

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 2nd September, 1948.

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

QUESTIONS.

PRICES CONTROL.

As to Withholding of Goods and Over-Charging.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Attorney General:

(1) In view of the fact that the six State Governments have agreed to release 30,000 items from price control as from the 20th September next, will he inform the House what steps, if any, are being taken to prevent traders from holding up goods with a view to getting higher prices in a free market?

(2) Will he also inform the House what steps are being taken, if any, to prevent traders charging higher prices on woollen goods on which subsidies have been paid?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) The conference of Ministers agreed upon a number of items which are to be de-controlled. No information as to such items will be available to traders until they are published on the 20th September, 1948.

(2) The States have no authority in connection with prices until the Commonwealth relinquishes on the 20th September.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FRANCHISE.

As to Introduction of Legislation.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Attorney General:

Is it his intention to introduce a Bill this session in order to give effect to the Government's policy of broadening the franchise of the Legislative Council in accordance with the undertaking given at the last election?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

This matter is now receiving consideration by the Government.

AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL.

As to Tabling of Minutes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Are the minutes of meetings of the Agricultural Council confidential?

(2) Will he table the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Agricultural Council?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The minutes are not available for general information. There is no objection, however, to making relevant portions available to particular industries concerned.

(2) It is not desirable that the minutes should be tabled. However, if the honourable member is interested in any particular subject the Honorary Minister will make the relevant portion available to him at his office.

RAILWAYS.

As to Amenities Block at Midland Junction Workshops.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he state when the proposed new amenities block at the Government Railways Workshops, Midland Junction, will be commenced?

The MINISTER replied:

The question of the release of the necessary material is at present in hand with the State Housing Commission, and a commencement will be made as soon as material is available.

WHEAT MARKETING.

As to Legislation for Implementing Scheme.

Mr. REYNOLDS asked the Acting Premier:

(1) Can he give an assurance that the other place will not prevent the passing of the necessary legislation to implement the Commonwealth Wheat Marketing and Stabilisation Scheme?

(2) Can he give an assurance that in the event of the wheatgrowers of W.A. voting in favour of Commonwealth Wheat Marketing and Stabilisation Scheme, the Government will introduce the necessary legislation to implement that scheme?

(3) Does he agree with the assurances given by the Premier, dated the 5th August, 1948, in a letter addressed to the General Secretary, Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation, Room 70, 4th Floor, Epworth Building, Pirie Street, Adelaide, which reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 16th July, I am advised by the Hon. Minister for Agriculture that the Agricultural Council did agree to submit the new wheat proposals to their respective Governments for consideration and recommend their acceptance?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

(1) No Government can give such an assurance.

(2) Yes.

(3) As the letter in question has not been traced yet, it is requested that this portion of the question be postponed.

TAXATION.

As to Issue of Group Certificates to School Teachers.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that many school teachers have not yet been supplied with

taxation group certificates covering the income year ended the 30th June, 1948?

(2) Is he aware that taxation returns for income derived from personal exertion should have been lodged by the 31st July last?

(3) What will be the position if teachers, as a consequence of the above, are fined for the submission of late returns?

(4) When will the group certificates be issued?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) The Taxation Department has granted extension of time to the 30th September.

(4) The balance of the certificates will be issued in the course of a week.

GOODS IN SHORT SUPPLY.

As to Impression Created by Honorary Minister.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping:

(1) Is she aware that embarrassment is being caused dealers and merchants by persons seeking goods in short supply, on account of the impression she is regularly creating that she is responsible for large quantities of such goods arriving in the State?

(2) Will she discontinue the practice of creating such impressions?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) No, but if the member will give the names and addresses of embarrassed dealers and merchants they will be contacted as soon as possible, and if there is any *bona fide* complaint, an immediate endeavour will be made to dispel such embarrassment.

(2) The Minister cannot discontinue a practice of creating what has never been created.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Rodoreda, leave of absence for four weeks granted to Mr. Leahy (Hannans) and to Mr. Triat (Mt. Magnet) on the ground of ill-health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifteenth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE ACTING PREMIER. (Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning) [4.35]: It is approximately one year ago, Mr. Speaker, that it fell to my lot—in circumstances somewhat similar to those existing at present—to endeavour to reply on behalf of the Government to a number of observations that had been made by members opposite, and that I thought, at that time, were worthy of some reply. On this occasion, so far as Opposition members are concerned, the Address-in-reply debate has been conspicuous, in my opinion, for their inability to discover any real reasons for serious criticism.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Your own side found some.

The ACTING PREMIER: I am dealing with the Opposition side of the House at present. It may be my privilege, later, to handle questions concerning members on this side of the House. It would be as well if the member for Fremantle would allow me to make my speech, as he has had many opportunities of delivering his own speeches in the past few weeks. It is perfectly clear that in the approximately 17 months the Government has been in office it has not merited much criticism; if it had, it is clear to me, as I think it will be to you, Sir, that that criticism would have been indulged in by members opposite with rather more effect than they have succeeded in applying during the weeks I have referred to. Therefore, they have been obliged to drag in all sorts of propaganda and attempts to impugn the Government's sincerity, such as were a conspicuous feature of last year's debate. At that time, it may be remembered, I said I thought the Labour Party was opposed to monopolies, but I have come to the conclusion, after hearing the debate, that they love one monopoly—the monopoly of the Labour Government.

In addition to that, the fact remains that after 14 years of Labour Administration—indeed, 20 years out of the last 23—the people of Western Australia decided upon a change of Government and, while the spleen displayed during last year's debates could, to some extent, be understood as a natural result of defeated persons, unaccustomed to defeat, not being able to come up smiling, its continuance in this year's discussions and the complete absence of constructive proposals from the great ma-

jority of members opposite indicates, in my view, that it can fairly be said that the present Government's work of little more than a year has presented in most directions a very creditable record. Members opposite have had the opportunity to ruminate upon what has transpired and one would have expected that they would be able at least to take a licking, but they have not been able to do so. It therefore falls to my lot, as I have said, to deal with certain things, many of which, in my opinion, are merely the result of the natural spleen of defeated persons.

We, in that period of 23 years, and I for a considerable portion of it, were accustomed to take the verdict of the electors and to come up smiling after defeat and not waste the time of the House, as I shall unfortunately be obliged to waste some of it today, in indulging in discussion about false pretences—I can use that word now that it has been used so often against me—as was done by Labour Governments in years prior to 1947 at election times. I will produce some data to indicate—as I produced some last year of a somewhat minor character—to prove that that statement is substantially correct. I repeat that there is considerable evidence, some of which I will give in a few minutes' time, that the present Government's work in a little more than one year has presented what, in some directions, is a highly creditable record, especially, it will be remembered, when it had to deal with the difficulties that had grown out of 14 years of Labour Administration and the catastrophic effects in some directions that were apparent as a result of that period of Labour's activities.

I am sorry that the conclusion of the Address-in-reply debate has been delayed a little so that the Leader of the Opposition himself is not here. As we all know, he left yesterday for the Old Country on a mission in regard to which we all wish him, as I do now, every success and a very pleasant journey. Therefore my observations regarding what that hon. gentleman said will be entirely, so far as I can make them, of a factual nature. I feel, however, that I must make some reference to some of his remarks, emanating from the source that they did. I shall deal first with his observations on the financial side, with which I was greatly

intrigued. The hon. gentleman said that when he was Treasurer he presented two Budgets and that in one of them he "achieved a small but symmetrical surplus of £11,111" and in the other he had, "achieved a balanced Budget."

Those remarks were made in the course of a diatribe indulged in by the hon. gentleman for the purpose of showing that the present Treasurer had been extravagant, that his handling of the work of the Treasury had been virtually catastrophic, and that he, himself, on the contrary had by his far superior management avoided achieving a net deficit of £327,000, which, I think, is the figure he attributed to the present Treasurer's accomplishment. Instead of doing that he had succeeded in producing his symmetrical surplus and, for the next year, a balanced Budget. Let us examine this balanced Budget.

When presenting his Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year ended the 30th June, 1946, the member for Gascoyne, in this then capacity as Treasurer, estimated a deficit of £186,000. I spoke on that Budget and there was not one word of criticism from me, as a perusal of "Hansard" will demonstrate, with regard to his budgeting for such a deficit. I thought I had then, as I think I have now, a proper realisation of the position of State Treasurers in relation to the Commonwealth financial arrangements, and in the circumstances I thought that the hon. gentleman was justified in budgeting for a deficit. In fact, I think I said, if I remember aright, that it might even have been a larger one. When the financial year closed on the 30th June following, the hon. gentleman's actual deficit was £912,559.

The Minister for Lands: Nearly £1,000,000.

The ACTING PREMIER: That is so. Compared with his estimates there was a deficiency of approximately £750,000. Despite that, the Leader of the Opposition had the temerity to come to this House and suggest that because the present Treasurer brought down a Budget in respect of which he estimated a deficit, which proved less than was ultimately achieved, his administration had been extravagant and wasteful and, in effect, he suggested that the present Treasurer was not capable of managing the affairs of the

State. It was sought to show that the present Treasurer was the only one to achieve a deficit, compared with what the Labour Treasurer had accomplished. I hope to show that in the circumstances of the times when the member for Gascoyne was Treasurer, he was extremely lucky, and had he been required to face the conditions that confronted the member for Murray-Wellington in his present capacity as Treasurer, his excess deficiency would not have been even £750,000 or thereabouts, but a very much larger sum.

It was in these circumstances that at the 30th of June the present Leader of the Opposition, who produced this balanced Budget, actually had a deficit of £912,000 odd. How did he achieve his balanced Budget? He made an application to the Commonwealth Government for a grant and, as a result, that Government provided him with the exact amount he had incurred as a deficit. That was done under a law that existed at the time but which has now been repealed, and it enabled the hon. member to make his application to the Treasurer of the Commonwealth. On the recommendation of the Grants Commission, the Treasurer, if he cared to do so, was able to make that application, and, as he did so, the Commonwealth Government paid over the amount without any ado. Thus was the wonderful achievement of the balanced Budget accomplished! Yet it was actually no more than a deficit of £912,559. I offered no criticism of that, because I could find in the expenditure proposed by the Government of the day no amount that could not in some way be justified.

I say to the member for Gascoyne—if he were here I would put it in much stronger terms, but as he is absent, I shall refrain from doing so—that he overstepped the reasonable mark when he suggested that because the present Treasurer incurred a deficit only slightly larger than his own, he was extravagant, wasteful and all the rest of it. Let us remember this fact that at the time when the member for Gascoyne occupied the position of Treasurer of this State, he was able to rest upon Federal regulations, which made it extremely difficult for costs to be increased. There were, for instance, the wage-pegging regulations that prevented many of them

rising. It is a well known fact that in the discussions which took place within this House, even upon such a small matter as parliamentary allowances, the member for Gascoyne himself was not willing, and quite properly so, to take any action to increase those allowances at that time and until the wage-pegging regulations had ceased to operate.

Thus the hon. gentleman was not faced with the position that the present Treasurer has had to contend with—a time of rapidly rising costs completely outside the control of this or any other State Government, partly caused by Commonwealth policy and partly by that Government's heavy expenditure. Prior to those years, the administration of Labour Governments, in my view, was distinguished by a policy of parsimony. Last year, it will be remembered, I said that the railway position alone was sufficient to have justified the dismissal of the Labour Government by the people. Whatever doubt there may have been as to the truth of that statement at the time, has been conclusively removed by the report of the Royal Commissioners who said that the railways had been starved for want of finance and declared that an expenditure of £23,000,000 was necessary to rehabilitate them.

I could quote to the House some of the observations of Mr. du Plessis—one of the Commissioners, who was a man without political or any other bias, totally unknown to politics here and merely a visitor to our shores—on railway matters, but most members, I have no doubt, have perused that report, and most members of the public have read the précis of it which was published in the Press. All of them well know by this time, I would suggest, that there was a period of catastrophic administration which has left, not the sound foundations boasted about by members opposite but a most undesirable legacy of impoverishment and inefficiency. Much has been said, too, on the question of uniform taxation. It has been suggested that the Policy speeches of the Premier and myself urged that uniform taxation should be abolished. I will quote the actual statement which was made by myself—

Twice on my occasioning the Legislative Assembly has asked for a conference between the State and Federal representatives of all parties to obtain a long-term financial arrange-

ment taking into consideration the needs of this State for development. We propose to bring about this conference and to strive for the resumption by the States of the control of their own revenues. We will co-operate in every possible way with the Federal authorities, but we will forcibly represent the just claims of Western Australia.

If any member of the Labour Party is prepared to quarrel with that statement, then he is not fit to represent the people of Western Australia in this Parliament, for it would indicate that he proposes to continue to support a system which reduces this and other States to the level of mendicants, and which can prevent any policy of long-term development from being put into operation by any State Government. The desire for a long-term financial arrangement and resumption by the State of the control of its own revenues implies, of course, that the system of doling out a few pounds here and there to the States from uniform taxation should come to an end; but it does not imply—nor would I subscribe to a return to it—a system where two returns on differing assessment methods were required from every taxpayer. But it has also been suggested by one member that if a calculation of revenue, which would require to replace Commonwealth taxation reimbursement to this State, were made with a view to imposing State taxation to replace it, the prospect would appal the Treasurer of this State.

I have had careful research made into this matter and, up to the 30th June, 1948, the position was far less favourable to the State of Western Australia than it would have been had we been collecting taxation only at the rates which were imposed in Western Australia in the pre-uniform tax period. Taxes on income under the State's pre-uniform tax law, if levied in respect of the income year 1947-48, would have yielded revenue to the extent of £4,700,000, and the amount received by Western Australia as tax reimbursement during that period was £3,807,000, or approximately £900,000 less than the amount which would have been yielded by the levy of State income tax at pre-uniform tax rates. In such circumstances, Commonwealth taxation would have been reduced, to the extent that income tax reimbursement is now made.

The Commonwealth collected a substantial sum last year, I think £45,000,000 in all, for the sole purpose of re-

distributing it among the States. Therefore, if the Commonwealth were relieved of that responsibility, it could at least have reduced the tax by £45,000,000; and, on indications this year, by even a greater amount. Still, the facts and figures indicate, notwithstanding the increase, that Western Australia's position would have been better at the pre-uniform tax rates on the 1948-49 income, though not to the extent I have referred to in connection with last year, for obvious reasons, and a slight reduction only of the well-known extravagant expenditure of the Commonwealth would have enabled it further to reduce its taxation.

The principal point I wish to make, however, is that £900,000 more could have been collected by this State on its very reasonable—in fact, very low—pre-uniform tax rates, and it would not have affected the normal course of the Grants Commission in respect of the three States at all, because grants have been made over a period of approximately 20 years and all through the period when State taxes were being struck. I have given these figures not for the purpose of entering into an argument in regard to uniform taxation or the reverse. I believe the parties to this controversy should get together, and that if they did so, on a reasonable basis, they could solve this problem and the question of the method of collecting taxation would, in my view, then be only incidental to that solution.

I have given these figures to show that the "appalling prospect to the Premier," is far more imaginary than real. I feel this Government will be well satisfied, however, if the Commonwealth will consent to a long-term financial arrangement which will take more into account the developmental needs of the State and give an opportunity for long-term plans. As I have said in this regard—and speaking for myself, as I have had no opportunity for consultation—this could be so whether uniform taxation continued or not.

The Leader of the Opposition and other members claim that the State's finances are drifting. All I can say in that respect is that, if by increased expenditure Western Australia is going to the dogs then so are the other States. Allow me, although it may not be much consolation to know that the other fellow was "going broke," too, to indicate the position in regard to all the

States, as perhaps some demonstration of the effect of the absence of this long-term Federal arrangement between the Commonwealth and the States to which I have referred. The following table shows the expenditure for each State for the years 1946-47 and 1947-48, expressed in millions:—

	1946-47	1947-48	Increase.
N.S.W. ..	76.9	87.9	11
Victoria ..	37.4	42.2	5
Queensland	25.0	26.9	1.9
South Aust.	17.3	19.1	1.8
West. Aust.	15.0	18.0	3
Tasmania ..	4.6	5.1 (about) †	

On these figures Western Australia showed a 20 per cent. increase last year over the year before and thus heads all the States in that regard. Whereas the Opposition claims that this indicates extravagant spending, the apparent reply is that of all the States in the Commonwealth, Western Australia at the beginning of 1947-48 was suffering the greatest lag due to the failure of preceding Governments to live up to their responsibilities. This Government, coming into office and inheriting starved public services, was compelled to spend at a greater proportionate rate than any other State for the time being. In any case, if by increased spending Western Australia is going to the dogs, it is going there slowly but surely in good company, and that in my opinion is a very strong argument indeed why we should arrive at a system which I believe will give a most desirable result, whereby there can be some long-term certainty as to the financial relationships and our position therein.

I would like to say at this stage that were it not for the fact that the Labour Government refused or failed over a period of years to face up to the deteriorating position of railway finance, the State's financial position would today be a reasonably satisfactory one, and many improvements could be effected, and many things done which today are extremely difficult to undertake. For years there were heavy railway deficits, but I will quote from the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in recent speeches made in this House on the subject. He said—

There is another aspect. If the Railway Department is spending money from revenue that should legitimately be in its Loan programme, it is possible that there will be some conflict between the regeneration programme and the standardisation proposals. If the standardisation of the railways is to take place in our time, if it is to take place within the

next decade, I suggest that that is also a reason for a very close examination, by the Treasury and not by the Auditor General, of railway expenditure and railway finances, for, unless that is done, it will be the instrumentality which will be responsible year by year for the total deficit. If that instrumentality is not surveyed from the financial angle it is certainly not fair to all the taxpayers of this community. That, I say to the Treasurer, is one of the aspects in the discussion of Commonwealth-State financial relationships that has to be examined and ventilated.

I have already observed that there have been railway deficits of a substantial character over a long period of years. There have been substantial railway deficits during the last 14 years of Labour administration in this State. Was it less unfair to the taxpayers during that period than it is today? Was it less necessary before this avalanche had gathered way to conduct this investigation as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition? If there are reasons now for a close examination by the Treasury, and not by the Auditor General, of railway expenditure and finance, did not those reasons exist during a large part of Labour's term of office? Of course they did!

Why was not the investigation undertaken? Echo answers, Why? I think I can give the reason, and I have mentioned it once or twice already in the course of my remarks. It is because that Government was not conspicuous for its efficiency and, therefore, presumably, was prepared to allow a policy of laissez faire to continue. But it is not much use the hon. member now coming forward in this House and suggesting that the investigation should be made. So far as we are concerned, it will not be very long before it does take place. As soon as the law can be amended, it will be done. It should and could have been carried out if any action had been offered by the preceding Administration of which the hon. gentleman to whom I have referred has been a distinguished member since 1935.

I now propose to have a word to say on housing. I am afraid that some of my remarks will not be very obliging to members opposite. I notice some of them are not present to hear what I have to say about them, although they expected me to remain to listen to what they had to say about me.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I would not say too much about that, if I were you.

The ACTING PREMIER: I have sat and listened to all the debates on this subject. I am not referring to the member for Leederville because he is present. I am referring to the absentees.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: It is a very poor shot, all the same.

The ACTING PREMIER: I am not saying whether it is poor or not. It is a fact.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Every time the Government benches are thin in the future, we will call attention to the fact.

The ACTING PREMIER: I am not calling attention to the thinness of the Opposition benches.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Government benches are more often thin than are ours.

The ACTING PREMIER: There are certain members about whom I have a word or two to say, and I was hoping they would be here. That is all I have to remark.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The ministerial benches are pretty often thin.

Mr. Marshall: Those who are here are usually asleep, anyhow.

The Minister for Lands: You speak for yourself. You are always dozing in your seat.

The ACTING PREMIER: In 1943, the then Administration appointed a committee which made certain recommendations in regard to the housing problem in the postwar period, and the means whereby it considered that problem could be satisfactorily solved. Subsequently to that report, on the 12th November, 1943, a week before the State elections of that year, there appeared a full-page advertisement in "The West Australian Worker" which is well known and recognised by us all as the official organ of the Labour Party in Western Australia. This advertisement urged the electors to vote Labour again, which they subsequently did, probably in pursuance of the undertakings therein stated, of which I am about to quote one. The advertisement gave this undertaking on behalf of the Labour Party—

The Post-war Housing Committee has recommended the building of 4,000 houses in each of the five years immediately after the war. The Government will operate this vigorous policy in connection with housing.

That meant that within five years of the end of the war there would be 20,000 houses erected by Government means in this State. The war in the Pacific ended in August, 1945. I will allow the balance of that year—approximately five months—as a period of grace. Then we can have a look at the manner in which the undertaking of 1943 was honoured. In the first postwar year, namely, 1946, the total number of houses constructed in Western Australia was 1,309, or 2,691 short of the total which the Labour Party had promised the electors. That party had led the public to believe that 4,000 houses could be built in each of the postwar years. It is amazing to find that a party which gave these undertakings, having as the Government of the day and for many years prior to that time had a full knowledge of all the circumstances, should, after being driven from office by the disillusioned electors, accuse the present Government of having got into power by fraud and false pretences, which is what it has been saying.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is true, is it not?

The ACTING PREMIER: The hon. member's party is as fraudulent as any other. I do not mean that individually, and I am not saying I subscribe to that point of view, but there are many puffing statements made at all election times which wise people subsequently forget. I have forgotten many of them in the 12 or 13 years that I have been in this House. But when it is suggested and more than suggested, and driven home moment by moment that everything we say is "false pretences" then I submit that what the Opposition has said is on a par with it, and, perhaps, exaggerated, and it is equally culpable. If it is wrong for me, it is wrong for members opposite. If it is not wrong for me, all right, I will let it go at that. That is the position.

The promises of the Opposition were far more extensive than any I or my associates made, and they were made with a full knowledge of all the possibilities and, I suggest with all the data and information which a Government can acquire by the intelligent use of its Public Service. Such facilities are not available to the Opposition who must, therefore, be guided to a large degree by what the Government of the day indicates as being practicable. If we believed that the

figure of 4,000 houses was founded on fact, and we knew that the result was 2,691 less, is it any wonder that we came to the conclusion that there was inefficiency in regard to housing? It was not, I submit, a very great stretch of imagination, taking these figures and facts into consideration, on the part of those who were responsible for the advertisements, which have so often been referred to, of the Liberal Party, to say that there were cobwebs on housing, because 1,309 is approximately only 33 1/3 per cent. of the undertaking given for the second postwar year. That does not fill me or anyone else, I think, with enthusiasm.

It is high time we got down to a real consideration, on a constructive basis, of the housing problem. I have not heard, in this debate, many constructive observations from members opposite. They have indulged, most of the time, in criticism which, as I say, has been based on splenetic feelings in regard to the last election and from which I had hoped they would by this time have fully recovered. I think my record, short as it was, sitting where the member for Gascoyne would sit, were he here today, indicates that most of the time of the Opposition, of which I was Leader, was spent in an endeavour to criticise constructively and, sometimes, to make suggestions. It was only very occasionally that we did other than those two things.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: There is the matter of the vermin Bill.

The ACTING PREMIER: I will talk about that later. I must ask the member for North-East Fremantle to allow me to make my speech, in rotation, to the best of my ability. If I miss any points, doubtless there will be an opportunity later to deal with them, but I will try not to miss anything of importance. It is time we got down to what is really wrong with regard to the housing problem. I have gone to considerable trouble in this regard, but before I touch on the point there are one or two observations I would like to make.

When the Government took office in April, 1947, I think I am correct in saying that one kiln out of three was working at the Rivervale cement works. Nor was I able to discover, and I was interested in the matter, any considerable action that had been taken to energise those responsible for opening the other two. But I do know that

conferences took place between the Government and the management of the works, and it was not very long before there was a considerable improvement in the quantity of cement manufactured, or many months before those who were unable to obtain cement when we came into office were able to get it; and shortly afterwards it was released from control. The Government also set up a special division of the Department of Industrial Development to help in the production of building materials. Negotiations were opened with a number of persons and financial assistance was given for the manufacture of bricks, and every effort was made to increase the supply of timber. Pursuant to this policy, a number of additional saw-mills were opened in country areas, particulars of which I will supply later on when speaking about the Forests Department.

The Government took steps to provide homes for railway employees in country districts and approval has been given for no less than 44, which have been constructed since the 25th August, 1947. Seven were constructed departmentally, 26 by outside contracts, three fabricated by outside contract and erected departmentally, and eight have been purchased or acquired. It is a well known fact that the housing of railway employees, particularly in the country districts, was brought under notice. I made representations, and other members have spoken about it in the House, concerning the miserable shacks in which these people have been obliged to reside, but there had been no effort whatever to remove them. This Government came into office at an extremely difficult time to tackle the problem. It should have been tackled at least 10 or 12 years ago, before the country became embroiled in a war and when there was plenty of materials. The people who represent these gentlemen, or are alleged to represent them, did not do anything about it and it was apparent as the sun in the sky that the work wanted doing but no action had been taken except upon a very small scale. This Government stated in its Policy speech that it would attempt to do this work and the result is the construction of 44 dwellings, and contracts for others have been authorised.

Since the 1st April, 1947, 40 new mills have been registered under the Timber In-

dustry Regulations Act—20 with a capacity of 62½ loads per day of general cutting, 17 with a capacity of 20 loads per day for cases and boxes, and six with a capacity of 20 loads per day for sleepers and short scantlings. There is no doubt that a very substantial increase in production has resulted and practically the whole of this extra production has been absorbed by the local market, while at the same time steps have been taken heavily to restrict the exportation of timber, suitable for housing, to the Eastern States.

The control of paint and cement has been lifted and the control of bricks has been eased. During the 12 months immediately preceding the Government's taking office, that is to the 31st March, 1947, the number of houses constructed in Western Australia was 1,516. During the first 12 months of office to the 31st March, 1948, the number was 2,325, an increase of 809. A further comparison of interest is the following:—

Houses completed for the quarter ended	
the 30th June, 1946	295
Houses completed for the quarter ended	
the 30th June, 1947	480
Houses completed for the quarter ended	
the 30th June, 1948	602

A period is arriving when any considerable forward movement in the housing position must, I think, be thrown back upon members opposite, because it will depend substantially on the availability of sufficient qualified and skilled artisans and workmen. The member for Mt. Marshall last night drew attention in general terms to that position. He is one who has contact with many aspects of this matter as the ex-Servicemen's representative on the reconstruction committees and is well qualified to make general observations on the question. It is interesting to me that he should, in general terms, have approached the topic. It is quite clear that it is of no use to continue increasing the quantity of materials available for building unless there is available the effective personnel to use that material.

The economic research officer of the Treasury Department has, over recent weeks, gone to considerable trouble in this matter and supplied me with certain figures. The current housing shortage in this State, excluding requirements for the replacement of sub-standard dwellings, is of the order of 8,000 units, while it is estimated that new

annual requirements will average about 1,800 units per annum during the next five to six years. This means that the average number of houses required to be constructed each year in order to eliminate the shortage within any specified period is as follows:—

1,800 (new annual requirements) plus 8,000 (current housing shortage) divided by the number of years in period specified.

To clear the shortage within four years it would thus be necessary to complete 3,800 houses per year; and corresponding figures for five and six years would be 3,400 and 3,133, respectively. During the June quarter the effective building rate for all house construction was equivalent to 3,125 units a year, the rate for contract and Public Works Department construction being 2,626 units and the rate for owner-builders 499 units.

There are grounds for concern in these figures, because the indications are that no significant improvement can be expected in the current rate of contract and P.W.D. construction. Yet, failing such an improvement or substantial increase in owner-builder construction, it will evidently require six years to overtake the housing shortage. Excluding men working as or for renovators and other jobbers who do not undertake the construction of new buildings, the building force at the 30th June last comprised 5,591 men distributed as under—

	Private contractors.	Governmental (Day Labour).
Working on—		
New houses ..	2,721	355
Alterations, repairs, etc., to houses ..	394	176
Other building construction	794	1,151
Total ..	3,909	1,682

In addition to the necessity for the erection of a large number of houses there are facing us continual demands for the construction of school buildings in particular, as well as other public buildings in various parts of the State. There is an evident need for them. As I hope to indicate subsequently there has been a considerable forward move in the provision of them in the last 17 months and that forward move to some degree can be continued. It cannot be continued at the rate it ought to be nor can the Government cope with the problems of other public buildings which are

equally important in many aspects nor can the expansion of our industries, in many ways most essential, be attended to, unless we are able to provide the qualified artisans and skilled persons to handle the materials that are available for that purpose.

Any considerable attempt, therefore, at the present time to speed up the erection of public buildings and to increase the number of school buildings and to deal with the other aspects which I have mentioned, can only be achieved by diminishing the force available for house building. Alternatively, the number of houses can only be substantially increased by restricting the provision of other essential buildings to a greater extent than it is now restricted. Is it reasonable to do either of those things? No, it is not! The only thing that it is reasonable to do is to ask for the co-operation of all the people in this State, wherever they may be and whatever their employment. This will ensure that the requisite materials are made available and also that the requisite people to use those materials in a skilful and proper manner are forthcoming.

There have been newspaper reports during recent weeks where trade union secretaries concerned in this matter have expressed reluctance to increase substantially the number of artisans engaged in their respective callings because they are of the opinion—this can be seen from their comments—that there will not be enough work to go round in a short period of time. I have looked around this State during the last 17 months and have arrived at the conclusion that when we have finished building the 8,000 emergency houses, which exclude the replacement of sub-standard houses, we must face up to the replacement of 20,000 sub-standard homes in Western Australia. While we are doing that there will be an additional 1,800 or 2,000 homes, or perhaps more, required per annum, depending upon the number of marriages that may take place and any other circumstances that may arise. It can therefore be seen that there will be a great quantity of house building required for many years to come, and on top of that there are many public buildings which should have been built some time ago and departments that are today crying out for new premises. Members all know the premises of the Child Welfare Department and I know of no more urgent

job than that. These premises have stood for, I believe, over 100 years and they are becoming a disgrace to the community.

Mr. Marshall: There has never been any shortage of work to be performed in this State.

The ACTING PREMIER: No, and there will not be in the future.

Mr. Marshall: But there will be a shortage of money.

The ACTING PREMIER: I do not want to get on to the hon. member's favourite topic. However, he made the most interesting speech of any member on the Address-in-reply. What the hon. member stated was quite true. He was back on his old hobby horse but put his speech in a new way. There was meat in it, too, but it is no use my talking about finance. I must have something for the purpose of this case and I am going to assume there will be money available within reason, money at least to employ another 500 artisans, which would help considerably to solve this problem. So I appeal to my friends opposite not to come here just as carping critics but to realise that if they want to—as I believe in their heart of hearts they do because I do not want to charge them with gross insincerity—they may make some approach to the solution of the problem. I shall be only too happy to talk to representatives or to arrange for some other Minister to do so in order that their various points of view may be brought together.

I have a feeling, supported very strongly by the research information which I have obtained and some of which I have given to the House, that this is the only way in which a reasonably early solution of our present difficulty can be found. Meanwhile, I have no hesitation in saying that the best possible use is being made of the facilities available and that the utmost effort is being exerted to remedy a difficult position. But it is a job of far greater magnitude than most people are prepared to admit. Houses do not grow on trees; they have to be made, but when it is realised, according to the statistics I have, that it takes one man approximately $1\frac{1}{4}$ years to build a house, it is quite obvious that to build 4,000 houses requires that 5,000 men be engaged. I have said that we have a total of 5,591 in our building labour force in this State—that

was to the 30th June last—and therefore if we attempted to build at the rate of 4,000 houses a year, on those figures, we should have 5,591 men to attend to the thousand and one building problems, small and large, associated with providing for public works, educational requirements, hospitals, police stations, railway works and many other things, all of which are sadly lacking because we cannot be sure of getting sufficient labour even if and when we get sufficient material.

I feel it incumbent upon me to substantiate my case in regard to the matter of election promises. I have said that it is by no means a prerogative of members on this side of the House to make puffing statements at election time. When the Hon. John Willcock was Premier, he delivered a policy speech at Geraldton on the 1st November, 1943. I am using his remarks because the information is of decided interest. On that date, which was in the middle of the war period, he tickled the ears of the electors of Western Australia with the following:—

Extension of technical education and improvement in general standards, particularly in country districts. It is the intention of the Government (Willcock Government) to effect a further great increase in technical education facilities.

That was five years ago. Can members find it, particularly in the country districts? I can find no great increase. True, there has been some slight progress in the metropolitan area, but it could not be called a great increase. Mr. Willcock must have known at that time that he still had some war years ahead of him. It must have been a great effort to come to this conclusion and to tickle the ears of the electors in this way in 1943, but I have no recollection of the Opposition, of which I was then the Leader, coming to this House and chivvying any members of the then Government about election promises, such as has been done in this House during the last two sessions. Members will not find a record of anything of the sort anywhere. Let me quote further from the same Policy speech of Mr. Willcock. He said—

Preparation of plans for public works, both metropolitan and country, to include hospitals, schools and other public buildings, to be put in hand when construction departments are relieved of the necessity to construct defence works.

Pacific Victory day was the 15th August, 1945, and the Government of the day continued in power for 18 months after the termination of the war. I cannot find such hospitals in the country districts.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The cobwebs are still well on them.

The ACTING PREMIER: They are and are likely to remain on if the hon. member gets back to office, much more so than if he stays where he is. Mr. Willcock also promised at that time—

Co-operation with the Commonwealth Government in a development programme for the North-West.

I mention this only because I was wondering how long it would have been, had Labour remained in office, before the Treasurer would have authorised the expenditure of £50,000 for the provision of a water scheme for 300 people at Port Hedland. I understand that for something like 20 years the people of Port Hedland had been making representations for a water supply without getting it. It took a non-Labour Treasurer to decide in his first year of office that sincerity demanded that the people of Port Hedland should be considered, even if the cost was £50,000 to cater for 300 people. Mr. Willcock, in the same Policy speech, also said—

The railway workshops are busy on munitions and other war production, but the new machinery which has been obtained will enable rolling-stock to be restored to a proper state of repair when the pressure of war work lifts.

I have read with interest some portions of the report of the Royal Commissioner on the Midland Junction railway workshops and on the rollingstock of the Government railways. The period between the conclusion of the war and the defeat of the Labour Government at the last elections—18 months—was not used very profitably if Mr. Willcock, when he made that statement, had any idea that he would be able to carry out the promise. Either the promise was a puffing statement or there was no great efficiency displayed by the Government in making use of the machinery at the Midland Junction workshops. In the same speech, he promised—

War conditions have compelled the deferment of much necessary railway maintenance work, for which financial provision has been made and which the Government proposes to undertake at the earliest possible opportunity.

There was a strange consensus of opinion at the inquiry of the Royal Commission on Railways that no financial provision had been made for anything the railways required. They had been starved for money, a fact that was conclusively proved at the inquiry, but the hon. gentleman in order to convert the long-suffering public of that day—suffering as much as and possibly more than at present—said that financial provision had been made for this work to be done. Further he said—

In our health policy for the future, special attention will be paid to increasing hospital accommodation, particularly maternity and children's wards in country districts.

I ask myself, had the Labour Government remained in office, when would this "future" have started? It showed no sign of activity. While I offered no criticism during my 1944 observations on the statements of the hon. gentleman, I repeat that what is fair for one is reasonable for another. When Mr. Willcock was Premier, he made the following promise, and it was the best election fairy story I have ever heard:—

It is the policy of the Government to build up further the health and education of the aborigines and to encourage them in every way to play an active and useful part in the life of the community.

I consider that to be a gem; in fact, I am convinced of it. I shall repeat that passage, because it is so beautiful—

It is the policy of the Government to build up further the health and education of the aborigines and to encourage them in every way to play an active and useful part in the life of the community.

Mr. Reynolds: When did he say that?

The ACTING PREMIER: On the 1st November, 1943. That was a signal day in the history of State politics, and I happened to keep a copy of that speech. It is one of the few I had by me.

Mr. Reynolds: Were we not then in the throes of war?

The ACTING PREMIER: I am telling the House what the then Premier, a man full of responsibility and one who should have been full of knowledge, said he was going to do. I did not want to say this, but I am prepared to say that the then Premier did not intend to do it.

Mr. Reynolds: I do not believe that.

The ACTING PREMIER: The hon. member wants to say that we were then in the middle of the war period and is attempting to make excuses, but, knowing the facts as the then Premier did, how could he then make that statement?

Mr. Hegney: You put up a strong argument on wheat but you are putting up a weak case now.

The ACTING PREMIER: No, I am putting up a strong argument on a strong case. The then Premier also said—

The Government proposes to re-organise social welfare activity.

Judging by the position when the present Government took office, this was an excellent example of long-term Labour planning. I am not too sure what those social activities were, because there have been but few in recent years that have been conducted by the State, owing to the Commonwealth's entry into the field and the decision of the electors at the referendum. Of our social welfare activities today, I suppose No. 1 is the Child Welfare Department. I do not know how many members inspected the Children's Court building when Labour went out of office last April 12 months. I hope that all of them did, because if ever there was a disgraceful and disgusting place, it was the Children's Court.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I agree with you there.

The ACTING PREMIER: The Government that the hon. member supported left it there year after year. The building had been standing like that since about 1935 at the very least.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I always agree with you when you are right.

The ACTING PREMIER: It should be some comfort to have the member for Fremantle in agreement.

The Minister for Lands: That is why he has been sitting there so quietly.

The ACTING PREMIER: Today the Children's Court presents a very different sight. The work of renovation was undertaken at a time when conditions were bristling with difficulties, but we felt that no Government with any sense of respect or responsibility could allow the place to stand as it was. During the last 17 months we have done our best, and with a fair measure of success, to meet the position of those whom

the Children's Court throws upon the care of the State. We have not hesitated, as part of the alleged extravagant expenditure of the Government, to make it possible for those institutions to maintain those children in a reasonable manner by giving them extra financial assistance, which had been denied them for a decade. We have not hesitated, if a case could be proved, to try to help them improve the premises in which they carry on their business and look after our State wards. We feel that it is the duty of any responsible Government to make those premises as reasonably attractive as the surrounding circumstances of the time will permit. It is true that what we have done is not a tithe of what we should have liked to do; but it is as much as we can do without taking too much from the common pool of materials and labour. And we will carry on and do more of it.

I now come to the next point. Over a period of many years, propaganda was indulged in by the Labour Party to the effect that a return to a coalition government, which might include the party I have the honour to lead, would be disastrous to the workers of the State as the parties constituting such a Government would be "low-wage" parties. That was broadcast over the wireless stations; published in every newspaper; distributed in every pamphlet; and exploded at every opportunity. On what was it based? I thought I dealt with this subject last year, but apparently I must make some reference to it again.

As I pointed out last year, that was the greatest lie that could ever emanate from any responsible organisation. They knew, as I knew, that the unfortunate reductions which took place in 1932 were a product of a policy which was forced upon the Government of Western Australia by a Premiers' conference at which the Commonwealth Labour Prime Minister was in charge and at which three other Labour Premiers were present. But in order to obtain—and here is the point I want to make—an unfair political advantage against the non-Labour parties, the people of this State were led to believe continually that the return of a Government of this type would result in the disastrous effects to which I referred, and that the coalition Government of 1930 to 1933 was alone responsible for the Act which I have mentioned. This propaganda

was indulged in right up to the eve of the 1947 general elections, to such an extent that I was compelled to make special reference to it in my Policy speech.

But what are the facts? The Government had not been more than a few months in office when it entered into a new agreement with the Police Force for reasonable increases in their remuneration. It authorised a new classification of the Public Service. It placed no obstacle whatever in the way of application by Government employees in industrial unions for the fair consideration of their claims by the Arbitration Court, and in many cases made private agreements which were satisfactory to those parties for a substantial increase. It introduced legislation to increase the superannuation benefits of the Public Service without increasing their contributions. It took steps to give consideration to improve benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act, on which I shall have more to say at a later stage.

Mr. Hegney: You will not refer to the 1930 measure will you?

The ACTING PREMIER: The hon. member knows perfectly well what it will be. The 1930 measure has nothing to do with me. The measure members will be asked to deal with will be the 1948 measure, and the hon. member will soon see what that is. This Government has sought wherever possible to improve the working conditions of Government employees, and it has adopted the attitude generally of accepting the point of view that effective service by those that are in the employ of the Government necessitates their being regarded almost as partners in this State's development rather than merely as cogs in an industrial machine. That is the position so far as this Government is concerned. There has not been one scintilla of truth found by any industrial worker in this State in the propaganda which for 13 years assisted to keep members opposite in office. Yet they have the nerve to come here and say that we put over untruthful propaganda! Ye gods!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And little fishes!

Mr. Hegney: There would be a different tune if you had a working majority on that side of the House.

The ACTING PREMIER: It would not be a different tune.

Mr. Hegney: My oath it would!

The ACTING PREMIER: I know what are the intentions of the Government, and the hon. member does not. He has a figment of the imagination that nobody can look with an unjaundiced eye on the industrial worker except himself. But I believe that the industrial worker is a working partner in the State's development rather than merely a cog in a machine. I have made remarks similar to that for years and the hon. member, who has been here all the time, should know that.

Mr. Hoar: Does the Liberal Party agree to that?

The ACTING PREMIER: Obviously, or it would not be party to the legislation of, and the arrangements made by this coalition Government. We do not act as two separate halves but as one Government. There is the closest co-operation between both sections and I believe that up to date there have been very good results to this State. I have no doubt those results will continue. My friends opposite do not believe that anybody at all except themselves has a reasonably decent outlook in regard to his fellow-men.

Member: Whose Government opposed the 40-hour week?

The ACTING PREMIER: Oh, come off the 40-hour week! I will guarantee that the working man in Western Australia is less concerned about a 40-hour week than he is with obtaining decent conditions and a place to live in, and other things of that kind.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PREMIER: I know that I am getting under the skins of members opposite. They expected me to take this for 15 years and say nothing; and I took it. Now they can take it! I come now to the subject of education. In the Policy speeches, we observed that all over the country new schools or additions to schools were necessary. We found, when we came into office, that 17 substantial additions or new school proposals, large and small, had been approved. During our first year this work was all completed and nine others, and approval was given to school buildings costing approximately £300,000. To such an extent was this activity pushed on that today there are 39 contracts in various stages of completion and a substantial number of other

buildings are awaiting advertising for or acceptance of tenders. Since the 1st of January, 1948, a large number of school works have been approved to the value of £163,620. These will be found spread all over the State. There are 19 in all, varying in value from £1,130 at Darkan to £28,000 at Boyup Brook.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You are a long time making a start.

Mr. Styants: There is a big gap between approval and construction.

The ACTING PREMIER: There always has been. Might I suggest to the member for North-East Fremantle that approval was given by the Treasurer, which was a good way on from the beginning of the business, on the 14th December, 1946, and a tender was not accepted for the school at South Bunbury until the following August; but there was no attempt by anybody—quite the reverse—to occasion any delay. It appears to be inseparable from the machinery of government, which grinds extremely slowly but also exceeding small. That seems to be the position. I was about to observe that I am informed that the figures I have quoted represent an all-time record. Both the numbers and the amount involved are from 100 to 200 per cent. greater than in any year since 1936-37, beyond which period I did not ask the recording clerk to go. In addition, following the policy declared, every effort has been made to provide children on correspondence lessons with better opportunities to contact other children, and a substantial reduction in the number of children on correspondence has been made.

At Bunbury, the Government has purchased premises suitable for a high school hostel to assist the Country Women's Association in the better development of their project, particularly on account of the difficulties they were experiencing in retaining the existing premises. Some thousands of pounds have been expended to bring the premises of the Goldfields Fresh Air League into a condition suitable for the accommodation of a larger number of children. At Geraldton we have taken steps to ensure the continuance of a hostel for girls which is being conducted at that centre. A substantial amount has been donated to the expansion of the Hadley Library. High school scholarships have been increased. Assistance has been given to parents and citizens' associa-

tions in regard to the provision of visual aid projectors, the furnishing of Oslo lunch rooms and the expansion of school libraries.

An office has been provided for the Parents and Citizens' Federation and a grant has been made to enable it to employ a clerk to assist the Federation's secretary. The Education Department's senior staff has been re-organised with a view to obtaining greater efficiency, with most desirable results, and investigations are proceeding with regard to expansion of the scheme for medical and dental attention to all children attending State schools; although here the prime difficulty, apart from finance, is the inability to obtain dental officers. But four new officers have been approved and inquiries are being made as to the acquisition of others. I believe that the happiest relations exist between the School Teachers' Union and the Government. While it is not always possible to agree to suggestions made by the union, all its proposals are given careful consideration and many of them have been accepted either completely or in a modified form. Allowances to trainees of the Teachers' College have been increased and are about to be increased again to encourage the maintenance of a full training college.

A librarian has been appointed to the Training College. Assistance has been given to the students in the provision of social amenities, and the Government realises that the acquisition of a sufficient number of trained teachers is absolutely essential if the school-leaving age is to be raised and the number of children per class reduced to a satisfactory figure, both of which are reasonable ambitions. From memory, the situation is that there are 440 trainees at the college at present, and it is expected that about 230 will pass out as teachers at the end of the year.

Mr. Graham: What is the loss per year?

The ACTING PREMIER: Unfortunately, last year the loss nearly equalled the acquisition of teachers from the college and prevented any of the lag being made up. It is expected this year that the number coming out of the college will exceed losses by 60 or 70, which will make some contribution towards overtaking the lag that is still, I believe, of the order of 150. So it becomes necessary—as will readily be realised—to maintain the population of the Training College. To that end the

Government has considered the matter, in conjunction with the expert officers of the Education Department, and it has been decided to make these increased allowances. The position this year, I believe, will be that the trainee who lives away from home will receive an allowance of £150 and the trainee who lives at home will receive £110 per annum.

Moreover, in view of the demand for an increase in the school-leaving age and a reduction in the size of classes, opportunities for entering this profession will continue for a substantial number of years, in my opinion, and I believe teaching affords far better opportunities at present—as the rates of remuneration upon entry are reasonable—than many other professions, some of which are bordering on being overcrowded. We know what are the problems that must be overcome in order to achieve these ambitions and I tell you, Sir, and the people of this State, that we are steadily applying ourselves to their solution as fast as is possible. I have no hesitation in saying that in the 17 months that the Government has been in office considerable progress has been made in the field of education. It has been suggested by the member for East Perth that the last session of Parliament was virtually blank as regards worth-while legislation. That was a gross exaggeration and must have been known to be such by the hon. member. I regret to have to say that.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Page 116!

The ACTING PREMIER: Appendix 16, on the contrary. I regret to have to say that, because the hon. member must have known better. I have no doubt he did know better—but chose, as many of his colleagues have chosen—and as the Labour organisation has chosen over the years, to endeavour deliberately to misrepresent those sitting opposite to them.

The Minister for Lands: He is at that all the time.

The ACTING PREMIER: The first Bill I will refer to was one to make provision for an iron and steel industry in Western Australia. That project has now proceeded to a degree where I think the agreement will be signed within the next few days. Then there was the Bill covering the introduction of the rural water schemes, the Government having made an arrangement

suitable to the Commonwealth and the State. There was the Bill to extend the activities of the Rural and Industries Bank, and the Bill to provide for a long overdue redistribution of Legislative Assembly seats, which I think the hon. member will agree was of some importance.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I would not mention that.

The ACTING PREMIER: It was a good Bill, and was passed by this House. Then there was the Bill to write off £800,000 of farmers' debts incurred under the parent Act. There was the Bill to effect necessary reforms in child welfare, and one to make provision for a review of rents of shared houses, caravans, the practice of charging for the key of the door, and the like. There was a Bill to provide an increase in the superannuation of civil servants, without any increased contribution from them. There was the Bill to confer long-service leave on civil servants as a right, and not as a privilege, as well as others too numerous to mention. I hope the hon. member has not forgotten the Bill to provide for an increase in the salary of members of Parliament. That makes hon. members smile.

The list of Bills I have mentioned indicates that the member for East Perth did not give sufficient thought to the business of the session—without imputing any other motive—when he made that statement. I am sorry to think that that should be so, but it seems to me to be symptomatic of the outlook of members opposite when it comes to the matter of criticism. If they have not much foundation for criticism, they build up a facade on the lines of that of the member for East Perth.

Mr. Graham: And you talk about tortfeasors and so on.

The ACTING PREMIER: The hon. member misrepresented the position by saying that the session was a complete blank. Considerable criticism has been voiced about the Department of Supply and Shipping.

Mr. Marshall: It is a very efficient department.

The ACTING PREMIER: I hope in the next few minutes to be able to satisfy the hon. member that that is so, and I think the member for Murchison is open to conviction, if any member on that side of the House is. The figures available indicate that the total quantity of goods imported

by us from the Eastern States increased in the first year of this Government's term of office as opposed to the preceding 12 months, by 9,000 tons, and while every effort has been made to bring over from the Eastern States such goods as are essential to the carrying on of industry in this State, I would point out that that alone should not be the main consideration. Members opposite seem to have a complaint that we are not importing sufficient from the Eastern States, but I am sure the member for Northam would not subscribe to that view, and I do not.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Neither does the member for Leederville.

The ACTING PREMIER: I referred to the member for Northam because he had an intimate interest in this matter in past years. The aim and ambition—in this direction—of both this and the preceding Government, has been to ensure that the things we require but which can be produced in this State, are produced here, and so it is the object of the Government—opposite to that of the member for East Perth who introduced this enlivening topic to the House—that we should seek to minimise our importations. I have already said that a special division of the Department of Industrial Development was set up to increase the supply of building materials manufactured in this State, and it will be of distinct advantage, bearing in mind the continual industrial troubles of the Eastern States which prevent not only manufactures, but also transport—

Mr. Graham: But that did not start until 1917.

The ACTING PREMIER: I would suggest that the procedure of lessening our importations has been going on over a period of years and that it is in the best interests of Western Australia that it should continue to go on.

Mr. Graham: What about the cosmetics that are imported? They are not essential.

The ACTING PREMIER: There are plenty of people who seem to regard cosmetics as more essential than bread and butter, but I do not know whether the hon. member is among those people. My submission is that 9,000 tons more came into Western Australia in the first 12 months of the present Government than in the preceding

12 months, and I hope that, unless there is some sound reason for greater quantities coming in, we shall be able more and more to rely upon our own industry, where the industry is soundly based as most of those here at present are. The Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping, in my opinion, is to be congratulated and commended on her substantially successful efforts to bring in essential supplies.

Particularly is she to be congratulated on the case she has had prepared for an increased quota for Western Australia, from the common pool, of goods that must be imported into this State from the Eastern States to enable local industries to function properly in view of their increased manufacturing capacity. One of the greatest handicaps of some small industries in Western Australia has been the difficulty of obtaining the necessary raw materials, and the Honorary Minister has devoted a considerable portion of her time and energy, with great success, to the solution, to a considerable degree, of that problem.

The Minister for Lands: She has done a fine job.

The ACTING PREMIER: Of my own knowledge I know of the successful work done in many directions by the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping. I have seen a great number of communications, from persons whose importations into this State are of the greatest importance, expressing appreciation of her services. I will read three of those letters to the House.

Member interjected.

The ACTING PREMIER: What does that imply? It should imply nothing, because if it implies anything, it is that these letters are to be read for the purpose of bamboozling the House.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Other Governments have received letters similar to those.

The ACTING PREMIER: The hon. member does not know what they are.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They are letters of appreciation to the Honorary Minister for the efforts she has made to bring goods from the Eastern States to Western Australia.

The ACTING PREMIER: I have picked them at random from a large bundle because I thought the member for Northam or somebody else with an equally alert mind would

indulge in just such a remark. The first of these letters is from H. V. McKay Massey Harris Pty. Ltd. It is dated the 31st July, 1947, and reads—

We desire to acknowledge with thanks your letter of the 28th inst., relative to the matter of shipment of agricultural machinery and parts to this State, and it is pleasing to read your latest advices in this respect.

We appreciate very much indeed your activity in this direction, and it would perhaps please you to know also that the improvement and general interest by the State Government in regard to the matter of shipping is remarked on most favourably in many quarters.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I received a letter similar to that from the same firm, when I was in office.

The ACTING PREMIER: That letter is not before us. On the 19th May 1948 the Building Industry Congress of W.A. wrote—

At a meeting of the council of this Congress today two of our members reported on various matters to which they had attended while in the Eastern States recently. During discussion on the importance of the shipping problem, attention was drawn to the favourable results which had been achieved to date, largely as the result of your personal efforts.

I was asked to convey the appreciation of the building industry and express the hope that the position will be further improved as the result of your tenacity.

The other letter reads—

The negotiations in connection with the transport of these goods have extended over many days, and we desire to extend to you and your staff our sincere thanks for the very close co-operation and assistance, without which these machines would still be in Victoria awaiting shipment, which would be to the detriment of farmers of this State.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The previous Government received thousands of similar letters.

The ACTING PREMIER: The point at issue is not whether the previous Government received such letters, but that members opposite have decided—in their own minds—that the activities of the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping are not deserving of any commendation whatever. I do not deny that the preceding Government probably made substantial and at times successful efforts to achieve what the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping has been trying to achieve in more recent days, but I do say—and I am perfectly justified in pro-

ducing evidence to this House—that her efforts have been worthy of commendation because they have brought results.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The previous Government did the same thing without the help of an Honorary Minister.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The ACTING PREMIER: Before tea I was dealing with the question of the need for commending, rather than the reverse, the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping. Before I finish with the subject I would like to say that when the Government took office the greatest difficulty was to secure adequate shipping to convey consigned goods to Western Australia. There seemed to be considerable lack of co-ordination, and the goods we did not want were frequently received and those we did want were frequently left behind. To a great extent that position has been remedied by continual application to the problems associated with transport between here and the Eastern States and representations to what may be regarded as the proper quarters.

Now, unfortunately, owing to various troubles, some industrial and some of other kinds, which have taken place in the Eastern States and prevail there so much, the production capacity of the various plants and factories, in respect of the many things which this State is still forced to get from the Eastern States, is partly responsible for our difficulties. The main trouble seems to be under-production at the source of supply. I feel sure that anybody who wants to assist in the acquisition of these goods for the betterment of conditions in Western Australia, cannot do better than endeavour to persuade the people in industry in the Eastern States, both employers and employees, of the necessity for increasing production to a reasonable maximum. In this way there will be more for everybody and less difficulty of supply, and our troubles may be somewhat alleviated.

Mr. Rodoreda: Do you not think you should send the Honorary Minister over?

The ACTING PREMIER: I was making the suggestion more in regard to the hon. member and those with whom he is associated. I did not think it would be very long before the hon. member, or one of his

friends, took the opportunity of interjecting, and I would then be able to explain myself in greater detail. If the Labour Party will undertake to accept its share of this effort, I will use every endeavour to find people who will make level representations to the employing side of industry so that we may get that co-ordination and increase of production which are so vitally necessary. In other words, if members of the Opposition will do their share, we will try to do ours.

It might be desirable at this stage for me to say a word or two, without anticipating the debate which may later take place, on the question of the Black Diamond leases, particularly in regard to the observations made by the member for Collie. I do not propose to say more than that the suspicions voiced by the hon. member are entirely without foundation and that the facts, when disclosed, will indicate that the Government took steps which were best calculated to maintain coal supplies in Western Australia on a fair and reasonable basis. I will say, however, that when the Government came into office, matters affecting the supply of coal, in common with many other matters, were not in a very satisfactory condition.

The agreement for the supply of coal by Amalgamated Collieries—and I might say at this stage that various agreements with Amalgamated Collieries over a long period of years, had been signed by successive Governments of the present Opposition Party—for the year ended the 31st December, 1947, was for a period of two years. It had not been signed by the outgoing Government at the end of 15 months of the two-year period, nor had the conditions which were to be contained in that document been settled by the Government to an extent which would enable an agreement to be signed. It was therefore necessary for the Minister in charge of the matter to take up, in association with other Ministers vitally concerned, the question of coming to an arrangement in regard to the period of two years, partly because it was not at all desirable that an arrangement should continue without any agreement whatever, and partly because on the completion of the agreement depended the receipt by the Government of considerable sums of money. These sums were claimable by the Government in respect of that agreement if it were completed.

The agreement was completed and subsequently renewed for a short period in order that negotiations might proceed for a final and better settlement of the coal problem for a substantial period of years. The Opposition, from the remarks of certain members, and I will refer only to certain members, apparently viewed Amalgamated Collieries with some suspicion. There has been ample opportunity in the long period during which Labour Governments have remained in office in this State, if it were desirable, to terminate the arrangements with Amalgamated Collieries or with any other concern, for that matter, which was supplying coal to the Western Australian Government, the principal consumer of Collie coal. No action was taken in that direction, and therefore it can be assumed that there was reasonable satisfaction, at least so far as the Government of that day was concerned.

I now turn to a matter which, while of a minor nature, indicates the trend of Labour propaganda and reluctance on the part of some of its sections—in saying that I will not condemn the whole organisation—to adhere to anything like the truth. I have already referred to certain propaganda which has been continually circulated over a period of approximately 13 years, and which had no foundation at all in fact. I find that even the more youthful members of the Labour Party are evidently being trained in the same class of propaganda methods. I understand that the "News Letter" is the official organisation of the University Branch of the A.L.P. In its issue of Friday, the 9th April, 1948, Vol. 1, No. 7, an article written by the editor dealing with the building question stated inter alia—

Persistent bleat is that there isn't enough building materials. This doesn't square with the peculiar issuing of permits for the Mayfair, His Majesty's, the West Perth Glaciarium, sundry hotels, not to mention luxury renovations about the place.

There can be only one of two alternatives regarding statements of that nature; either they were made deliberately with the knowledge that they were untrue or they were made without any inquiry as to the actual facts and in those circumstances they are equally culpable. It is a fact that the permit was issued to the Mayfair Theatre in September, 1946, which was six months before the Wise Government went out of office. As to the permit for a glaciarium,

West Perth, it is true that the Housing Commission about this time last year issued a permit in respect of portion of the plan which was supposed to be a freezing works. When this came under the notice of the member for North Perth, who was then Acting Minister for Housing, he took steps in accordance with the powers given to the Minister for Housing under the Act to cancel the permit. The cancellation was notified within two days of the intention to issue a permit, even though it was not clear that the permit included provision for materials for the glaciarium itself. In consequence no part of that building was proceeded with.

No permits whatever have been issued for the erection of hotels. The Licensing Court has granted provisional certificates, as it is entitled to do, but the court has made it perfectly plain that it is unlikely any permit will be issued until 1951 and, as a matter of fact, in the majority of cases, no pressure has been applied for the granting of any such permit because the pending licensees are well acquainted with the position. Consequently we must come to the conclusion—and I think one can come to no other conclusion—that this section of the Labour Party is following the lead of other sections which find actual and sound opportunities for criticism of the Government so few and far between that, in order to provide its followers with some sensationalism or openings for criticism, it is not averse to telling lies and half truths.

Mr. Brady: Is mention made of the improvements to Helena Vale racecourse?

The ACTING PREMIER: No.

Mr. Brady: It should have been.

The ACTING PREMIER: I think the gentleman who started that work was prosecuted. He had not a permit.

Mr. Styants: And the club paid the fine.

The ACTING PREMIER: That is not the responsibility of any Government; it is the responsibility of the magistrate and, if the hon. member likes, of Parliament, although the penalties were substantially increased last session. Still, we cannot dictate to a magistrate; otherwise we would ruin the responsibility of the judiciary, and the hon. member would not want to do that. Obviously no permit was issued or the party

concerned would not have been prosecuted for building without a permit. I think I have established the true aspect of that matter without much difficulty. At this stage I feel impelled to make some reference to the observations of the member for Bunbury.

Mr. Rodoreda: Before you pass on to that, will you tell us something about the Royal Commission on Vermin?

The ACTING PREMIER: I suggest to the hon. member that this is my speech and that it is a matter for me to decide. I have told the member for North-East Fremantle that I shall say something about that in a little while and that promise I shall most certainly honour.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Provided we have patience.

The ACTING PREMIER: Patience is a virtue, highly desirable, but possessed by few. The member for Bunbury, in a splenetic and somewhat ill-advised speech, accused the Government of being insincere and of political wirepulling. The unfortunate part is that the hon. member had no justification whatever in fact for his remarks. Let me say first of all that, in the case of Albany, the outline of the harbour scheme has only just been approved, a dredge that will take two years or thereabouts to arrive has been ordered and no other work has yet been initiated.

Is there any reason why those two parts of Western Australia, with their own particular zones, cannot be developed without jealousy or antagonism? I have never subscribed to any point of view other than that. For my part and so far as the Government is concerned, we consider it our duty to endeavour to develop all parts of the State that are capable of being developed. Above all, it is our desire, so far as is practicable—although we know the practical limitations—to decentralise trade and industry. It is no part of our duty, as the member for Bunbury should know, to decentralise industry or trade to Bunbury only. His spleen was apparently caused by the fact that at long last it is proposed to do something for Albany, but I have already indicated that as yet nothing has been done there whereas considerable work is in progress at Bunbury. I will tell the hon. member a few other things in a moment that will probably interest him to some degree. I give him this assurance that the work

on the Bunbury Harbour that has been authorised will be proceeded with.

An amount of £50,000 was placed on the Loan Estimates for this financial year, which is the utmost that the Government anticipates can be expended, having in mind the provision of materials and manpower. All this is quite contrary to the views expressed by the member for Bunbury. Not more than £9,000 would be on account of the rockbreaker dredge. I think the hon. gentleman referred to a sum of something like £30,000 for that item. I have the latest information on this subject and am supplying it to the hon. member in order that there may be no further confusion in his mind. The Government has never varied from its intention to proceed with the carrying out of the scheme, which includes provision of a greynne, an extension to the breakwater, a cut connecting the estuary to the sea above Turkey Point, a bank isolating the estuary from the harbour, an extension of the sand greynne, deepening of the navigation channel and the provision of new berths at an estimated total cost of approximately £1,000,000 on today's figure. That is the total of the work which is contemplated over a period.

The member for Bunbury referred to a confusion in the drafting of a minute written by the Premier, leading to an understanding that the rockbreaking dredge was needed for the breakwater and the Turkey Point cut. The minute does not appear to infer this. The hon. member suggests that the whole project is held up because Mr. Tydeman is not giving further consideration to the Bunbury harbour scheme until he has completed his report on the Fremantle harbour. In order that there should be no delay, the Government arranged for Mr. Tydeman to give immediate consideration to the Bunbury proposals. The work is not held up. But we have no final report yet. The member for Bunbury appears to be obsessed with the necessity, above everything else, of completing the cut above Turkey Point. He does not realise that at the present time the cut consists of only a mark on the plan. To connect the estuary to the sea successfully is a major engineering work and requires careful surveys and designs.

That is the position so far as the actual work at Bunbury is concerned. It is proceeding as fast as circumstances will permit.

So far as concerns Bunbury having been superseded by any other work, that is not so, as no other work in the southern part of the State has been commenced, although it is intended to commence it as soon as circumstances will allow. It is strange Mr. Speaker, that the member for Bunbury should be so unstatesmanlike as to accuse this Government of wire-pulling as he did, and should suggest that because it desires to do something for the development of the zone around Albany, it would minimise anything that can be done at Bunbury.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think you misrepresent him by saying that.

The ACTING PREMIER: If I could read from the "Hansard" report of his speech, which I have perused only a quarter of an hour ago, I think the member for Northam would find that that was the essence—not the exact phraseology, of course—of what the member for Bunbury did say.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I have read the "Hansard" report twice and I think you misrepresent his attitude to the matter.

The Minister for Lands: What are you trying to start now?

The ACTING PREMIER: I shall not continue an argument on those lines. The word "wire-pulling" was used. We will stop at that. This comes from a gentleman who represents a district where, since 1918 and excluding all thought of expense on group settlement in the Bunbury zone, there has been a total expenditure by the Government of £3,050,000; whereas in the other area to which he made reference the total expenditure in the same period upon similar work was £122,000, or a difference of £2,928,000. So, while I give him the assurance that the work will proceed, there is no intention whatever to hamper in any way—quite the contrary—the development of the area around his electorate, may I suggest to him that he adopt a somewhat more statesmanlike attitude and allow other portions of the State—not only Albany; other portions will be receiving consideration before very long—to take their fair share of whatever is going in the best interests of the whole of Western Australia. If the hon. member will do that, he and I no doubt will have no cause for disagreement whatever, as I would not blame him for a moment for putting his best foot forward in regard to

his own electorate. But I do think that, in all the circumstances, it was rather unnecessary to approach the subject of the Albany zone development in the way he did, especially when he knew that certain facts in regard thereto had been brought to his notice.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: In other words, if he agrees with you, you will be good friends.

Mr. Leslie: That is only natural.

The ACTING PREMIER: That is hardly fair, because I do not think we are expected to agree upon every subject in order to be good friends. Were that so, my opportunities for being good friends with the member for Northam would be singularly limited, whereas I have the feeling that we are at most times on fairly good terms.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: We will see about that later.

The ACTING PREMIER: It is a matter of opinion from time to time, and that is where I leave the member for Bunbury, as I think he can rest satisfied as to the remainder of his observations. At an earlier stage of the debate the member for North-East Fremantle made reference to the Mt. Barker, east and west, transport service. I do not propose to take up much time on this subject. The point he endeavoured to make apparently was that I, as the member for that district, had undertaken, as soon as the change of Government took place, to make strong representations—with great success—for an increase of the subsidy. I point out to the hon. member that the increased subsidy to which he referred was obtained while I was Leader of the Opposition and that since that time, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, there has been no alteration therein.

I am rather surprised—this is the reason I make reference to it—that the hon. member should have endeavoured to create the impression that intense pressure had been brought to bear by me upon the Transport Board. In any event, the extra amount involved was only in the vicinity of £120 per annum. I feel perfectly certain that will not be detrimental to the local authorities about whom he was concerned. In any case, it is the responsibility of the State Transport Board to decide what payments it shall make. I conclude this subject by saying that since that time the service which the new proprietors are giving is a

success; and I understand that a new basis is now being arrived at by the Transport Board, which the board has not discussed with me but which I am informed will put the service on a more economical basis. I mention that because there was a reference to me by the member for North-East Fremantle who I feel sure will appreciate the fact that he was under some misapprehension.

The member for South Fremantle, looking for a reason to batter the Government, endeavoured to establish that we had something to do with a somewhat fraudulent home-building company, that we were directly responsible for—

Mr. Fox: I did not say you had anything to do with it.

The ACTING PREMIER: I said he endeavoured to establish that we had something to do with its operations.

Mr. Fox: I did not say anything of the sort.

The Minister for Lands: Take your gruel.

The ACTING PREMIER: I would love the hon. member to look more carefully into what he did say. I admit that at the time he was in a rather—

The Minister for Lands: Excited condition!

The ACTING PREMIER: I will not say in an excited condition, but in a disorganised frame of mind and possibly he was not quite aware what he did say.

Mr. Fox: I know exactly what I said.

The ACTING PREMIER: Let us put it this way. The company was going strong about August 1946. As a matter of fact it had by that time, I understand, defaulted in its payments of rent and the landlord was seeking to eject it. The Government had no more to do with its successful or unsuccessful operations subsequent to that time than our Government did subsequent to the 1st of April, 1947, because during both periods—the hon. member has assured me in regard to the period since April, 1947, and I have made inquiries with regard to the period before then—it was taking money under what were virtually false pretences. But that had nothing to do with any Government and only exemplifies the weakness of the case which the hon. member tried to put up.

Mr. Fox: I said that they were encouraged by the fact that in your Policy speech you said you would build houses for two-unit families, but did not.

The ACTING PREMIER: A few years ago the hon. member's Government promised to build 4,000 houses a year so I think he had better leave the subject alone.

Mr. Fox: We brought down a Bill to build houses for letting in 1937 and your pals up above threw it out.

The ACTING PREMIER: The previous Government promised to build 4,000 houses a year and did not succeed; so I say that this company was encouraged to start building operations because of that Government's failure to carry out its promise. That is as logical as the argument of the member for South Fremantle.

Mr. Fox: It was encouraged, by your promises, to rob widows and children.

The ACTING PREMIER: It was encouraged by the promises of the previous Government to rob other people. So I think we can leave the subject-matter alone.

Mr. Fox: You do your job and put them in their place!

The ACTING PREMIER: They do not exist, so how can I do that?

Mr. Fox: Of course you can!

The ACTING PREMIER: Where are they? You find them for me.

Mr. Fox: That is your job.

The ACTING PREMIER: No, it is not. They do not exist. I promised the member for North-East Fremantle that I would say something about the report of the Royal Commission on vermin. The present position is that it is quite probable the Government will introduce legislation. The matter is a subject of discussion between the Honorary Minister for Agriculture and two other members of Cabinet with a view to recommendations being made. There have been some changes in the position since the report of the Royal Commission was made, and it is as difficult to get unanimity on the commission's recommendations from members on this side of the House as it possibly would be to secure it from the whole House.

Mr. Rodoreda: I bet it is on the rating proposition!

The ACTING PREMIER: There are several ways of approaching the subject, and

an investigation is being made into the report at present. I am very hopeful indeed that legislation will be introduced before the end of the session.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You promised to do it. It was not that you might do it.

The ACTING PREMIER: I pointed out last session that a Policy speech is intended to cover the period between the time it is delivered and the normal next election, which is generally three years. It would be impossible, no matter how well intentioned any Cabinet might be, to carry out the whole of the programme—or even a substantial portion of it—submitted to the electors, in a period of one and a quarter years.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Yes; but more than 18 months ago this was an urgent problem!

The ACTING PREMIER: I have said that circumstances have somewhat changed and the problem has not been so urgent. Other problems of greater urgency have presented themselves. There are those with a knowledge of the outback districts who will agree that there are certain aspects of the problem that have changed during the intervening period.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The member for Mt. Marshall has shot all the emus!

The ACTING PREMIER: He has had great satisfaction from the Department of Agriculture in that matter, as he indicated last night.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That, Mr. North-East Fremantle, is the Minister's reply on the vermin question.

The ACTING PREMIER: It is all he will get tonight and I think he will agree that it is all he is entitled to get tonight.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I know that we will get no Vermin Bill as was promised.

The ACTING PREMIER: Does the hon. member? Let him wait and see.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: "We will give full implementation to the recommendations of the Royal Commission." That was the promise.

The ACTING PREMIER: I am not going to say that. There may be one or two items left out. I have changed my mind on one or two points.

Mr. Rodoreda: Naturally! You are on that side of the House now.

The ACTING PREMIER: No. One of my changed views is due to a report from the officers of the Department. A man should not be incapable of changing an opinion which may have been formed in error. I am referring more particularly at the moment to the mobile units. I have not changed my mind by reason of the very great expense involved—I believe that could be overcome—but because I think it would be difficult, if not impossible, to fit them up at the present time. I tell that to the member for North-East Fremantle, who strongly pressed that point of view earlier. At that time I did not see eye to eye with him; but if a man cannot change his mind, he is not capable of progress. In that particular direction I have changed my mind.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I know you have a big hurdle to jump.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: And a lot of weight to carry over it.

The ACTING PREMIER: In the course of his remarks earlier this session the member for Northam accused the Government of extravagance; and having been asked to nominate some of the items of extravagance, he referred to the appointment of Royal Commissions. The Premier, in making some reply to his remarks, indicated that it had been the intention of the former Government, had it remained in office, as disclosed by the undertaking of the present Leader of the Opposition when he spoke on a motion affecting the railways, to have a close inquiry into that matter by responsible persons. So with regard to the appointment of at least one of the Royal Commissions I claim there was unanimity of thought. This appointment of Royal Commissions and like inquiries has not been the special privilege of the present Government. We have been in office 16 or 17 months and it is therefore a fair proposition to examine the number of Royal Commissions and other inquiries which were created or instituted by the preceding Government in a similar period—that is to say, from December, 1945, to the date it went out of office.

In December, 1945, Mr. A. Donne, manager of the State Coalmine, New South Wales, was invited to examine our coal industry and report as to the prospects of

improvement in the present mining methods and likely additional operations with a view to early increases in production. A report dated the 1st January, 1946, was made to the Government. Following a resolution of the Legislative Council dated the 27th November, 1945, that the Government should appoint a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the administration, conduct and control of trotting in Western Australia, and to recommend any legislation considered necessary, the Government appointed on the 20th February, 1946, Mr. C. McLean, magistrate of Melbourne, to be a Royal Commissioner, and his report was presented in June, 1946. In March, 1946, Mr. W. J. Wallwork was appointed Coal Production Commissioner for a period of six months in association with a representative of the workers and a representative of the mining company concerned. In April, 1946, the powers of a Royal Commissioner were given to Mr. Wallwork. The terms of reference covered methods of production and development of coalmines, terms and conditions of employment in coalmines, including amenities, and improvements in quality of coal by cleaning, grading and blending etc. An interim report was presented in August, 1946, and a final report in September, 1947.

Mr. W. J. Wallwork was appointed in July, 1946, to inquire into housing matters and shortages in the building trade. Reports were made on the 9th August, 1946, the 30th August, 1946 and the 17th October, 1946. In September, 1946, Professor P. McCallum, of Melbourne University, was invited to report on the need for a medical school in this State, the cost of establishing same and the practicability of providing staff and operating the school by 1947. The report was presented in October, 1946. In November of that year Mr. Wallwork was appointed a Royal Commissioner to inquire into and report on present housing costs, the reasons for any variations in costs, causes and effects of shortages of materials and labour, and the effect of control systems on costs.

In February, 1947, Messrs J. S. Teasdale, S. B. Donovan, J. Sadler and R. P. Roberts were appointed as a Royal Commission to inquire into the best arrangements for the stabilisation and marketing of wheat for wheatgrowers in this State. Their report was appointed on the 14th May, 1947. So,

If we use the fingers of both hands to count these respective committees of inquiry and Royal Commissions, we find that the scales balance about evenly. Therefore I do not think there is any substantial ground for alleging that there has been extravagance in regard to the appointment of Royal Commissions or unnecessary inquiries, any more than there was by the previous Administration.

I desire to make reference to a couple of observations by the member for East Perth and the member for Kalgoorlie. The member for East Perth, when referring to the so-called milk strike, was in my opinion grossly unfair to the Honorary Minister for Agriculture. He said that the Minister, when the strike was in the offing, vanished to the Eastern States. Now, I do not know whether the hon. member delights in being unfair, but he lays himself open to the suggestion that he does when he makes statements of that kind.

Mr. Graham: Is that true or false?

The ACTING PREMIER: The Honorary Minister went to the Eastern States to a meeting of the Agricultural Council that had been arranged some time before the milk strike was even thought of. When he left the milk strike was certainly not under way.

Mr. Graham: It was on the eve of starting.

The ACTING PREMIER: He left the State on the Thursday night and the milk strike started on the following Tuesday morning. The hon. gentleman was obliged to go on State business. The implication by the member for East Perth was not only unfair and ungenerous but, in my opinion, totally unwarranted. If that is going to be the attitude adopted by members of this House in regard to the absence of Ministers on State business, it is quite obvious that a most unsatisfactory state of affairs will result. These meetings in the Eastern States are not the desire of Governments, of either complexion, of Western Australia. They have to be attended, and if Western Australia is not represented at them it is not satisfactory.

Mr. Graham: A deputy was soon found for the Minister for Railways when he could not attend a Federal meeting.

The ACTING PREMIER: Fortunately, a deputy was over there. If there had

been no-one there the meeting could not have taken place. The Minister for Housing—the member for West Perth—was there.

The Minister for Railways: The Premier was invited to the conference, in any case.

The ACTING PREMIER: Had there been no-one in the Eastern States we could not have been represented at that meeting, because, as far as I know, there was not time for anyone to get there, or hardly time. The member for Kalgoorlie asked a question yesterday in regard to rail freights, which I answered, and that answer was referred to by the hon. member in the course of his remarks last night. I reiterate, it is impossible to deal with this matter on a sectional basis. I do suggest to him, however, that if he agrees to make representations for some other form of assistance it might be possible for the Government to accede to them. I appreciate his point of view and understand his difficulty. While I cannot see that there is any prospect of a specific reduction being made in favour of goldfields mines, I can understand that the difficulties mentioned might arise. I suggest he gives the matter further thought and, if he cares to make representations I, for one, will be happy to consider them, and will try to evolve some scheme that will be of assistance to the mines, without upsetting the general arrangement of railway operations and charges.

I give the hon. member this assurance, that the question of water charges on the Goldfields and in other areas has received consideration, and we shall shortly be able to announce what proposals we intend to put into operation. I do not know that they will entirely suit him, but they will make some contribution towards alleviating the position which has existed for so many years. It has been a surprise to me that the inquiry that was made into the matter by the present Government was not commenced by its predecessor. When I realise the substantial support which the preceding Government obtained, politically, from the goldfields areas, I find it almost impossible to understand why the representations of the members for those districts did not at least cause an inquiry to be commenced, even if they did not bring about actual results. Anyway, we are going into

the matter but I doubt whether the conclusions will altogether suit the hon. gentleman who addressed himself to this subject last evening. I do feel, however, that they will go some way towards helping him.

In conclusion may I say I have traversed a great many of the objections and complaints that have been raised by members. It is of course impossible for me to cover them all. My main objective, as I indicated when I started, was to show that much of the time spent on these debates in this House has been substantially wasted in discussing propaganda. I have indicated that I am not anxious to deal with that type of question. I am prepared to get down and do some constructive work as early as possible but, if members opposite persist in dragging up these things, then I promise them I will make every possible effort to bring up just as many to controvert what they say.

Mr. Hegney: Is that a threat?

The ACTING PREMIER: My recommendation to both sides is to forget this kind of thing and get down to the real subject-matter that is in the minds of individual members in regard to problems of district or State importance. Members would make a far better contribution and do much more to justify our existence as a legislative body by accepting the verdict of the electors when given, and waiting until next time to fight it out again.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	18

Majority against 2

AYES.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Fox	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Snyants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tunkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Rodoreda

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Borell	Mr. Seward
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Doney	Mr. Watts
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Wise
Mr. Hill	Mr. Yates
Mr. Murray	Mr. Brand

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.

Mr. Wise
Mr. Leahy
Mr. Collier
Mr. Tait
Mr. May
Mr. Smith
Mr. Coverley

NOES.

Mr. McLarty
Mr. McDonald
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Leslie
Mr. Parkins
Mr. Mann
Mr. Hall

Motion thus negatived.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [8.20]: Members will have gathered the impression—from the speech delivered by the Acting Premier—that if there is one thing more than another in which he believes, and for which he would almost lay down his life, it is fair play and reasonable dealing. In many parts of his speech he uttered condemnation of what he considered to be unfair play, unfair statements and actions. It therefore came as a great surprise to me that, when I sought to obtain the adjournment of this debate, the voice of the Acting Premier was loudest of all in denying me that opportunity.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He did not want you to be given a chance to reply to him.

The Acting Premier: I thought I was doing the replying.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Acting Premier thought he was doing the replying! What special right has he above any other member of the House in a debate of this kind? Has he some special right to receive preferential treatment above everyone else? If so, in what Standing Order is it contained, or by what practice of Parliament has it been laid down? I am inclined to think, from the interjection of the Acting Premier, that he places altogether too great an importance upon himself—

The Acting Premier: No.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:—and upon his standing in this Chamber.

The Acting Premier: You have had ample opportunity for five weeks to speak.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have had no more opportunity than has the Acting Premier himself, yet he comes here tonight with a bundle of anything up to 200 pages of notes—

Mr. Marshall: All badly marshalled by his agents.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:—in which is contained a careful analysis of things done

and alleged to have been done by Labour Governments over a long period of years now past. Upon the basis of that case, carefully prepared over a period of weeks, he launched an attack on past Labour Governments with regard to many matters, and in order that I might have the barest of fair play, by being given 24 hours or, at the utmost, three days in which to prepare a reply to the unfair criticism of the Acting Premier, I moved that the debate be adjourned. Out of hand, the Acting Premier refused me that right; saying, in effect, "Whilst I have had many weeks and the assistance of many officers to prepare my criticism and condemnation of previous Governments, you, as Acting Leader of the Opposition, will not be given even five minutes in which to prepare any defence to the attack I have made upon those Governments."

Mr. Grayden: Who will reply to you? You would go on for ever.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have no objection to anyone replying to me. That privilege is available to anyone who has not already taken advantage of the opportunity of speaking in this debate. The action of the Acting Premier in refusing even the shortest adjournment exposes the hollowness of the attitude he sought to adopt throughout the speech that has just concluded. It exposes the hollowness of his claim, expressed and implied, that he is a super-believer in fair play and fair fighting, and that he would not consider, even to the slightest extent, saying or doing anything that was at all unfair or unreasonable. His attitude on the motion that I moved for the adjournment of the debate indicated ever so clearly that he believes in putting the hoots in and then making it impossible for the persons into whom the hoots have been put to fight back in the ordinary fair and reasonable way. That is the attitude of the Acting Premier, shorn of all the protestations and make-believe with which he surrounded himself during his speech.

Mr. Grayden: That would mean that all members would get 24 hours in which to reply to each other's speeches.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I prefer not to take any notice of the interjections of the member for Middle Swan. I hope he will take no offence at that.

Hon. A. H. Panton: At any rate, he is leaving us shortly.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I will quote from a speech made in this House on the 11th November, 1947, by the member for Irwin-Moore. In the portion to which I will refer he strongly criticised the Acting Premier and said—

But a man who could make statements of that sort—

The member for Irwin-Moore was there referring to the Acting Premier—
—could never have captained a successful sporting team, at any rate.

Mr. Bovell: He is vice-captain of a successful Government.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Had members listened carefully to the speech of the Acting Premier, they would have found running through it an exaggerated idea of his own qualities of fair play and sportsmanship, and an extremely jaundiced view of those qualities as found in other members. Where any member during the course of the debate criticised the Government, that member, in the view of the Acting Premier, had been splenetic and had vented his spleen on the Government. Not only did the Acting Premier apply that generally to members of the Opposition but, with even more bitterness and feeling, to the Liberal Party member for Bunbury, who had sufficient courage to stand up in his seat and advocate a better deal for his district.

The Minister for Lands: We will see how bitter you are tonight.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: This is supposed to be a representative Parliament where the elected representatives of democracy are enabled to express their views freely and where members from different districts are expected by their people to criticise the Government when they think criticism is justified, and to advocate strongly the requirements and wants of their districts. Surely things have come to a sorry pass in this House when a member who does that, especially a member of the Government side, is declared to have been splenetic; declared to have vented his spleen against the Government or some portion of it.

Evidently the Acting Premier wants behind him only "Yes" men, men who are prepared to say "Yes" to everything he advocates or wants, men who are prepared to

praise him, even though the praise is in no way genuine or justified. Evidently there is to be no right of independent thought and independent statement given to any supporter of the Government in this House by the Acting Premier. In all those things any person who has any knowledge of the legal profession—and I do not say this in any way derogatory to the profession or to anyone in it—is aware that a person with legal training can use words to suit the situation.

The Acting Premier: It does not require a legal training to do that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: For instance, using the reasoning basis employed by the Acting Premier himself, there were many more splenetic outbursts in his own speech than there were in any other speech delivered in the House during the course of this debate. So it is quite an easy matter for him to say that the member for Bunbury, in his speech, was splenetic, but it would be just as easy and more justifiable to say that portions of the speech of the Acting Premier were much more splenetic. The Acting Premier would say that the more severe statements in his speech were motivated by righteous indignation. That is the difference! With the Acting Premier when things are different they are not the same!

If the member for Bunbury, the member for Avon, the member for Beverley or Cannington, to pick a few members on the Government side who are prepared to criticise the Government, think it is justified and necessary for them to criticise, they are indulging in splenetic outbursts in the opinion of the Acting Premier, although in fact they might be giving voice to some indignation they feel on behalf of the electors or some portion of the electors, whom they represent in this House.

The Acting Premier: They would not talk about political wire-pulling and other things.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not concerned whether they are—

The Acting Premier: Their criticism would be welcome without references of that type.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not think the Acting Premier can start to square off successfully now that the hollowness or the inconsistency of the attack he made on the member for Bunbury and others is being demonstrated to the House. The criticisms

voiced by the members I have mentioned, and in some degree also by the member for Maylands, were not their own criticisms of the Government, they were not their own criticisms of what the Government had failed to do and should have done, but were the criticisms which had to come to them from the people they represent. The Acting Premier and any of his colleagues would be extremely foolish to brush aside any criticism voiced during this debate, especially by their own members, as being merely a splenetic outburst on the part of those particular members, or some individual complaint by those members.

Evidently the Acting Premier and probably other members of his Government, feel that this Government is not to be criticised or, if it is, everyone criticising it to any extent is to be charged with indulging in splenetic outbursts. Is this Government a sort of hot-house plant that cannot even be breathed upon by any human being for fear it will fade away?

Hon. A. H. Panton: No such luck.

Mr. Marshall: It will fade away at the next election. There is no doubt about that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Is this Government to be surrounded with some structure that makes it impossible for criticism to be heaped upon it? I say that the members of this Government would be wise to realise that the criticism voiced in the Chamber during this debate, especially by its own members, is public criticism of the Government and a very sure indication that the public are realising that it is failing in a very large measure to deliver the goods which the members of it promised the people some 18 months ago they would deliver. I suggest that any member on this side of the House is at least the equal in sporting qualities of the Acting Premier.

Members of the Opposition, when they condemn the Acting Premier and the Premier in particular for misleading propaganda, which those two gentlemen themselves issued to the electors 18 months ago, are offering that criticism and condemnation because they feel that the propaganda then indulged in, if continued by the leaders of all parties, will drag the political life of Western Australia at least down to the level of that in New South Wales. We as members of the previous Government are not

greatly concerned because the people at the last elections defeated us. That was the decision of the people; they had a right to make it, and I can say at least for those members who had been in office for some years that we obtained the greatest mental and physical relief when the burdens of ministerial office fell from our shoulders.

The Acting Premier: I agree with you on that point.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I should hope so. We had no ill-feeling at all regarding the decision of the electors, but we naturally feel a good deal of resentment because the Premier and Acting Premier indulged in wilfully false propaganda in such a wholesale fashion during the election campaign.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think the people believe that?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: They did believe it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: What did the Premier and Acting Premier tell the people about Ministers in the then Labour Government? In effect and directly, they said that the Labour Ministers were utterly without ability, capacity or energy, and so completely lazy and lacking in initiative that everything in the State was in such a terrible condition that cobwebs covered all activities with the result that everything had more or less come to a full stop. I say without hesitation and quite coolly that that statement was totally unjustified and wilfully false.

The Acting Premier: I have no recollection of having made it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Acting Premier is a man of remarkably reliant memory normally, and it is more than passing strange that he should have no recollection of having given the electors that impression.

The Acting Premier: That is a different matter. I did not accuse individual Ministers.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No, but surely the Acting Premier is not going to try to square off in that weak and miserable fashion.

The Acting Premier: I am not squaring off at all, but I do not want you to create the impression that I was individually personal. I may be mistaken and if so I withdraw.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is not necessary to be individually personal when an attack is made on a Government in the terms I have mentioned.

The Attorney General: I can see you singing our praises in another 18 months.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Which side are you on?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If I may speak in lighter vein, one would have to exaggerate almost beyond measure to sing the praises of the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: There you are. What did I tell you?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I shall venture to make a prophecy, namely, after the Attorney General has been in charge of the administration of prices control for 12 months, members of his own party will be asking for his removal from the Ministry.

Hon. A. H. Panton: As bad as I was when in charge of civil defence! I did not have a friend in the world.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Let me revert to the point I was dealing with before the Attorney General brightly interjected and drew me away. One cannot utterly condemn to the public a Government as being all the things I have mentioned and the next day meet the Ministers individually in the street, shake them by the hand, congratulate them, tell them what wonderful jobs they have done for the country and wish them the best of luck in future. To do so is not honest. It is indulging in something covered by a word that the member for Middle Swan shot around this Chamber the other night three times in every sentence he uttered.

I say without hesitation that the work done by individual Labour Ministers from 1933 to 1947 was of untold value to the State, and that the Deputy Premier in his capacity as Minister for Industrial Development and the Minister for Works would have been in a fairly hopeless position except for the work put in hand and the plans prepared in connection with vital undertakings associated with public works and secondary industries.

The Minister for Works: It is inevitable that every next succeeding Government take over the work of its predecessor when the time comes for it to leave office. It could not be otherwise and will be the same with us.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I should have expected the Minister for Works to interpose with a profound observation that really has no relationship to the point I am making.

The Minister for Works: It is precisely the point you put up.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Minister had followed my argument, he would know that it started several minutes ago—

Mr. Marshall: He has just awakened.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:—and started on the basis that the Premier and Acting Premier—and I can include the Minister for Works—during the last election campaign, led the people to believe that Labour Ministers had reduced the affairs of Western Australia to chaos, allowed everything to come to a standstill, with a result that the State was in an utterly hopeless or almost hopeless condition. As I followed my argument through, I arrived at the claim that, except for the application, energy and initiative of the previous Government, the Acting Premier, in his capacity of Minister for Industrial Development, and the Minister for Works in his capacity of Minister for Works, would have found themselves in an exceedingly difficult situation when they assumed office. Will the Minister for Works say here that he found himself in a difficult situation when he took office? Will he say that no work of any consequence had been achieved by the previous Government?

The Minister for Works: Have I ever made any such admission?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Will he say that no important works were under way when he took office? Will he say there were no plans well prepared, or completely prepared, covering other vital works for the State when he took office?

The Minister for Works: Have not you and I had a talk about that before? You know very well what my views are.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister for Works shows greater wisdom than usual by refusing to answer any of these questions. I think it was the member for Maylands who the other night accused him of political astuteness. I did not quite agree with that hon. member at the time.

The Minister for Works: Neither did I.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I must concede that at the moment, however, the Minister for Works is showing considerable political astuteness by not answering my questions, but by trying to take me off on a different track altogether.

The Minister for Works: I see.

Mr. Fox: Prompted by the Acting Premier.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is, always possible for any person, with even ordinary ability, to prepare a case based on certain premises and to make it appear to be exceptionally favourable in the direction in which he wants it to be favourable. I do not know whether members think that because they have become members of Parliament there is something exceptional about them. I am including myself and all other members in that statement. If they do, I think they are making the worst possible mistake in their own interest and in the interest of everybody else. After all is said and done, Mr. Speaker, we are an average group of men.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: F.a.q.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It just happens that Fate, or something else, at some stage in our lives, moves us to be interested in the possibility of getting into Parliament and by application of that idea we got here. But we are a group of ordinary people, with some specialised knowledge of Parliament and parliamentary procedure and the affairs of Government. So, as I said a moment ago, it is within the capacity of any of us to prepare a case, using the right premises, and to present it to this House or to an audience outside, and give this House or that audience the angle on things we desire to give them. Take the speech of the Acting Premier today: He kept within certain limits and completely refused to go beyond them. He used certain suitable premises and built up his case. On the face of it, he appeared to build up a fairly strong case against the Labour Governments which had been in power in this State from 1933 to 1947. But is there any member, even on the Government side of the House, who believes that the case presented by the Acting Premier was fair and complete?

The Minister for Lands: I thought it was a very good one.

Mr. Grayden: It completely demoralised Opposition members.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I should have excluded the Minister for Lands and the member for Middle Swan from my question—

The Minister for Lands: You asked us and we answered you.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —because they would very naturally say that the case was fair and complete for the reason that they did not understand it. They did not know enough about past events in Western Australia to judge whether it was fair and complete or not.

The Minister for Lands: You are putting yourself on a pedestal now. You must be an extraordinary man. You reckoned we were average men.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No. I am an ordinary man and the Minister for Lands is rather less than ordinary.

The Minister for Lands: Good enough for you, anyway.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: At what?

The Minister for Lands: Anything.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Well!

The Minister for Lands: Well, you tell us.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Here we have this bulky, prosperous vigneron—

The Minister for Lands: That is all right.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —from the Swan area, sitting up in his seat, with his eyes blazing and his teeth clenched, challenging me, and I suppose any other member on this side of the House, with the statement that he is as good as we are and better any day at any thing.

Mr. Styants: Challenging you to mortal combat!

Mr. Grayden: The member for Northam is white with rage.

The Minister for Lands: I think I will take the member for Northam out to the Swan. He looks as though he could do with a good paddock.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Mr. Speaker, I prefer to be as I am.

The Minister for Lands: That is all right. So do I.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: What are you complaining about?

The Minister for Lands: Nothing. I have not complained. It is you who are complaining.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No, I think it is the Minister for Lands.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Northam will confine himself to the Address-in-reply.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The fact that the Minister for Lands has more physical bulk than I have—

The Minister for Lands: That is all right. You put that up. I did not.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —does not in my opinion necessarily and inevitably make him an ever-so-much more useful and valuable member of this House than I am.

The Minister for Lands: You have twisted things.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: To get back to my point—

The Minister for Lands: Good!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —which is that the speech of the Acting Premier was deliberately designed to be incomplete! It was deliberately designed to leave out of account two of the most outstanding events from which Western Australia has suffered since it has been in existence. What are those two events? The first was the financial depression which continued in this State from 1930 to about 1938. The second was World War II, which continued from 1939 to 1945. The Acting Premier in his case left completely out of account those two outstanding events.

Mr. Grayden: You could not have been listening to his speech.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The difference between the member for Middle Swan and myself, Mr. Speaker, on that point, is that I was listening and understanding and he was listening only.

Mr. Grayden: That is some of the spleen you were talking about earlier.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The financial depression injured Western Australia far more than it did any other Australian State. It injured this State more because at the time we were far more dependent upon our exports of primary products than were any

of the other States. During the period from 1930 to 1933 our State was governed by a coalition Government similar to the one now in office. That Government had a most unenviable job to do. It faced terrific problems, and it had not the financial wherewithal properly to face them. I ask members to take their minds back to the depression period. If they do, they will clearly recollect that the order of the day was "no money."

Mr. Marshall: That has always been the order of the day other than during a war.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: They will clearly remember that we had anything up to 100,000 people in this State receiving bare sustenance from the Government. They will clearly remember also that there were unemployed in Western Australia anything up to 40,000 would-be workers, even though all of them were not officially registered as unemployed.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are wrong; they did not get bare sustenance. We had to feed them in Fremantle in soup kitchens.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: During the worst period of the depression, from 1933 to 1935, Governments were struggling to obtain every penny they could in order that they might save large numbers of men, women and children from outright starvation. What money could the coalition Government in its three years of office during that period make available for houses, for hospitals or railway locomotives or any of the many other essential requirements of the community in a State like Western Australia? Of course it is very paradoxical, when we look back and think of that time, to remember that there were plenty of houses in those days; but only because men were out of work and did not have the money to pay rent and consequently two or three families had to occupy one house just the same as today, though the reason now is entirely different.

When the Labour Government came back to office in 1933 it was the confirmed view of the then Premier, Mr. Collier, and other members of his Government that the depression in Australia was to a large extent due to the fact that people had ceased considerably to be consumers of goods. In other words, the leaders of the Labour movement in Western Australia were convinced that there would be little or no easement of the

position in this State or in Australia until such time as the monetary process of deflation was reversed and money was made available to Governments in greater quantity in order that they might more fully employ men who were unemployed or only partly employed. It was due to the advocacy of Mr. Collier, the then Labour Premier in this State, at Premiers' Conferences and Loan Council meetings that in process of time that monetary deflation policy was reversed. But even when it was reversed, as it gradually was as you, Sir, having been a keen student of the problem at that time will remember—the amount of money made available to State Governments in Australia was not very quickly increased, and so the Government in this State was not in a position by any means, even under the first instalment of the new policy, to do more than make some additional employment available to the unemployed and the part-time worker. Even when the war started in 1939, not all the able-bodied men in this State anxious to work full time were being employed full time because the monetary resources required to enable that to be done were not available.

Mr. Marshall: Thousands of them never had a square meal until they went into the Army.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: What weird legalism is it on the part of the Acting Premier that would try to pivot upon the shoulders of the Labour Governments from 1933 to 1939—taking that period first—the responsibility for the fact that not as much money was expended on hospitals, schools, railway rollingstock and so on as should have been expended? Surely that is a weird type of mental acrobatics on his part! Surely the more responsible Ministers of the Government and the more responsible members on both sides of the House know that in the years from 1930 to 1939 loan funds were made available only in limited quantities to the State Governments of Australia. Of course it is very easy today for people who had no responsibility at that time for governing the country to say that this was neglected and that was neglected and something else was neglected. It is very easy to say these things, but people are not justified in saying them. They are not speaking the whole truth when they do so.

By leaving some truth unspoken they misrepresent very unfairly and badly the real

situation. It would have been very easy for Labour Governments from 1933 to 1939 to spend upon the railway system every pound of loan money received; but would any member in this House say that should have been done? What a howl there would have been from the present Acting Premier and from every member representing a country district if that had been done! What a howl of abuse would have gone up throughout the State—and justifiably so—if the Labour Governments of those years had spent every shilling of loan money available upon keeping the railways in good order! The railways would certainly have been kept in reasonably good order if that had been done.

But what would have happened to agricultural policy? What would have happened to hospital buildings, schools, education, public works, water supplies and main roads? Although, of course, the Main Roads Department has its own special source of income! So the Labour Governments during that period did exactly the same as any other Government would have done. They used the loan moneys available to them to the best possible advantage by spreading them over every vital activity within the State. If I wanted to be party-minded and to be as unfair in effect as the Acting Premier was today, I could rail against the coalition Government of 1930 to 1933 because that was when the rot set in in this State in regard to railways, hospitals, schools and other public activities. It was impossible, under the financial conditions at that time, for the coalition Government to do anything about it.

Mr. Grayden: And how the rot flourished in the 14 years of Labour rule! There were 14 years in which to correct it.

Mr. Marshall: I think your mother was buying flannel at that time.

Mr. Styants: You were wearing three-cornered trousers.

Mr. Reynolds: He is still wearing them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: So, I ask members on the Government side to study this problem from the beginning. Any reasonable-minded person, whether he belongs to the Labour Party, the Liberal Party or the Country and Democratic League, will know, if he examines the position, that Western

Australia's trouble has its roots in the monetary deflation that was forced on the world in 1929 and 1930. Of what value is it in relation to the real problem for the Acting Premier to get up here today and talk within the restricted limits in which he spoke? Of what value is it to us, in trying to understand the real nature of the problem, if we go no further than he would have us go?

Does the Acting Premier hold the foolish belief that if his Government stays in office long enough it will be able to solve all of Western Australia's problems? Is it not obvious to him, as it ought to be to anyone who knows enough about the situation and who appreciates its underlying causes in this and in the other States, that the problem we suffered, especially from 1930 to 1935, might be again upon us in five years' time? Does the Acting Premier, and other members of his Government, believe that the world is going to continue paying £1 a bushel for wheat, if that be the price, 5s. a pound for wool, and so many shillings a pound for butter, meat, and all the other primary products which we export overseas? I say to him in all humility, and in all friendliness, too, that it would be far better for him and the members of his Government, and every one of us as members of this House, to try to fathom the real cause of the trade depressions and financial stringencies which come upon the world periodically.

Mr. Marshall: That is the point. Solve that, and you will be right.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That, fundamentally, is the problem. These other things that the Acting Premier gets excited over and froths slightly at the mouth about are only effects, after all, of the major problem which I am trying briefly to discuss tonight. It will not matter very much when the next trade depression comes, if one does come, whether there is a Labour Government or a Liberal Party-Country and Democratic League coalition Government in power because, if the financial resources of the Government are only one-third of the total required to carry on the normal affairs of the State, it will be in difficulties since there is no Government or Minister who can make 6s. 8d. do the work of £1 in the field of Government administration.

That brings me to the second vital consideration which, for all practical purposes,

the Acting Premier excluded from the survey he made in his speech this evening. I refer, of course, to the World War which raged from 1939 to 1945. The Acting Premier, in trying to excuse the extravagant propaganda in which he and his colleagues indulged in the last State election campaign, made a comparison between that propaganda and a statement contained in the Policy speech of the then Labour Premier, Mr. Willecock, in 1943. The Acting Premier was so self-sufficient in his reasoning that he felt that by making his comparison he had completely answered the criticism of his own propaganda. We would have thought from what he said that the situation and circumstances of the two periods were exactly the same whereas, in fact, they were entirely different. In 1943, and for at least two years after, this State, together with every other British State and country, was engaged in a struggle for existence.

No-one at that time could possibly measure the physical capacity that would be available in Western Australia when the war ended. No-one knew how long the war would continue. It is true that the Government of that time appointed a committee. If I remember rightly, the town planner at that period, and at the present time, was the chairman. That committee made a survey of possibilities, and drew up recommendations and plans. I know of nothing easier than to solve problems on paper and in my younger years, when I was less experienced, I solved many of them in that way for myself. When the war ended the Willecock Government did everything humanly possible to have houses built in this State. It would be misleading for anyone to endeavour to create the impression that as soon as a war ends one can automatically and in the normal way carry out the work of building houses, schools, hospitals, and so on. It cannot be done. He is a fool who depreciates the destructive influence of war by thinking that such things could be done.

War does not injure and damage a community only whilst hostilities are raging. Many of its destructive and dislocating influences live on for months and even years afterwards. Members know that when the soldiers were demobilised—it took a long time to demobilise many of them—and back in Australia, they did not straight away

return to their civilian occupations. I think the member for Mt. Marshall would know only too well how many of them wanted to have a spell, as they called it.

Mr. Leslie: They were mentally unsettled.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I was coming to that point. Many of them were, as the hon. member suggests, unsettled and did not want to be slaves of the whistle straight away, because they had been under iron discipline for years and wanted some liberty and to be permitted to move around as they thought desirable. Some of them did that for months.

Mr. Leslie: Many of them were looking for something better than they had previously had.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As the member for Mt. Marshall says, many of them did not want to go back to their old labouring or semi-skilled jobs.

Mr. Leslie: We had promised them something better.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: By the extravagant propaganda distributed to them during the war they were led to believe that when they had finished fighting and returned to Australia there would be a new world waiting for them to live in.

Mr. Leslie: Thank God somebody besides myself is saying that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have said it on many occasions. The physical resources available to the Government of this State when the war had finished in 1945 were not much greater than they had been during the last year of the war. Surely all members know that the industries necessary for our civilian existence had, in the majority of instances, been changed over to war production during hostilities.

Mr. Leslie: Wholesale.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes, wholesale, as the member for Mt. Marshall says. There was the problem not only of trying to recruit the necessary labour force in the building of houses but of trying as quickly as possible to move many of our industries through the transition period of change from war to peacetime production. Let me compare the statement on housing in 1943 by Mr. Willecock, and the circumstances that faced him during the last few months of 1945 and the first six months of 1946, with the circumstances that existed in Western

Australia during the last State election campaign, when the present Premier and Acting Premier indulged in their extravagant and wilfully deceiving propaganda. By January, February and March of 1947, conditions in Western Australia had become, as far as was possible, normal.

Mr. Leslie: Except for the inclination to restrict production.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The maximum labour force that could be made available in the State was available.

Mr. Leslie: But they were not producing as much.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The number of that force was known and every civilian industry had by that time completed the movement through the transition stage. Consequently it was the easiest thing in the world for any man who was prepared to study the situation honestly to realise that the task of increasing production of houses or anything else was extremely difficult.

Mr. Leslie: Not if all sections of the community played their part, in co-operation.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not prepared to discuss the question of whether more could have been done had every section of the community played its part because, as I think the member for Mt. Marshall will agree, that would be indulging in a glorious and useless generality.

Mr. Leslie: But there is plenty of evidence, facts, figures and so on.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not know what they are.

Mr. Leslie: Take man hours, and volume of production!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I know a well-organised attempt has been made by the capitalistic newspapers of Australia and similar interests to lead the public to believe that production is not as great as it should be owing to the fact that Bill Smith and Tom Jones are not working as hard as they could or should at the jobs in which they are engaged.

Mr. Leslie: The fault is not all with the workers. Do not think that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: While it may be true in some instances I think that generally the workers of Australia are doing

a reasonably good job. Where they are not doing as much as they should I believe the blame lies largely with the employers. My experience leads me to believe that an employer with the right attitude and the proper knowledge of human nature will always get from his workers a fair return for the wage he pays to them. There are some employers in Western Australia who have the wrong attitude towards their workmen and have no proper understanding of human nature. Those employers do not, and never will, receive from their employees the service that would otherwise be available. Whilst there may be some workers in Australia who are deliberately not doing as much as they could, there are also some employers in Australia who, during the last two or three years, have deliberately gone slow with the miserable excuse that if they went any faster with their industry they would have to pay more taxation to Ben Chifley.

Mr. Leslie: Both sides are guilty of that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: What gratitude has that kind of employer for the sacrifice of the lives of thousands of men during the war to preserve his industries? During the war this type of employer was most active in waving flags; most active in cheering the soldiers, sailors and airmen and most active in saying that no sacrifice was too great to save Australia from the Fascist threat of Japan and Germany. He was prepared to give up his last penny that Australia might be saved; he was prepared to sacrifice everything that the maximum war effort might be put forward. But, as soon as the war was over and the danger of Japanese invasion of Australia disappeared, that miserable type of employer was not even prepared to pay his reasonable proportion of the taxation that had to be imposed upon Australia in order that the cost of the war might be met.

Mr. Leslie: All sections are guilty of that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I want to go back again to the point that I left when the member for Mt. Marshall made some helpful interjections. The point was that it was not legitimate to compare the statement made by Mr. Willcock in the Policy speech to which I referred, with the propaganda in which the Premier and the Acting Premier personally indulged during the last

election campaign, in connection with housing.

Mr. Grayden: You should talk about propaganda!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is quite clear from the speech of the Acting Premier, and from the speeches of other Government members, that the railways are to be the main subject upon which the Labour Party of this State is to be crucified. I think I have said enough in my survey of the depression period and its financial difficulties, and about the war, to show that it was unavoidable that there would be a great accumulation of arrears of work, not only as regards the railways but also in connection with every other activity with which the Government of this State is concerned.

Hon. E. Nulsen: And other States.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As I said, in relation to businessmen and their attitude towards the war, the State Government of Western Australia, during every minute of the war, was concentrating the resources of this State upon the war effort. I did not hear any member of the present Government criticise our Government during the period of the war for doing that. Every member of Parliament during every day of the war was anxious that Western Australia should, together with the other States of Australia and the other British nations of the world, leave nothing undone to win the war and to win it as quickly as possible. Because our Government, during the war period, concentrated the resources of Western Australia upon the war, the upkeep of the railways, the upkeep of hospitals, schools, the building of houses and all the rest of it, fell far behind.

Mr. Leslie: Did not the Royal Commissioner say they were bad even before that period?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: They were bad because of the financial difficulties during the depression.

Mr. Leslie: It was nine years after that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Ministers of the present Government cannot have it both ways. They cannot, during the time of war, be 100 per cent. in favour of the State concentrating all its resources on the war effort, and then after the war is over, try to make political capital out of the fact that there has been an accumulation of ar-

rears of work as regards railways and other things. We cannot be loyal during a war and then take the attitude, after the war is over, that everything is not as good as it should be. That is not fair and reasonable and it wipes out all considerations of the difficulties brought about because of war conditions. I am not satisfied that our railways are as bad as they are because not enough money has been spent upon them. I say quite frankly that the management of the railway system, for many years, has left much to be desired.

Mr. Leslie: Why did you not sack him?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not think sacking him, whoever he may be, would solve the problem, because if the member for Mr. Marshall by his interjection, means the Commissioner, I would say that in my opinion there are others in the department who should be dealt with before the Commissioner.

Mr. Marshall: I happen to know the Commissioner who was in office before this one. I know what his attitude was towards the Government.

Mr. Leslie: Do not forget you renewed his agreement.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: However much money the Government pours into the railways, and no matter how much of its policy for the regeneration of the railway system it might carry out, there will still have to be some drastic things done in regard to the management and the administration, if the public is to receive the service from the Railway Department which it is entitled to receive for the money it pays. Labour Ministers carry too much condemnation for the Railway Department because they preferred, as members of the Government, to carry that condemnation, as against criticising individuals associated with the management of the railways.

Mr. Grayden: They did that for 14 long years.

Hon. A. H. Panton: If the hon. member knew what might happen during the next 14 years he would forget those words. He will be a bald-headed old Federal member, I suppose.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Our Government was so concerned about the situation that it came to the conclusion that there was only one solution and it introduced a

Bill containing what it believed was the solution. That Bill had for its main purpose the establishment of the Minister for Railways as the supreme authority in regard to the railways of Western Australia. That is the solution which the Government sooner or later will have to adopt if it remains in office.

If I were asked to say which of those high up in the administration of the Railway Department was most to blame for the problems of the department, apart from the financial aspect, I would say that that person was the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Mr. Mills. Yet we read in the newspaper the other day that the Government had sent this man abroad, his main mission being to investigate the matter of railway engines.

Mr. Styrants: To supervise the building of them, too, was it not?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: And we are told he is to be absent from the State for at least six months. I do not know whether the Acting Premier or the Minister for Railways has studied from beginning to end the departmental and governmental history of the A.S.G. engines in relation to their present ownership by the Railway Department of this State but, if either of them has done so, he deserves to be severely censured for sending this officer abroad to carry out the mission with which he has been entrusted.

It was strange that when our Bill to clothe the Minister for Railways with complete legal authority for the management and administration of the department came before Parliament, those who today are loudest in their condemnation of the railway system were the ones responsible for the defeat of that legislation. The blame for the continued deterioration of the railway system since the time we introduced that Bill lies absolutely on the shoulders of members of the Liberal Party and Country and Democratic League, for they were the persons who defeated the Bill and left the power and authority with the Commissioner and his officers.

Do members consider that the Railway Department is more important or more difficult to administer than the Public Works Department? From my experience, I say that the Public Works Department is more important and more difficult to administer. It

is faced with far more intricate and difficult technical problems in relation to engineering, and a Minister of the Crown, whether Labour or anti-Labour, is in complete charge of the Department of Public Works. The same principle applies to all other Government departments except the Railway Department. Is it not strange that the one department not under the legal control and direction of the Minister is the worst administered department of the lot?

Mr. Marshall: Absolutely the most inefficient.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yet, when we introduced our Bill to vest responsibility and authority in the Minister for the administration of the department, we were told it would be bringing the railways under political control. That was the basis upon which members of the Liberal Party and the Country and Democratic League defeated the Bill. Surely to goodness, if it is dangerous for the Railway Department to be under the control of a Minister it is equally dangerous for the Public Works Department, Education Department, Health Department or any other important department to be under the control of a Minister. So I say to members of the Government, in quite a helpful way, that they are deceiving themselves if they think that the spending of a few millions on the regeneration of the railway system will solve the problem. It will not! Is it not logical also to argue that, if the Minister for Railways and the Government of the day are to receive all the criticism and abuse for the deficiencies of the railway system and for its inefficiency, they should at least have all the legal authority for administering the department?

Mr. Marshall: I bet the present Minister for Railways on more than one occasion has wished that that Bill had been passed.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have no desire to enter into details, but I have received some letters from the present Minister for Railways, obviously based upon departmental minutes, that would be an insult to the intelligence of a school kiddie. I received one only this week. It had to do with a request made by a deputation from the Northam Municipal Council that a railway-owned motor road bus should operate between Perth and Northam. The reason for the request was the shockingly late running

of passenger trains between Perth and Northam. The personal reply of the Minister to the deputation was that he had hoped that the department would be able to overcome the difficulties that had caused the late running of trains, but that if an appreciable improvement did not occur within a reasonable period he would review the matter.

Instead of an improvement taking place, the situation went from bad to shockingly bad, and so I took the matter up again with him and, the other day he sent me a letter which I can only describe as shocking. I do not blame the Minister or condemn him because, legally, he has not the requisite complete authority in the matter and therefore, to a large extent, has to accept what officers of the department send to him through the Commissioner of Railways. The major reason set out in the letter for the decision not to put on a motor bus was that there were only two or three centres between Perth and Northam that would be served; therefore to put a bus on that route would not be justified. Mr. Speaker, if you have some knowledge of the geography of the State between Perth and Northam, I think you will know how pathetically weak and illogical is the excuse put up by the department in this matter. If you have not such geographical knowledge, I hope you will gain it in a year's time, or less, by accompanying Their Majesties on their trip from Perth to Northam.

Mr. Leslie: That will be rough in patches, too.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I say to every member of the Government, very seriously, that they are deceiving themselves completely if they think the pouring of money into the railway system will solve the problem and give to the people of the State the service they ought to get. I hope that even this Government will change its mind on this matter as the Acting Premier has to some extent changed his mind over the last few months on the vermin question. I earnestly hope that the members of the Government will give the most serious, and I hope favourable, consideration to the question of bringing in legislation which will, if passed, give to the Minister for Railways complete legal authority over railway administration. It is absurd to say, as was said when our Bill was before the House,

that if the Minister had complete legal authority over the railways he would have to do all sorts of small jobs. He would have to be brought in to attend all sorts of tiddley-winking, tuppenny-halfpenny matters. Ministers who are in control of other departments know that they do not do that sort of thing; they deal with major matters, matters of importance, matters of alleged injustice and that sort of thing. They know that in regard to general routine affairs all of the work is done by the under secretaries and officers of varying degrees of importance.

Mr. Marshall: Did you draw up plans and specifications for the Canning Dam when you were Minister for Works?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: So I say the members of the present Government will get themselves into an exceedingly difficult situation if they proceed by merely pouring millions of money into the railway system and failing to take unto the Government complete legal authority over its administration. I think I have said enough, even without preparation and without any opportunity to look back over past records, to indicate that the situation in Western Australia by and large is unavoidable. The greatest contribution we can make to the permanent future welfare of Western Australia is to apply ourselves to the deepest study of the real underlying causes of the difficulties that have faced us in the past and that will face us more acutely in the future. A nation such as Australia, with a comparatively small population, cannot suffer a six years' trade depression and nine to ten years of participation in world war without storing up terrific financial problems for itself, apart from the injurious effects that will come to us from reactions in other parts of the world when the boom of war expenditure and post-war spending ceases.

Australia spent a huge sum during the last war, mostly from loan. It was all borrowed at interest; interest will have to be paid on those loans and all the other loans raised by State and Commonwealth Governments in the years gone by. Sinking funds will have to be provided; new loans will have to be raised for public works and so on. I say without hesitation that the financial burden of interest and debt repayment upon the people of Australia, few as

they are, is impossible of being borne by them during any normal period.

Mr. Leslie: The future will look after that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We can carry the burden today because many countries in the world are desperately short of primary products which we produce in great quantities. Because they are desperately short there is a keen demand, high prices are ruling and our economy is being geared up somewhere near the high prices now ruling for those products. When the reverse process begins to operate, as it must, we will find that the financial burden imposed on Australia as a result of the last world war, coupled with the financial burden still upon the nation as the result of the depression and the previous war, will be so heavy as to make it impossible for our industries to carry it.

When the time comes it will be found that the private financial system of Australia will run for cover. It will play safe. As soon as it sees the first sign of a trade depression or a trade slump, it will commence to operate a policy of monetary deflation. Make no mistake about that! This is what was done in the early part of 1930. You, Mr. Speaker, and members know that once that monetary policy of deflation commences, even though it commences in a small way only, it sets in motion a process that spreads in ever-widening circles until such time as unemployment becomes rife and industry is severely depressed. The purpose of production is consumption; and unless there are consumers, that production is of no value. When the private financial system first commences to withdraw credit facilities from farmers and owners and controllers of industry, those persons will have to economise, as Governments must when the same financial policy is practised upon them.

The first line of attack when a policy of economy is to be practised is upon the workers. They are sacked or, to use a more polite and gentle term, they are retrenched. They lose their jobs, which is bad enough. But, what is worse, from the point of view of the economic system, is that they lose their income; they lose the power to purchase goods, and therefore their consumptive capacity is cut down to such a standard as some Government, out of its reduced resources, can make avail-

able to them to keep body and soul together—no, not soul, but body. That is briefly how it developed the last time, and that is how it could easily and quickly develop this time; and the sooner members of this House and of all Parliaments and members of the general public come to understand the basic features of this situation, the sooner will it be possible to apply the corrective necessary if such a situation is to be avoided in the future.

It may very well be that never in the process of time will it be possible completely to avoid any semblance of trade slackness or trade slump; but surely it is within the capacity of man, after all these years of education, to evolve a financial and economic system that will enable work to be made available to people and incomes to be made available to them and social security and protection within reasonable limits. The essentials of human existence are not many in number. First of all, there are food and water. Clothing is less essential but, in civilised countries, is necessary. Housing is also necessary. Those are the major requirements for human existence. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there has been a tremendous advance in the field of technology over the last 30 years. There have been extraordinary advances in the field of production, with the result that today the capacity of the world to produce goods is unlimited.

Therefore, there is no danger, as some people thought 30, 40 or 50 years ago, that the pressure of population upon the means of subsistence with the passing of time will become so great that millions of people will starve. So we have all the capacity necessary to produce the essential requirements for human existence and welfare. If we cannot harness in a sensible and scientific way the monetary system of this country and of other countries to those abilities, then we, as a race of people in the world, deserve to be exterminated, either by starvation or war, or some other calamity.

The Attorney General: Monetary experience has advanced, too, in the last ten years, has it not?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think monetary experience has advanced as a result of the war and the new financial methods that were used by nations involved in the

war; but that comes to bear right on the problem. That hits the nail right on the head, as it were; because I am inclined to think that those in Australia and in other countries who profited most by the monopoly control which they exercised over the issuance of credit and over money are going to endeavour very strongly from now on, with the war over, to regain all the control they had before the war and as much more as it is possible for them to obtain. This international monetary group, in my opinion, has no loyalty to any country or to any community. It is a far greater menace to mankind than the communists, because it holds a million times more power to destroy the welfare of communities than they do. And in order that I might not be misunderstood or misrepresented in saying that, I want to state quite frankly that I have no time at all for the Communist Party or for its members. I regard them as being a menace to Australia and I hold them in the greatest contempt, most of all because they believe in and practise the doctrine of the end justifying the means—no matter how dishonest or despicable they are.

Mr. Bovell: We wholeheartedly agree with you in that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am afraid that the member for Sussex has to a large extent a one-track mind in this matter; and I say that in a friendly way, as I think the hon. member will understand.

Mr. Bovell: Quite!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The hon. member—and I hope I do not do him an injustice—and some other members, and lots of people in the community, hold in supreme contempt the Communist Party and the communists, but they hold in the greatest admiration international financiers and international capitalists who for their own selfish ends would plunge this country, and the world, if need be, into a trade depression that would inflict unemployment upon millions of men throughout the world and untold misery and destitution on tens of millions of men, women and children. So I hope that in our search for menaces; in our search for subversive influences; in our search for those we should criticise and condemn, we will not stop at the Communist Party. If members opposite would take a wide-

range view of all the dangerous elements in the community and in the world, and if they would condemn all of the dangerous influences, individuals and organisations, then I think we could join happily with them.

What we feel about the condemnation which so many people heap upon the communists and their party is that it is done mainly for the purpose of trying to link the A.L.P. with the Communist Party at election times so as to discredit the A.L.P. in the eyes of many electors. If I find that from now on the member for Sussex and other members on the Government side are prepared closely to analyse all the destructive influences in Australia and in the world, and are willing to investigate all of the organisations in Australia and in the world that have no loyalty to any country, flag or people, but are prepared to go to any lengths to benefit themselves and gain power, even perhaps more than money, then I shall be glad to meet them on common ground and to unite with them when possible to do everything within my power to see that these influences are weakened to the greatest extent, and brought to a stage where they can no longer have any evil effect on any worthy section of the Australian people.

Money of itself is not the main objective of these financiers and worldwide capitalists of whom I have spoken. Their greatest objective is power—power to control industries, trade and commerce, farmers, and even Governments, as they have done in most countries of the world on many occasions in the past, and as they successfully did in Australia back in 1931, 1932, 1933, and so on. So, I hope that when the debate on the Estimates comes before the House, every member will be in a position to discuss in a frank way subjects such as these because, in a permanent sense, they are vital. This Government might do very well in the field of building houses, and do an exceptionally good job in regard to our educational system, and it might out-match any Government of the past in every field of Government administration, but its achievements will be very temporary benefits for the community of Western Australia if a year or so later Australia finds itself in the grip of a world trade depression with a policy of financial deflation which will do incal-

culable injury not to schools, houses, railway engines or hospitals, but to human flesh and blood and human mentality and nervous systems.

So I hope that we may from now on, as the Acting Premier suggested in his speech, try more to develop a statesman-like attitude. I trust, however, that it will be developed in regard to the real, complete problems, and especially the fundamental causes for the fact that periodically, despite there being an abundance of production available and means to make further production available, great groups of people in every Australian State, and probably in every country of the world, are reduced to misery and suffering, because through some maladjustment, deliberately brought about by small groups of powerful individuals in different countries, it is made impossible for the average man and woman to work and obtain weekly or fortnightly the amount of money necessary to enable them to buy the bare necessities of existence plus a few comforts. I am not suggesting that we alone could solve the problem, but we might make a valuable contribution, together with the other States and countries of the world, towards finding a solution. That, in my opinion, would be an achievement in which we, having played some part in it, might well feel that we had done some good for humanity, and for which, I am sure, the generations of the future would have reason to call our name blessed.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

BILLS (7)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Education.

- 2, Hospitals Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Health.

- 3, Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment (Continuance).

- 4, Industries Assistance Act Amendment (Continuance).

- 5, Northampton Lands Resumption.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

- 6, Builders' Registration Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

- 7, Railway (Brown Hill Loop Kalgoolie-Gnumbulla Lake) Discontinuance.

Introduced by the Minister for Railways.

House adjourned at 10.22 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 7th September, 1948.

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DEPUTY PRESIDENT—ELECTION OF HON. W. J. MANN.

The Clerk (Mr. L. L. Leake): I have to announce that the President, Hon. H. Seddon, is absent. It is, therefore, necessary for members to elect one of their number, now present, to fill the office, perform the duties, and exercise the authority of the President during such absence.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood): I move—

That Hon. J. A. Dimmitt be elected to fill the office, perform the duties, and exercise the authority of the President during the absence of the President, Hon. H. Seddon.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I second the motion.