayfish supplies being rapidly depleted. One great loss to the people is brought about because the whole of the crayfish, with the exception of the tail, is thrown into the sea. The part discarded would make valuable fertiliser if it were possible for the boats to carry it, but unfortunately the boats are too small.

The Minister for Lands: A factory is being built now at Geraldton.

Mr. FOX: Yes, but the boats are not big enough to bring the crayfish bodies in. If this could be done it would be very helpful to the farmers and others. I introduced a deputation from the Fremantle City Council to the Minister for Works in connection with the way that South Beach, and other beaches south of Fremantle, are being spoiled. Over the years the Government has built moles and the fish market jetty at Fremantle, and those who consider themselves expert in these things are of the opinion that these moles have deflected the currents coming up from the South-West, with the result that the beaches have been over-run with water every winter and are being destroyed. We have a very fine beach at South Fremantle; it is one of the safest for children in Western Australia. There are no sharks there—not even land sharks. The Government has a railway line running adjacent to the beach, and there may also be a danger of that being submerged. We approached the Minister for Works to see whether anything could be done. The Labour Government, now sitting in Opposition, went 50-50 with the Fremantle Council in putting out a groyne in order to arrest the sand that sweeps up from the South-West. That sand was expected to build up a beach. Unfortunately the stones used in the groyne were too small, and during the winter months they were completely swept away.

The Minister for Works: What did you say?

Mr. FOX: It has been completely swept away.

The Minister for Works: That is not so. It is either swept away, or it is not, and the stones are still there.

Mr. FOX: What is left serves no good purpose at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOX: We approached the Minister in the hope that he might write off the sum

due by the Fremantle City Council, but I understand that that has not been done.

The Minister for Works: You have not yet received your reply. When you get it I think you will have a pleasant surprise.

Mr. FOX: What is really needed there, in order to preserve the beaches, is a series of groynes running out 40 or 50 feet to arrest the sand, and so build up the beaches. I think the Government is partly responsible for the condition of the beaches there, owing to the necessary construction of the moles and the fish market jetty. In consideration of that I believe the Government should run out one or two groynes in that area, as an experiment. One groyne was constructed, as I have said, but unfortunately the winter weather was rough and swept away the stones of which it was built.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [9.13]: I wish, first of all, to extend my formal congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your elevation to the high position that you now occupy. In my congratulations I also include the Chairman of Committees. I am quite satisfied that, at the end of your long term of office in the Chair—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is wishful thinking.

Mr. LESLIE: It is confidence. I am satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that by then both you and the Chairman of Committees will have added some brilliance to the lustre that already adorns your respective positions. Although the other side has already started on me, I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the courtesy that members of the Opposition extended to me while they occupied Ministerial positions.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We will go quietly now.

Mr. LESLIE: I say that in all honesty and sincerity. I received courtesy and consideration at their hands always, and sometimes consideration to an extent that I—in my ignorance at that time—did not think I was likely to receive, belonging, as I did, to the other side. I unhesitatingly give them that amount of credit. I also extend my congratulations to the occupants of the Treasury bench. I believe the correct thing to do would be to extend congratulations to the people of the country for the quality

of members occupying the Treasury bench today.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That should be worth a sergeant's stripes.

Mr. LESLIE: During the course of the debate a very pessimistic tone has been used. I am not inclined to adopt such an attitude. I believe the future of this country is such as to justify the utmost optimism. I am satisfied that the Government, if it carries out the programme mentioned in His Excellency's speech—that Ministers are determined to increase the production and prosperity of our great primary industries, that scientific research is being extended and that marketing schemes are under consideration—will be successful. I feel confident that, building the administration of the State upon such a foundation, we have promise of a good future. I visualise the task of government as being not only a matter of organisation and administration, which are its primary responsibilities, but as including the exercise of a wide and far-reaching vision in tackling national problems.

In its approach to such problems the Government must consider utilising the natural resources of the State to the best possible advantage. An expanding population, prosperity and constant gainful employment, together with a high standard of living, are possible only if we aim for a steady increase in production, in both primary and secondary industries. Successful government can be achieved only when it envisages the future of the country on that basis, which is the broadest of any. A Government which, as has happened in the past, succumbs to the temptation to deal with national problems by means of temporary expedients such as restricting production, is heading for a fall, and is dragging the country with it.

It is regrettable that "restriction" is a word in common use today. It began in the early 1930's when economic problems arose and, as a temporary expedient, Governments decided that restriction was the only means of overcoming their difficulties. That reminds me of the doctor who adopted the expedient, in order to relieve pain or remove an illness, of killing the patient. Both the pain and the problem disappeared. The policy of restriction has been adopted by Governments, both Commonwealth and State. I have here world authorities to tell

this and future Governments that restriction is a wrong policy to adopt. At some time most of us are accused—particularly if we are in public life—of having bees in our bonnets. On the other side of the House we have a member who is an authority with very firm convictions about gold standards. Other members have similar fetishes, and I am prepared to be labelled as an anti-restrictionist. Moreover, I am prepared to show by quoting some of the highest authorities in the world that my opinions are based upon something solid.

There is a body known as the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations which, for the last two or three years, has been carrying on a complete survey of the food position throughout the world. On the Commission are representatives of 37 nations, who recently made a careful survey of the food position in no fewer than 70 countries of the world, and have based their comparisons not on present day but on pre-war data. The report shows that the opinions I have expressed in this House on a number of occasions are solidly based.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What is the date of the report?

Mr. LESLIE: I am quoting from the report of July, 1946. I have later reports.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I think you want to read their commodity series, 1947.

Mr. LESLIE: This one will do for the moment. They show there is not sufficient food being produced in the world to feed the nations on a decently high standard. I concede for the benefit of the member for North-East Fremantle that they might deal in later reports with particular commodities in which they raise the problem of surpluses in some countries and under-production in others, but I selected this report because it gives a survey of the ultimate objective. The report deals very satisfactorily with surpluses. If we are to adopt the recommendations, it will be found that there is no problem of surplus such as we have known it when people in our own State were under-nourished and under-fed while foodstuffs rotted on the farms, at railway stations and on the wharfside. Such a position would never arise. From the report dated the 5th July, 1946, I quote the background of the survey as follows:—

It is well-known that there is much starvation and malnutrition in the world. Millions

of people never get enough to eat, and much larger numbers, not actually hungry, do not obtain the kind of diet necessary for health. Vague knowledge that this situation exists is not enough; facts and figures are needed if the nations are to attempt to do away with famine and malnutrition.

Later on the report points out that the world needs more food both to feed more people and also to feed the people better. In Table V. of the report is shown in percentages the amount of increases in supplies required for the 70 countries in the survey, assuming that the targets set out are to be reached by 1960. That is a long way ahead and the world population will have risen 25 per cent. by that date. The report adds—

This estimate of food needs in 1960 gives some idea of the magnitude of the task to be undertaken and the opportunities ahead for food producers if the nations set out to improve nutrition on a world scale.

I am emphasising the words "the magnitude of the task" because there are some people who still tell us that the days of restriction must continue. Yet the task, we are told by the report, will be of magnitude till 1960. The table shows the increases over pre-war supplies required to meet the targets, plus the need based on the assumption of a 25 per cent. increase in world population, to be as follows:—

Cereals	21 per cent.
Roots and tubers	27 per cent.
Sugar	12 per cent.
Fats	34 per cent.
Pulses	80 per cent.
Fruit and vegetables	163 per cent.
Meat	46 per cent.
Milk	100 per cent.

Those are the increases required to meet a reasonable nutrition target by 1960. Later on the report states—

By 1960 original calories would have to be increased by 90 per cent. in comparison with the pre-war value. Fifty-five per cent. of this increase is accounted for by improvements in the diet and 35 per cent. by population growth. By 1970, the increase in original calories required would be about 110 per cent.

In other words, if we are to attain the nutrition standard throughout the world for all nations, we require a 90 per cent. overall increase in our production by 1960, and if we are to continue that standard with a rising population of only 25 per cent., then by 1970 our pre-war production would have to be increased 110 per cent. Yet we still have people who say that the outlook

for agriculture production is gloomy and that we ought to impose restrictions. The report continues—

Clearly, to double the food supplies, in terms of original calories, in the less developed countries will require a great expansion in agricultural resources, and indeed in all other resources as well. Large increases in imports may be needed also. That would call for expanded production in exporting countries as well as production of commodities in the importing countries to trade for food. Nothing less is involved than a transformation of life in all its aspects, which challenges the best efforts of science and industry, governments and peoples.

Concerning the development of land, the report says—

Land is the basic resource in food production. In some parts of the world the area of cultivated land is less than half-an-acre per head of the population, and this is decreasing as population rises. At present only about 7 per cent. of the land surface of the globe is cultivated. Much of the rest is unfit for cultivation by present methods, but there are large areas that could be opened up if capital were available for their development by modern technical methods, including, in many cases, irrigation and drainage.

In those words these world authorities, after a survey of 70 countries, tell us of the stupendous effort that confronts the world if all the people are to be adequately fed. In a report of February, 1947, the Preparatory Commission on World Food Proposals deals trenchantly with any suggestion for restriction; in fact throughout the report we find that any and every suggestion for restriction of agricultural production is roundly and solidly condemned. For instance, I quote the following—

We are convinced that the basis of all inter-governmental arrangements should be an expansion of consumption and not restriction of production. To this end, we have suggested that where, after the present scarcity is ended, surpluses ensue or exporting countries undertake to maintain production in excess of what could be sold at reasonable prices in the regular markets, such excess production should be made available at special prices for approved nutritional programmes.

That brings me to this point: I say definitely that we in Australia can produce a huge surplus of foodstuffs over and above our requirements, and possibly a huge surplus over and above what countries outside Australia can afford to buy according to our standards of purchase. If we are to concern ourselves with the welfare of the world in general, it is still necessary for us

to continue our production at its maximum scale, because if other countries begin to go down-hill, their bad nutritional standards, owing to their inability to maintain themselves in industry, are bound to react on us and we ourselves shall suffer in the end. We had a picture of that in the depression period. That depression was not peculiar to Australia. It prevailed all over the world and the reason for it was that, notwithstanding the huge production, there was a breakdown in distribution. Nations were unable to maintain a sufficiently high industrial standard in their own countries to enable them to purchase goods from us at prices which we considered reasonable.

Mr. Reynolds: What caused the breakdown? Who had all the money?

Mr. LESLIE: What does the hon. member want money for? Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had his pockets, however many there may be in the suit of clothes he is wearing, lined with notes and gold and all the wealth of the world, as we call it,—

Mr. Reynolds: We have heard that before.

Mr. LESLIE:—he could live on the paper of the notes, certainly, although I do not know whether there is any nourishment in it. There are many things that we need and have, and we have many things that other nations need and with which we can supply them.

Mr. Reynolds: You said that in 1929 you had an abundance of everything.

Mr. LESLIE: Of primary production.

Mr. Reynolds: And that something broke.

Mr. LESLIE: The human equation.

Mr. May: Somebody locked the money up.

Mr. LESLIE: Somebody decided that we were to live in a self-sufficient way. Nations started to confine themselves within the borders shown on a map. They decided that they were going to be self-sufficient in that little sphere and were going to produce all that they required, without getting anything from other nations. Read these reports and see how far down the scale of nutritional values some of these nations went.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will please address the Chamber.

Mr. LESLIE: I am sorry I was drawn aside.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Now tell us where the shop is where you can get things for nothing.

Mr. LESLIE: Not for nothing, but by exchange. The trouble is that so many people have an idea we were born to believe—how shall I put it—that work is the main essential in life.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I have never thought that.

Mr. LESLIE: Nor I! The 40-hour week has been mentioned here tonight and it has been suggested that members on this side of the House object to it. Personally, I would like to see an 8-hour week; but first I want to see sufficient of the essential things produced. There are three essentials, as I have said before in this House—food, warmth and shelter. Let us concentrate on these three essential requirements for human comfort and I am satisfied there will be no quibbling about a 40, 36, or 24 hour week.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you not think you should send your solution to the British Prime Minister?

Mr. LESLIE: The British Prime Minister is finding that he is up against exactly the troubles I am telling the House about. He is not able to provide his people with a sufficiently reasonable standard of living.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: He cannot buy what is produced.

Mr. LESLIE: Because he has not the goods with which to buy anything. He is not asking for money. He is turning to his own people and saying, "You have to work more than 48 hours a week; you have to send children under 16 years of age to work early in the morning." That is unheard of and would not have been agreed to by a Labour Government except in the most exceptional circumstances. The position in England today is such that that is what they are up against. They realise it is all very well to talk about shorter hours, but production is the essential thing. Produce sufficient, no matter how short or how long it takes, but try to produce it in the shortest possible time!

Mr. May: We gave you production in 1929, and nobody would buy it. Where was the money?

Mr. LESLIE: The primary producers gave us production. I will state why nobody could buy. This country, among others, decided that it would produce its

own natural resources and live within its own borders. Let members turn back to the history of the depression period and see what happened. Belgium was the first country against which we raised the tariff. We raised the tariff on glass and Belgium in turn excluded the very valuable products of Australia. Our barley industry was one of the first to be affected in 1930 on that account. The report goes on to say—

As long as under-nourished people exist, essential food that could be made available for human consumption should never be destroyed. All nations of the world should make every effort, individually or by agreement, to avoid the necessity of curtailing production.

Because of our man-made system, we could not get our commodities to the people who wanted them. We should be concerned about the fact that if we restrict our production there will be grave danger to the hungry people of other nations. Dealing with price stabilisation—and I know this will interest the member for Forrest—the Commission says this—

The Commission rejects the proposition that restriction must be the first and chief supporting pillar in a system of price stabilisation.

I could read pages of the report in which the Commission sets out a basis whereby price stabilisation, without restriction, can be achieved if the nations are prepared to do the job, if Governments are prepared to do their job and act with vision, instead of acting as they did in this country in 1930, when the quickest way out of the trouble was considered to be a policy of restriction. That brings me to a particular area that suffered severely from restriction. The marginal areas agreement between the Commonwealth and the various State Governments was a crime so far as Western Australian production was concerned. When that agreement was made between this State and the Commonwealth, it was an injustice to Western Australia. During my visit to the Eastern States I was surprised to learn that in New South Wales and Victoria, when I spoke about the marginal areas of Western Australia, the people envisaged a condition of affairs similar to that in the mallee country of Victoria, where there are vast areas of undulating sandhills and the sand is blown hither and thither by the wind. It did not grow a blade of grass, let alone a tree. When I showed the people pictures of our marginal areas they said, "Good God, what kind of a Government

have you that would call such land marginal areas?"

Mr. Reynolds: What about the rainfall?

Mr. LESLIE: I suggest to the hon. member that he obtain a copy of a recent report issued by the C.S.I.R., or one of the other Commonwealth departments, dealing with the rainfall of Western Australia, with particular reference to the so-called marginal areas of this State.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is a pity you did not hear Mr. Boyle and a few other fellows in this House talking about the marginal areas!

Mr. LESLIE: Because of the atmosphere, which prevailed throughout this country, of pessimism and despair, they adopted the expediency of despair—anything for a temporary cure from the difficulties then existing! Some cure was necessary in a hurry, but not something so drastic that it literally deprived a vast productive area of this country of its birthright.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Would the private banks lend any money on the proposition?

Mr. LESLIE: They have lent plenty and still have plenty there, and are still lending plenty.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Under reconstruction!

Mr. LESLIE: Their faith has not gone. I do not say that everything then was not correctly done, but we have to realise that that country had hardly got into the developmental stage when the depression came, and the first thing they said instead of trying to do something to alleviate the difficulties by a long-range policy, was, "Throw everything overboard." To return to the member for Forrest's remark about the rainfall, the report to which I referred was unable to declare definitely of any part of that outer area whether it has or has not sufficient rainfall. Twelve or more graphs were prepared based on different statistics. If a person were to take any one of those graphs by itself, he would declare half of the State out of production because the rainfall is not uniform; there is either too much or too little.

If we take the flood records of this State, half the district lying south of Perth should go out of production because of the disastrous years that succeeded one another. Add to that a depression in prices and those people, too, if their land was only in a

primary state of development, would be appealing to the Government for something to be done. But I hope we have advanced far enough not to make the same mistake as was made in connection with those areas. I do not for one moment wish to condemn entirely the reconstruction policy which has been adopted there. I believe that we must advance with the knowledge we gain as time goes on. We find that by making wheat-growing literally the only activity in that area we were wrong.

Hon. A. H. Pantou: That was the trouble.

Mr. LESLIE: We were wrong; but it is not correct to turn round and say that that area is going out of production eventually and is to be turned into stock-raising country.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What do you propose now; because you have a Government that ought to do as you say?

Mr. LESLIE: I propose that this Government endeavour to obtain from the Commonwealth a definite undertaking that the threat of eventual elimination from wheat-growing of those outer areas is to be removed; that they are to be allowed to grow wheat for grain.

Mr. Reynolds: What was your line of demarcation? Where would you start and stop?

Mr. LESLIE: I would not start and stop anywhere.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You never do!

Mr. LESLIE: Circumstances would have to be taken into consideration in every case. I have one district to the north of my electorate in the line of demarcation, which I understand has been removed from that category, and is being brought under a grading system. In that area there were 60 farms. Six of the farmers had obtained some small measure of relief under the reconstruction scheme—one had only received £43 for wire-netting. But because of the assistance thus given, all the six properties were brought under restriction of wheat-growing; their farms were marginal. Yet 50 odd farms in that district were permitted to grow any wheat they liked. But they all had to bear a stigma, though the men were free farmers without any restrictions on their farm economy and their production methods. Because they were within this line that was drawn on a map, they had to bear the

stigma of being in the marginal area. A line cannot be drawn. Where is it going to begin and end?

The first necessity of these outer areas is to receive from the Commonwealth the birth-right they sold for a miserable amount of assistance, which should have been afforded in any case and which was only a temporary expedient. The farmers are prepared to agree—and I am in accord with them—that stockraising should be the major enterprise in that district. But cereal-growing must go hand-in-hand with it. Whether wheat restriction comes in forever or not; whether licensing is to continue or not, they are prepared to accept a licensing system, provided it will include a minimum of one-fifth of the declared area of their land. That is reasonable. I say that because that land must be cultivated if we are to undertake animal husbandry successfully in those districts, and produce sufficient food. The land must be regularly cultivated. At least once in five years that should be done. Arbitrarily to compel anybody to undertake the expense of cultivating his land without assuring him of some reasonable return for his labour is unjust. That cannot justly be applied to any section of the community.

The people are prepared to accept the condition of compulsory cultivation of one-fifth of their cleared land provided they are allowed to crop wheat for grain. That is reasonable. They are also prepared to accept—and I believe this is necessary—that wheat for grain shall be grown only on fallow and rest land; that the land shall be cultivated on a rotation basis. They are prepared to agree to that, because over the last few years they have discovered that the minimum rainfall is required to produce reasonably satisfactory crops so long as the land has been well farmed; and today the not well farmed land in that area is an exception and is readily seen. The farmer who reports failure, except through most unusual seasonal conditions, is a rarity. With anything like a continuance of normal seasons as we know them over many years, that district can be and will be one of the biggest potential producers in this State.

Mr. Reynolds: To what district do you refer?

Mr. LESLIE: I am speaking of the north-eastern areas, to the north of Kalannie, Kulja, Koorda, Beneubbin and to the north

and a little eastward of Mukinbudin. I am not prepared to go very much further eastward of that north line. I hope this Government will at the earliest possible opportunity take whatever measures it can to secure from the Commonwealth Government release for those areas from that unjust condition, that sword of Damocles that hangs over their heads continually: that on the slightest provocation their land is likely to go out of wheat production, and that it will say to them, "Your privilege of growing wheat will be continued, but it will be on a restricted basis in accordance with the economy necessary in that district." We would be happy to accept those conditions and make animal husbandry the major enterprise, with wheatgrowing a very useful adjunct.

It is possible that the officers of the Department of Agriculture will say that these people can still cultivate a fifth of their area by putting in oats, rye or other crops which can be used for feed, but none of these crops produces anywhere near as good a result as does wheat. Wheat stubble is far better feed for sheep than is either oats or rye stubble. In addition, while the wheat is in the land there are the alternatives of using it for grain or for feed, instead of, so to speak, having all our eggs in one basket. It might be interesting to learn how sheep happened to get a hold in that northern country. The credit is not due to any Government or to any Department of Agriculture. In the early days—going back to 1926 or 1928 when I first went there—we found, when we spoke to people in the districts north of Koorda regarding sheep that we did not get a sympathetic audience. We were told it was not possible to raise sheep in that country.

Although we made every effort to get some farmers to go in for sheep raising on a fairly large scale, according to the extent of their holdings, we found that they lacked confidence and did not believe it was possible to raise sheep on an economic basis. Eventually it was decided to make a presentation to a prominent citizen in the Koorda district. I think at the time, there were about 1,000 sheep in the area north of Koorda. This prominent citizen had a farm about 14 miles north of Koorda, and I was asked what I thought he would like. I said, "Give him some sheep." It was considered a joke, but one member of the committee

handling this presentation thought there might be some sense in it. He was farming south of Koorda, and he ran sheep. Eventually they purchased 100 sheep which, together with a small cheque, they presented to the farmer. Some three years later there was hardly a man who did not have sheep on his property. The proof of the pudding was in the eating. When they found sheep could be reared successfully they all became interested. As a result that country became a stock-raising area. That was purely by accident, members may consider. If that had not happened the alternative, I presume, when the marginal areas were being considered, would have been for the farmers to have been shifted.

Mr. Reynolds: Sheep were there in 1923.

Mr. LESLIE: That is granted, in certain parts, but not in those to which I allude. It is necessary for me to touch on one aspect of production in those areas, and that is this: We must induce people to undertake a scheme of maximum production. Such encouragement again lies in the hands of the Government. I am afraid that today's severe taxation is not an encouragement to intense production. But I do not propose to discourse on that. There are means of encouragement within the hands of the State Government. The discouraging part of production that exists in this State, and in the rest of the Commonwealth, is not peculiar to Australia only, because in another report from "The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations," we find the following brief extract:—

In most parts of the world large numbers of farmers, fishermen, and forest workers are poor, and the present pattern of production tends to keep them so. Land tenure arrangements need to be improved in many areas. Education, health and sanitary services in rural areas are, for the most part, inferior to those in urban areas. Housing of rural workers is frequently bad. The benefits of electricity and other modern conveniences are less frequently present in rural than in urban households. Many rural families live without ready access to the community facilities and amenities that are an accepted part of modern living. Social legislation tends to include the rural workers and their families less frequently or less adequately than it does industrial workers. The principle that agricultural workers are not less important to the nation than other workers is not generally recognised and only rarely is it put completely into practice.

From that we can see that the circumstances we complain of in Western Australia

lia are world-wide. But that is no excuse for allowing them to continue. For just so long as they do continue, so are we going to be faced with a recurrence of intense production and restriction as a means of overcoming the problem which Governments, lacking vision, are not able to combat. One of the things necessary in the outer areas of this State, and in the districts to which this restriction is applied, is water.

I was pleased to notice in the Press recently that the Commonwealth committee that made an investigation into the comprehensive water scheme reported favourably in connection with some parts of the State, and I take those parts to include the north-eastern portions. It must have been so, because in the newspaper report it was intimated that the Government intended to proceed with the scheme and also, to some extent, with the extension promised to me during the last session of Parliament. I welcome that announcement. Because of the fact that the farming economy in these areas has been and is being dictated by Governments, it is necessary for Governments to be responsible for the provision of the necessary facilities. The member for Forrest mentioned rainfall. A far more certain rainfall is required for a stock-raising area than is necessary for wheatgrowing.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Not if you can get the water from underground.

Mr. LESLIE: Not if it can be pumped from elsewhere, but someone has to get it from underground and pump it. A survey made in a considerable part of that area indicates that underground water is not available, or where it is available that it is not suitable for stock. While the rainfall may be adequate for wheatgrowing, the precipitation is such that except in unusual circumstances it is neither heavy nor long enough to fill the catchments and tanks. Nor is there plenty of land suitable for making into catchment areas and holding-dams. The natural water resources of that country for stock are limited, and water is the one thing we can provide. In those areas we have soil and climate unsurpassed in any other part of Australia or of the world, and the production possibilities there are immense. In a great deal of that country there is soil equal to that of Palestine, which produces the finest oranges in the world, without any rain at all.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They have had a couple of assassinations there recently.

Mr. LESLIE: Perhaps they think the blood might help as fertiliser for the blood oranges. What could be done in these districts with adequate water is beyond imagination today. We have not yet tapped more than the edge of the resources of that country, yet water is the easiest thing of all to provide. We cannot make good soil or a good climate where those factors do not exist, but we can take water to where previously there was none, and in that regard we are proud of our achievements.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Minister for Water Supplies is not even listening to you.

Mr. LESLIE: He is listening. The comprehensive water scheme must go right up into the stock raising areas. The scheme proposed by the previous Government stopped short of that.

Mr. Reynolds: Who stopped it?

Mr. LESLIE: The scheme stopped too far south to be of real benefit to those areas. I suggest to the Minister for Works—I hope he jots it down—that he should have his engineers make a survey of the North-Eastern stock areas before he commences the construction of the major pipelines for the comprehensive water scheme, with a view to having the reticulation system extended to those districts. If, because of engineering limitations, that is found to be impossible, the engineers should investigate the possibility of expanding the rock-catchment system. That country abounds with ideal rock-catchments. There are many that could be suitably dammed and harnessed one to the other so that the whole area could be reticulated and connected up with the Goldfields water supply to ensure sufficient water for the stock. That is the only way in which we can be sure that the changed economy applying in those areas will be successful. This year alone offers to the Minister an indication of the urgent necessity for adequate water supplies being made available.

Already farmers are being obliged to quit stock owing to the fear that they will not have a supply of water adequate to meet their needs during the summer months. The rainfall has been insufficient to replenish supplies and provide what is known to be a safe margin to carry them over the summer. Some are already carting water. Supplies

are available from Government tanks, but if carting is to continue the stock position will become serious and, reconstruction or no, we will find that another half-baked scheme will impose hardship on those who are attempting to do everything possible for themselves. I hope the day is not far distant when that part of the State, which in the past has produced so abundantly—one-sixth of the wheat grown in this State for many years came from those areas, and today the amount of stock raised in them is enormous, one siding alone being the largest pig-raising siding in Western Australia—will be provided with adequate water.

Those areas have unlimited potentialities and require only a limited amount of Government assistance in this regard. The men there can provide water catchments and sink wells and bores, but without sufficient resources they cannot do it. The Government should assist in every way possible. If this Government is really imbued with what His Excellency said—that Ministers are determined to increase the production and prosperity of our primary industries—my plea for these areas to be included in the comprehensive water scheme will be heeded. If that is done I am satisfied that we will have the period of prosperity for which we are all hoping.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: After what you have said it should be as good as done.

Mr. LESLIE: Rome was not built in a day. While I know that this Government is going to accomplish results that will make members on the other side gnash their teeth with envy—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Crunch, crunch!

Mr. LESLIE: —I do not expect it to perform miracles. I am confident that we can leave the matter in its hands, and I am sure I can make out a good case for the Minister's consideration. Several of the matters with which I proposed to deal this evening can be dealt with under the various headings on the Estimates, but I think the time is now opportune to mention certain legislation that the Government has said it intends to introduce.

I understand that the State Housing Act is to be amended and provision made for a woman to sit on the Housing Commission. I would draw the attention of the Government to the fact that that Commission is the agent in this State of the War

Service Homes' Board. At the end of June there were 3,000 applications from ex-Servicemen for war service homes. There were 7,000 applications for State Housing Commission homes, so one-third of the total applications were for war service homes. Because of the importance and volume of the business involved in administering the affairs of the War Service Homes' Board I believe it is only right that a representative of the ex-Servicemen should be included on the State Housing Commission. The State Housing Act says that the Commission, subject to any directions by the Minister, shall be charged with the administration of the Act, and that Commission has to administer affairs related to war service homes. When the Government finally gives consideration to the Bill intended to amend that Act I hope that, before bringing the Bill down, it will consider the claims of the ex-Servicemen in this direction.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Put an ex-Service-woman on.

Mr. LESLIE: No; I understand that there is to be provision on the women's side. I can convey this bit of good news to the Government. Its announcement regarding the proposal to make a substantial writing-off of debts incurred under the Rural Relief Fund Act has been received with general approbation throughout the country districts.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Naturally!

Mr. LESLIE: There is some regret, however, that the whole of the indebtedness is not to be written off. I am anxious to see total relief extended in that direction and unless some good and proper reasons can be given when the legislation dealing with the matter is before the House, I shall feel disposed to move an amendment to provide for the total writing off of those debts. I am well aware of the limitation of my powers as a private member, but such a move on my part would serve to indicate to the Government the desires of the people. In view of the fact that the money has been given to the Government for such a purpose—the statement has been made to that effect and I have not seen it contradicted—the people mostly concerned feel that in the existing circumstances they are being penalised.

Then again, some suggestion has been made—I am not aware of the origin of the statement, but I know it has been made—that there is to be an increase in railway

fares and freights. Perhaps this is not the place to sound a note of warning—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Why not?

Mr. LESLIE: —but I have grave misgivings on the matter should any proposal to increase railways fares and freights be submitted in this Chamber. I believe there are other ways and means by which the railways could be made—that is, if such a result is possible of achievement—to pay their way.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Would such a proposal have to be introduced in this Parliament?

Mr. LESLIE: I do not know.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I do not think it would.

Mr. LESLIE: At any rate, if it is introduced here, there will be such a protest voiced that will deafen the Minister and prevent him from hearing anything else for quite a long time. I can assure him that we are firmly convinced that, unless the railway finances are put in order and the system run on a much different basis from that obtaining at present, there is no justification for any suggestion of fares and freights being increased. I see no justification whatever for any such step being taken. There will have to be very solid reasons to make me change my mind on this point.

Mr. Graham: Operating costs have nearly doubled.

Mr. LESLIE: Even if they have, if the interest bill were to be reduced we would then be just about at the stage where fares and freights could be what they are today. Over past years we have been mulcted unjustly in the freights and fares that have been charged. They should have been reduced long ago instead of having been increased. A perusal of the railway finances convinces me of that.

Mr. Graham: You have your head in the clouds!

Mr. LESLIE: I am pleased to note that the Government intends to introduce an amendment to the Child Welfare Act and to deal with the Children's Court as well. I hope that when the legislation is introduced it will remove from the Children's Court one of the greatest injustices that could ever exist in any British self-governing country. I refer to the travesty of charging an infant with being a neglected child.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESLIE: I am delighted to hear that expression of approval. Only the other day we saw in "The Daily News" a picture of a six-months old infant that had been left on a doorstep. That baby was charged with being a neglected child! How could that infant defend itself? What a travesty of British justice! I always understood that under British law a person was deemed innocent until proved to be guilty. How could such a child defend its innocence? Surely a better and more dignified way of dealing with such matters could be adopted without this shocking scandal and injustice. If a child is found to be neglected, then let the Child Welfare Department or the police or the parents or someone else who is responsible, petition the court with a view to the baby being made a ward of the State. Fancy charging such a child with being neglected! It is useless telling me that in such cases no conviction is recorded and so the child is not affected in after life. Like hell it is not! The stigma of having been charged in court with being a neglected child adheres to that individual through life. No child should be charged with anything unless it could be definitely held that it committed the misdemeanour knowingly and that it was of an age when it was responsible for its action. During the present session I hope we are to hear something about the report of the Royal Commission on vermin.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I wonder!

Mr. LESLIE: At any rate, I am hoping that we shall. The report was excellent and I said as much to the ex-Minister for Agriculture. I am aware that it did not contain some provisions I would like to see embodied in it, and that it contained others with which I was not so much in favour. It did provide for one particular step that would have afforded some protection to the people outback who today stand as a buffer between the vermin-infested parts and those that, so far, are free from vermin. I have in mind the emu pest, grasshoppers and others as well. For too long have the people outback carried the burden themselves, and it is up to the State to accord them some assistance to cope with a menace that is well beyond their means. I regret to have to say that at present emus are threatening to do severe damage to the crops in the areas I have in mind. Today they are well inside the outer fringe of the agricultural districts, and are

there in large numbers. If any member should feel inclined to spend a happy weekend that would also be profitable to them, I can inform them that some of the road boards are so concerned about the vermin that they have acted for themselves. We are known for our self-help attitude in our district and of our own volition have increased the bonus on emu beaks to 1s. per head.

Mr. Reynolds: Why not get machine-guns?

Mr. LESLIE: I am not very enamoured of the use of machine-guns. I think it better for a number of the settlers to spread out with their rifles and do as much damage as they can by virtue of their numbers. By such a move we might succeed in driving the emus a little further outback and in destroying many as well. At any rate, the emu menace must be tackled and one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission was for the erection of ring-lock fences or fences of some other suitable description, with traps at intervals, between No. 1 and No. 2 rabbit-proof fences. The object would be first to exclude the birds and, secondly, to trap them. I appreciate that at present—no-one does more than I—it is extremely difficult to get the small modicum of fencing requirements of any one individual in the State. Goodness knows, I am pleading enough to get some for individual farmers. Because of the difficulty, there is an excuse for the Government's not taking immediate action. It cannot draw blood from a stone, and if the employees of the Broken Hill Co. will work only 40 hours instead of a reasonable number of hours in order to supply materials—

Several members interjected.

Mr. LESLIE: It all boils down to the same thing. It is goods we want, and every minute that passes is an opportunity lost and may be costing the State goodness knows how much. Just because somebody will not work half an hour longer a day, a few thousand bushels of valuable foodstuffs must disappear.

Mr. Reynolds: Why not 60 hours a week?

Mr. LESLIE: I would suggest 60 hours if people could stand it in order to catch up the leeway. Nobody worried how long he worked during the war. People exhibited a wonderful spirit during that period. What we need today is a return of that war spirit.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Nobody worried about money during the war.

Mr. LESLIE: We want people to work to get us out of this crisis.

Mr. Reynolds: We should never have got into it.

Mr. LESLIE: I do not know how we could have kept out of it, but there would have been less difficulty if there was a different attitude to work than that which prevails at present. I hope that during the session we shall hear something about the report of the Royal Commission on Vermin.

I find it necessary to bring up a point before the Government introduces the Estimates, and that is in connection with education and, if possible, the standardisation of children's school books. Why in the world is it necessary to allow every schoolmaster to have his own ideas as to what particular books might be used in his particular school in any particular year?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is neither necessary nor permitted.

Mr. LESLIE: Then let me tell the ex-Minister that my children have changed their school during the year and the books at one school were useless because the schoolmaster said he was using something else. That state of affairs does exist. It is of no use the ex-Minister saying it is not permitted because it happened. Why it should happen I do not know. I refer the matter to the Minister for Education and suggest that it should be policed.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It should be easy.

Mr. LESLIE: It should not be necessary to have a multiplicity of books. We should be able to go further and standardise all our books so that they will be serviceable for more than one-yearly periods. I do not like mentioning personal matters.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: There are books in the schools today that have been in use for the last 25 years.

Mr. LESLIE: That might be so, books of a cheaper kind or those used in the High Schools.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Standard Readers, for example.

Mr. LESLIE: At one school the Oxford Reader is used; at another school Whitcombes, and at another school yet another Reader. I have such a stock of school

books at home that I could almost start a private school with them. I have four children attending school, and just when I think I shall be able to save a little money on those passing into a higher standard, I find that half the books previously used are rejected because the teacher has made a change. This is imposing a most unjust burden upon the people. If the Government is going to countenance that sort of thing, it should do something to compensate parents and that is to provide the school books. The Minister might take that point into consideration. In addition, he might consider standardising the books. If that is not a practical proposition, he should do something in the direction of making an allowance to parents to compensate them for the additional cost. Free education! There is no free education. The only free part about it is that parents do not pay directly for the building or the salaries of the teachers. The rest is all a cost to the parents, and a fairly heavy one, too.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You have Ministers looking very worried.

Mr. LESLIE: It will take more than that to worry them.

Mr. May: They should do something about it.

Mr. LESLIE: I am glad to receive support from that side of the House. To the Minister for Health, I wish to mention a sore point. The Minister has a very capable representative in this House, and I hope he will place what I have to say before the Minister in a stronger way than would be conveyed by merely reading a report of my remarks. I have not had time to submit this matter to the department, but this is the place to mention it, because it might apply to hospitals in areas other than my own. I understand that the Medical Department has cut down the subsidies that were being paid to Government hospitals in country districts.

Hon. E. Nulsen: They are still going on.

Mr. LESLIE: That is not in accordance with my information.

Mr. Reynolds: When does that apply from?

Mr. LESLIE: It appears to be almost a continuation of the action of the ex-Minister for Health of endeavouring to deceive as many people as possible into paying

for hospital accommodation when every person in the State is entitled under the Commonwealth Hospital Benefits Scheme to free treatment in a public hospital.

Hon. E. Nulsen: That is wrong.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Absolutely wrong.

Mr. LESLIE: Every person is entitled to free treatment in a public hospital.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Where are the public hospitals?

Mr. Reynolds: To the extent of 6s. per day.

Mr. LESLIE: I suggest that members of the Opposition look at the agreement. No matter what members might say about the 6s. per day, when any person enters a public hospital, he is entitled to demand a bed.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Where is there a public hospital in any part of the country, apart from the Royal Perth Hospital?

Mr. LESLIE: I could name quite a few. The term "public hospital" is interpreted as a hospital which has received Government assistance.

Hon. A. H. Panton: No.

Mr. LESLIE: The hon. member should look at the Act.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I was Minister for Health for a good while and attended two or three conferences on the subject.

Mr. LESLIE: I argued this point with the former Minister for Health. We have Commonwealth Ministers saying what jolly fine fellows they are for having made free hospital treatment available and then Ministers on the other side come along and put people in such a position that, if they cared to exercise their rights under this free hospital scheme, they could do so only by suffering the greatest indignity. I could mention one hospital that has refused to make any charge at all—Wongan Hills. It claims to be a public hospital and makes no charge for any patient. The same applies to many other hospitals. Before the introduction of the benefits scheme, it had one charge only; everybody paid the same rate.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Any hospital is at liberty to do that if it chooses.

Mr. LESLIE: When this free hospital treatment scheme that is not free came in, the hospitals were told, "So much of your hospital is a public hospital—that is, an odd

bed or so—but the rest of the beds may be regarded as intermediate and private and you may fix a higher scale for them." For instance, in the Wyalkatchem hospital there were two beds, prior to the introduction of the scheme, for which 15s. per day was charged; for the other beds in the hospital the charge was 10s. 6d. per day. Now we find that half or more of the beds are private or intermediate beds and there is only an odd public bed.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Have you a committee at Wyalkatchem?

Mr. LESLIE: Yes. I was on it for years. I know of another hospital with four beds in one ward. I walked in with a prospective patient and was told that a bed was available in a men's ward with three other patients. The matron asked, "Who is the gentleman, Mr. Leslie?" I told her. She said, "I suppose he would not want a public bed." I replied, "My oath, he is going into a public bed."

Hon. A. H. Panton: You said that to the matron!

Mr. LESLIE: Yes. She said, "I do not know what I shall do," and I said, "He will have to go in there." I went into the ward and found there were two men patients who were paying the intermediate rate. The other was occupying a public bed, and the man I took to the hospital was going into a public bed.

Mr. Reynolds: Whose fault was that?

Mr. LESLIE: The Medical Department's.

Mr. Reynolds: What about your committee?

Mr. LESLIE: The committee is in this position: It relied upon the Government—and this applies to all country hospitals—to assist with finance to make up the hospital's deficit, and the Government says, because of the control it had over the purse-strings, "Right, you dance to our tune."

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Is the Government saying that now?

Mr. LESLIE: I do not know.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I thought you did.

Mr. LESLIE: I have just received information that the subsidies have been reduced. If the present Government is continuing the policy of the past Government, then I say it is wrong, but I can hardly conceive of that being the case.

Hon. E. Nulsen: I think you have been deluded.

Mr. LESLIE: It would not be the first time.

Mr. Reynolds: That is news to me.

Mr. LESLIE: I do not think I would be considered to have said anything at all unless I spoke on the subject of war service land settlement.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That will come up in legislation.

Mr. LESLIE: I hope it will.

Hon. A. H. Panton: So do I.

Mr. LESLIE: I am, of course, fully aware of the extent to which the scheme has progressed up to the present. The announcement of the intention of the State Government to take some part off its own bat in assisting to overcome this exceedingly great difficulty—the question of soldier settlement—has been welcomed far and wide. We were awaiting an announcement by the State Government as to what exactly would be done in the matter. I know, as do others who have looked deeply into the position, that it is not going to be easy.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You have suddenly made up your mind on that point.

Mr. LESLIE: I did not suddenly make up my mind. I was glad someone had the courage to tackle the question, instead of bowing meekly to the continued shortsighted, narrow and unsympathetic dictates of the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Hoar: The present Minister agrees with the scheme. He said so the other night.

Mr. LESLIE: Of course he does. I am quite satisfied with it, too, but he does not agree with everything the Commonwealth dictates. There is nothing wrong with the scheme if it is allowed to work. The State will work it. The member for Leederville would have allowed it to work if the Government by the Party of which he was a member was satisfied with it. He knows the limitations.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Prior to the election, I was blamed for the lot.

Mr. LESLIE: I will state what the hon. member was to blame for. He was to blame for not being honest enough to tell us where the snag was.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I told you.

Mr. LESLIE: Early during the session, we had what I might best describe as a procession of sore heads paraded before this Chamber by members on the Opposition side.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Not by me.

Mr. LESLIE: Those members were bemoaning the fate that overtook them at the election.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I had no sore head.

Mr. LESLIE: That remains to be seen. We will jump that hurdle when we get to it. All kinds of accusations were levelled at members on this side of the House about election propaganda. My name was coupled with it. I had no intention of dealing with this matter had it not been that the member for Northam decided to saddle me with responsibility in relation to some things which had been said.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You saddled yourself with responsibility by authorising the worst of the advertisements.

Mr. LESLIE: No, Sir, but I accept the responsibility for what I myself said. Had the previous Government, prior to the election, been honest with the people, there would have been little ground upon which to base the accusation that all the post-war difficulties were its responsibility. The man in the street and members of this Chamber can see scant evidence of any action having been taken to overcome what we knew were difficulties.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you think your propaganda was honest to the people?

Mr. LESLIE: Of course it was.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you think that education in this State is lower than in most countries in the world, because that is what was said?

Mr. LESLIE: I did not say it, nor did I put my name to it, because I did not know the educational standards of other countries. What I did say was that there were no houses, but the member for Northam told the Chamber that that was a lie and still is a lie. Members on the other side of the House deny the fact. I heard the member for Kalgoorlie speak in this House about the discontent on the Goldfields with the Housing Commission. The member for South Fremantle also spoke of the housing difficulty at Fremantle. Does that indicate that the housing problem is finished

and over? There were no houses then and there are none now.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The same difficulty is the cause of it.

Mr. LESLIE: I am not so much concerned about that. I was responsible for saying that there were no houses and no transport. There was no transport and there still is no transport. I said there were no hospitals and there are still no hospitals. I also said there was no education. There is still no education. What I said then I still say today.

Hon. A. H. Panton: And you will say it again in 12 months.

Mr. LESLIE: We saw scant evidence of any action on the part of the previous Government to attempt to overcome these troubles. I will quote some propaganda that I have here in support of what I say in this connection. This document which I hold has, I presume, been issued by the Western Australian Labour Party. At least, it contains photographs of Hon. P. Collier, Hon. F. J. S. Wise and Hon. J. C. Willecock, ex-Premiers of the State. They are very fine photographs. I have not seen such fine photographs for a long time.

Mr. May: There is some good stuff in that document.

Mr. LESLIE: There is.

Mr. May: No cobwebs!

Mr. LESLIE: I am afraid there is no space to hang cobwebs on. This document says—

During the war years Labour Governments, led by Mr. Willecock, concentrated the resources of the State almost entirely to the support of Australia's war effort—

Hon. A. H. Panton: At the request of the Prime Minister.

Mr. LESLIE: The document continues—
—a policy which at that time had the support of an overwhelming majority of the people. Such concentration of effort for six years naturally led to the creation of arrears of work and shortages of labour in many fields, including those of housing, school and hospital buildings, and so on.

I make this quotation merely to refute the statement by the member for Northam that what was contained in the document which he quoted was lies. His own paper, his Bible, or whatever it may be called, says it is true. Yet he turns round and says to the House that I lied.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I said nothing of the kind.

Member: He gave the reasons.

Mr. LESLIE: He gave the reasons, but he should have given them previously. I stated that a certain set of circumstances existed at that time. There is no denying the fact that they existed.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Your logic is deplorable.

Mr. LESLIE: Moreover, I mentioned that a lot of the trouble had arisen because of the fact that prior to the war years the Labour Government had not taken the necessary action to overcome some of those difficulties. For 14 years that Government had been in power, yet at the stone end of that time it dragged out the war period as being the cause of its difficulties, and of the evident neglect in public administration that existed.

Mr. Reynolds: Did we not have a depression before the war?

Mr. LESLIE: Yes. We had an election in 1933 when the member for Northam stood for the first time against Sir James Mitchell. During the election campaign he told the people what was wrong with the state of affairs in this country. I will tell members what he said at Northam in his election address in 1933. I stated recently that our railway transport had been muddled. That was what I said in March, 1947. This is what the member for Northam said in 1933—

The recent Labour conference had declared in favour of a writing down of the capital costs of the railways, a proposal which he heartily endorsed. It might be contended that such a policy would merely transfer charges from the Railway Department to the general revenue of the State, but it would mean more than that. Today £1 of every £3 earned by the railways had to be paid away in interest. Everybody knew that in the past politicians had built railway lines that should never have been built. As a result the Railway Department had to continually operate such lines at heavy loss. Such a system was grossly unfair to the railway management, the railway workers and the railway users, and popularity and profit hunting politicians should not be allowed to dodge their responsibilities in that easy manner.

In comparatively recent times New Zealand had written off £10,000,000, Queensland £28,000,000, and New South Wales, £30,000,000. Victoria was now examining the question and South Australia would soon be forced to face it. A writing down of railway capital in this State would considerably reduce the £1,000,000

interest bill which the railway users now had to pay each year. This in turn would enable freight reductions to be made, would give a measure of real relief to the country people who paid practically all freights. The interest charges on the capital written off would then become a charge on the whole community, and as the building of railways advantaged the whole community it should be called upon to pay something for the benefits received.

It was an open secret that the rollingstock and permanent way of the railways had not been receiving the attention necessary. A policy of neglecting this important phase of the railway system was false economy of the worst kind.

That is what the member for Northam said in 1933. For 14 years afterwards, he was on the Government side of the House and was a member of the Cabinet. I asked him in March, 1947, what he had done to fulfil the promise he made in 1933. Not a damn thing! So my charge of no railways and no transport is confirmed.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESLIE: As a matter of fact, I said this in 1945 and 1946. I quoted a lot of figures to prove my contention concerning the writing down of the railways.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is wonderful how great minds think alike!

Mr. LESLIE: I am glad to know there is another great mind like mine! I pay tribute to the member for Northam for having discussed this matter; but I must say I cannot pay tribute to him for having done nothing about it, seeing that he was a member of the Government; and then for turning round and saying, when we declared that the Government had continued to neglect these things, that we were lying. The effect of the war years is a worn-out excuse so far as the previous Government is concerned. The present Government could justifiably advance the war years as an excuse for failure—

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is a beaut!

Mr. LESLIE: —because the present Government was not in office prior to the war years in order to build up the country. It did not take a mere few years of war for the present state of affairs in Western Australia to develop. I have shown that the member for Northam was, to put it politely working on wrong premises when he referred to the propaganda which appeared under my name as being lies—the propaganda that mentioned no houses and no

transport. All the "noes" that were then mentioned still exist. They existed then, so he cannot deny that he uttered an untruth.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I do deny it.

Mr. LESLIE: It has been suggested that we indulged in false propaganda. I have shown that there was no false propaganda. But in view of the propaganda that was made out of a set of circumstances that existed in past years; in view of the use that was made by members opposite, even in recent times, of conditions that prevailed years ago, we would have been justified in going to the extreme extent of using doubtful propaganda if we had cared to descend to that level. I am alluding to the constant references that have been made to the Mitchell Government and the depression, references made in such a way as to imply that that Government was entirely and wholly responsible for the circumstances that arose during the depression.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Work for all! Do you remember that?

Mr. LESLIE: Work for all?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That was promised.

Mr. LESLIE: A promise which members opposite never allowed the Government to fulfil!

Hon. A. H. Panton: We had nothing to do with it.

Mr. LESLIE: Of course not! But members opposite happened to be part and parcel of a political organisation which had a majority Government in Australia at that time. The Commonwealth Government then was a Labour Government under a certain Mr. Scullin.

Mr. Needham: With an antagonistic Senate led by Sir George Pearce.

Mr. LESLIE: When I get a chance, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should address the Chair.

Mr. LESLIE: It was not the Commonwealth Senate that invited Sir Otto Niemeyer to come here and put the screw on the country.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You admit he came to put the screw on!

Mr. LESLIE: It was Prime Minister Scullin, a member of the Australian Labour Party and head of the Labour Government.

Constantly we have a reiteration of these charges against the Mitchell-Latham Government and the circumstances existing at that time, as if that Government was responsible. I wonder whether the Labour people in the other States—those four States where Labour Governments were in existence when the Premiers' Plan was brought into effect—I wonder whether the present-day Labour members in those Chambers sling off about the depression years and accuse members of the Labour Governments of that time of being responsible for the depression! It would be fair to expect that, seeing that the matter is constantly brought up here. I say definitely that if ever there was false and unjust propaganda indulged in at election time with a wilful desire to deceive people it has been this repeated reiteration of the circumstances of the depression with blame laid at the door of the Mitchell-Latham Government. Here we have it again in this pamphlet—

Unfortunately, the State suffered a period of retrogression under the National Party—Country Party Coalition Government in the years 1930, 1931 and 1932.

Members opposite could find no other way of condemning their opposing political organisation than to drag out false arguments and blame a Government existing years ago for something over which that Government had no control whatsoever!

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: We blamed them for promising work for all.

Mr. LESLIE: That Government would have made some solid attempt to give work for all had its policy not been dictated by the Australian Labour Party sitting in Canberra. We have the same thing today. Because of the existence of the uniform tax agreement and other things, the Commonwealth Government is dictating our policy. The ex-Premier made apologies for that state of affairs, and no doubt this Government will do the same.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The people of Australia gave the Commonwealth Government that authority.

Mr. LESLIE: That is so. They did many things that they regretted afterwards. They regretted electing the Labour Government and turfed it out this year. I hope that we have heard the end of the Mitchell-Latham Government bogey.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The member for Nedlands has walked out because of what you did.

Mr. LESLIE: I cannot help the ideas that some people have. We are accused of using false propaganda. I have given the lie to that. But there is an excuse for any party, other than the Labour Party, to use false propaganda because of the example it has set. In this same publication we find this heading, "Vote Labour for State-wide progress." That appeared on March the 15th.

Hon. A. H. Panton: A man ought to take you back to 1917 when Billy Hughes sold a pup to the soldiers.

Mr. LESLIE: This paper states—

Increase in basic wage. The table below shows the respective basic wages applying in 1933 (under National-Country Party Government) and in 1943 (following the Labour Premier's order of 1942) and in 1945.

Nothing is said of the fact that apart from an amount of 5s. the Arbitration Court has decided the basic wage and not the Government. It would have been somewhere near honesty had this said, "Under the Labour Government the Arbitration Court has increased the basic wage." But, no! This was carefully prepared and worded so as to imply that it was the magnanimous Labour Government which gave all these increases, and improved the industrial conditions.

Mr. Needham: The Court refused to increase the wage.

Mr. LESLIE: That was one small amount of 5s. The increase has gone considerably beyond that since. In any case, the action of the Government in that connection is very questionable; namely, the right of any Government to interfere with courts of justice. At the bottom of this we find—

All above amendments secured by Labour legislation.

This is so prepared as to deceive the people. One member early in the debate, said this was a case of the pot calling the kettle black. I think it is a question of a pot seeing its reflection in a shining mirror of purity!

Hon. A. H. Panton: Is that Emerson or Longfellow?

Mr. LESLIE: It is my own; on the spur of the moment.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I bet "The Daily News" will have that featured.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mt. Marshall will address the Chair.

Mr. LESLIE: In connection with this legislation, I refer to the remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie the other night when he said that the Labour Government was in office for 14 years, but not in power because of the existence of the Legislative Council. No doubt it is because of that fact that no reference is made to what the Legislative Council has done in assisting to improve the standards mentioned here. The President of the Arbitration Court, Mr. W. Dwyer, declaring the annual basic wage for 1942, said:

The State's average weekly wage per adult male worker is the highest in the Commonwealth both in amount and in purchasing power.

Lower down we find:

All above amendments secured by Labour legislation.

But that was not without the concurrence of the Legislative Council. All the benefits of the industrial and other workers have been secured with the concurrence of the Legislative Council, but we hear nothing but abuse of that place from the other side of this Chamber. The member for Kalgoorlie said that the Government had been in office for 14 years, but not in power. I want to remind him that legislation is only one function of the Government; it is administration where power lies, and the Legislative Council was not able, in this period of 14 years, to interfere in one small bit in any power that the Labour Government cared to exercise when administering the affairs of State. It is useless for our friends on the other side of the Chamber to attempt to deceive the people by suggesting that things could have been better if it had not been for the Legislative Council.

Mr. Styants: What happened to the Fair Rents Bill?

Mr. LESLIE: The Legislative Council did not stop the Government from administering the affairs of the State as efficiently as they should have been, prior to the war.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It stopped us from building homes for rental purposes. It would not pass the Bill.

Mr. LESLIE: There might have been a reason for it. I do not know that I would be particularly happy about even the Com-

monwealth-State Housing Agreement, except for the fact that a condition attaches to it whereby each tenant can, in the words of Mr. Dedman, become a little capitalist by purchasing his own home. I have no objection to that. Every man should have a home of his own. Every home should be under a purchase scheme.

Mr. May: Of course it should.

Mr. LESLIE: The hon. member will be taken to task at Trades Hall, because someone else who said the same thing was.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: It is a pity the member for Mt. Marshall has not a home to go to.

Mr. LESLIE: I am not concerned about that. I have something else here. Members on the other side will be interested in these two papers which are copies of the "Worker" of the 21st March and the 25th April.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We never read them.

Mr. LESLIE: I suggest you read these. It is a pity they were not read before we had the procession of sore heads from the other side.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You started off with a sore point.

Mr. LESLIE: The campaign director, Mr. Davies, explains the reason for the defeat of the Government. I apologise to Mr. Davies. What I have in mind is the leading article appearing in the issue of the 21st March, and that has been contributed by the editor. This article states—

Labour on Saturday suffered a reverse which was not expected and which was not deserved. It later continues as follows:—

If, therefore, Saturday's vote represents a vote of no-confidence, the loss of confidence must have been in the electors and in respect of the decisions made by them at the election of 1933 and at subsequent elections.

That is peculiar reasoning, but I have to accept it. In other words, the writer says that the electors of Western Australia suddenly lost confidence in themselves and in their decisions at the 1933 and subsequent elections until 1947.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is possible.

Mr. LESLIE: They are entitled to lose confidence in themselves. When people find, after 14 years, that they have made a bad choice the only thing to do is to place their confidence somewhere else.

Mr. Styants: They did not do it very decisively. You have not now a majority in the House.

Mr. LESLIE: We have enough. We are confident that we are going to do a good job and that, therefore, the other side will have very little to say about it. Referring to the election—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why do you not read "The West Australian"? It is more interesting.

Mr. LESLIE: Mr. Davies says:—

I cannot, however, permit the opportunity to pass without remarking that in my considered opinion thousands of workers, many of whom must have been Government employees, voted against Labour Party candidates. This is apparent not only in those seats in the metropolitan area which were lost, such as Mt. Hawthorn, Middle-Swan and Canning, but the trend was noticeable even in what might be termed, "Industrial seats," like East Perth, Guildford-Midland, and others where our majorities were reduced.

Mr. Graham: I got more votes on this last occasion than at the previous election.

Mr. LESLIE: The statement continues:

Many people must have short memories of the hardships endured in the years 1931-33.

Even after the election the Labour Party still indulged in false propaganda:—

But of course it must be admitted that in the intervening period many thousands of young voters who did not experience the results of coalition Government in this State during the years previously mentioned have been enrolled.

In other words, it endeavours to draw a comparison between the state of affairs existing in 1933 and that existing in 1947. Conditions in 1933 were brought about by circumstances over which the then Government had no control.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Look out that this Government does not meet the same fate.

Mr. LESLIE: For 14 years that set of circumstances has been used for Labour propaganda. Now, when circumstances arise similar to those over which the Labour Party said it had no control, it objects to similar action being taken. Mr. Davies, in analysing the election result, tells us clearly why the election was lost by Labour.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You must have been impressed.

Mr. LESLIE: I was. He says:—

To win the next Federal election may require an alteration of Ministerial policy.

In other words, he says that Labour might have won the State election had there been an alteration in its Ministerial policy. He has his pulse on opinion—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: On what do you say he has his pulse?

Mr. LESLIE: He has his finger on the pulse of opinion and says:—

It will require from the trade union movement a close analysis of its ideas towards arbitration generally. While I do not think for one moment that a strike in certain given circumstances is not justified, but we cannot fool the people continually by paying lip service to arbitration and using it on some occasions and on many other occasions taking direct action. This has been done more often in the Eastern States than here, but in my opinion it is the greatest factor contributing to our defeat.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You used it considerably on your side.

Mr. LESLIE: He says that in his opinion it is fact.

The Chief Secretary: The Labour Party only thought of the other reason afterwards.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: Mr. Davies says:—

Ultimately if it continues it will bring about the defeat of all Labour Governments, because it must ever be remembered that no matter what might be the viewpoint of males in this matter, their wives and female members of their families might have completely conflicting opinions and females, like males, vote at elections.

That is the official report of the Labour Party election organiser to the Labour Movement. He sums up the reasons for the defeat of the Labour Government. In another paper he condemns the people who dared to exercise their liberty in voting against Labour.

Mr. Hegney: You had to tack yourself on to the Liberals to form a Government against us.

Mr. LESLIE: I am not concerned about that, but about the charges levelled against the Government relating to certain practices, and about the fact that my name was brought into it. They are without foundation. One member sitting behind the Ministerial bench said, in his maiden speech, that, should he be obliged to criticise, he hoped his criticism would be constructive. That is what I am attempting now. Members on the other side of the House should

not continue to drag up the bogey of false election propaganda and attempt to deceive themselves into thinking that that alone was responsible for their defeat—merely the propaganda without the circumstances that contributed to that defeat. I would hate to see a weak Opposition in this House.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We saw that for 14 years, but I would guarantee that it will not be seen during this session.

Mr. LESLIE: This paper says:—

Labour has fought for the right of free expression of opinion, and has no regret for having done so when the expression favours its political opponents.

Mr. Hoar: That is the first time that "The Worker" has been published through "Hansard".

Mr. LESLIE: It has been published before, but I do not think that anything to its credit has been going into "Hansard".

Hon. A. H. Panton: You are the means of its being published.

Mr. LESLIE: If there is anything discreditable it should be brought into the light of day. I do not know how far the statements in this paper have official backing, but if this means that one of our political movements, though it may express high sentiments towards liberty, is not prepared to allow liberty of action to individuals—

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is the only movement that has stood for liberty over the years. You would not have had much liberty had it not been for the Labour movement.

Mr. LESLIE: Because I am a worker, through circumstances obliged to belong to an industrial organisation in order to earn my living, I do not think I should automatically become an adherent of a certain political organisation, but that is what "The Worker" wants. Is that liberty? I looked in vain for someone in the Labour movement with sufficient courage to say that he did not agree with the slur cast on young men. I know the young men to whom allusion is made. They are young men who during past years have entered the labour market after returning from the fight for liberty, and who were compelled to have union tickets and thereby sell their liberty. I looked in vain for someone to say that that was not one of the policies of the Labour movement. I regret indeed to see that sort of thing creep in. I do hope

that our political organisations will never attempt at any time to follow such an example.

I can assure the House that the political body with which I am associated will, by every means in its power, attempt to educate even those rats of Labour people to a realisation that they have the privilege of ratting if they so wish. There is also another point about Labour that I have never quite been able to understand, and that is: Because a man is a worker in Government employment he, so they claim, must automatically vote for Labour. That is the type of propaganda that has been indulged in for so long that such people have come to believe that they must vote Labour. They have been bluffed.

Mr. Hegney: They will not want any bluffing now for a year or two.

Mr. LESLIE: No, not so long as this propaganda continues. I am satisfied that the bluff of the Labour organisations and of the Labour Party is about to be called and that there will be an end to that sort of thing, particularly seeing that they have now shown their hands clearly for all the world to see, that their nationalisation and socialisation policy is also that of the Communist Party.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Is not nationalisation popular with the farmers?

Mr. LESLIE: I know of two political organisations that have as a fundamental plank of their respective policies, the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange. I do not know whether it is coincidental that those two organisations have this fundamental plank in common.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Country Party has it today without the necessity for including it as a plank in its platform. That is the difference.

Mr. LESLIE: Since the announcement regarding the proposal to nationalise the banks, I am quite satisfied that of the organisations—one is the Labour Party and the other the Communist Party—the Communists are merely appendages to the Labour Party and have proved useful appendages.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They have been very good appendages for you.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You would not like to get rid of them.

Mr. LESLIE: There is no similarity between the policy that we propound and that of the Communists.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: But plenty of similarity in the methods you use.

Mr. LESLIE: The nationalisation of banking indicates the summing up of the policies of the two Parties. However, I find that the Communists are honest in that they blatantly say that they aim to obtain that objective even to the extent of engaging in disruption. Our Labour friends are not so honest although their objective is the same, but they pursue it in a more subtle manner.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: We are much more honest than you are.

Mr. LESLIE: I still believe in the liberty of the individual. I and some of my friends sitting on the Opposition side of the House fought against Communism and Fascism, and I shall continue to fight against both, particularly when any attempt is made to introduce the methods of the Communists who use the Labour Party for their own purposes.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We represent the only party that has fought the Communists, and you know it.

Mr. LESLIE: I have seen scant evidence of that. The Labour Party has fought for socialisation and nationalisation just as the Communists seek it to secure the complete control of industry, distribution, wealth and production. If that is not so, why do our friends opposite allow the Communists to continue as appendages to the Labour Party?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You want the financial system controlled by private interests.

Mr. LESLIE: I want it controlled by the people who own the country, those who have a stake in it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Have the banks?

Mr. LESLIE: No.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Who is in control?

Mr. LESLIE: Who are the banks?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should address the Chair.

Mr. LESLIE: Members opposite, when they see a building with the word "bank" on it, assume that that is the bank. They see nothing behind it. They do not see the enormous number of people who are investors.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Give us some figures.

Mr. LESLIE: They do not see who are the real owners of the bank.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: This is just propaganda, and you should be careful.

Mr. LESLIE: They do not appreciate the people who actually own the banks.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Tell us who own the banks.

Mr. LESLIE: Can the hon. member himself tell me?

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: We are asking you the question.

Mr. Hegney: Yes, you tell us.

Mr. LESLIE: If the hon. member will provide the necessary 5s., we can go to the Supreme Court and get a complete list of the shareholders of the various companies. By that means we could find out who owns the banks. I assure the member for Pilbara that if he were to find out who are the individuals that own the financial institutions, his ideas would be appreciably altered. He would have a rude awakening, and he would discover that his ideas about banks were merely so much peculiar, non-existent bogeys. What he fears is really not there.

Mr. Hegney: You believe in those people owning the banks.

Mr. LESLIE: Of course. When I was a very little boy—

Hon. A. H. Panton: You have not grown up much.

Mr. LESLIE: —I was very interested in a picture that hung on the wall of the school I attended. It depicted his satanic majesty in all his glory. I assure the House that I was very frightened of it. Any time I was inclined to kick over the traces, I was told that the devil would get me.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He got you all right!

Mr. LESLIE: When I was told that, I had the picture on the wall in my mind. I do not know whether the devil really exists or whether the picture was anything like him in appearance.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You will see him some day; you are going the right way!

Mr. LESLIE: Members opposite have for so long entertained their banking bogey that when mention is made of banking they immediately conjure up the picture of the devil—of something entirely non-existent.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I would like to hear the member for Claremont reply to your statements.

Mr. LESLIE: Thank goodness, the member for Claremont cannot do so! Because of the peculiar bogey and the remarkable ideas members opposite hold regarding banking, they, through their political associations, seek to deprive me and thousands like me of our liberty to say what we are going to do with what we have rightly received as the reward for our labour.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I put mine in the Rural and Industries Bank.

Mr. Fox: You never had any liberty.

Mr. LESLIE: The only times I have confessed to any restriction upon my liberty were when I was in the Army and since I have been married.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Is that why we have to suffer all this?

Hon. A. H. Panton: We want to go home!

Mr. LESLIE: I am definitely out—

Hon. A. H. Panton: So are we.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Are you not allowed to talk at home?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member address the Chair and turn towards the Chair.

Mr. LESLIE: It is necessary for the people of this country clearly to understand that the proposal for the nationalisation of the banks is merely one step towards Labour's objective, of ultimately securing complete control, such as that enjoyed for a time by our friends Hitler and Mussolini, and that enjoyed today by the friend of members opposite, Mr. Stalin, in Russia. I intend to oppose it for the sake of liberty and freedom, and I think that the people should be made well aware of the danger. It is the first step in the Communist programme. I am afraid I have trespassed somewhat on the time of the House.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No, keep going!

Mr. LESLIE: I wanted to counter the note of pessimism that seems to have animated this debate. The only pessimistic note we are justified in striking at the moment is in relation to the Commonwealth proposal to nationalise banking. If we follow out the principles of freedom as in the past, under wise government, I foresee a great future ahead of this State, but we must cast aside the pessimistic outlook that would have us believe that the only way to achieve something worth while is by adopting restrictions, even to the extent of restricting working hours and so further curtailing the supplies of commodities of which the people are so urgently in need.

On motion by Mr. Hegney, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.22 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 27th August, 1947.

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

QUESTION.

ALBANY HARBOUR.

As to Tabling Plans.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Minister for Mines: Will he lay on the Table of the House a copy of the plans prepared by the Public Works Department for improvements to the Albany Harbour?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes. The existing plan is an outline design only and subject to amendment following receipt of Mr. Tydeman's report.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. 'A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.33]: I desire to congratulate the Government on its attaining to the occupancy of the Treasury bench. We know that doctors frequently order their patients a change of climate; and it will be good for Western Australia to have a change of Government. In my opinion, it will prove beneficial to the State.

Hon. G. Fraser: The doctors often order a change to a temperate climate.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The previous Government, having enjoyed the fleshpots of office for 14 years, had become self-satisfied; any person who dared to criticise its administration was viewed with extreme disfavour and his action was regarded as rather offensive, particularly if the criticism was from a member of the Opposition. Personally, I feel that the offer of the present Opposition to give the new Government every help is not quite in keeping with the petulant and fault-finding attitude taken by the Opposition so far as this session has proceeded. Opposition members claim that the ex-Premier, Hon. F. J. S. Wise, performed miracles in obtaining from the Commonwealth Treasurer sufficient money to enable him to balance his Budget, and that the present Government should bow in humble acknowledgment to him for supplying an overflowing Treasury and for the work which the previous Government arranged so nicely and planned so far ahead.

I have no desire to detract or withhold from Mr. Wise any praise for what he and his predecessors, with the able assistance of Mr. Reid, the Under-Treasurer, and the Treasury officials, as well as previous Premiers, did to obtain satisfactory results for Western Australia when attending the various conferences of Premiers at Canberra. I am quite sure Hon. D. R. McLarty will prove their equal in his efforts to procure justice for this State. Mr. Wise was reported in the Press as having said that he intended to insist on the present Government carrying out the promises which he made to his electors. I would be greatly disappointed in the Government if, without just cause, it deliberately refused to carry out the commitments of the previous Government.

I cannot congratulate some of the members of the previous Government upon the attitude they have adopted so far. The