

Hon. G. Fraser: That you got as far as you did.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: —that the President did not restrain the member, I forget who it was, who gave us a lengthy discourse on the 40-hour week. I am afraid I have been equally guilty in discussing it at this stage.

Hon. G. Fraser: Don't contravene any more.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I commend to the House a reminder given to it by Mr. Craig. He told us that the Premiers' Conference was convinced that an effective system of price control was still vitally necessary. The Commonwealth regulations, about which I am afraid not many of us know much, at least have stood the testing period. It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and I am sure that the Commonwealth Government, if it had time to take note of our deliberations, would feel much flattered to know that the Government of Western Australia is simply transplanting what was the Commonwealth state of affairs into the State sphere, despite all the arguments which were used against Canberra control during the recent referendum.

The provision for the appointment of three commissioners appeals to me, as both the producers and the consumers will have representation. I am aware that it will involve the appointment of two more officials. We have many of them now, so one or two more will not make much difference. In effect, the chairman of the commissioners will function in the same way as the President of the Arbitration Court. He will be the final arbiter, but the public will know that its views will be expressed by their representatives. That, I think, will make for greater harmony and will give the public confidence, as they will know their requirements are being attended to. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. K. Watson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 1st September, 1948.

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

PRIVILEGE—NEWSPAPER STATEMENT.

MR. CORNELL (Avon) [4.32]: On a question of privilege, I desire to draw the attention of the House to an article that appeared in the issue of the "Workers Star" on the 27th August, 1948. In a column headed "Tintacks" the following appears:—

Electors who went up to Parliament House for the debate on the Prices Bill couldn't help contrasting Parliamentary wages and conditions with that of the average worker.

No speed-up in that joint—members sprawl in the soft leather armchairs, are allowed to smoke on the job, and doodle or whisper while speeches are being made, and when too bored can disappear for a drink.

They work a 15-hour week in three days until later in the session. But in the most strenuous week, they don't record 40 hours. But I haven't heard any of them come out against the Metal Trades Employers' demand for a return to the 48-hour week for workers.

To say that I take exception to the article would be an understatement, and I think members on both sides of the House will concur with me. Standing Order 142 reads—

Any member complaining to the House of a statement in a newspaper as a breach of privilege, shall produce a copy of the paper containing the statement in question, and be prepared to give the name of the printer or publisher, and also submit a substantive motion declaring the person in question to have been guilty of contempt.

The statement is obviously one of gross contempt of the House, and although I have not considered going so far as to suggest that the printer and publisher be committed for contempt, I do wish to express my strongest disapproval of the article. I am wondering whether some form of reprimand could not be administered to the printer and publisher of the paper in question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does any member wish to address himself to the matter?

Mr. Mann: Is the incident closed or may any member speak?

Mr. SPEAKER. The hon. member may address the House on the matter.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [4.35]: I hope the Government will take some action in the direction of committing the printer and publisher for contempt. The credit of Parliament is a matter of general concern to the House and we should see that some action is taken. These are the most contemptible remarks ever made against Parliament since I have been a member, and I consider that the whole matter should be thoroughly investigated and, if deemed necessary, the offenders be brought to the Bar of the House.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What could you do if you brought them to the Bar of the House?

Mr. MANN: The hon. member, as a former Speaker of the House, knows that there must be a penalty that can be imposed when an offender is brought to the Bar of the House and adjudged guilty of contempt. Members should not take this matter lying down or tolerate such filthy propaganda when we are here for the good of the country.

The Minister for Lands: The article says that we loll in our seats and smoke. That is a deliberate lie.

Mr. MANN: Yes, and the same may be said of the other insinuations regarding the activities of members. This is a matter on which I should like to hear the views of the Acting Premier. Surely something should be done.

Mr. Marshall: On a point of order, the Standing Order quoted by the member for Avon states that any member complaining of a breach of privilege shall submit a substantive motion declaring the person in ques-

tion to have been guilty of contempt. That has not been done, and I respectfully suggest that until it is done, all discussion on the matter is out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: That does not prevent other members from moving in that direction or discussing the matter. If no other member wishes to speak, we shall pass on to the next business.

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

(a) *As to Transfer of Maylands Pavilion to Wanneroo.*

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the amount estimated by the department for the transfer of Maylands school pavilion to Wanneroo?

(2) What was the amount paid to the contractor for this work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £390.

(2) £455.

(b) *As to Renovations to Highgate School.*

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the amount estimated by the department for renovations to Highgate State School?

(2) What was the amount paid to have the work done by contract?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £3,100.

(2) £2,940.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Insurance and Standby Tug for Tankers.

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

(1) Is he aware that the Fremantle Harbour Trust always had an insurance policy against disaster to the harbour and that a tug was kept standing by day and night whilst tankers were unloading?

(2) Is he aware that this practice has been discontinued?

(3) Is he satisfied that this is in the best interests of the port?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Fremantle Harbour Trust is still covered by insurance to the same extent as at any previous time. Prior to 3rd August, 1948, it was the policy of the Trust to engage a tug to stand by under steam in the harbour at night time during periods when inflammable liquid tankers were present, owing to the fact that tug boats were not ordinarily available between 6 p.m. and 7 a.m.

(2) and (3) Owing to the great improvements over the years in fire-fighting equipment and conditions aboard tankers engaged in the carrying of highly inflammable liquid, and the experience gained during the war, this practice is considered no longer necessary.

GOLDMINING.

As to Increase in Rail Freights and Fares.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Premier:

Because of the acute financial position of the goldmining industry in this State, and the added burden which an increase in railway fares and freights will impose upon it, will he favourably consider the postponement of the application of the increase to Goldfields areas until such time as the financial position of the industry improves?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

The increased charges are to cover increased operating costs, including basic wage adjustments and similar increases which have been incurred since 1st July, 1947 only. The increases will render the readjustment of charges bearing less heavily in places at long distances from the coast, but it would be impracticable to make any sectional concessions.

RAILWAYS.

As to Purchase of Additional A.S.G. Engines.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Railways:

Has the present Government taken any action with the Commissioner of Railways upon the subject matter contained in a minute directed to the Commissioner of Railways dated the 24th March, 1947, from the then Premier relative to a recommendation by the present Commissioner of Railways and Mechanical Engineer to the then

Government for the purchase of 25 A.S.G. engines?

The MINISTER replied:

No such minute directed to the Commissioner of Railways can be traced. A "minute for file" signed by the former Premier and dated 24th March, 1947, which is on the file, has received consideration by the Government in conjunction with other matters, and the result of such consideration will be announced in due course.

ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL.

As to Age Limit for Patients.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is there an age limit for patients seeking admission to Royal Perth Hospital?

(2) If so, what is the limit?

(3) By whom was it determined, and when?

(4) Is he aware that a number of sick persons have been rejected?

(5) Does he know that recently a working man was ordered to hospital by his doctor, and that arrangements were interrupted by the hospital when it was learned that the patient was 64 years old, on the grounds that younger people required the beds and that admission should be sought to a private hospital?

(6) Will he take steps to prevent a recurrence of the above?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) and (3) Answered by No. 1.

(4), (5) and (6) Specific information would be needed to reply. Eligibility of persons for treatment is determined by the hospital's medical officers solely on the grounds of medical need, and subject to beds being available.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourteenth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. WILD (Swan) [4.43]: I had little or no intention of entering this debate, but I desire to do so at this stage in order to speak on the matter of Communism. I had hoped that a lead would be given to

members on this subject by the Government but to date it has not been forthcoming, so I propose to speak on two or three small matters affecting my electorate and finally to draw certain conclusions concerning the dreadful menace that is creeping over Australia.

During this session we have had to listen for hours on end to a tirade of abuse from members, mostly on the front bench of the Opposition side of the House, in the course of which they have given reasons why they are not occupying the Treasury bench. Before I entered Parliament, I heard that much time was wasted on matters of this kind, but quite frankly I was disappointed when I came here to find that during debate after debate we had members getting up with cuttings extracted from various papers setting out things that had been said during the election campaign, but none of them having anything to do with the furtherance of the interests of the people of Western Australia, to whom we owe our allegiance when we enter this Chamber.

About a fortnight ago I listened with great interest to that portion of the speech of the Leader of the Opposition which related to the Food for Britain Appeal and the utilisation in that connection of a vast expanse of country in the North-West; but I thought that he descended from very magnanimous heights and came down to a very low level when he commenced to criticise this Government for what he considered to be the very difficult state into which the finances of Western Australia were gradually drifting. I think the memories of members are getting rather short. Not many weeks ago we had presented to us the report of the Royal Commissioners on railways. Having perused that report on two or three occasions, I have come to the conclusion that all members must agree that, if this Government is faced with a terrific deficit, a very large proportion of it is due to the condition of the railways when the Government took office. The fault cannot be laid at the feet of the gentlemen now occupying the Treasury bench.

If we look further into the report of the Royal Commissioners, especially that part dealing with the Midland Junction Workshops, we find that, spread over many years, requests for assistance have been repeatedly made by the Commissioner of Rail-

ways and other senior officers in the department; but always there has been the same cry—"No money." The result is that when this Government took office in March of last year, it assumed control of a railway system not only financially bankrupt but absolutely inoperative. In connection with this matter of rising costs and the financial position of Western Australia, last session we had brought before us a little Bill in which I concurred and which I think every member supported, to raise the salaries of members of Parliament. But I did not hear very many protests from the Opposition on that occasion about the terrific financial drift that was taking place in the finances of the State.

We have also heard very much criticism in recent months about what this Government should have done in connection with housing. Other members have referred to statements made in the House and replies being made by Ministers in the Press. I agree that if any criticism is to be offered to comments coming from the other side of the House, or vice versa, this is the place in which that criticism should be made. At least in that event when remarks are made the member making them can look the person to whom they are directed straight in the eye.

I suppose that on this side of the House, I have been one of the harshest critics when it comes to the question of housing. In our Party room, on every possible occasion, and when I have met Cabinet Ministers, I have complained that we have not been doing all we should in the interests of the people of the State in this matter. I must confess, however, that in the last six months the Hon. R. R. McDonald, as Minister for Housing, has made a tremendous difference; and irrespective of the figures published by the Statistician month by month, I am prepared to say that never before in the 18 months I have been here have I seen so many building operations under way.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Things have never been as bad.

Mr. WILD: In refutation of the adverse criticism that has been made, I intend to quote a few figures concerning the supply of materials, which I think will be very much more relevant than those we receive concerning houses completed and houses

that should be completed. I will refer first to the number of bricks available, speaking in thousands. In 1945-46 there were 24,728; in 1946-47 the figure rose to 37,482 and in 1947-48 to 42,834. The figures for cement, in tons, were as follows:—1945-46, 25,195; 1946-47, 43,575, and in 1947-48, 56,831. For tiles, the figures, in thousands, were as follows:—1945-46, 3,511; 1946-47, 4,793; and for 1947-48, 6,285. For the first six months of 1945, timber production was 3,459,351 cubic feet, and for the second six months 3,618,936. For the first six months of 1947, it was 3,923,148 cubic feet, and for the second six months 4,449,343 cubic feet. I understand that—as recently as last week—no more of our basic materials are going into public works than the 20 per cent. allowed two years ago.

Where are the bricks, cement, tiles and timber going, if not into houses? Members know that recently there have been many prosecutions of people for erecting buildings and brick walls without permits. I can recall many prosecutions that have been launched recently for offences of that kind, and I would say that in 1947-48 there has been far less illicit building than there was for many years previously. The figures show that we are producing up to 40 per cent. or 50 per cent. more of those basic materials than we were producing 12 months ago, though the housing figures that have been given to members may show only a slight increase.

If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would accompany me to my electorate one day, I could show him round and let him see many people who are gradually building homes worth £200, £400 or £500, under the £50 per annum permit scheme, doing the labour themselves. He would be surprised to find how many people there are building their homes in that way. They are not mentioned in the Statistician's figures that are placed before the House. Though the progress in building is far below what I would like it to be, I say that since the present Minister for Housing took over that portfolio the building of small houses, particularly outside the metropolitan area, has increased tenfold.

Mr. Fox: How many of those small houses, at £50 per annum, have been built?

Mr. WILD: Something over 300 last year.

Mr. Fox: If they cost £500, it would take ten years to build them, at £50 per year.

Mr. WILD: To my knowledge, the £50 permits have been available for two years. The hon. member knows that the cost of labour is at least twice that of the material used and a man who spends perhaps only £100 on material may finish up with a house worth £400 after a couple of years.

I will now bring before the House a matter that I mentioned last year when speaking on the Agriculture Estimates. I refer to the position of poultry farmers in this State. It may be remembered that last year there was great concern in the poultry industry when a disease known as laryngo-tracheitis—which had been unknown till then in Western Australia, though it had been prevalent in New South Wales and the Eastern States generally—suddenly appeared here. At that time, the industry was thrown into a panic and many men in the district of the member for Fremantle had their complete poultry stocks wiped out by the disease. One man lost 2,500 birds and several others lost over 1,000 birds each. There is a small section of the Department of Agriculture that looks after the poultry industry but, without casting any aspersions on the officers concerned, I suggest that their task at present in dealing with this large and growing industry is far beyond their resources.

I believe that some two years ago a block of land at Herdsman's Lake—approximately 25 acres—was taken over by the Department of Agriculture to be used for research into various items, including poultry. I understand that nothing has yet been done there, owing to lack of funds. At present, all a poultry farmer can do is to go to the Department of Agriculture and discuss some disease that he thinks is affecting his birds. He can discuss it with one or two of the men who deal with his industry but, if he wishes to ascertain anything about the laying propensities of his birds, he must send them to Muresk, where yearly tests are held as to the productivity of various breeds. With the shortage of food in Great Britain making extra demands on this growing industry, I feel that the Government should immediately establish the research station at Herdsman's Lake.

Such action is essential to the industry for the following reasons:—Firstly, the station should investigate and carry out research into all types of poultry diseases and the eradication of poultry pests. Secondly, it should conduct laying tests within the metropolitan area, as this is the locality in which the majority of the birds are bred and reared. Thirdly, experiments in feeding should be carried out as the shortage of bran and pollard necessitates substitute feeding stuffs being found. The poultry farmer in Western Australia today is experiencing great difficulty as he cannot get the correct foods, bran and pollard, with which to feed his birds. Day by day men are being forced out of the industry because they cannot—I mentioned this at length last year—afford to take prepared mash at an enhanced price with which to feed their birds. Apart from the problem of diseases, this matter should be investigated immediately. Fourthly, there should be the initiation of a sound breeding plan whereby producers could purchase utility breeding stock through the department. That is done in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, with great benefit to the industry.

Experiments in feeding have been carried on at Werribee in Victoria since 1921, and the results have proved of great value to the industry. It may interest members to know that avian leucosis—it is another name for a paralysis of poultry—is the cause of over 50 per cent. of the mortality in birds today, yet no-one in Australia, with all the research stations, has any idea of its cause and, not knowing the cause, no-one has any clue as to how to eradicate it. There are about 40 common diseases of poultry, and of that number there are few on which the Department of Agriculture can advise poultry farmers. I would therefore impress on the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture that the land I have mentioned at Herdsman's Lake should be utilised immediately, and something done along the lines I have suggested.

I desire at some length to bring before the House a matter that is causing great concern at present to everyone in Australia. I refer to the insidious enemy that has crept among us in recent years—Communism. During the debate, one or two speakers have referred to Communism, but I think our attitude in this regard is rather like that of

a man who walks down the street and sees a house burning furiously inside. Instead of hurrying to call the fire brigade, he goes along, pulls the blinds down, and walks off. I do not think members of this House, the people of Western Australia or those of Australia as a whole need to be told of this dreadful enemy that has shown itself in our midst and has been growing greater day by day, particularly in recent months. The time has come when we must take our stand.

I intend to trace roughly what is happening with regard to communists and their activities in Europe, throughout the British Empire and even in Australia. At the conclusion of my remarks, I shall endeavour not to be one of those destructive people that offer criticism without trying to be constructive. I trust that in my conclusions, when I tell the House what I think should be done, I shall indicate to the people of this State—I hope it gets to them through the Press and the radio—the objection we have—I know all members will agree with me—in this the Parliament of Western Australia to that foul thing—Communism. If we are to survive as a democratic country, and if we are to retain the way of life that has been ours for decades, it is up to us as a Parliament to take a definite stand. Everyone knows that, because of lack of coal in the Eastern States, Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd. is able to produce only 60 per cent. of its maximum output.

Everyone knows that the building of houses in all the States of the Commonwealth is held up through the slow strangulation that is apparent in New South Wales. We all know that various projects including the construction of schools, hospitals, railways and, in fact, everything of major importance with which the production of the Eastern States is associated, are slowly being strangled, until we have reached the stage when such work has practically stopped. I tell members sitting on the opposite side of the House that I dissociate myself from some sentiments that have been expressed here regarding the Labour Party and communists travelling together. Just as I and many of us deprecate what we know to be the weak attitude of the Chifley Labour Government in Canberra, at least I feel certain that the leaders of the Labour Party are gradually waking up to the fact that everything is not right within their political camp.

Thank goodness, in Western Australia we have seen in recent weeks, backed up by very strong pronouncements by the President of the Arbitration Court, that two or three unions have already made their stand in the matter.

Mr. May: Are you quite sure about your own party?

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILD: I was very pleased to read the other day the refutation by some gentleman at Collie—I cannot remember his name at the moment—regarding the attitude of the Collie coalminers to Communism. I say to members opposite that I hope they will put some stiffening into their Commonwealth Labour Government so that we can, in the very near future, eradicate this menace from our midst.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What about trying that on the Liberal Party?

Mr. Styants: What attitude did they adopt in 1925?

Mr. WILD: Members may possibly take their minds back to 100 years ago when Karl Marx and Engels first preached their ideology in Queens Hall, London. When I refer to their ideology, I have no doubt that members have read the communists' manifestos and other sheets that have been put out from year to year and have been posted up in various places. At the time very little notice was taken of the matter although people had heard about the First Internationale and the Second Internationale. Then we heard of the turmoil in Russia followed by the revolution of 1917. Although I was a small boy at the time, I can remember how little comment there was on the fact that a revolution had taken place in Russia.

As everyone knows, the object of the Bolsheviks when they secured control of Russia, was world revolution, based on the use of force. They ridiculed the idea of Labour Governments and the possibility of their serving the people, and it was their policy to denounce democracy. Ever since that time the party has been organised on Russian lines and its policy has changed in accordance with the nationalist needs of the party operating in Russia. Little was known outside that country of the activities of the communists until not many years before

the outbreak of war. In fact, I feel Russia had hardly made her hand felt until in 1939 she took over by force Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Then followed the war, during which Russia was too much involved in being first on one side in 1939, then on the other in 1940 and back again in 1941 to where she was in 1939, to worry about the plans that had been prepared for world conquest prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Its efforts in that direction had to be curtailed until after the war.

In 1947 we saw the strong outward surge of Communism through Poland, Rumania, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania and lastly through Hungary. Those countries were completely dominated by the communists and early this year we saw that domination extend to Czechoslovakia. Subsequently Mongolia was occupied by Chinese communist troops. Finland, although an independent State, is known to be strongly under Russian influence, so that there seems to be little doubt in the final analysis that she is Russian-controlled. Communist inspired guerillas, supported from Albania, Jugoslavia and Bulgaria, have been operating in Greece in an endeavour to bring about the collapse of the Government. Within the British Empire we have seen in recent years, due I maintain to communist influence, the throwing over of what had taken Britain a decade to build up. In 1947 India became a seething mass of race-hating people and was granted independence.

Egypt was a protectorate and had been controlled by Great Britain for many years, but in 1947 that country was granted independence, with the exception of the Sudan, which is still a bone of contention. Ceylon was granted independence in February, 1948, and Palestine, which had been governed by Great Britain under a mandate, was relinquished from that position in May of this year. More recently Malaya has been granted a limited form of independence. Recent events in Malaya have been such, as members know, that extra British protection had to be forthcoming in order to combat the inroads of communist guerillas against the national forces. As a matter of fact, I understand that already two brigades, and probably three brigades, of troops have been sent out from England to relieve the situation in Malaya.

In addition to that, we have the position in Burma and Indonesia where in recent months fighting has broken out, all of which is without a doubt attributable to the influence of communists among the natives.

I next desire to turn to the infiltration of communists into Australia. Communism had a very slow start in this country. In fact, it was hardly heard of until in 1927, J. S. Garden, who is well known to certain members of this House, went to Russia to attend a school there for a term of three years. He returned to form what is known as the I.W.W. He was associated with that militant minority and a man who was prominent in trade union circles at the time—a person named Orr—was appointed president of the organisation. It was apparent that the communists had decided at the outset to fight and ultimately to control the coalminers' union in the Eastern States. Pit top papers were established and roneoed sheets appeared at the pit tops, on the wharves and in tram sheds. At that stage, up to and during the depression years, two men named Teece and Rees were president and secretary respectively of the Miners' Federation. Not long after the infiltration of the communists into the union, those two officials were removed and in 1934 were replaced by two others named Nelson and Orr, the latter of whom, as I mentioned previously, was also president of the militant minority movement.

In 1936 the presidency of the Sheet Metal Workers' Union was taken over by Tom Wright who also had returned to Australia after having attended the school in Russia. These gains merely served as a springboard for the wholesale invasion of the trade union movement throughout Australia. In 1930 a school was formed in Moscow known as the Karl Marx-Lenin School of Ideology, and to it went many prominent trade unionists from all over the world for a period of two years. I shall read to the House the life history of some of those men who went to that school from Australia and have since their return to the Commonwealth taken up positions with the permanent Communist Party throughout the country. Some of the men to whom I will refer are probably known to members of the Opposition.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Tell us how you welcomed Tom Walsh when he returned to Australia.

Mr. WILD: First of all, there was a man named Richard Dixon, who is the assistant general secretary of the Communist Party in Australia. Dixon started his career as a messenger in the Lithgow post office. From there he joined the railway service as a relieving porter and in time was assigned to the Sydney parcels office. In 1928 he joined the Communist Party and in the following year became secretary of the Sydney branch. In 1930 he was handed his passport and given a free passage to Moscow, where he attended the school. When he came back to Australia in 1932, he did not return to his former employment but became permanently associated with the Communist Party and from 1934 until the party was declared an illegal organisation in 1940, he was editor of "The Communist Review." Then we have Joe B. Miles, who is joint secretary of the Communist Party's permanent staff and has held that position since 1928. Before coming to Australia, Miles, who was an English socialist, had worked as a bricklayer, stonemason and tram conductor. He settled in Queensland where he joined the Communist Party in 1920, and first came into prominence as a member of the Brisbane Labour Council. In the early thirties, he also attended the school in Russia and on his return was given charge of the Communist Party's headquarters in Sydney.

Next there is a man named L. L. Sharkey, who joined the Communist Party in 1920 when there were only 300 members of the organisation. In 1927 he was allocated to the central committee of the Communist Party and in 1930 became the editor of the official organ "The Workers' Weekly." He also studied in Moscow and in 1935 he was placed on the official pay-roll and became active in the Miscellaneous Workers' Union. He is now president of the Communist Party of Australia. Next there is Jack Blake. His activities have been mostly confined to Victoria but he is now attached to the Sydney headquarters. He also is a graduate of the Moscow school. He joined the Communist Party in 1925, being shortly afterwards elected secretary of the Lithgow branch. On his return from school in Russia in 1932 he was appointed president

of the Victorian branch and there established "The Workers' Voice," later known as "The Guardian."

There is Norman Jeffrey. He also graduated from the I.W.W. and went to Moscow in 1928. He was appointed organising secretary of the industrial panel in the War Loans Office under Treasurer Chifley. He brought many communists in as war loan organisers, where they had access to industrial plants all over the country. Then we have W. Orr, who had been secretary of the Miners' Federation during the war and was placed in charge of propaganda to speed up coal production by the Government. There was probably not a miner in the industry who did not remember him as leader of the militant minority movement, as well as national secretary of that communist auxiliary, and also editor of the "Red Leader," the organ of the militant minority movement.

Then we have another man who figured prominently in union circles in recent years, Ernest Thornton. Thornton is a depression communist, as he says that he was unemployed during that period; but soon after obtaining work, when things became more normal, he was appointed secretary of the Victorian Communist Party, in 1935. He was appointed president of the Ironworkers' Federation in 1940 and since that date has made a second trip as delegate to the World Union of Trade Congress. He was appointed President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions in 1946. All of these men—I could give particulars of many others—went to the Moscow School of Ideology, to return to Australia in order to propagate what they had learnt there. These communists know that if they can capture all the Australian trade unions, they can achieve three objectives. First, they will have access to the huge annual income in the shape of members' contributions, as well as to the accumulated funds, for the purpose of forwarding Communism. Then, through the control of the unions they planned to dominate the Labour Governments. By controlling trade union policy, they could choose their own time for advancing to their final objective, which is the forcible overthrow of the Government of Australia.

[Mr. Brand took the Chair.]

Mr. Graham: It seems that they have captured the B.M.A. already.

Mr. WILD: A further step forward was made by the Communist Party in 1943, when, owing to the rapid onward movement of the Japanese down through the islands to New Guinea, it became absolutely necessary that conscription should be enforced in Australia. Then, I regret to say, there was a big sell-out, when at that famous A.L.P. conference Mr. Curtin was forced, through these communistic-controlled unions having the predominance of power, to turn round and, by way of pay-off, give to the Communist Party a license to operate four newspapers in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide; and at the same time to give them a license for 82 tons of newsprint per annum. That, I feel, was one of the worst things that could have happened to Australia. However, it was inevitable. There had to be conscription and, as I have said, the Communist Party controlled some of the major unions in Australia. Mr. Curtin was left no alternative course but to acquiesce.

Hon. A. H. Panton: None of those representatives was present at the conference. That is a very unfair statement to make, old man.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. A. H. Panton: It was a very unfair statement to make and you should prove it. The man is dead and I would ask you to prove what you say. I was present at that conference and no communists were there.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILD: When the ban on the Communist Party was lifted by the Curtin Government in 1942, one of the first things done by the party was to purchase the "News-letter" printery in Sydney for the sum of £25,000. Then, as soon as the Government issued the newsprint licenses to the Communist Party for 82 tons of newsprint per annum, there was immediately set up the "Tribune," which is the official organ of the Communist Party. In addition to the "Communist Review," a host of other papers were put out. Also printed there was the party literature, most of which is now published in Australia. This ranged from books, including "The Socialist Sixth" by the Dean of Canterbury, heavy works by Karl Marx, besides thousands of pamphlets that you, Sir, and members can see in the

little bookshop in London Court. For the sale of these books and pamphlets the Communist Party set up a chain of bookshops throughout Australia. In Sydney they are known as the "Pioneer" bookshops. They are really another auxiliary of the Communist Party.

In Melbourne and Sydney one can go to some of the fashionable suburbs and there find these "Pioneer" bookshops selling communistic literature. About the same time, there appeared in the "Sydney Morning Herald" an advertisement for large office accommodation, approximately 2,000 square feet, capable of housing fourteen offices. It is known that Mr. Thornton, who was then president of the Ironworkers' Federation, negotiated for the acquisition of Adyar House in Bligh Street, Sydney, at a figure of £89,000. Owing to tenancy regulations, however, the party would not have been able to evict the tenants and so the deal fell through. Some weeks afterwards, however, the party acquired the "Green Coupon" premises in George-street, Sydney. This was then re-named "Marx House."

Mr. Styants: Who was the owner that sold the "Green Coupon" premises to the party?

Mr. Graham: A good Liberal!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILD: In 1933-34, it is estimated that the Miners' Union and its ancillaries had a membership in New South Wales of 24,000, while in the ironworkers' and munition workers' unions there were 130,000 at the peak, from whom the annual contributions amounted to £150,000. With the amalgamation of these iron trade unions, which later embraced the sheet metal trades, the total membership was brought up to approximately 250,000 with an income of £500,000. All these were more or less under communistic control. Without doubt, the Communist Party is the wealthiest political organisation in Australia. The party now owns its own premises in the heart of Sydney and has a large staff of permanent organisers and its own printing presses. It publishes five newspapers now, not four as formerly. Furthermore, these newspapers have little or no advertising space; and, as everyone knows who has had anything to do with advertising at all, it is impossible to make a paper pay its way, let alone make a

profit, unless there is a large proportion of advertising to be found in it. In addition to these newspapers, halls are hired all over Australia where lectures are given by party theorists. Dances are held and potential members are lured to them with free tickets. In recent years the movements formed by the Communist Party have been—

The Militant Minority,
Hands off China,
Sheepskins for Russia,
The Young Communist League, now known as the Eureka League,
Educational Workers' Association,
New Theatre League,

and many others in the Eastern States that are not operating in Western Australia at the present time. Wherever the money comes from it certainly does not come from the local membership. It is very interesting to recount an interview given by Stalin to the American Labour Delegation to Soviet Russia in September, 1927, which was reported in Vol. II of "Leninism" by Joseph Stalin on page 8. The question was—

Is any money now being sent to America to aid either the American Communist Party or the Communist paper "The Daily Worker"? If not, how much do American Communists remit to the Third International in annual membership fees?

Stalin's reply was—

If this has reference to the relations between the Communist Party of America and the Third International, I must say the Communist Party of America most likely pays affiliation dues to the Comintern. On the other hand, the Comintern being the central body of the Communist National Movement, we assume renders assistance to the Communist Party of America whenever it is necessary. I do not think there is anything surprising or exceptional in that.

In New South Wales alone it is estimated that the Communist Party at present is spending £150 per week on broadcasting. In addition, many thousands of pounds are being spent to propagate the party's ideology. Recent events have made it quite clear that Australian Communism is treasonable, anti-democratic, and destructive. In support of this statement one has only to read over the history of that tragic strike in Queensland, followed by the imprisonment of some of the leading communists in recent months. I wish to deal with another disturbing feature and I shall quote from "The West Australian" of the 26th July, 1948. This will show clearly to the people of Australia that things

are far from being what they ought to be in this country. The extract reads—

Canberra, July 25: The United States is refusing to give any atomic research details to Great Britain unless definite assurances are given that the information will not be handed on to Australia, it was learnt on reliable authority tonight.

Mr. Graham: You know that is a rotten lie.

Mr. WILD: Continuing—

Fear that leakages of vital details may occur through Australian Communists is believed to be the reason behind this condition.

Things have come to a sorry pass when America will not give any secrets to Great Britain because America is afraid that they will be handed over to Australia owing to the fact, as the Opposition members and I know, that we have communists right here in our midst.

Mr. Graham: That is not true.

Mr. WILD: In recent weeks I have been studying the attitudes adopted by other Governments to Communism and from this research I have ascertained that in the House of Commons on the 15th March, 1948, the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee, made a statement on the employment of communists in the Civil Service in Great Britain, and I will therefore quote extracts from his speech, all of which can be read by members of this House in Vol. 19, No. 1, of April, 1948, Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire, which was recently distributed to members. Mr. Attlee said—

There were certain duties of such secrecy that the State was not justified in employing in connection with them anyone whose reliability was in doubt. Experience, both in Great Britain and elsewhere, had shown that membership of, and other forms of continuing association with, the Communist Party might involve the acceptance by the individual of a loyalty which in certain circumstances could be inimical to the State. It was not suggested that in matters affecting the security of the State all those who adhered to the Communist Party would allow themselves to forget their primary loyalty to the State. But there was no way of distinguishing such people from those who, if opportunity offered, would be prepared to endanger the security of the State in the interests of another power. "The Government have, therefore, reached the conclusion," Mr. Attlee stated, "that the only prudent course to adopt is to ensure that no one who is known to be a member of the Communist Party, or to be associated with it in such a way as to raise legitimate doubts about his or her re-

liability, is employed in connection with work the nature of which is vital to the security of the State."

It is not known how effective the Government's decision in Great Britain has been, but I recently read in a paper sent to me from London—a paper known as "The Record"—that 45 suspected communists and communist sympathisers had been found in the British Ministry of Defence and Supply Department, and that they had been dealt with in accordance with Mr. Attlee's statement in the House of Commons. In the United States in 1938 a Congressional committee was set up to investigate un-American activities. As a committee of Congress it was authorised to summon people to appear before it either to answer allegations or to give evidence. Amongst the powers of such a committee is that of naming public servants guilty of un-American activities. With such power, persons may be disciplined or removed permanently from the service. Other action taken against communists in the United States has been initiated by various Government departments.

For example, in October, 1947, the Department of State announced that it would dismiss instantly any officer or employee deemed to be a security risk, "security risk" being defined as any person who engages in, supports or advocates treason or subversion, or who is a member of or affiliated with or in sympathetic association with Communist, Nazi or Fascist Parties, or any other movement seeking to overthrow the Government by unconstitutional means. The United States Army has also been investigating its members and the members of its administrative organisations. For example on the 27th February, of this year a number of employees were dismissed and others turned over to the F.B.I. for further investigation. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is at present engaged in a systematic check of all Federal Government employees. To date it is understood that 85,000 employees have been screened, of whom 143 are suspects and subject to further investigation. So serious does President Truman consider the menace of Communism in Europe that on the 17th March he outlined to Congress three main proposals, which were agreed to, to combat that evil. Summarised, his three points in the programme are—

1. Temporary re-introduction of conscription.

2. Prompt enactment of universal military training.

3. Speedy completion of action on the Marshall Plan.

In his speech to Congress, describing the European situation, Mr. Truman said that as long as the menace threatens the very existence of democracy the United States must remain strong enough to support those European countries which are threatened by communist control. He said, "We must be prepared to pay the cost of peace, or assuredly we shall pay the price of war." Further strong action was taken in America when the Taft-Hartley Act was passed this year. That Act specifically states that no union may enjoy the privileges of collective bargaining unless all the union officers concerned sign statements attesting that they are not communists or communist sympathisers. We have also read in recent months, reports of a far-reaching inquiry that took place in Canada. This inquiry was instituted in September, 1945, when a Russian cipher clerk, who had been employed in the Soviet Embassy at Ottawa said he had observed and heard things which he considered were not in keeping with what he thought to be right, so far as the Canadian people were concerned. He revealed in evidence before the Royal Commission the existence in Canada of a widespread conspiracy to obtain official information, and that such conspiracy was being conducted by the Soviet Embassy.

The Royal Commission revealed that money was being paid out by members of the Soviet Embassy, who directed the espionage network, to Canadian agents. I have in recent weeks read extracts from the Royal Commission's report which definitely indicate that there is a large number of people in prominent positions in Canada found to be associated with this espionage movement. Taken at random from the report the following persons—and there are many of them—were found to be implicated:—

Israel Halperin, Professor of Mathematics, Queen's University, Kingston; formerly Major, Directorate of Artillery.

P. Durnford Pemberton Smith, National Research Council, Ottawa.

Samuel Sol Burman, Insurance Salesman, formerly Major in Canadian Army.

Major Rogov, Soviet Embassy.

James Scotland Benning, Department of Munitions and Supply, Ottawa.

There are others: in fact, there is a considerable list. I have also read in recent weeks, reports from the "New Leader," of New York, of the 25th March, 1947, of the Soviet Fifth Column operating in the Canadian Seamen's Union. Mr. Pat O'Sullivan, who had been president of the Canadian Seamen's Union for the past ten years, resigned in March, 1947, as he was convinced that the interests of organised labour were being subverted by the agents of Communism to their own ends. Mr. O'Sullivan stated that the Seamen's Union, due to communist infiltration was led by the latter people completely from top to bottom. I would like to ask members: What are we doing about Communism in Australia?

Mr. Graham: Making silly charges against the Labour Party!

Mr. Grayden: They are perfectly justified.

Mr. Graham: You are getting as irresponsible as the member for Middle Swan.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILD: In recent months we have had one of the most shocking strikes in Australian history. It occurred in Queensland and culminated in Mr. Hanlon, the Labour Premier of that State, being forced to put on the statute book emergency legislation to deal with it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you remember when you fought an election with Tom Walsh, his jumping on the Union Jack, and then your accepting him with open arms?

Mr. WILD: Mr. Hanlon introduced this legislation to make operative again the railways which had been on strike, as members know, for something over 60 days. The penalties in the measure were very severe, but I think that members on the other side of the House will agree that Mr. Hanlon, in the circumstances, could have done nothing else.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Australian Labour Party backed him.

Mr. WILD: Also, in Victoria, a few months previously, there was another devastating strike when the railways there were absolutely paralysed. Mr. Hollway, the Liberal Premier of that State, introduced legislation to bring the union to its knees so that the people of Victoria would not be victimised by a small section of the com-

munity—communists—who had at that time dominated the union.

We have on our statute book in Canberra the Crimes Act which was referred to last evening by the member for Beverley. From a perusal of that legislation I have no doubt that if the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Government were sincere and wanted to put this thing down, they have everything they need in that Act. I am not going to read its sections because they are too long, but if we take Sections 24 (a) and 30 (a) to 30 (j), we find there is hardly anything in the nature of treasonable activities and Communism that would not be covered.

Mr. Graham: Will you tell us something that the Government might do?

Mr. WILD: In view of the gravity of the international situation and the vital importance of Australian production and transport, communist activities can no longer be tolerated. The difficulties to be surmounted in this regard are many. Although the Communist Party in Australia is as great a menace to democracy as it is in any other part of the world, I maintain it is essential that the question of its suppression be regarded, not with hysteria, as in America, but calmly and in accordance with the traditions of British justice. It may seem paradoxical to extend the benefits of democracy to these people, but it is only by judicial treatment of them that damage to innocent folk may be avoided. As I said earlier, I hope to give to the House what I consider to be constructive thought. To rid us of this menace, firstly, all members must impress upon Mr. Chifley that he has to invoke the Crimes Act if need be. It is within his power to do that.

It is of no use time after time allowing these people to upset industry right throughout Australia, in the coalmines, the metal industries and on the waterfront. Other action which should be taken is that every union official should be made to sign a declaration to the effect that he is not a communist and has no affiliation whatever with the Communist Party. We have seen in this State, in recent weeks that two or three union officials who were asked to do that and did not acquiesce, were put out of their jobs. That is the sanest way to attack the problem. A man cannot possibly—although one or two in the Queensland Par-

liament have done this—come into this House and swear, honestly and conscientiously, that he believes in God, King and Country, and, at the same time, be a communist. We can put these fellows on the spot. Either they are communists or they are not, and if they are they are not game to come here and make that affirmation.

Mr. Hoar: Do you know that you cannot get a union registered if you make any reference to politics?

Mr. WILD: With such a code of appropriate law as the Crimes Act and sufficient force to uphold it, and the suggestion I have given to the House to see that union officials are forced to sign a declaration that they are not communists or have no affiliation with the Communist Party, there is no reason why this dreadful menace could not be stamped out of Australia within a few weeks. It is essential that no half measures be taken, otherwise there is the ever-present chance that more red martyrs will be created. In the attitude that we adopt, particularly in regard to the fixing of penalties, it should be remembered that these people preach bloody revolution, the overthrow of the State, and its complete annihilation as an executive machine, and the establishment of a dictatorship. Remembering the methods that have been used to achieve this state of affairs elsewhere, such as the Asiatic refinements of torture, and the rape of the Eastern European democracies, how can any punishments be too harsh? No matter how harsh, they cannot equal what the comrades would introduce if they were not checked. I give this to the House in the hope that all members, on both sides of the Chamber, will appreciate that the day has come—and it is today, not tomorrow or next week—when in the interests of our people and British democracy, we must take a stand.

Mr. Graham: Why pick the unions only?

Mr. WILD: If all of us realised our obligations to our country and to our fellow men and to those thousands who in this war and the last gave up their lives in order to maintain for you, Mr. Speaker, and for me, that freedom we enjoy under the British flag, then we would accept that responsibility and stamp out the menace. In order to stem this debacle, we require the co-operation of all members. It can be done, and it will be done, but it will only be achieved by the united efforts of us all, whether we be on

the Government or the Opposition side. I say, and I know every other hon. member will agree with me, that I never want to see the day when any other flags are displayed than those which now hang over Parliament House. We want some red in this flag of ours and we want some white and blue as well. Let the red not represent some foreign ideology, but rather the blood of those men who gave their lives in order that we all might continue under the British flag to live in the peaceful way of life that has been our heritage for so long.

HON. A. A. M. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [5.46]: It was once said by an eminent politician that if anyone wanted to divert a controversial or unpalatable subject he introduced another. We have had a great display from one or two of the youthful members of the Liberal Party recently, and it would appear to me that the Liberal propagandist campaigners have been working overtime, putting forward something for these younger members of the Liberal Party to say. I am sure these young members have been feeling very uncomfortable when listening to some of the addresses given by members on this side of the House in reference to policy and the inactivity of this Government to put that policy into operation.

I do not want to be drawn off the track on the Address-in-reply by referring to the terrible thing termed Communism or the illogical statements made by the youthful member for Middle Swan followed by—

Mr. Grayden: Is this going to be another plea for Communism?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: If the hon. member does not mind waiting until I have finished, I will tell him what it is going to be.

The Minister for Lands: Endeavour to keep your youthful member for East Perth quiet.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I am not prepared to stand up and use in a loud voice, and repeat again in a loud voice some of the illogical arguments submitted. I can quite understand how uncomfortable the member for Middle Swan is at the true statements that have been made in refer-

ence to the Government's policy and its inactivity to carry out that policy. We on this side of the House do not intend to be diverted from what we propose to tell this Government about its inactivity, and the member for Middle Swan is not going to lead me astray on that point. He is not going to lead the general public astray either by his various statements because the subject of Communism has been flogged to death, just as much as our friend from Swan flogged the old flag. It has been flogged for years and years, long before the member for Middle Swan ever thought of entering Parliament, and the public are getting sick and tired of that sort of thing.

After listening to the speech of the member for Swan I think the only contribution he made on the subject was that every unionist should be made to sign a pledge. What a wonderful contribution that is towards abolishing Communism! Sign a pledge! Communists will sign anything. Even the member for Middle Swan signed a pledge. What did he say 12 months before signing the pledge of the Liberal Party?

Mr. Grayden: We in the Liberal Party do not sign any pledges. We are free members.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: The member for Swan stated that all unionists should sign a pledge. Why the union members? Why not my friend from Swan? He knows that there are other people belonging to communistic organisations who do not belong to unions. There are business people, medical practitioners and many other people in all walks of life who belong to the Communist Party.

Mr. Marshall: Even bank managers.

Mr. Bovell: They certainly do not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: This Government has been reprimanded from both sides of the House for not attempting to put its policy and platform pledges into operation. I intend to follow on those lines and my first grievance is that the Government professed a policy of decentralisation.

The Minister for Lands: You will always find that a good Government will be reprimanded.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: My friend—

Hon. A. H. Panton: We must have been a good Government when the Minister was on this side of the Chamber.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: —the Minister for Lands must be doing quite a good job because he is the one Minister who has been let off up to date.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is because he passes the tough jobs over to the Honorary Minister.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Here we have a Government which professes decentralisation as a part of its policy, and if we examine what it has done up to date we find that one of the most serious crimes it committed was the introduction of a redistribution of seats Bill. That Bill robbed the country and the North-West of three seats and handed them over to the metropolitan area. The Bill was passed by this Legislative Assembly and members supporting the Government did not enter any protest. I would have expected members representing country districts at least to have entered a protest against robbing the outer areas of Western Australia to the advantage of the metropolitan area. I make this suggestion to members from the country, that it would not matter twopence if half the suburban or metropolitan area did not have a representative in this Chamber—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do not be too rough!

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: —for the simple reason that those members do not come into contact with their constituents as country members do. The city people have various organisations such as municipal councils and road boards and other organisations to look after their interests, but what do they have in the outer areas? They have no-one to attend to their wants and put forward their arguments. Country Party representatives in particular, and those Liberal Party members who represent country areas, should have joined forces with some of us on this side of the House, and entered a protest against the decentralisation policy of this particular Government.

There is also the latest introduction of extra charges on railway freights. Members from country areas tell me that the majority of the increased taxation will come from the metropolitan and suburban

trains and buses. The people from the back country and the primary producers are the ones who are really going to pay the extra taxation.

Hon. E. Nulsen: And the goldmines.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Yes, I include them in the people from the back country. They are going to be hit more heavily by the increased freights and fares on the railways.

The Attorney General: It is not taxation.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: It depends on the legal interpretation that my friend the Minister puts upon the word "taxation."

The Attorney General: It is payment for service.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Which is merely another form of collecting tax from the electors, and the greatest portion of it will be paid by the electors who live in the back countries without the amenities of the metropolitan and suburban areas.

Mr. Brand: The same position probably applies now.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: So I am very much surprised that members representing country areas have said nothing about it up to date and I guess they will not say anything about it either.

The Minister for Railways: It is a matter of putting it into State revenue instead of Chifley's revenue.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Another matter which I have been waiting to hear mentioned is that of native affairs. During the first session of this Parliament I thought I was going to get some support for the natives of Western Australia. There were at least five bright new members who came to light with ideas and commented severely on the Native Affairs Department of this State. This session there has not been a mention of it up to date and I am wondering what has dampened their enthusiasm. I do not think there is any other explanation but that they were probably told by the leaders of their respective parties that this is a forbidden subject. The Government was only funning when it said on the platform that its policy was reform for natives. It has probably told these new members that they are not

to mention the subject as it was only a joke and that nothing was meant by it. Not a word has been mentioned.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think the member for Mt. Marshall will say something about the subject.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I do not think so. He has been told, as well, that it is only a joke and probably he has been warned not to introduce the subject in Parliament.

Mr. Marshall: What does a Pom. know about native affairs?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: The Premier and the Deputy Premier made the statement on the platform that there would be reform for natives but that might mean anything. Of course, they did not say what it would be, but they kept the propaganda going through Press statements by the Minister every now and again until such time as they thought they might overcome this reform question. The Government misled the public by making certain statements in the Press. It formulated a policy of Press propaganda in which it badly misled the people. In case the Deputy Speaker takes exception to the word "misleading" I propose to read one of the Minister's statements. I am not going to weary the House by reading the full cutting from the paper because every member has read it and it would only be a repetition. To show how the Government misled the people I will quote from an authority on native affairs. On the 23rd August, 1947, the following appeared in the Press:—

Native Problem.—Government's Attitude Appreciated.

The view that the present Government was showing a better attitude towards the native problem than its predecessor was expressed by the Rev. J. Best at the Anglican Synod during consideration of the report for the past year of the Diocesan Board of Missions. Its attitude, he said, was vastly different from that of the previous Government. Nevertheless, it must be kept up to the mark.

I propose to help the gentleman keep it up to the mark. The misleading statements in the Policy speech and the misleading statements in the Press have confused the people generally as well as members of this Chamber. The words to which I take exception are contained in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, and are as follows:—

The Government arranged for a comprehensive survey of native institutions and conditions by Mr. F. E. A. Bateman, R.M. His report is a contribution of importance to the study of native affairs. The department's activities include the authorisation of an approved dietary scale in native institutions, the transfer of the medical inspection of natives who at the present time are congregated at the Moore River Settlement.

Mr. Bateman's report was recently handed to the Government and I had the honour of being presented by the Minister with a copy for my perusal. I propose to analyse portions of the report to show that it is not a contribution of importance to the study of native affairs. The dietary scale referred to in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech was authorised and in operation before the change of Government took place. I intend also to say a few words about the recommendation for the change of policy by transferring the health activities now exercised by the Department of Native Affairs to the Medical and Health Department.

When I spoke on the Estimates last session, I referred to the appointment of Mr. Bateman as a commission of inquiry, and said that I could not favour it because it would be only a waste of money and would lead to delay. I pointed out that all the information needed was on the files of the Department of Native Affairs and that effect could be given to the requirements on one condition, namely, that the Government was prepared to find the money. I emphasised that no commission of inquiry would be able to disclose anything that was not already known to the department.

The commission was appointed on the 21st July, 1947, and finished on the 4th June, 1948, at a cost, I should say, of £1,000 or more to the State. The report has been in the hands of the Government for over two months and I do not know of any activity that has resulted or anything that has been done during that time.

Mr. Marshall: Perhaps the Honorary Minister can tell us.

The Minister for Railways: You should read the newspapers.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I do read the newspapers.

The Minister for Railways: Have you read what the Prime Minister said?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: The Prime Minister did not mislead the people of Western Australia on this matter. The only persons responsible for misleading them were the two heads of the present Government. They did not tell the people that in certain eventualities they would do something; they said, without qualification, what they would do. Consequently, I want to know when they propose to make a start. I have pointed out that although I have only five supporters for the natives, they have been silent so I propose to comply with the bidding of the Rev. Mr. Best, and endeavour to keep the Government up to the mark.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Very necessary, too.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I said on the Estimates that I was of opinion that no good purpose could be served by the appointment of this commission. I repeat that the commission's report is of no value either to the Government or to the natives of this State. As a matter of fact, it is a worthless report in that it is only a copy of information that is already on the files of the department and could be read by the Minister. If he did not have time to read it, he could have instructed one of his clerks to collate the information for him, and then he would have had exactly what the report is. I go so far as to say that I hope in future the name "Bateman" will be dropped and that the report will be referred to as the plagiarist report of 1948.

Mr. Bateman has collated all the information on the file and placed it before the Government as a report. He has dealt with practically the whole of the ramifications. The first 20 or 30 pages deal with the missions, and contain several recommendations. That information was already available in the department. The report, in my opinion, is nothing but a repetition of what was already known. The commissioner visited the various missions except one. The one he did not visit is in the Warburton Ranges and, in my opinion, that was the most important one to visit, because it is of recent origin and deals mainly with full-blooded adults and children. However, he did not go there, but made the excuse that it had

only recently been established and that it was so inaccessible that he did not think the cost of visiting it would be warranted. This mission has not been visited even by the Commissioner of Native Affairs or the Minister, so there is no report upon it in the department. I make bold to say that this is the reason why nothing was said about it in Mr. Bateman's report.

Turning to the report, I wish to read some of the recommendations made by Mr. Bateman and comment upon them. They are already covered by regulations which I think the adviser to the commissioner must have overlooked. These deal with missions, their location and how they are conducted, besides giving a lot of information that was not necessary. The department and the Minister know where those missions are, their area and the number of adults and children catered for. It is all on the file, and to put it before the Minister in this form was a waste of printing and of time. After dealing with the missions controlled by religious organisations, he concluded by making the following suggestions:—

With the object of implementing the suggestions above made, I recommend that the Government lay down a policy for missions on the lines referred to above, that increased subsidies be granted to missions conforming with the Government policy and that all missions be compelled—

(1) To lodge with the Commissioner a detailed statement of policy with annual reports on progress.

That is already in operation.

(2) Advise the Commissioner of all changes of staff, disclosing qualifications of new appointees.

That is already done. No mission may operate without a permit from the department. The regulations stipulate that a missioner, before being granted a permit, must conform to this condition. Thus the first two recommendations are already covered by the regulations.

(3) Furnish to the Commissioner for approval block plans of the mission and plans of all buildings thereon.

Of what use would a block plan be to the Minister or to the department? I do not know. The vast majority of missions are operating on native reserves and some of them have a homestead lease, which was granted to protect their buildings, etc. All

that information is in the office of the department.

(4) Submit to the Commissioner for approval plans and specifications of all proposed new buildings.

(5) Furnish to the Commissioner annual financial statements relating to the mission.

(6) Comply with the instructions of the Commissioner in respect of education, diet, housing and medical treatment of inmates.

(7) Comply with all other matters necessary for the purpose of implementing the said policy.

Compliance with these requirements has been demanded of the missions that have recently been established, though similar compliance is not required of some of the older-established missions. So that information was of no use to the Minister. These missions are catered for under a regulation which I propose to read. It appears in Section 68 relating to the establishment of mission stations and the issue of permits to mission workers, and Regulation 134 reads—

No mission for the evangelisation of the natives or for other kindred purpose shall be established or attempted to be established until the governing authority, church, or society, or individual concerned is first in possession of the authority of the Minister to establish such mission. Such authority shall be in Form No. 21 in the Schedule, and notification of its issue and tenor shall be published in the "Government Gazette."

So those recommendations are of no value. Provision is already made in the regulations which have been put into operation in respect to the last few missions established. I shall revert to this later to show that what I have stated is correct. On page 23 of the report, the commissioner, referring to the Wandering Brook Mission, said—

This mission has not yet completed its building programme and consequently has not commenced operations. Nevertheless, I feel I should include particulars concerning it as I believe that, when completed, it will be the finest mission in the State. For practically the first time, a mission is being established to a proper plan with a long-term policy in view. Money is not being stinted and the building plan provides for good substantial and adequate institutional buildings, with playing fields and sporting facilities.

He also referred to the Seven Hills Mission in practically similar terms. My reason for mentioning these two missions is to show that the recommendations made by the commissioner are already in operation. That is the reason why those two missions are on such a good foundation. Before either of

those missions received a permit to start, it had to comply with the regulations and give an undertaking to the Commissioner of Native Affairs that the mission would be planned on the lines desired.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Before tea I was indicating that in my opinion the report of this commission on the native institutions was nothing but a waste of time and had delayed action by the Government instead of effect being given to improvements in accordance with facts which were already known and which were on the files of the department. I instanced that the first portion of the report dealt with missions and certain recommendations were made which I suggested were already covered under the Act and regulations, and therefore all that information was of no value to the Government except that it might want some indication that the later appointed commissioner was doing his job. The report emphasised that the regulations now in existence are up-to-date and are performing a useful purpose.

The second portion of the report deals with the Government institutions and a perusal of this suggests that it follows the general trend of criticising the whole of the Government's decisions without giving any credit to a department whose work increased out of all knowledge during the war. That increased work was due to the fact that many natives and half-castes were found employment under industrial conditions and their employment had to be supervised and checked by the department. Again, there were many enlistments which had to be supervised and controlled by the department. Following that, child endowment was paid by the Commonwealth Government to a large section of the native community, and that meant increased work for the department because the endowment was paid to coloured persons recommended by the department which had the supervision of the payments. The receipt of this money led to excessive drinking by natives to whom it was paid. This also entailed extra work for the department.

The department had all this extra work to do, with no extra finance and with a temporary staff, many of the permanent employees having enlisted. At one stage the Commissioner of Native Affairs was left

with only one permanent senior officer to do all the work. An exceptionally fine job was done by him and his temporary staff but no credit has been given for this. Nor has credit been given to the female staff of the department in respect of training and finding employment for female half-castes. The work done by this staff has been considerable, and a number of native girls has been trained and provided with employment throughout the country districts and in the metropolitan area. The department suffered the loss of its manual trainers at institutions. But these things were overlooked and much criticism of the department occurred in the Press during the war; and the commissioner in my opinion has followed that line without giving any credit to the department which did such good work under the circumstances that prevailed at the time.

The Moore River native settlement has been given great prominence in the Press in the last few years, and also in the commissioner's report. The recommendations of the commissioner are nothing new to the department, whose aim it has been to separate the natives when a reasonable property could be purchased to make this possible. A policy was laid down by the previous administration for the purchase of a new property so that the younger children might be removed from their present surroundings. Negotiations were placed in the hands of the superintendent of the land settlement scheme, Mr. Fyfe, and the former Agricultural Bank officials and Treasury officials. Inspections of certain properties were made and information about all this will be found on the files. After a trenchant criticism of the Moore River settlement, the commissioner states—

As a policy it is not only stupid but also futile, but it is only fair to add that the present administration is fully aware of the undesirable conditions existing at Moore River and has advocated a drastic change in the present policy.

If the words "present administration" read "past administration," it would be much fairer to the department that has carried the burden of this place during the war. The general analysis suggests that a new area should be taken up for the transference of part of this institution. That recommendation being already on the files, there is no need for me to comment any further other

than to repeat that the report was a waste of time and money.

In his survey of the institutions, the commissioner includes the East Perth Girls' Home, provision for which had already been made. A new site for that institution was selected at Victoria Park—a very nice block of five acres. A corner block on the tram-line was chosen, and it was only a matter of obtaining finance to go ahead with the erection of buildings. I noticed that there was a Press statement by the Minister that this site had been selected, but I am a little concerned about the last paragraph, which reads—

The former Government, he said, had in view the extension and re-organisation of native settlements and institutions, and the present administration was anxious to make early progress in this direction. Acquired some years ago, five acres on Albany Highway, about four miles south of Perth, would be considered as the site for a new native girls' home to replace the home at East Perth. An alternative site for such a home would be a location in the hills.

I hope this Government will not be influenced to shift the institution to the hills. There are very good reasons why it should not be placed there. At Victoria Park, the institution would be a home to which the native girls on domestic service could return when they were on holidays. Many of them come from the country and do not want to be "parked" in the hills. They desire to be in the vicinity of the metropolitan area where they can enjoy some of the amenities offering, in return for the penalty they pay of being pushed into the back country to do work on farms. It is proposed that tennis courts and other similar facilities shall be placed on the new site at Victoria Park. So I hope there will be no endeavour on the part of this Government to choose another site. I know there have been private inquiries from people interested in getting hold of the Victoria Park site, which is a particularly nice one. It is handily situated to the tram so that girls working in the city can go backwards and forwards very easily.

The next portion of the report deals at some length with wages and conditions and has special reference to wages paid to natives in the Kimberley district. The reason given for the recommendation of the commissioner in this regard is that the system prevailing has been criticised in England, where it has been termed slavery. I want to tell this Government that it is noth-

ing of the kind. The pastoralists in the Kimberleys pay natives not in cash but in kind. The natives are much better off under that system. There is a grave danger in paying cash to people who do not understand the value of money. The native is a born gambler; and I am positive that whatever extra money is given to him he will use either in this way or in the purchase of drugs. He will drink laudanum and other pain killers in large quantities, and is fond of alcoholic liquor, preferring wine to beer.

There are unscrupulous people who will provide natives with the things that contribute to social evils, so long as they can make money thereby. The Government should give serious consideration to that aspect before meddling with something that will not be to the benefit of the natives, but to their detriment. The criticism from England comes from the Anti-Slavery Society. The reason for that criticism is false information given to the society by a certain organisation in Western Australia that has not always got on very well with the Department of Native Affairs. It does not readily submit to regulation, and naturally it has a grievance so that when it has the opportunity to discredit the department it does so. This is not a very serious matter, because on more than one occasion when the Anti-Slavery Society has written to the Premier and replies have been forwarded back to it, we have heard nothing further of the matter. The commissioner recommended that the medical and health aspects of the natives be taken over by the Health Department.

Most members know that the Department of Native Affairs has many hospitals throughout the State, in which natives are cared for by qualified nurses under the supervision of medical officers. The department had a medical officer of its own who continually made inspections, but we have now lost his services and the inspections and advice are looked after by the local medical officer in the district nearest to the hospital concerned. The recommendation that all this work should be taken over by the Health Department amuses me, because that department has not been very successful in providing sufficient hospital accommodation for the white population. Practically every member who has spoken during the debate has voiced some complaint about our hospitals and the accommodation for patients,

overcrowding, the necessity for larger buildings and so on.

When the Health Department is unable to give satisfaction to the white population, how can it be expected to increase the amenities for natives? In his report the commissioner suggests that plans must be drawn up for the Department of Native Affairs by the Public Works Department. When the Department of Native Affairs approves of extensions or improvements, the delay in the Public Works Department always hinders the carrying out of the work. When the doctors and matrons of the hospitals with which I am in touch complain of conditions, and the Health Department approves the necessary extensions, plans are sent to the Public Works Department for an estimate and for the drawings to be made, and the same delay is experienced in the case of hospitals for white people as with native hospitals. I do not know what benefit will be bestowed on native hospitals if they are placed under the Health Department. In fact, they will get a worse deal than ever, because when money is to be spent or work done, preference will be given to hospitals for white people.

The Attorney General: I will not agree with that.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: The Government has been on the job for nearly 18 months but has not done anything for the native population of the State. When speaking to the Estimates last year, I mentioned the appointment of the commission, which I said would be a waste of time and would delay action, and that is what happened. The other point I mentioned was the declaring of prohibited areas in the metropolitan area, which did no good. The Government so far has done nothing for the natives and, if these recommendations are given effect, the Government will claim credit for something that is of no benefit at all to the natives. If I am forced to do so, I will read to the House some of the misleading propaganda that has so far been put forward.

Again I state that the medical and health recommendations of the commission will not improve the condition of the natives at all. If given effect, they would only mean a change of control from one department to another, and the same difficulties would still prevail—lack of finance and loss of time

through the Public Works Department, its draftsmen, engineers and so on. Another part of the commissioner's report refers to the system of inspection and criticises the appointment of some ex-police officers to the Department of Native Affairs, and the appointment of police officers as honorary protectors of natives. I entirely disagree with the commissioner. I say that in a general way the policemen to my knowledge have been the only friends of the natives. Other honorary protectors of natives—there are a hundred of them—have never taken action against a white man or instituted a prosecution of any description in favour of the natives.

The only honorary protectors that have taken such action against white men have been police officers. That is something in their favour. If members have read the daily paper and seen the numbers of cases recently—and they are increasing—of where drink has been given to the natives, they will know that on every occasion it has been a police officer who has taken action against the white people. The commissioner in his report says that the police officer is usually both the prosecutor and the protector. That is what he has been told by someone who does not understand the position. There are very few police stations throughout Western Australia where there are not two policemen stationed, one of whom is the prosecutor and the other the protector. I am not prepared to lend myself to the argument that because a policeman is an honorary protector he does not do his job as a protector of the natives when that duty falls on him. I am convinced that, in general, they do a very good job.

The appointment of police officers as inspectors of the Native Affairs Department was also criticised. I think I am justified in saying that they have made a success of the job up to date. A police officer is one who is usually trained in approaching people and in law. He would have a greater knowledge of the Native Administration Act and its regulations than most outsiders. He would also be trained in putting up a case in the matter of legal prosecutions; and the conduct of prosecutions in court takes up a great deal of the time of an inspector of natives. I am of the opinion that policemen would make very good officers in this regard. It is rather amusing to find that after the commissioner's con-

demnation of policemen as honorary inspectors, he finishes up by saying, "This, of course, is inevitable in such a system. Although it is universally condemned no satisfactory alternative seems to be apparent." So, it is more or less a "yes-no" policy throughout. He next deals with the education of our natives. He has not told us anything that the department does not already know. It is already laid down that the Hendren curriculum is the method under which the natives are to be taught.

The education of the natives was handed over to our Education Department some years ago, so that they are all controlled by school teachers of that department. They are taught under the Hendren curriculum which was put forward at the Queensland University some time back. I am unable to follow the commissioner's reasoning in this respect. He recommended that a special native curriculum be used in native schools on Government settlements and missions. That is already in operation. I do not know why he wants to emphasise those things that are already being done. He recommends that legislation be enacted to provide for the removal of neglected native children from their parents, by the Commissioner of Native Affairs, to these institutions, with the right of appeal to a magistrate by aggrieved parents. Surely not many members have forgotten the controversy and harsh words that were published in the Press in 1936 when this Act was amended. It was criticised from one end of the State to the other. Various organisations wrote letters to the Press, to every member of Parliament and to the Government in condemnation of the measure.

The only difference between what is already law and what the commissioner has recommended, is that the recommendations provide for the right of appeal to a magistrate by an aggrieved person. That would not work very satisfactorily as far as the department is concerned. The majority of those shifted by warrant are children living in bush camps somewhere in the back country of the North with full-blooded parents. Imagine their having the right of appeal to a magistrate! Where would the case be heard, and, with the lapse of time, what would happen to the children? It would not work. I hope the Government gives serious consideration before making any move to amend the law in this regard. The

report contains a heap of statistics which have only been copied from the files of the department. They are of no value either to the Government or members. The report also contained a recommendation in regard to the Sunday Island mission. It was suggested that that mission, being on an island and barren country, ought to be permitted to establish itself inland. I do not know where the commissioner got his information from, but it is very much out of date.

The Sunday Island mission was permitted to shift to the mainland a number of years ago, and it was moved inland to a selected spot of very good country. It only lasted 12 months because the natives refused to stop there—they returned to the island. The mission authorities shifted their buildings and started a garden on the mainland, but the natives just decided to go back to Sunday Island, and that is where they are now. We find in this report a recommendation that the Government give permission to the people to go inland. I do not know where the information was collected, but it is very much out of date and very misleading. As I have already pointed out, the commissioner evidently set himself out to criticise the administration of the department and particularly Government institutions.

I consider his criticism might have been tempered with some fairness and facts. There has been a shortage of permanent staff, labour, materials and finance during the war period of seven or eight years. This commissioner apparently followed the line of popularity and criticised without giving full consideration to the circumstances when the neglect took place. He makes a recommendation on legislation in the report. The consideration of that can be left until the time when the Government introduces amending legislation, if it ever does, but I am sure it will be left in abeyance, like all other activities of the Department of Native Affairs. I repeat that there will be no advantage from the Government's legislation, and nothing will be gained from this report, because the only thing lacking in the administration of the department is finance. Until the Government is prepared to spend £100,000 on a three-year or five-year plan, the conditions for natives will not improve. The plans for improvement are already on the files, and all that is now necessary is for the Government to carry out its electioneer-

ing promises and provide finance, and the department will do the rest.

I do not wish to discuss the subject any further, but I hope that the Rev. Mr. Best will be able to see that, although there is a vast difference in the attitude of the past and present Administrations, he will at least be able to rely on someone to carry out his wishes and keep this Government up to the mark, as he requested.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is an impossible task.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I hope that members who had a burst of enthusiasm in their first session of Parliament will at least continue to assist and see that something is done, without blaming the Commonwealth Government by saying that it would not supply the money. That is no excuse. There was no provision or "if" attached to the promise, and I sincerely hope that the Government's word will be honoured very shortly.

I noticed in the Press quite recently that the Minister for Works stated that money is to be expended on the stock routes of the North-West. I find that the first portion of the programme is to take place in the North-West area. After that job has been completed, the Minister proposes to transfer the engineers and plant back to the extreme North. It seems absurd that this expenditure is to take place first of all in the North-West.

The Minister for Works: If the hon. member has any suggestion that the money might be better employed in some other direction, I shall be glad to hear of it.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I suggest that the Minister is placing the cart before the horse. The movement of cattle is taking place in the extreme North and not in the lower North. With the appeal for food for Britain and the interest I know the Government has in trying to accede to this request, I think the Minister might spend the money in the area where cattle are being moved. The more water there is, the better the condition in which the cattle arrive at the meat works at Broome and Wyndham. That is where the money should be spent. There is little movement of sheep today and what movement there is takes place south of Broome.

The Minister for Works: If the hon. member cares to discuss the matter with me, I shall be glad to hear his views.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I shall be glad to discuss it with the Minister and, if anything can be done to improve the position, I shall be satisfied. That concludes my remarks.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [8.5]: I would like to preface my remarks by saying that I, with other members, am pleased to know that the Royal Family is to visit this State some time next year. I noticed with pleasure that the itinerary sets out a period of 1½ hours for Their Majesties to see the Eastern Goldfields. That is 1½ hours from the time of their arrival by plane at Boulder, and its departure for Perth. While I do not know how much of the Golden Mile they are to see, during that period, it will at least be a satisfaction to know that they will be able to drive around the streets of Kalgoorlie and Boulder so that their subjects will be able to get a glimpse of them.

I wish to express regret at the passing of two members who have graced this Chamber by their presence for a great number of years. I refer to the late Hon. W. D. Johnson and our dearly-beloved old comrade, Arthur Wilson. I first knew Arthur Wilson in Collie in 1912 or 1913, and the opinion I formed of him then has never altered. He was one of Nature's gentlemen and one of those who would put himself to no end of personal inconvenience to do a good turn for any man, woman or child, and I feel sure that the political and public life of this State will be the poorer for his passing.

Dealing with the important matter of housing, I have been very interested in some of the remarks of certain members on the Government side of the House as to how pleased they are with the progress that has been made in their particular electorates for the provision of houses. I have a certain amount of admiration for the hardihood of the Minister in maintaining, in the face of information and the experience of most of the members of the House, that the housing position is quite satisfactory and that it will reach normality in a few years. I remember on the hustings last year the public were

promised that it would be a matter of only 12 months. Prior to the Minister leaving for the Eastern States, he stated that the position would be rectified in something like four years, that it was due to inefficiency, bungling and maladministration on the part of the Labour Government that the shortage of housing continued.

I am sorry that the Minister is not here—I do not suppose he will pay me the compliment of reading my speech in "Hansard"—because I was going to put it to him that his persistency in stating that the material is available and that homes can be provided for two and three-unit families has proved to be a cruel hoax for thousands of people. I know the Minister would not do that intentionally, but people have been buoyed up with the hope that at least they will be able to get a home from the Government or a permit for the material with which to erect a home.

To my mind the position is definitely worse now than it has been for the past two or three years, the only difference being that publicity is not now being given in the Press to cases of hardship, probably for political reasons. Nevertheless, those who are in desperate need of homes cannot be hoaxed all the time. We know quite well that even on the figures supplied by the Government and from our own knowledge of the thousands who have made applications for homes, the position is still desperate indeed. According to the answers given by the Minister to certain members, there are something like 10,000 applicants for homes and I would say that at a conservative estimate there would be another 10,000 of two and three-unit families who desire homes but have not bothered to make application, knowing that there was a ban on the permits for such families or that a very small percentage was being made available for that class of family.

Then there are the hundreds who at one time were optimistic about getting homes of their own and have now abandoned all hope because they realise that they cannot afford to pay the prohibitive costs prevailing today, and so they have not applied for permits. When I consider all the factors I have mentioned and the additional one that there are close on 5,000 marriages annually in this State, and that at least 3,500 of those couples would

be desirous of having homes of their own, I wonder what exactly is the position. Where do these newly married couples get accommodation? Are they living with their in-laws or living in a room with the use of a kitchen? In the very small circle of my acquaintances, speaking comparatively to the whole State, I know that a great deal of domestic discord is being created between men, wives and families because of the cramped and pitiful conditions under which they are living. I do not think it would be possible to assess the amount of human unhappiness and misery caused by the deplorable conditions and the shortage of housing generally.

I was particularly interested in interjections made by the members for Middle Swan and Canning that quite a number of houses had been built for two-unit families in their electorates. That is entirely different from my experience.

Hon. A. H. Panton: And from anyone else's experience.

Mr. STYANTS: I endeavoured to get a permit for a young man who was sufficiently enterprising to buy one of the Air Force buildings at Geraldton and have it conveyed to Kalgoorlie. He had, I suppose, 75 per cent. of his requirements and was intending to marry. He got married, but could not persuade the State Housing Commission to grant him a permit. So, when I hear members on the Government side state that they are getting on quite well in the matter of the provision of homes for two-unit families in their electorates, I wonder whether the Minister is adopting a partisan attitude to his supporters.

The Attorney General: You know very well that he would not.

Mr. STYANTS: I have a very high opinion of the Minister and his integrity, and am rather inclined to think that the members for Middle Swan and Canning exaggerated the position rather than that the Minister was adopting a partisan attitude.

Mr. Fox: I have not been able to get one in my constituency.

Mr. STYANTS: Neither have I. I feel, too, that the Commission has a definite bias against country applicants for permits to build, and I do not say that without reason. I asked a question recently about the

supply of porcelain enamel baths and sinks to workers' and war service homes on the Goldfields and the metropolitan area. I was informed that 31 per cent. of the Commonwealth-State homes in the metropolitan area were provided with galvanised iron baths and 88 per cent. on the Eastern Goldfields. Evidently the Housing Commission is of opinion that for war service and workers' homes on the Goldfields, galvanised iron baths and sinks are quite suitable. Only three porcelain enamel baths and three porcelain enamel sinks have been used in war service homes and workers' homes on the Eastern Goldfields. I think that shows an amount of discrimination that is likely to cause considerable dissension. Certainly it is not fair.

I have had other instances of bias against applications received from the country. It is quite common for permits to be issued in the metropolitan area for houses to a value of £2,000, but if an application were sent from a country district for a home of that value, it would be an odds-on chance that the Commission would whittle it down. I have a particular case in mind that I intend to bring before the notice of the Minister on his return. A police sergeant and acting inspector who resides in Kalgoorlie, has given long service to the community and is due to retire next year, is living in police barracks that he will have to vacate as soon as his service terminates. He submitted an application for a permit to build a house in Busselton so that he could retire there for the remainder of his days. I admit that, considering the shortage of materials, the plans he submitted on the first occasion were somewhat elaborate. He had six children, four of them boys who had served in the Forces and two girls who had been in a reserve industry making uniforms, etc., for Servicemen. His object in making application for this elaborate home was to provide accommodation for his children and grandchildren when they visited him.

The State Housing Commission told him the building was too elaborate. He then reduced the size of the home to four small rooms, including a kitchen. Once again the State Housing Commission, when I interviewed it on the matter, said the house was still too elaborate. All that this highly placed

official was to be entitled to, according to the Commission, was a three-roomed shack, because he proposed to build in the country. That is totally unfair. A man who has held a high and important position—sergeant of police and acting inspector of police—is surely entitled, on his retirement, to something better than a three-roomed weatherboard and asbestos shack. Such a house would not add to the prestige of the Police Force, and it certainly is not much for a man who has given 40 years' service to the State.

The average floor space in a Commonwealth-State home under the main roof is about 1,100 or 1,200 square feet. That is for the metropolitan area and it is the average. There is no quibbling about granting a permit for a house of that size in the metropolitan area. I asked an officer at the State Housing Commission to tell me how many square feet there would be in the proposed building of three rooms and a kitchen which the Commission decided was sufficient for this retired police officer. I was told that it was less than 700 square feet, and the Commission thinks that that is too much! I believe there is a bias against the country districts.

I remember that evidence was given before the Royal Commission on housing to the effect that a man who had arrived here from the Eastern States got a permit to build a home costing £3,000, and he got that permit a few months after he came to the State, because the house was to be erected in the metropolitan area. People in the country are equally entitled to get a permit to build a £2,000 home. I am hopeful the Minister will persuade the State Housing Commission to revise its estimate of what is fair and reasonable comfort for a man who has held a high official position, such as that occupied by the man I have mentioned. I do not wish to refer at any great length to the revelations of the Royal Commission on housing, except to say that I was dumbfounded at the partiality shown to people in high places and to wealthy persons.

I would like the Government to inform me how many of the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner have been implemented. I believe that at least 75 per cent. of them were wise, practicable and desir-

able, but I understand that very few have been adopted. I am aware of the difficulty in providing sufficient accommodation for the people, but the Government definitely promised on the hustings that the people would get accommodation. I shall quote two or three of those promises to show that I do not think the Government should take exception to criticism by members of the Opposition, when we complain that, despite the Government's promises, it has been unable to provide more accommodation than that which was made available by the Labour Government that it condemned. On the 22nd January, 1947, at Mt. Hawthorn, in support of Mr. N. Hard for the State election, Mr. Watts said—

That as with railways Western Australia was making progress by going backwards.

On the 17th February, 1947, at Katanning, during his Policy Speech, Mr. Watts said—

Solution of the housing problem, overlooking the needs of none.

We will press on with the erection of homes under agreement with the Commonwealth Government at a rental not exceeding one-fifth of the family income and will see that an increased number of these homes is allocated to country centres.

The Housing Commission will resume home-building for purchase at the lowest rates of interest; ample funds are available for this purpose; permits to build will be issued where only two persons are to be housed, where hardship is shown. Urgent steps will be taken to increase the supply of materials and for prompt transport of goods from the Eastern States where necessary so that the permit system can be done away with.

We are still a long way from giving up the permit system. On the 18th February, 1947, at Pinjarra, the Premier, during his Policy Speech, said—

A housing speed-up with encouragement of home ownership and a review of the permit system to help deserving cases.

The housing position was distressing. The Commonwealth and State Labour Governments by delay and indecision had landed Western Australia in a housing crisis of a magnitude that should not have occurred.

At Northam, on the 24th February, 1947, Mr. Watts, in support of Mr. N. Baxter for the State election, said—

Both the State and Federal Governments have a rationing complex. They have preferred to dole out through permits and boards the meagre existing supplies, rather than throw themselves into the task of increasing production. They are in a fair way to creating

a new sort of depression—one where business and industry will stagnate—not because people will have no money to buy with, but because there will be little or nothing to spend it on.

At Perth, in support of Mr. S. Perry for the State election, the Premier said on the 24th February, 1947—I quote from the newspaper report—

Earlier in the evening Mr. McLarty won applause by saying that the success of the South Australian Government, led by Mr. Playford, in regard to housing, had been such that when the new Government was formed here after 15th March, one of the first things done would be to find out the reasons for South Australia's success, and by what means costs had been kept so low, compared with other States.

There is no doubt that the Government definitely promised to build homes for the people. The people, having read in the newspapers that all those homes were to be available, are harassing their members to know why they cannot get homes in their particular districts or why a greater share of materials cannot be allocated for the purpose. Another matter I have to complain of in connection with the Housing Commission is this: A wealthy man at Kalgoorlie, who had 97 per cent. of the materials necessary to build a block of flats, applied to the State Housing Commission for a permit. The Commission went completely outside its jurisdiction in saying that the plans did not conform to the health regulations or to the requirements of the local governing body. The plan had been passed by the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council within whose boundaries the block of flats was to be erected.

The Commission then passed the plans on to Dr. Cook to see whether it could get him to condemn the building. Evidently the Commission was not too successful; but Dr. Cook did find fault with the plan. He said that too many people would be living in the one block of flats, and eventually the applicant reduced the number of flats to eight. After all this haggling over a period of months the Commission then said that, in its opinion, the necessity for a number of houses in Kalgoorlie was not evident. I quickly disillusioned the Commission on that point. The man who intended building this block of flats is very wealthy and was not proposing to erect them for the sake of getting much additional income from them. He was among the class of person who would be paying the maximum income

tax rate, some 15s. or 16s. in the pound. The Commission said, however, that there was not a demand for housing accommodation in Kalgoorlie.

I therefore wrote to the man telling him what the State Housing Commission thought about the matter. He immediately prepared a petition signed by 71 of my constituents who were in need of housing accommodation, asking that permission be granted for the erection of this block of eight flats. I want it to be borne in mind that this man had 97 per cent. of the required materials. All he needed was three basins, three baths and 1,000 feet of half-inch water piping. Those 71 people ranged from couples who intended to get married to those who were married and had up to four children. Then the State Housing Commission wanted to know what the rental was going to be for each of the flats. It was told that the rental would be 25s. furnished, which was a particularly moderate sum for that class of accommodation on the Goldfields and would have been quite suitable for a man with a wife and up to two children.

The climax came when, after the applicant had complied with all requirements, the State Housing Commission sent to the Town Clerk in Kalgoorlie a letter in which it wanted to know whether he would co-operate in the selection of tenants. The Commission asked me first whether I would co-operate, but I declined. The Town Clerk was prepared to co-operate and so was the owner of the flats. Then the Housing Commission adopted the attitude that it would be the sole selector of the occupants. That is the dictatorial attitude frequently taken up by the Commission. I am beginning to feel, like the Honorary Minister, that I have not very pleasant feelings towards the State Housing Commission.

I believe that we have assisted, by appointing that Commission, in building up one of the most dictatorial boards that have ever existed in this State, and I am not at all satisfied that the country districts are getting a fair deal compared with the metropolitan area. The present Government is always preaching decentralisation, but we will not get decentralisation if we build commodious houses in the metropolitan area, like the Commonwealth-State houses, while people in the country districts

are told that they must live in three-roomed shacks. That is all I have to say on housing.

The position of the Kalgoorlie Hospital is not at all good. The intermediate ward has been closed for two and a half years. Here is a case of cobwebs, not metaphorically speaking, but in actual fact. This ward, the best appointed in the hospital, has been closed for over two and a half years; and following repeated requests to the Minister for Health, I have been informed that there is no prospect of its being re-opened. Here is an opportunity for the Government to start scraping off some of the cobwebs from the intermediate ward and returning it to service. At present there is only public ward accommodation.

A question I have raised from time to time is that of dental attention for old and indigent people on the Goldfields. I have frequently requested that attention should be given to them comparable to that which can be obtained at the Perth Dental Institute. I would have liked to see a branch of that institute opened on the Goldfields; but I realise there is a fairly logical objection to that, in that the Perth Dental Institute is primarily for the purpose of training dental apprentices, and to establish a branch in Kalgoorlie would mean creating another staff there. Until about 12 months ago, on the Eastern Goldfields, members of the Australian Dental Association performed a great amount of honorary work for these people at the Government hospital. But because of the fact that certain fees were payable to the Perth Dental Hospital the members of that association decided they would no longer continue that honorary work. I am given to understand by the Minister that they demanded full rates for work done for these old people.

It is true that a railway pass is available to old-age pensioners or indigent people to come to Perth in order to obtain treatment at the Dental Institute; but, when a number of extractions are necessary and dental plates have to be provided, it is necessary for the people concerned to stay in the metropolitan area for two or three months, and these old folk are not able to do that. So at present no treatment is available except for those who are patients in the hospital. The Goldfields branch of the Australian Dental Association has expressed willingness to do any

work for in-patients suffering pain as a result of dental troubles. In Kalgoorlie and Boulder there is a population of something like 25,000 people in an area of three or four square miles. In such circumstances I think the Government could easily provide free dental treatment approaching that given to people in the metropolitan area. It seems to me that not only on the Eastern Goldfields but in country districts generally people are not given the same service by government departments that is received by people in the metropolitan area.

I want to refer to the late running of trains to Kalgoorlie—particularly passenger trains, and to a great extent goods trains. This late running is totally disorganising the commercial and business life of the town. It is quite a common occurrence for the express trains to arrive two, two and a half, and three hours late. Sometimes they arrive six hours late. When the express is notified as being on time, it is something that is commented upon over the broadcasting stations on the Eastern Goldfields. When mails arrive two or three hours late and also goods trains—particularly those with perishable commodities on board—the whole of the commercial life of the community is disorganised and everything is thrown out of balance. I know it is a popular thing to blame the locomotives, but we had a lot of late running trains prior to the last 12 or 18 months. I know, from travelling on the trains and from conversations with the drivers at the Kalgoorlie end, that late running is frequently not caused by any engine failure. On the contrary, the enginemmen make up a considerable amount of time between Southern Cross and Kalgoorlie because there are few stops.

The Railway Department notified last Thursday morning that the Westland was one hour and forty-four minutes late out of Southern Cross. When the driver got to Kalgoorlie an hour late he told me he had made up most of the delay by the time he reached Bullabulling, which is 44 miles from Kalgoorlie. Members know that there is an electric staff system, which is the safe-working system of the railways. The section from Bullabulling to Bali takes 21 minutes to cover by express train. The driver told me that his express, the Westland, was held for 32 minutes at Bullabulling while waiting for a train to clear a

21 minute section. He said that he then proceeded for five or six miles to Coolgardie. The Westland is not scheduled to stop at Coolgardie at all, but he was blocked there for another 18 minutes while waiting for a train that was either shunting or in the section ahead of him.

It is not only the locomotives that break down; there seems to be carelessness on the part of the administration of the system. In addition, where the time-table allowance is a minute for stopping at these stations, it is frequently exceeded. I suggest to members who travel on this line that they time the stops and see how often the minute is extended to two and three minutes. If they multiply the additional minutes by the 30 or 40 stations between Northam and Kalgoorlie they will get some idea of why the trains run late. Of course, the locomotives do break down. They were worked threadbare during the war, and they sometimes fail, but that is incidental to any class of machinery. Quite a lot of blame is attributed to locomotive failure when the locomotives are not at fault at all. It is very rarely that an engine loses time so that it gets in half an hour or an hour late. That is generally found to be due to traffic causes.

The condition of the central school in Kalgoorlie is very poor. Some of the rooms are badly lighted and, of course, the building needs to be completely renovated. A lot of work should be done on the outside of it, and estimates approaching some thousands of pounds have been submitted to the department. But the Minister always says he is not able to get the local contractors to tender. I made some inquiries and found there was a certain amount of justification for what he said. I believe, however, that the Government has the remedy in its own hands. Because there is such a lot of private work with less supervision, there are some contractors who are loth to tender for Government jobs where they get strict supervision and, perhaps, a lesser margin of profit.

Now, the State Housing Commission is a government instrumentality functioning under the direction of a Minister, and I suggest that if these contractors will not submit a tender for at least some of the government work that is offering, then their supplies of materials should be held up by the Housing Commission. I made this sug-

gestion to the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council, and it created quite a stir as far as the contractors were concerned. I do not want it thought that all the contractors come within that category, but some of them will not tender for government work. They make all kinds of excuses. They say there is too much supervision and that they are not allowed to substitute materials when those stated in the specifications are not available. From making inquiries of the Public Works Department supervisor, I am satisfied that those are excuses and not explanations for not tendering for Government work.

As far as the goldmining industry is concerned, I, as usual, do not know anything about it first-hand. The Chamber of Mines never consults the goldfields members. It by-passes and completely ignores us as far as the requirements of the goldmining industry is concerned. It has direct access to the Minister—not only this Minister for Mines, but each one ever since I have been the member for Kalgoorlie, a period of 13 years—so I have no first-hand information of the position of the goldmining industry. I have read some interesting and informative articles on the subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat for a moment? There is a conference in progress on the cross benches on the Government side. It has been going on for far too long. The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. STYANTS: We goldfields members do not know whether these articles are inspired by the Chamber of Mines, or where they come from, but we do know that we are not taken into the confidence of the Chamber. Whilst we read that the financial position of the mines is parlous, we do not know whether that is a fact or not. I would say as an observer, however, that the margin of profit on the mines—if they show a profit—must be much smaller now than pre-war because of the tremendous increases that have taken place in their costs. Those increases do not occur so much in wages as in the cost of the commodities necessary to carry on the industry. The wages, particularly of the contract men, are at the same rate now as pre-war. What I am afraid of is that if the position, as it is shown in these articles in the Press, is that the industry is working on a very small

margin of profit, then the increase in fares and freights will just about push it over the brink into insolvency.

There is not the slightest doubt that an increase in fares and freights will inevitably bring about an increase in the cost of living on the Goldfields which will be followed by an increase in the basic wage. Not only will that impose an additional burden on the mining industry, but there will, of course, be the increased rates on the commodities that the miners require for their own use. This is where the Government could show that it is really anxious and willing to assist the industry. Despite the Acting Premier's answer to my question in connection with the postponement of the application of the increase in fares and freights to the Goldfields, that it would be impracticable, I do not think it would be at all. I see no difficulty in the matter.

I know the Premier is fully seized with the importance of keeping this industry going at full pressure because he has put up strong cases to the Commonwealth Government for assistance, and that Government has decided to help in a limited way. While not giving a straight-out subsidy on all gold produced, it is prepared to assist in other directions, particularly in the case of three mines on the Golden Mile and, I understand, a couple of others on the Murchison field. But this is where the State Government could assist: It might only be a matter of six or twelve months until America, or the nations that are signatories to the Bretton-Woods agreement, will consent to an increase in the price of gold.

The trouble with the goldmining industry is that, although costs have risen enormously since before the war, the price received for the metal is at world parity and is fixed by the conditions of the Bretton-Woods agreement. I was interested to hear the Minister for the Interior—the Federal member for Kalgoorlie—in a discussion on that matter in Kalgoorlie recently. He put up good reasons why the Commonwealth Government cannot subsidise outright the production of gold. America has made it clear that it will not purchase any gold that has been produced with the assistance of a subsidy. Mr. Johnson informed his audience that Canada, which recently did pay a subsidy on the production of gold, had been brought

to heel, and had now decided to discontinue the subsidy under the conditions of the Bretton-Woods agreement. Another direction in which this State could assist the mining industry would be through a reduction in water charges. The average cost of water to the mining industry is about 5s. 1d. per thousand gallons. Excess water is charged to householders at 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons and market gardeners are charged 2s. per thousand.

It would appear that, to assist the gold-mining industry to survive the difficult period through which it is now passing, the State Government might reduce the water charges until such time as the financial stringency has eased. I am particularly impressed with the disabilities that people live and labour under, not only on the Goldfields but in country areas generally.

I read with dismay that there is to be a further reduction by the Commonwealth Government of the petrol ration. I do not know whether members have given much thought to the disabilities of people living on the Goldfields as compared with those residing in the metropolitan area, particularly in the matter of their annual leave. When there were no restrictions on petrol, the car-owner on the Goldfields—a large number of them have their own cars—could buy sufficient petrol to bring his wife and family to the metropolitan area or still further afield to a seaside resort, such as Bunbury, Albany or Busselton.

For a number of years past, however, unless two or three were prepared to pool their petrol, they have had no prospect of getting even from Kalgoorlie to Perth on the amount of fuel available to them. They are at the additional disadvantage of having to put their cars on blocks and—in the case of a man with a wife and three or four children—of having to pay perhaps £20 to get to the metropolitan area. Having done that, they then commence their annual leave on the same basis as those who reside in the metropolitan area. They suffer so many other disabilities for which they do not receive consideration that I sometimes wonder—particularly in summer on a hot and dusty day—why any people reside in outback districts at all; why they do not come to the metropolitan area where all the amenities are provided and where they would be better off financially.

I anticipate that members will have an opportunity to discuss the railways at a later stage in the session, but there are some points to which I would draw the attention of the Minister and which I think might be dealt with to the financial betterment and smoother running of the railways if action can be taken in the near future. I am sorry that the Chief Mechanical Engineer has left the State on a mission to England to supervise the construction of a number of engines, because my remarks will be a criticism of his management of the locomotive position in this State. The Cyclone spark-arrester was originally an American invention, and from what I can find out from those associated with the first test done here, the engine steamed fairly well, but the spark-arrester was not perfect. It was decided to put two or three extra vanes into the device, and it then became not only a spark-arrester, but a train-arrester, as the engine would not steam.

I have seen along the track engines that previously steamed freely, but that, when they had these contraptions on them, would not steam, and therefore lost three or four hours between Kalgoorlie and Merredin, as was borne out by the statements of the drivers and crews. Some of the engines still steam well when fitted with the Cyclone spark-arrester, which is not really a spark-arrester but a spark-deadener. The great objection of the enginemens to this device, apart from the fact that it interferes with the steaming qualities of the locomotive, is that it agitates the sparks round dead plates until the spark dies out of the cinder, which is then carried up the funnel and, instead of being carried clear, as is the case with the H.D.D. spark-arrester, just clears the funnel and comes down on the driver and fireman. They fear that in ten years' time no man now on the footplate will be able to pass the eyesight test, owing to the irritating effect of the cinders.

I rode on one such engine from Bullahulling to Coolgardie. When the regulator is shut off, it is impossible to look out of the cab because of the cinders coming down in a shower. They seriously interfere with the crew whose eyes, noses, mouths and ears become filled with them. The men have a distinct objection to that. In the last three or four days I have been

informed that a method is being adopted to make the engines steam when fitted with the Cyclone spark-arrester. Before the efficiency of the device was thoroughly tested and proved, 100 sets were purchased. I do not know how much they cost, but from looking at them I would say it was probably a considerable sum. They can now be seen in a row at the East Perth running-sheds, it having been discovered that they are not a success. Many of the engines had the box or H.D.D. spark-arresters taken out of them.

It is a two days' job for a boilermaker and his assistant to replace each of those arresters. As the wheat season will commence very soon, I do not know what will be the position regarding spark-arresting appliances on engines in the wheat districts. Those responsible showed lack of business acumen, or impetuosity, in purchasing 100 Cyclone spark-arresters before they had been fully tested and found efficient. In the last two or three days I have been told of a device—I understand it is very crude—to make engines steam when fitted with Cyclone spark-arresters. The method is one which restricts the area of the exhaust pipe of the locomotive. When I was a young fireman, that was known as "jimmying" an engine, and was strictly forbidden by the department, because the engine has a scientifically designed exhaust pipe built to clear the cylinders of the whole of the exhaust steam before the intake of live steam at the end of the valve's travel.

I have always been told that if the size of the exhaust is restricted it creates back pressure on the cylinders because the exhaust steam is not cleaned out before the live steam comes in. It is proposed to reduce the size of the exhaust pipe on the engines and they will then steam. I know when we were sent out to do a job for two or three weeks without supervision we used to put a jimmy in some of the engines, and it is an old-established fact that if the exhaust cavity is reduced by any means the engine will steam. Just what effect it will have on the driving mechanism or the locomotive driving boxes, rods and big ends, I do not know. On looking at some of the experiments that have been made over the last 18 months, I would not be surprised at the engineers attempting anything.

I want to refer to a costly experiment which was carried out on the authority of the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Mr. Mills. A saturated engine is one where steam comes off at 212 degrees F. and passes straight into the internal steam pipe, and then down to the cylinders. In a system of superheating the steam is taken through a series of tubes known as superheated elements, then through plain tubes and heated up to about 750 degrees F., and because of the intense heat to which these superheated elements are subjected when the regulator is shut off, a circulating valve is put on. When the regulator is shut off a certain amount of steam is still allowed through to stop the pipes from burning out. For reasons best known to himself Mr. Mills removed the circulating valve. The mechanics and the enginemen tell me that this has been the cause of innumerable burnt-out elements, and engines lying idle for long periods.

I have seen an engine with the circulating valve removed and the superheated header was almost completely burnt out of the engine. I am satisfied that if an investigation were made it would be found that thousands of hours of locomotive power have been lost to the State because of the removal of the circulating valves from superheated engines. I have made inquiries all over Australia as to the means of getting steam to circulate through the elements when the regulator is shut off. In New South Wales they have a new G. 38 engine which has a system known as the cracked regulator. That is an attachment made from the cylinder to a tie rod and the driver has to keep his regulator open to such an extent that the steam will circulate through the valve to prevent burning out. The Trans-Australian Railways have a device which has the same effect, but instead of a register on a dial in front of the driver there is a fierce shrieking whistle which takes place in the cab if the driver is not opening the regulator sufficiently to keep the vacuum from forming in the cylinder, and to prevent the superheated elements from being affected.

I am quite satisfied that it was a mistake and that the circulating valve should not be taken off. That fact now appears to be realised by Mr. Mills himself, because I understand an order is now out for the

circulating valves to be replaced on all superheated engines. So I repeat that there have been some costly experiments made by the Chief Mechanical Engineer. He has an oiling device on the ASG engines which is giving no end of trouble as far as hot boxes and driving boxes are concerned. It has been customary over the years to have an oil pad on the bottom of the journal for the purpose of lubricating the axle, but Mr. Mills persists in his idea. As far as lubrication is concerned, scores of hours of locomotive power have been lost because of hot boxes. The U class engines which did such a good job here are affected. I was informed by a railway official that one of these engines had gone to the Midland Junction Workshops and had been returned to traffic without an oil pad under the journal, and that some other oiling device had been attached. The engine did a trip from Perth to Pinjarra and back and was immediately returned to the workshops with five hot driving boxes.

Throughout the length and breadth of the State, wherever there are ASG engines and wherever repairs are carried out on them, mechanical staff are employed on the ASGs to the exclusion of all other engines. Last week I asked the Minister for Railways how many of the 24 modified ASG engines had been available for traffic continually over the previous two months. The Minister's answer was that only seven out of the 24 had been available. What a calamity these engines are to the service of the State! I also asked some questions in connection with the number of frames these engines had broken over the previous two years throughout the State. I think the answer was 12 or 14.

The breaking of the frame of an engine was unheard of with engines under the age of 30 years. It is true that when the 19 inch superheated cylinder is put on to a frame that is not scientifically designed for it, it will have certain effects. Extra strain is put on the engine because the tractive power is increased so much that it is out of proportion to the frame on which it has been put, and quite a number of them break down. That is a clear indication to me that the engine is built out of all proportion. I have been told that with the ordinary type of locomotive—and I have seen instances of it—a P.R. engine has been held up for some weeks be-

cause the mechanics were not able to obtain a quadrant bolt.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do they not make a bolt such as that in the workshops?

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, and if any of the country depots send down to Midland Junction a request for a part for an ASG engine it is sent on the next train, but the other engines are held up for many weeks. One engine was held up for some weeks for a part to be sent from Midland. Not only at Kalgoorlie but also at Norseman, Collie and other places wherever there are ASG engines working, it is the same story, and this comes not only from the drivers but also from the officials and from the mechanics, so that we can fairly conclude that the ASG engines, taken by and large, have been a tragedy for this State.

If we compare the mileage run by an ASG engine over a period of 12 months with that of a PR engine, we find a great discrepancy. The PR engine probably does 50 per cent. more mileage. The ASG goes on a trip, runs a few hundred miles and then has to be brought in and is idle for a week, either waiting to go into the workshops or, having got in, waiting for repairs to be completed. A great idea was to have a rivetless water-tender for these engines, and the experience has been that it is almost necessary to follow them around with a spot welding plant to repair parts that are breaking away.

A sum of £234 has been spent on the four locomotives located on the Eastern Goldfields, for services rendered by a private firm that has a welding plant, in spot welding tenders and broken frames, and these engines have even been followed as far as Norseman for spot welding jobs. So I repeat that the ASG engine has been a calamity, even allowing for the shortage of tractive power. The two redeeming features of these engines, are that they ride particularly well and, when in working order, can haul a particularly heavy load on a 45 lb. rail.

The "S" class engine which Mr. Gibson inquired into has caused a tremendous amount of expense to the State in the matter of laying up and repairs. There was excessive wear of the steam chest cages and, despite the recommendations made over

many months by mechanics that the lubrication was not effective, the Chief Mechanical Engineer has only recently decided to use a four-feed lubricator rather than the orthodox two-feed lubricator. This is the only thing I believe that saved this type of engine from condemnation by Mr. Gibson. I have asked for what period these "S" class engines have been in traffic and have been waiting to get into the shops or have been in the shops for repair, and I find there has been almost as much time spent by new "S" class engines waiting to get into the shops, or in the shops, as on traffic. The enginemen like the "S" class locomotive but, from the mechanical point of view, they are a very expensive job. However, I understand that the Chief Mechanical Engineer has at last condescended to put in four-feed lubricators and that these engines are now not getting the excess wear in the steam chest cages that they were and that they are putting up an improved performance.

I should like to know what has become of the project for blending Collie coal. I understood that the Government intended to erect a plant at Collie costing about £100,000 for the purpose of blending the various coals for locomotive use. I believe that such a plant would return the cost tenfold over a short period of years. I have been told that the site selected in Collie has not been approved by the municipality and that there is consequently a hitch in the plans for erecting the blending plant. I am satisfied, as is almost every railwayman, that greater efficiency could be obtained from Collie coal and that less time would be lost through dirty fires and indifferent cleaning of locomotives if the blending of coal were undertaken. I hope that the project has not been abandoned.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. STYANTS: I am pleased to hear that. The blending of the coal would make for improved working conditions for the enginemen, economy in the direction of obtaining a better class of coal and the better running of trains.

The Minister for Railways: This is the first I have heard of it.

Mr. STYANTS: We have engines of the "U" class here, engines into which was

oil fuel. A different system of throwing the flame in the firebox was adopted to save any damage being done to the super-heating elements or the tube plate. When our engines were converted to burn oil, however, the flame was directed in the opposite way, namely, from the firebox end to the super-heating elements, thus burning out many and damaging the tube plate. Many of these locomotives have been laid up because the flame, instead of being thrown from the tube plate to the firebox door, has been thrown in the opposite direction. I have been told that this arrangement is to be altered. Quite a number of engines which have been oil-burners have been converted back to coal burning, and quite a number that are to be continued as oil-burners will have the same type of apparatus and the same throw of flame as the "U" class. Therefore I am of opinion that some very costly experiments have been made on the locomotive stock of this State.

It is not altogether obsolescence that has caused the difficulties arising from the shortage of tractive power; it is these experiments which have been made that have been the cause of laying up many locomotives, particularly through the burning-out of the super-heating elements and the removal of the circulating valve on the super-heated engine. If the Minister will make inquiries, he will find complete substantiation of my statement, so long as he does not go to the Chief Mechanical Engineer. If he inquires of some of that officer's subordinates, he will obtain a wholesale condemnation of the removal of the circulating valve. The fact that the Chief Mechanical Engineer has decided to replace it is an indication that its removal was a failure. Had that officer's idea been established elsewhere, one could have understood his action but, so far as I can ascertain, on all superheated engines operating in Australia there is a device that permits of the same result as did the circulating valve used in this State.

One other matter on which I wish to touch has already been raised and that relates to Communism and the attempt that has been made by certain members to link up the party to which I have the honour to belong with the Communist Party in Australia. There is not a vestige of truth in it as far as we are concerned. The Com-

munist Party is just a bad headache to the Labour Party in Australia. We have endeavoured by all the means in our power to rid ourselves of the influence of Communism; but for some reason or other, communists attach themselves to the Australian Labour Party, particularly if they think that by doing so some discredit can be cast upon us. Then they attach themselves to our Party like barnacles to a ship's bottom.

I was very displeased with the member for Middle Swan a couple of weeks ago when he constantly reiterated the statement that members on this side of the House were either communists or fellow travellers with the Communist Party. The ideals and objectives, and the means of achieving them, of the Communist Party and of the Australian Labour Party are as far apart as the poles. It was particularly sorrowful to me to see a young man like the member for Middle Swan, who was born with all the advantages that wealth and a good education could bestow upon him, so unsympathetic to those who have not had the good fortune to be born under such favourable circumstances. I think he mentioned that the Eureka Youth League should be banned from association with all other sections of the community because its members did not believe in God.

When I noted the bitter, vindictive, malignant, lying attitude of the hon. member, I wondered what degree of faith he had in the Supreme Being, because I am certain the hon. member knew that what he constantly repeated was not true. After having listened to him for about half an hour, I was convinced he had but a superficial knowledge of or faith in the Almighty or in the Christian philosophy as portrayed in the life of Christ and as set forth in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the New Testament. If he had anything but a superficial belief in the Almighty and the Christian philosophy, he would not have adopted the nasty, vindictive attitude he did in constantly repeating what he must have known were deliberate lies. The political venom was dripping from the tip of his tongue. He was prepared to say anything that came to the tip of his tongue. I would not say that it went to his mind, because had it done so he probably would have refrained from letting it drip from the tip of his tongue. I believe it was only for

political purposes and with the desire to blacken members on this side of the House that he made such a vitriolic and untruthful attack on us.

I wish to express my appreciation of those other members on the Government side of the House who have criticised Communism but who did not associate the members on this side of the House with the Communist Party or its activities. I was particularly surprised to hear some of the Liberal members talk about banning the Communist Party, as that is not the policy of the Liberal Party in this State. The Liberal Party does not believe in banning the Communist Party; it believes in freedom of political thought to any institution or person, just as did the founder of the Liberal Party, Mr. Gladstone, many years ago. The meaning of Liberalism is freedom of political thought for any institution or any individual. I noticed in the newspaper that Mr. Downing, the State President of the Liberal Party, when addressing the annual congress, said that the Liberal Party's policy was not to ban the Communist Party. But, of course, it is a different matter with the Country and Democratic League. The landed gentry have for centuries been advocates of ruthless repression by force of any body or person who differed from its opinions. That is history.

The landed gentry, as represented by the Country and Democratic League, are running true to form when they say that the Communist Party, because it holds a different political faith from theirs, should be banned by the most rigorous application of the law. I was particularly interested in the speech of the member for Swan and his statement of the history of the inauguration and progress of the Communist Party in Australia. But he spoiled his speech, in my opinion, by saying he considered that the Chifley Government was not doing everything it should do to suppress the Communist Party. That immediately placed his speech in the category of political propaganda. I regard most of the outpourings of the capitalistic Press and those opposed to the Labour movement in Australia as being nothing but political propaganda, the desire being to prejudice the electors of Australia against the Labour Party. I draw the attention of the House to the lack of

activity that was evidenced on the part of anti-Labour Governments from about 1925 onwards.

It is well known that in 1925 the Communist Party was getting a foothold in Australia; it is also well known that the Crimes Act was in force then. It was passed in 1914 and I think it is the Act mentioned by the member for Swan, the 1914-1932 statute. I have gathered some newspaper cuttings showing what was the position in 1925. At Dandenong, on the 9th December, 1925, Mr. Bruce called on the people of Australia to assist him to wipe out the viper of Communism. He said that the Labour Council of New South Wales consisted of 120 unions. Eleven of twelve members of the executive were also members of the Communist Party. That was in 1925, and the Crimes Act was then in force. If the Communist Party was such a menace to Australia then, why did not Mr. Bruce take action against it? As the result of the 1925 election, the Bruce-Page Government assumed office.

Between 1925 and 1928, as far as I can find, there never was a communist prosecution, either under the Crimes Act or under any other Act. I cannot find that anything effective was done between 1928 and 1939 beyond an endeavour to stir up prejudice in the minds of the people against the Australian Labour Party whenever there was a Commonwealth or a State election. The same tactics were adopted then as are being adopted today, of associating the Communist Party with the Labour Party for the purpose of reducing the chances of Australian Labour Party candidates being elected.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Was it not at the 1925 election that Tom Walsh danced on the Union Jack?

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, and it was subsequently found that he was in the pay of the anti-Labour forces because on the verge of Federal elections he would stir up trouble for the Labour Party. He was rewarded by getting a cushy job on the administration of one of the islands adjacent to Australia. In 1940 the Australian Country Party had a man known everywhere as "Shoot-'em-down-Thorby." He was going to straighten up the Communist Party; and perhaps if they had let Thorby loose with

a machine gun, history thereafter would have had a different trend. Mr. Thorby was Deputy Leader of the Country Party and this is what he said:

I will wipe out the Australian Communist Party pretty soon. I have all my plans made and I have the 100 per cent. support of the people of Australia.

The Government was returned with a majority in both Federal Houses, but I cannot find any indication that at that time it took any action against the leaders of the Communist Party.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The machine gun must have jammed.

Mr. STYANTS: Something must have gone wrong with it.

The Acting Premier: Mr. Thorby was defeated.

Mr. STYANTS: It is true that a few of the lesser lights were interned by the Government because of their attitude in the early stages of the war; but I did not see that the leaders of the Communist Party had much done to them; and when I mention the leaders, I refer to the gentlemen of whom the member for Swan spoke—Ernie Thornton, Healy, Phillips and Nelson, of the Miners' Union. They were leaders of the Communist Party and the communist-influenced unions in Australia at that time, if we are to believe what the members of the anti-Labour parties in Australia said. I do not know whether they were communists or not, but the anti-Labour people definitely said that they were. So we find that although the Crimes Act has been on the statute book since 1914, and for a great number of years—between 1925 and 1940—there was an anti-Labour Government with a majority in both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament, a Government comprising parties that members opposite say are definitely opposed to Communism, nothing was done to curb the activities of the communist leaders.

Mr. Bovell: Communism is a greater menace today than it was then, do you not think?

Mr. STYANTS: I would not be too sure about that.

Mr. May: It would have been more easily controlled then.

Mr. Marshall: If it had been nipped in the bud, it would not have had any flowers.

Mr. STYANTS: Mr. Menzies, the Federal Parliamentary leader of the Liberal Party adopts the correct attitude towards Communism. When asked what he thought of banning the party or punishing the members, this is what he said, according to a Press statement—

If strikes are illegal and a communist foments a strike, he should be punished for that illegal act.

I think we all agree with that.

If a communist is a traitor he should be punished for his treason, but to place a ban upon a person because he belongs to the Communist Party, without having to pin on him the fact of having done an illegal act, would be a travesty of civil liberty.

Mr. Bovell: I think that if you read "Hansard" you will see that my speech was similar to that of Mr. Menzies.

Mr. STYANTS: The Liberal Party does not propose to ban Communism. It believes in combating Communism in other ways. The aims, ideals and objectives of the Communist Party, and its means of achieving them, are so diametrically opposed to those of the Australian Labour Party that anyone who has given honest consideration to the matter will realise that to the Labour Party the Communist Party is just as much a menace as it is to members of other parties that are opposed to us politically. I can remember Lenin's advice given many years ago to the Third Internationale, his society for the purpose of extending Communism throughout the civilised world. He said that the Communist Party should give support to Socialist and Labour parties in exactly the same way as a rope gave support to a hanging man. I can also remember that early in the history of the Communist Party in Australia reference was made to smashing the Australian Labour Party. But the Communist Party, like other parties, has found it a difficult task to smash the Australian Labour Party.

I would warn members opposite that in this constant decrying of the Australian Labour Party in connection with Communism and their talk of the Labour Party's affiliation with and sympathy for Communism, they may be destroying the greatest shield that the public has against Communism in Australia. The communists realise that, too, and that is why they oppose us with their literature, and their pamphlets and dodgers at election time, and every time

they get a chance. The only occasion when they link themselves with us is when they think it will bring odium on the Labour Party. On those occasions they make public utterances to the effect that they propose to support one of our candidates. I can remember that down through the years this type of propaganda from anti-Labour forces has been carried on. We have been dubbed everything that is disreputable in politics. I can remember that during the 1914-18 war we were accused repeatedly of being in the pay of the Germans and accepting German gold.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I fought my election in France on German gold.

Mr. STYANTS: The communists would destroy the Labour Party if they had the power to do so. We have been called everything that is disreputable in politics. We have been accused of being disloyal and of subscribing to all the isms that were in bad repute. We have been accused of subscribing to Bolshevism, Socialism, I.W.W'ism and of being Sinn Feiners. Every epithet in the political dictionary has been thrown at us, but I believe that many of those who are condemning the communists so vociferously at present are doing so simply for the purpose of political propaganda with a view to prejudicing the Australian Labour Party in the eyes of the public. However, I consider that that party is the greatest buffer between the people and Communism in Australia. The anti-Labour forces seem to have adopted Hitler's policy. He believed in telling stories and repeating them so often that eventually he got the majority of the people to believe them. Extracts from the diary of his propaganda merchant, Goebels, were published, and I was particularly struck with one of them, as follow:—

The Fuhrer fully endorses my anti-Bolshevik propaganda. That is the best horse we now have in our stable. He also approves of my tactics in letting the Bolshevik reports of victories go out into the world unchallenged. Let Europe get the creeps; it will regain its sense all the sooner. Besides, our anti-Bolshevik propaganda is the apple of discord in the enemy camp.

I believe that is the policy which is being adopted by the anti-Labour forces in Australia today. They think the apple of discord is to sow distrust of Communism and its association with the Labour Party so that it will be reflected to the advantage of the

anti-Labour forces when it comes to an election. I wonder whether members opposite have given serious consideration to just what is involved in their proposal to ban the Communist Party. I would say in the first place it would mean a sacrifice of principle. I believe the principle should be that which the very word "Liberalism" indicates, namely, freedom of political thought for every institution and person. Legislation would have to be passed to deal with people having communistic ideas, and it would be a criminal offence for anyone to hold or express views favourable to Communism. We can imagine the extraordinary difficulties of enforcing such a law, and the injustices that would be likely to arise out of it. There would not be sufficient prisons in Australia to hold all the avowed members of the Communist Party.

Mr. Graham: Especially if the member for Middle Swan happened to be the Attorney General.

Mr. STYANTS: It would be quite easy for anyone, under a system of that kind, to lay an information against any person, no matter how innocent he might be. In countries where suppression of the rights of people or sections of the people has occurred, suppression has followed suppression until eventually something similar to what happened in Germany has taken place, where there were concentration camps full of political prisoners. That policy was followed by Hitler. First he attacked the socialists, and then the communists. He next attacked the churches, dealing with the R.C.s. first because they were in a minority. He then dealt with the Lutherans. Suppression followed suppression until he started on the trade unions and then the Socialist Party itself. That, I believe, would be the inevitable result if we attempted to ban the Communist Party in Australia. We would very soon build up a state of affairs something like that which obtained in Germany, according to the books I have read, where a father was afraid to discuss State matters—unless he was in favour of Nazism—at the meal table with his family because his sons or daughters might be supporters or members of the Gestapo. To ban effectively any minority movement in Australia we would have to adopt the same policy.

Instead of being proud of our principles, as we are today, we would in a very short

time create a position that would be abhorrent to the majority of Australians. I can almost imagine that under such a system the member for Middle Swan, as the chief marshall of the Gestapo, and possibly the member for York and the member for Irwin-Moore and some other members of the C.D.L., would have information laid to them in connection with certain members on this side of the House. Then probably we would have the member for North Perth as the Chief Justice.

The Minister for Lands: Seeing that you are dealing with the question so fully, tell us of the attitude of the R.S.L. towards it.

Mr. STYANTS: I do not know what its attitude is.

The Minister for Lands: It has been published often enough. The R.S.L. has carried resolutions to ban Communism.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: The R.S.L. is non-political. We are dealing with politics here.

Mr. STYANTS: I am dealing with the attitude of the A.L.P. If we attempted to ban the Communist Party in Australia, we would find ourselves in the position of having created a Gestapo, and a state of affairs that would be loathsome to the majority of the people in Australia, because it would be an infringement of their civil rights. The passing of legislation will not do way with the political opinions, or any other types of opinions, held by the people. If we banned the Communist Party, we would simply drive it underground, and that would not have the effect of suppressing it at all. We have a better chance of dealing with its activities by having it on the surface.

If we drove the communists underground, they would simply change their name, and we would have the Gestapo agents trying to establish that their activities were seditious, or something of that kind, and thousands of innocent people, as well as the guilty ones, would go inside on the word of the Gestapo agents. The authorities tried to suppress them in Canada and England. Instead of achieving their object, they simply drove them underground, and it was well known that they had representatives in Parliament, operating under a different political title. The remedy suggested by the member for Swan, that they should be compelled to sign a pledge that they do not belong to

the Communist Party, has been in operation for the last quarter of a century in our party. But many of those people are totally unscrupulous, and will sign a statement to the effect that they do not belong to the Communist Party, and then come into the inner councils of the Labour movement and take away the information. It would be very foolish to endeavour to ban them.

We have plenty of legislation on the statute book now to deal with these people. I believe that any person—whether a member of the Communist, the Liberal, the Labour or any other Party—who by utterance or action is treacherous, seditious or subversive, should be apprehended under existing laws, either the National Security Regulations or the Crimes Act, and tried for his treasonable utterances or actions. That course should be followed instead of endeavouring to ban Communism. If we do away with the conditions that breed Communism we will get rid of it more quickly. Communism is the result of hundreds of years of rule by caste, class and privilege. It grew apace all over Australia during the depression years, because there were unemployment camps and because men were either totally unemployed or worked only part-time and had rations issued to them by the Government. Although we have full employment today the position is not a great deal better, because goods are at famine prices.

Members must realise that the man who is on even £1 over the basic wage, if he has a wife and family to keep, finds it impossible to provide them with a reasonable degree of comfort. In our shops one sees the necessities of life, foodstuffs and clothing—it applies also to medical services—at prohibitive prices, and people are living under deplorable housing conditions. I am very sympathetic towards young people who now get married and try to begin their life together, as a suite of furniture costs anything from £75 to £100 in Perth today. I am certain that the cost of production of a £75 suite would not be more than £25. The furniture is only plywood, with a veneer covering, and is machine made, as the day of the artisan joiner has gone. I am satisfied that the prices now charged for furniture are prohibitive.

The Minister for Lands: That is where price-fixing has failed in many instances.

Mr. STYANTS: That is so. Had it been more effective in the last five or six years through the Commonwealth, the people would have taken a different view when asked at the referendum to leave price-fixing in the hands of the Commonwealth Government. Such goods are now at a prohibitive price, which in certain instances is up to three times the cost of production. The man on the basic wage has no hope under present conditions of ever owning his home. In fact, he has very little interest in it and has no security of tenure at all. Conditions such as that are the soil in which Communism thrives. If we provided a home for every married man in the community nothing would impress them more with a sense of their responsibility to and interest in our country. They would then have a stake in the land. When we are at war men are told that they are fighting for their King and country, but it must be remembered that the wealth and property of the whole of Australia are owned by about 20 per cent. of the people, the other 80 per cent. owning not an inch of the land. That 80 per cent. are held in property and wealth bondage by the other 20 per cent.

I will suggest a few remedies that are entirely different from those advanced by the member for Swan. If we adopt methods that will allow such remedies to be put into effect, we will soon get rid of Communism. We should see that every person in the community receives economic and social justice. When there is full employment and every worker has the food and clothing necessary for his dependants; when he has a house in which to live, there will be no more Communism. That doctrine thrives on discontent and human misery. The average man wants a wage on which he can live decently, educate his children, own his house and have security against sickness, old-age and unemployment. He must be provided with a house the cost of which is within his capacity to pay.

I believe it would be possible to provide every married man with a home if we adopted the right methods. We are spending up to £40,000,000 a year in subsidising flourishing industries that are now on the crest of a wave of prosperity. If we halved that sum and provided £20,000,000 at a nominal rate of interest—just sufficient to cover administrative expenses—and provided

homes, even if at a loss on the actual building costs, all married men could be given homes of their own and Communism would receive the most serious setback it has ever had in Australia. We must redeem the promises that were made during the war years. I remember the Minister for Housing delivering a most impressive speech in this Chamber, early in the war, on what would be the new order after hostilities ceased.

On the 12th June, 1941, Mr. Menzies said—his statements received block headlines in the Melbourne "Herald"—that social inequalities were disappearing. He said there would be a new order after the war. At the time when their property and lives were in danger such people were prepared to promise anything, but as soon as the war was over the social inequalities crept back, until today a man on anything like the basic wage is worse off than at any time that I can remember. Only to the extent that social inequalities disappear will the danger of Communism be removed. We could do a great deal by instituting a better way of life and seeing that men have homes, food and clothing and can educate their children at a cost that is within their capacity to pay. In that way we would do more to get rid of Communism in this country than by trying to suppress it by force of law.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [9.58]: I was interested in the remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie, and some of the matter to which I propose to refer covers aspects that he mentioned, though he dealt with them under headings different from those that I will use. During this debate we are addressing ourselves to the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. On this occasion the Speech, like those of previous years, gave a resume of what the Government had accomplished during the past 12 months, the progress the country had made and the state of affairs that existed at the time Parliament was opened. The record presented by the Government is commendable on this occasion. The Speech included what the Government proposes to put before Parliament during the session. Unfortunately the present Government appears to have followed the rule of its predecessors in this regard by informing members of only one or two major items

of its programme and leaving them to wonder whether there is sufficient business to justify the calling together of Parliament. That is one of the reasons why the Address-in-reply is occasionally prolonged beyond the period of time that the Government can afford to give it.

While I am a stickler for tradition and although it seems to be a tradition for the Government to keep as quiet as possible on its intention to introduce certain legislation, that is a tradition which might well be departed from, all members being made aware of the Government's intention. The idea behind it might be the fact that Governments are disinclined, once they have set their chariot on a certain road and in a given direction, to depart from that course. That is not a fault or a failing with Governments only. The same applies in a direction which is far more important, to those upon whom Governments rely for advice in connection with affairs of State.

The member for Kalgoorlie, apart from the fact that he had me rather in a whirl trying to differentiate between circulating valves, superheaters, boiler tubes, bird-cages and that sort of thing, touched upon the promised new order. It will be remembered as the hon. member said, that during the early part of the last war—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Which war?

Mr. LESLIE: The 1939-45 war.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What about the promises that were made in the first war.

Mr. LESLIE: The member for Leederville and I are not likely to argue the point as to whether the first world war was the only war worth talking about. They repeated the promises except that in the last war they coined the phrase the "New Order."

Mr. Bovell: Who were "they"?

Mr. LESLIE: Those who were in authority, but they were unable to tell us definitely what the new order was to be. They were not aware, just as members were not aware, that the country would be suffering under a spirit of discontent and that conditions would be such as are existing at this time. It had to be brought about after Governments had promised the new order. They requested the economists, the theorists and the professors to discover what the new order was to be. These people studied the

then existing state of affairs and said that the new order would be a change from what had happened in the past.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The only thing they gave us was women with thin waists and full skirts.

Mr. LESLIE: Prior to the war there was a state of social insecurity and unemployment in existence, and all that the planners could see at the end of the war was the necessity to remove or to avoid a similar set of circumstances arising. In 1941 and 1942 our economists and theorists, at the behest of the Government, commenced to prepare plans for the post-war period and they planned until 1944 or 1945. Undoubtedly their plans were prepared upon the conditions which existed from 1930 to 1939. As early as 1941 and 1942 they were not aware of the tremendous devastation that was to take place throughout the world, with the exception of the United States and Australia. They were unaware of the devastation caused by modern warfare because they did not know what it was like.

At that stage they were not aware of the fact that the normal productive economy of nations would be transferred wholesale to an intense war production effort and that normal production for civil requirements would cease. They were also unaware that three years after the termination of the war the world would be less at peace than it has ever been in its history, and that unrest and disruption continue throughout the world, and as a result production be limited. Those are things of which the planners were not aware. They planned for a different set of circumstances entirely.

It is unfortunate that recently, when they were made aware of the circumstances, they did not apply themselves to modifications and alterations of their plans. I will illustrate that when I say that the post-war plans were based upon a period similar to what existed prior to the war, and I will quote extracts from a book called "Post-war Reconstruction in Australia." It is edited by Mr. D. A. S. Campbell and it is made up of addresses from five speakers, and the discussions which took place on them at the summer school of the Australian Institute of Political Science at Canberra from the 29th to the 31st January, 1944. The five speakers were Mr. R. G. Menzies, Dr. H. C. Coombs, Professor Copland, Dr. Lloyd Ross

and Dr. Evatt. I propose to take extracts from their speeches which, after a study of this book, indicate to me the trend of thought which prevailed at that time. Dr. H. C. Coombs, whom we know as the Chief Economic Adviser to the Commonwealth Government, was at that time Director-General of the Ministry of Post-war Reconstruction. Many people in Western Australia know Dr. Coombs as a likeable gentleman. In his discussion on the economic aftermath of war on page 68 of the book he said—

Hundreds of millions of pounds have been diverted to the production of factories, plant and equipment, and capital assets of every kind, many of which are specifically related to the wartime purposes they were designed to serve. We cannot expect that they will be perfectly adapted to the functions of peace, and we must expect that this development in the capital structure of our industries will prove wasteful in the light of peacetime requirements. The most outstanding change is, of course, the relatively enormous growth of our heavy and light engineering industries. These industries normally provide for expenditure on the production of durable plant and equipment and durable consumers' goods.

At the end of the war it seems probable that we will be equipped in these industries to provide for the maintenance and replacement of the industrial equipment of an economy much greater than Australia. A contraction in these industries is inevitable, but much can be done to see that waste is minimised and that the contraction is brought about gradually.

Here I point to present day conditions where production in Australia has been definitely hindered because of the lack of the very industries that Dr. Coombs, the economic adviser to this nation, said would be in oversupply and would have to be contracted.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Give him the sack!

Mr. LESLIE: Following the reading of each paper was a discussion. Dr. Walker, of Melbourne, in discussing the paper by Dr. Coombs, said—

Dr. Coombs set out to outline what we may expect of the economic aftermath of the war, and the first four or five speakers who have discussed his paper have provided a perfect illustration of what that aftermath is likely to be. After the war we shall have the voice of finance—somewhat muddled. We shall have the politician making an appeal on behalf of the forgotten man. We shall have the primary producers who will be worrying because they do not know how to get rid of all that wheat and all that wool which a beneficent Providence

has helped us to obtain. Finally, you will have a representative of the working class vehemently demanding action of some sort.

That might be right in many respects, but difficulty for primary producers in disposing of the products that a beneficent Providence has given is not actually in existence. Finance may be muddled, but Governments to-day are controlling finance.

Mr. Marshall: Who are?

Mr. LESLIE: Governments.

Mr. Marshall: Not at all.

Mr. LESLIE: I am not prepared to argue the point, but it is a fact. Dr. Walker was convinced, and he is a thinker, just as is Dr. Coombs.

Mr. Bovell: What about Mr. Menzies?

Mr. LESLIE: He dealt with international relationships. Dr. Coombs, in replying to the various points that had been raised, stated—

I maintain that whether post-war conditions will be one or the other will be for us to decide. Plenty and scarcity are only real in relation to the needs of the people. There is no doubt that there is an infinite quantity of work to be done in Australia to raise the standards of the people, without worrying about plenty in any absolute sense. I want to keep our resources so fully employed that they are continuously scarce in relation to the jobs upon which we want to employ them. In this sense scarcity is the aim of our post-war policy.

In other words, he wants to ensure that production will be so restricted, because of the fear of overproduction, that there will be a sense of security and that everyone shall have a job. Finally, I wish to quote from the remarks of Dr. Evatt, who dealt with "Reconstruction and the Constitution." He said—

Unless there is a national plan for the employment of all our people and that plan is carried into effect, disastrous unemployment seems inescapable. This is the probable factual background which all discussions about the constitutional basis of reconstruction must take into account.

I think I have quoted sufficient from those who were in authority and those who were advisers to the Government to indicate upon what their post-war plans were based. I will leave it to members and the people of the country as a whole to say how ill-founded were those assumptions. But they have had unfortunate consequences. The social conditions that prevail in Australia today—and I

say this in spite of the statement by the member for Kalgoorlie—were never better, except that there is a scarcity of materials. We have people in a position to buy, but the material is not available. We have a social set-up that has taken years to build. No particular Government can claim the credit for it; all have contributed. It is a social set-up which has provided, is providing and promises to provide in future still more security for the people.

Before the war the one fear with all of us—I admit that I had it—was that of unemployment. Today that fear need not exist in the people. If they are without a job, Governments will provide one. The Government has acknowledged its responsibility to the people in this direction. It says in effect, “You will live whether you have a job or not, but we will get you a job if at all possible.” But that, unfortunately, is not fully realised by the people and the unrest, of which the member for Kalgoorlie spoke, is based upon false grounds and false knowledge. The people have not fully realised what the change means and, because of the existence of this fear, are still looking for what they call a new order. But a new order has arrived, apart from those social conditions. The member for Kalgoorlie, whose remarks, strangely enough, fit in with what I had proposed to say, referred to the existence in past days of class distinction and class privilege. When on one occasion I suggested that class distinction might exist, there was a chorus of protest. However, the old class privilege that once existed has gone.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You are telling me!

Mr. LESLIE: There is scarcely any distinction between poor and rich, because there is none really poor and I do not know that there is any really rich. Still, a class distinction more severe than any that has ever previously existed in the world and armed with greater power has grown up amongst us. It is a class which, while it will permit its fellow man to live, will deny him the opportunity for improvement. Amongst the class rulers of Australia today, the most powerful is the class of waterside workers. If I or anyone else, no matter how highly born or how great his possessions of this world's goods, desired to do a day's work on the wharf, he would have

to beg humbly for the privilege and, having done so, would probably receive a kick in the tail by way of reply. But it does not exist there alone. In recent times, a man possessed of skill, whether employer or employee, has found that this possession is worth more than wealth and has decided that the man without skill shall remain without skill.

There is a new social condition with us today. Men are not called upon to starve. There is no need for it. But men and women are looking for something better. During the war, most of the troops asked for one thing only. They knew they had a job; in fact, the country would have gone to the pack unless they had had a job, but they wanted an opportunity to do something a little better. They looked for a new order—an opportunity to obtain more than the basic wage or the 6s. or 10s. above the basic wage. Every man is out for profit for himself. It is of no use my friends of the Labour Party saying otherwise. If a man is in business, he wants a profit on the goods he handles; if a worker, he wants a profit on the labour he provides. In other words, the worker seeks something more than a bare existence.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He has to go to the Arbitration Court to get it.

Mr. LESLIE: I agree, and he has been provided with that court.

The Minister for Railways: He could get it without going to the court.

Mr. LESLIE: The worker asks for and expects that profit. He wants something more than the bare cost of living. He wants a profit which will be sufficient for his future security. He still believes he needs that, although the new system is with us. We have men who have given up much for their country in the recent war years and who are asking for that opportunity. We have youths today leaving school who are also asking for a similar opportunity, but who are being denied it by that privileged class, the rulers of our land today, the skilled men. Those skilled men are the men who dictate the extent of the progress of our country. Upon them rests the decision whether we shall enjoy plenty of this world's goods or whether we shall merely struggle along. It would be well for the members of this Chamber, irrespective of

their political faith, to realise that the old class distinctions have gone. It is no use today talking about the landed gentry in this or in another place. It is useless talking about class and privilege or to bring back to mind the old days of the landed gentry, as the member for Kalgoorlie did tonight. Those days are gone.

Today one class rules and we bow to that class. It is necessary for the people to be aware of the fact that today we are ruled socially by people who definitely deny others the opportunities they are seeking. It is shameful, in my opinion, for one section of the community to deny opportunities which it could afford to other sections. No matter how downtrodden we may have been in the past, when we had classes, castes and privileges, at least every man had the chance to get out and better himself. But that privilege is now being denied not only to the man to whom it was promised but, unfortunately, also to the youth of the State, who are being deprived of the chance to enter skilled trades. That must cause Governments and other authorities to think furiously about what the future prospects of the State are. We shall eventually find ourselves denuded of skilled artisans and shall be forced to make up the deficiency by resort to foreign nations, asking them to supply us with this elevated class which will keep the Australian-born down to the level of serfdom with pick and shovel.

I do not know that the topic on which I am about to speak naturally follows on what I have just said. Much has been said during the debate about Communism. I was sorry to note the tone in which this most difficult subject was discussed in the House. I deplore any attempt to make party differences over Communism. I believe Communism is no less a danger than was Fascism; in fact, I think it is greater. I fought in two wars to maintain the British way of life and I am prepared to fight in another against my blood brother, if necessary, to ensure that what I fought for in the past is not taken away from me in the future. I consider it necessary for political parties to sink their petty party differences and get together in order to discuss how best to deal with this menace, which will affect not only ourselves individually, but our families and the State.

We cannot deal with the question successfully by personal or by party recriminations.

That only adds fuel to the fire that the communists are using to consume us. They are the ones who are creating a division. Divide us and we fall, and we are such darned fools as to be arguing the point among ourselves while they are profiting from it. Far better that we get together, each organisation, whether political or industrial, to discuss and discover the best means of combating this menace. I am not convinced that banning the communist organisation is the most effective means we can use. I am prepared to be convinced to the contrary but, if Communism is declared to be illegal, that will at least stop many respectable people—people who are conscious of their responsibility to law and order and to the welfare of the State—from associating knowingly with the Communist Party. If they know that they are associating with something which is illegal, they will draw away from it before it is too late.

I venture to assert that no section of the people, no body of men, no organisation, is entirely free from Communism. I do not care whether the organisation be Labour, Liberal, or C.D.L. I question whether among the thousands of members of the Country and Democratic League there are not some who have communistic ideas or associations. The same can be said of the Labour Party and the Liberal Party. Whatever walk of life one treads, whether among doctors, professors, clerks, navvies on the tram line, railway men, bricklayers or carpenters, there are communists, and there must be some among the teachers. I come to that point because I was greatly concerned when the member for Irwin-Moore seemingly condemned the whole of the teaching staff of Western Australia because of Communism in their midst; but I did not for a moment believe that he meant all the teachers were communists.

I am associated with two very prominent members of the Education Department who are on the State Executive of the R.S.L. They are held in the highest esteem, not only by their colleagues but also by people throughout the length and breadth of the State. One is the acting Director of Education, Mr. Edmondson. No-one for a moment would consider that he had the faintest touch of Communism in him. The other gentleman, Mr. Sten, is in charge of the Teachers' College. I do not for one

moment think that the member for Irwin-Moore, who also wears proudly the badge so many of us wear, when he said that there were communists in the ranks of the teachers, implied or thought that all of them were communists. I would be the first to rise and deny that suggestion.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I do not think anybody else suggested it.

Mr. LESLIE: That was the construction put upon his remarks. I say this now, because I have been taken to task for not having risen and told the member for Irwin-Moore where he got off. If I believed that was his intention, I undoubtedly would tell him off. But I know, and I am aware that he has the knowledge too, that there is not Communism throughout that department.

Mr. Needham: He made no exemptions.

Mr. LESLIE: There were exemptions •which any reasonable man would assume.

Mr. Needham: He made none.

Mr. LESLIE: There is no vocation in life, no class of people that can lay claim to being entirely free from Communism.

Mr. Rodoreda: We will accept your word.

Mr. LESLIE: All right. I consider—and I think this is the belief of the member for Irwin-Moore, and I want to support him—that in no walk of life can Communism do greater harm than in the Education Department; and that is why, in that sphere, more than in any other, more than ordinary attempts, should be made to wipe it out. Even if there is only one communist in that department, that one is poisonous; and if the law of the land would allow him to be shot, I would offer my services to the Government.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why murder the poor cow?

Mr. LESLIE: I am with the member for Irwin-Moore in believing that if there is one walk of life where we are largely concerned about the presence of this menace and the spread of the doctrine of Communism, it is in the teaching profession. If there is one sphere in which we have cause to fear the spread of communist doctrine, it is that one. We cannot permit these poisonous reptiles to continue to propagate their principles in our schools and we have

got to take action. Now I want to come down to—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Earth!

Mr. LESLIE: No. I have been on earth; and I hope members will realise that I have been dealing with a subject far more important than the more or less local questions to which I wish to refer from now on. I want first of all to thank the Ministers of this Government for the courtesies extended to me. I particularly desire to mention the Honorary Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Education, because in my electorate they have had some difficult tasks to face. The Minister for Agriculture was good enough, at my request, to accompany me to that area and to make a personal investigation, at great inconvenience to himself, of problems which were confronting wheatgrowers in the outback, and, immediately on his return, to use his very best endeavours with the Treasurer. As members know, the Treasurer is very concerned about the Budget position. But the Honorary Minister for Agriculture was able to convince him that the widest policy was necessary, and he has made a substantial sum available for the destruction of emus and other pests in those northern areas. I highly appreciate the fine job the Honorary Minister for Agriculture did on that occasion.

Mr. Reynolds: He gave you £3,500.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, and it has not all been used, but a good job has been done. The Minister for Education has been very good also. He has been faced with a number of problems. He has been somewhat like Solomon in having to choose between conflicting arguments submitted to him by local people; but somehow or other between us—I must, for the sake of my electors, draw myself into the picture—we have managed to solve the problems more or less to the satisfaction of all concerned. The Minister for Education has been very good in that direction and, in my opinion, has gone out of his way to assist.

I also want to thank the Minister for Water Supply. It will be recalled that when the comprehensive water supply scheme was first introduced to Parliament by the then Minister, now the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, he promised that an extension of the supply would be made a little further

north than was indicated on the plan. The present Minister has honoured that undertaking and made it possible for me to consult the Director of Works, Mr. Dumas, with a view to providing for an extension into at least some part of that northern area. I feel that the Minister cannot be too strongly urged to proceed with all possible speed in providing water for those localities. I am happy to say that, in spite of the very doubtful opening, we have a very promising season in our north-eastern area. Crop prospects are excellent and stock feed is splendid. It will possibly cut off a little shorter than in normal years; but we are enjoying a good, though late, season. Water supplies, however, are not as plentiful as we would like to see them at this time of year.

Mr. Reynolds: Whereabouts particularly?

Mr. LESLIE: North of the Wyalkatchem-Mukinbudin line, and even as far south as Kununoppin where the Barbalin scheme does not operate. Unless growers get good summer rains, they will be faced with the tremendous cost involved in water cartage. I am anxious to have that cost removed as soon as we can. The necessity for giving first priority to the extension of water supply into those areas was definitely established by the Commonwealth committee that made an investigation. I am satisfied that not only will the provision of adequate water supplies in those districts mean the definite establishment of stability for farming operations in those areas, but that it will render possible an investigation into other avenues of production. When speaking earlier in the session, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that in his opinion there was little scope for the development of land that was unalienated and that we had to look to private land for further development. He considered that economic production was not possible on unalienated land. I disagree entirely with that point of view. I believe there is Crown land in many parts of the State—even in my area, which is fairly well settled now—that is capable of being economically developed. I agree that it may not offer possibilities of economic development under the present system, in that it may not be good wheat or good stock-producing land.

Mr. Reynolds: Whereabouts?

Mr. LESLIE: The hon. member knows very well where! If he wants to get home tonight, he will let me alone. There are areas of land which can be developed in different ways from those to which we are accustomed, but that will be possible only by experimental work on land that is unalienated. I am not satisfied we have made a sufficient demand in that direction. I do not blame any Government or anyone in particular for that. We cannot have done all that is required in investigating the possibilities of our land because we are not yet provided with the necessary facilities. In the north-eastern wheatbelt God has given us a climate unequalled anywhere else in the world, soil capable of production, and free from disease. There is a little vermin, certainly, but it is easily eradicated if tackled in the right way. Generally it only comes as a result of lack of proper development. There is only one thing wanting in that area, and that is an adequate water supply. It is something which man, with his scientific progress, can provide at a comparatively small cost.

Mr. Reynolds: Did not the Labour Government give you water supplies up there?

Mr. LESLIE: I do feel that there are occasions, if someone is attempting to handle questions on a national basis, when purely party matters might well be left out of interjections.

Mr. Marshall: This is a big man with a big speech. Keep quiet!

Mr. LESLIE: The member for Leederville made some reference to soldier land settlement. I would not mention this matter if I were sure the Minister for Lands would refer to it, but in case he does not I want to say that what modifications are being applied today in the soldier land settlement schemes were discussed by the land committee of the R.S.L., and agreed to by it. Most of them, as a matter of fact, were based on requests which that committee had submitted for some considerable time and which the economic advisers to the Commonwealth were not agreeable to adopt. Again, I must refer to the fact that their post-war plans were not based on the practical conditions which actually do prevail.

I want to deal with the wheat marketing argument that is going on and the question of the marginal areas. I am very loath to make public the remarks which I shall

utter shortly, but I feel I must do so. Members are aware that because of certain financial assistance which was given by the Commonwealth to the States for the purpose of reconstruction in the marginal areas of Western Australia and of other States, a condition was attached that eventually those areas were to go out of wheat production entirely, and in the meantime they were to be restricted in the acreage they were to sow to wheat for sale as grain. Before my entry into Parliament, and since, I have vigorously opposed this policy. I agree entirely with the attitude of the previous Government when the Commonwealth Government made assistance available, and that was that the class of production from that area should be changed largely to stock-raising. But it is necessary, in order to maintain the fertility of that country and to minimise invasion by pests, for the soil to be cultivated.

It is unreasonable to expect farmers to cultivate their land unless they are to receive some return for so doing. Therefore it is necessary to allow them to grow wheat. Whether they should do so to a large or small extent, I do not know. I have refrained from taking any part in the discussions as to the relative merits or demerits of the Commonwealth and State wheat marketing proposals. My attitude has been that the wheat is the property of the grower. The goods in Boans' shop, or Foy's are their property, if they have paid for them, and just as it would be presumptuous on my part to suggest how they should dispose of them, so would it be for me to go to the wheatgrower and say by what method he should market his product. That is his prerogative. I am prepared to give him any information in my possession with regard to the two schemes. There is, however, one point in the Commonwealth scheme which is likely to be overlooked, because it concerns only one small part of the State. In the Commonwealth proposals there is this clause—

The regulation of wheatgrowing on marginal areas which have been reconstructed under the plan approved for the elimination of uneconomic wheat areas and the establishment of a committee to advise in cases where action to regulate wheatgrowing on marginal areas is necessary.

That is, the Commonwealth will expect the States to include in its Bill, if the Federal

scheme is adopted, something to provide for the regulation and eventual elimination of wheatgrowing in our marginal areas. The point I am loath to let go out—but I must as a measure of self-defence for those districts—is that there is nothing legal by which this or any other Government can force a wheatgrower to go out of wheatgrowing under the marginal area restriction conditions. There is nothing in law to compel those growers to abide by that condition that they shall restrict their wheatgrowing to the minimum laid down in the marginal area scheme. It is only an honourable undertaking between the wheatgrower and the institution assisting him financially. If he cares to depart from it he cannot be penalised in any way whatever. I have known that for some time, but I have refrained from making any mention of it, being quite satisfied that through discussion we would eventually be able to reach the position where this suggested elimination could be avoided, and conditions satisfactory to all set up so that the growers who received marginal area assistance would be permitted to grow wheat.

Mr. Cornell: Cannot their acreage be controlled by license?

Mr. LESLIE: Only while licenses exist anywhere else. The marginal area farmer cannot be picked out to be licensed or to have a maximum specified acreage, if the same thing does not apply to anyone else. If it becomes law it will mean that the restriction of wheatgrowing in an arbitrarily declared area in Western Australia will become legal and binding and that—if a Government or an advisory committee decides he shall not do so—a man who grows wheat for sale as grain will have committed an offence under the law. I desire growers in those areas to be aware of the implications contained in that proviso in the wheat marketing regulations. In the event of the growers preferring the Commonwealth scheme to the State scheme, and if the Commonwealth proposals are agreed to and that clause is included in the Bill brought down, I will oppose it strongly, as it would place a grievous injustice on a large area of good country in Western Australia and would be unfair to a great number of growers who are not deserving of being limited in their farming operations to this extent.

I associate myself with the claims for consideration—put forward by the member for Avon—for settlers in the Yorkrakine area. They are entitled to a better deal in the matter of transport than they have so far received. The only fair deal that can be given to them is for bulk bins or sidings to be provided within reasonable carting distance of their farms. The suggestion to pay them a carting subsidy would, if given effect, only put off the evil day and provide a small measure of relief. Payment of part of their cost of petrol and oil is no compensation for all the direct and indirect cost and inconvenience imposed on them by the long distance they are forced to cart their goods. The Government should investigate the possibility of providing a road train to serve the country of the Yarramony-eastward railway, with the provision of sidings and bulk bins. In place of two parallel rails on sleepers there should be a road, with road trains. I think that is within the bounds of practical politics and has been done in South Africa.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I thought Yarramony was dead.

Mr. LESLIE: It will take a lot to kill Yarramony. I agree with the member for Avon that the question of the railway is dead, as its construction would not be warranted. The Government will find it hard to justify failure to provide adequate transport facilities for these people who have been promised such facilities for so long. With regret I read that rail freights and fares have of necessity to be increased. I am satisfied that an increase is unavoidable, owing to rising costs, but I am not sure that the suggested increase is the right amount. It may be either too small or too large, and I am afraid the latter is the case. I have said and repeat that the system of railway bookkeeping in the past has been such that no-one could arrive at the true working costs. Until we can do that we cannot be sure what increase is justified. Before this increase was announced the railways should have justified the existing charges.

Earlier in the session considerable criticism was levelled by the Opposition at the Government for the sorry condition of State finances. That criticism fell somewhat flat. Most of the people in this State appreciate—I think—that those speakers

had their tongues in their cheeks. The people realise that for years—including the war years—social services and public facilities had to be neglected, through lack of funds and maintenance, and to bring them up to a standard sufficient to meet adequate normal requirements would involve the expenditure of considerable sums by the Treasury. Had Opposition members expressed surprise at the smallness of the sum asked for by the Government they would have received from the people credit for having spoken with greater honesty. They might have suggested that the Government was not doing as much as it could to bring the State back to a satisfactory condition after the years of neglect.

Some time ago I took a deputation from the spastic children's parents group in Perth to the Minister for Education, as Deputy Premier. Unfortunately there is a considerable number of spastic children that we know of in the metropolitan area—and probably a large number that we do not know of—besides many in the country. The deputation requested that the Government should provide facilities for the education, hospitalisation and treatment of these children, who are a problem to their parents and will be a problem to the State unless something is done for them. Doctor Schonell, an eminent educational authority from England, and his wife who is from the Birmingham Institute for the treatment of spastic children, were recently in this State, and will be returning for a short while. Mrs. Schonell, with whom I had the privilege of having a discussion, has agreed—if it can be arranged—to address a meeting of the spastic children's parents group. I am hopeful that the Government will take advantage of the visit of this lady to Western Australia later in the month and have a discussion with her on the problem of these children. Their treatment is still in the investigatory stage. Mrs. Schonell has a knowledge which is mainly psychological.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: She is not a doctor.

Mr. LESLIE: No, she is a trained psychologist.

The Attorney General: She is a physiotherapist.

Mr. LESLIE: Her knowledge of conditions in both America and England would be of value to the officers of the depart-

ment, and a discussion with her may give them some direction in which they might seek to provide for the requests of the parents of these children. It is a subject which merits sympathetic assistance from every person who is fortunate enough to be sound in wind and limb. These children are a tremendous burden on their parents and very often the other children of the family are neglected because of it.

I took another deputation to the Minister on the question of the employment of physically handicapped people. It is unfortunate that in our Civil Service set-up and because of certain conditions laid down under the Superannuation Act, if a man has something wrong with his big toe and is required to work with his fingers he is not permitted to be employed in the State service. Similarly, the Tramway Department has an age limit of 35 years. This age limit has been arbitrarily set down. I hope that some investigation will be made by the Minister and that he will be able to advise me within a short time of attempts that have been made to overcome the difficulty. We must solve the problem of physically handicapped people in its early stage, otherwise it will become increasingly difficult to do so. I have other matters to refer to, but I will leave them until the Estimates. I support the motion.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [11.3]: I had hoped that the Acting Premier would agree to the adjournment of the debate, but he is adamant in his attitude and, as a result I have been forced to condense my remarks. However, in referring directly to His Excellency's speech one member spoke of it as a colourless document. Whilst to an extent that is true, I think, the Speech differs little from its predecessors in recent years. I suppose that is attributable to the fact that we are existing under very different financial relationships with the Commonwealth Government, as a result of which this State, as a claimant State, is being restricted in its financial operations.

Whilst the Speech is colourless in that respect, some of the remarks of members on the Address-in-reply have introduced a great deal of heat into the debate. Some of the observations of members of the Opposition and a measure of the criticism to which the Government has been subject, have been due

to the extravagant propaganda indulged in by certain sections of the Government's supporters. The subject of housing has been the most disturbing to the community because, as members know, the most constant daily problem with which we are confronted is that of housing our constituents. I know that is so in my district, and as a result of the election promises people have come to me expecting there would be overnight results.

Mr. Marshall: What about the number of houses built in Middle Swan?

Mr. SHEARN: So I feel that those who are charged, irrespective of the party to which they belong, with the preparation of political propaganda at election or other times, should realise that they have a responsibility to the community to see that their enunciations, even from a party point of view, bear some resemblance to the actual situation. I counsel parties on both sides to see that there is less indulgence in what I term extravagant propaganda as it must reflect ultimately on the party itself, to say nothing of the unfairness to the community.

I realise that the Government cannot possibly be expected to perform miracles in the few months that it has been in office. A Labour Government in New South Wales made promises which were published in the Press during the last elections in that State. It said that its programme envisaged 90,000 houses over a period of three years at the rate of 30,000 houses per year. I read subsequently that the actual achievement was about 13,000 houses per year. That Government is subjected to the same conditions as this Government and so is every other Government in Australia. They must face up to the dire shortage of production in relation to demand. I suggest that the Government should concentrate on the production of materials which in turn will increase the number of houses built. In some industries today, whilst I admit there has been an improvement in mechanisation, there are still a number of employers attempting to produce materials by obsolete methods. There is still room for improvement. The responsibility lies with the Government to see that all avenues are exploited and that there is co-operation between the Government, the producers and the employees in industry so that some improve-

ment can be made during the next twelve months. It is, otherwise, futile and misleading to expect that any improvement will be shown.

A great deal has been said about the industrial reaction of the 40-hour week. Doubtless much could be claimed for and against the principle at this particular time when there is an urgent need for increased production but, if we are to be honest and frank, we must agree that the workers are entitled to a share in the improvements that have been introduced in relation to production. Members will realise that the 40-hour week has been introduced only after the fullest possible examination by the appropriate tribunal, the Arbitration Court of Australia. In view of that, surely there can be no complaints at the introduction of the 40-hour week, but it is up to the employer and employee to show that even with lower hours they recognise their responsibility to the community and will ensure that maximum production continues. I contend that the Government could play quite an important part in the matter and not only encourage but facilitate every possible move that is being made to give effect to suggestions in relation to precautionary measures.

A suggestion has often been made in this House that greater use should be made by the Government of the energies and abilities of members generally. In my absence during the course of the debate, I understand some such suggestion was made by another member, and I believe that those sitting on either side of the House, who have peculiar knowledge regarding various matters, could materially assist the Government in various directions. If there is an sincerity in our speeches—and I certainly hope there is—every member is anxious to contribute, as far as he is able, to the advancement of the machinery of government and so in the end to benefit the community at large.

In view of the lateness of the hour, I shall have to scrap a number of matters to which I had intended to refer, but I cannot refrain from lending my support to the idea advanced by the member for Guildford-Midland with regard to the development of the upper parts of the Swan River. With him, I submit that the metropolitan area abounds with highly potential recreational foreshore areas and that, as has been done at some

of the ocean beaches, some practical scheme should be embarked upon in conjunction with the local authorities concerned so that those areas could be developed more advantageously for the enjoyment of the community. Unfortunately, over the years much of the river frontages has been alienated by the Crown, and I suggest the time is now opportune for the Government to re-survey the alienations and take steps to regain possession of the areas so that they may be developed in the interests of future generations.

The question of transport has been mentioned frequently during the course of the current debate. While I do not propose to go into details, I wish to refer particularly to one or two matters that directly affect my electorate. Some time ago the Minister for Transport was good enough to assist in the inauguration of a bus service in the district. It is a fine service as far as it goes, but the terminus that has been decided upon is one that baffles everyone including those operating the service. Instead of running to the point that I suggested to the Minister and to the Transport Board as the most practical one, the bus goes to within a few chains of what is known as the No. 18 Inglewood tram terminus. It thus loses considerable value and, what is more important, it deprives quite a number of people of the opportunity to take advantage of the service. I suggest that the Minister take this matter up with the appropriate body with a view to seeing that the bus terminus is altered, and another fixed that will be more appropriate and certainly much more useful to the residents. The terminus I suggested was at the corner of Salisbury and Bowden-streets, which would be about midway between the No. 18 tram stop and the railway line. That would serve a considerable number of people in the area, which is developing very fast.

Another point I should mention concerns the Guildford-road tram service which consists of a single line for quite a distance. The service is not only slow but most unsatisfactory. It does not extend far enough into the district to be of the greatest use to the local people. Some years ago a proposal was advanced that the route should be extended to Garrett-road in Bayswater. I would like to see the tram service done away with and, installed

in its place, a diesel bus or something more mobile and certainly more satisfactory than the obsolete tram service we now have. Then there is the service provided along Peninsula-road where during the last two or three years great development has taken place.

A demand exists for the extension of this service. I have made representations on the matter to the department and I believe the officials realise that the time has come when the desired improvements should be carried out. I know that the Minister has to deal with many demands from other districts, but I cannot help noticing that only in recent months new services have been inaugurated in other portions of the metropolitan area that, I suggest, are better catered for than are the districts I have mentioned. In the circumstances, I submit I am justified in asking the Government to consider the extensions of the transport service I have indicated.

There is also a matter concerning the Railway Department affecting the bridge at the Maylands railway station. It has been in a state of disrepair for eight or nine years and the excuse made to the local governing authorities and others concerned, including myself—I may say that some time ago a petition containing a thousand names was presented to the Minister on the matter—was that, owing to the suggestions regarding altering the railway gauge, nothing could be done for the time being. Occasionally the department sends along a man who puts in a tread or two. Our idea is that a ramp should be installed there. As members know, at Maylands there is the School for the Blind, which means that quite a number of blind people use the train service. Many aged persons live in the vicinity and, as the business centre is on one side of the line, there is a considerable volume of traffic at the railway station. The reply we have received from the Commissioner of Railways is to the effect that owing to the suggested standardisation of railway gauges it was impracticable to do anything with the bridge for the time being. The district therefore has to tolerate a bridge that is in a bad state of disrepair. Until someone makes up his mind regarding the standardisation of gauge problem, we shall have to continue with the bridge as it is.

We have also made repeated representations for the provision of adequate protec-

tion at the Caledonian-avenue railway crossing. The Minister for Railways in the Labour Government will remember my stating at a deputation that it appeared to me the Commissioner or some members of his staff apparently waited until two or three major accidents had occurred at a crossing before appropriate precautionary measures were undertaken. The Commissioner took exception to that and said it was not so. He is perfectly entitled to his own opinion, but I think members know that what I stated is quite correct.

Certainly, the invariable experience is that a considerable number of accidents have to take place, sometimes with fatal results, before the department adopts measures to provide protection. I urge upon the Minister, before any fatal accidents occur at this particular crossing, that something be done about it. It is not as though any major expenditure is involved, but it is a case of the protection of human life. The one or two mechanical problems that it has been stated have to be dealt with, should not prevent the work being carried out. As a matter of fact, I have been told by an employee of the department, whose name I cannot divulge for obvious reasons, that the expenditure incurred would be very small and that nothing intricate is involved in providing the necessary protection. The attitude I have indicated seems to be that of the department and the officials are not anxious to depart from it. However, I look to the Minister to do something about it.

I should have liked to say a good deal about the proposals for the control of rents and land sales, but at this late hour it is scarcely opportune to do so. I noticed in the Press that there is to be some division of administrative authority, and I regret that the Government has not resolved to place these important controls under the jurisdiction of one Minister. As one who knows something of the ramifications involved in order to secure the satisfactory management of matters of this sort, I suggest that the two things are so closely allied as to be almost inseparable and this makes it most desirable that they should be placed under the control of one Minister.

The Acting Premier: This is the system that prevailed under the Commonwealth for many years.

Mr. SHEARN: That may be so, but I consider that it is imperative to have these two matters controlled by one head and that there can be no success attendant on the administration of these regulations for the control of rents and land sales unless the two are thus closely allied. I shall be interested to hear, when the Minister replies to the debate, exactly what progress has been made regarding the matters I have raised.

Some reference has been made to the Government's intentions as to the encouragement of tourist traffic. Although the time may not be opportune to commence any full-scale tourist drive, I suggest that the Government should explore the possibilities that exist here, just as the Queensland Government has done in that State. Thousands of tourists have gone from the colder climate of Victoria to enjoy the winter in Queensland, and I believe that there is an opportunity to attract tourists here, seeing that we have a similar winter temperature and equal attractions. I would instance the success that has attended the catering for this traffic by Trans Australian Airlines, which department has adopted the slogan, "Fly to Sunny Queensland."

Air transport has been developed to such an extent as to permit business and other men of the Eastern States spending their vacation here. Queensland, in common with the other States, has its housing problem, but nevertheless it attracted and was able to accommodate thousands of visitors from the southern States. Members may recall that last year we had some 800 visitors to attend various conferences and, though it is true that some of them were accommodated privately, the fact remains that they were successfully accommodated and that they spent money here and, what is equally important, were enabled to form impressions of this State. Travel, like any commodity, has to be sold to the public. We should therefore fully explore this opportunity because I believe the field is equally open to us as it is to Queensland.

Before leaving this subject, I think the Government might well investigate the advisableness of opening an office in Adelaide to deal with tourist traffic. When I was last in the Melbourne office, I found a young lady almost hidden away in a corner of a building that was not at all attractive and working in the least possible amount of

space. If we are going to attract tourists, that state of affairs should be remedied. I took the opportunity to visit our liaison officer in Melbourne and found that his office was about the least presentable place one could imagine. It is certainly a poor advertisement for our State. The member for Northam, when Minister, appointed this officer and I consider that he is doing a remarkably good job for this State. I met many manufacturers and other businessmen and learnt that he had contacted them and was respected by them. He should be provided with an office which will give people visiting it a better impression of our commercial instincts. The present office would certainly be a disgrace to any private firm and we look for something better for a State office. I hope the Government will take early steps to secure an office commensurate with the importance of the business that has to be transacted.

Another matter to which I wish to refer affects one of the most important undertakings we have in this State, namely the Electricity Commission. The observations I am about to make have arisen from representations made to me last week by a number of employees of the Commission. My information is that, following the recent retirement of the General Manager, Mr. Taylor, the members of the staff were officially advised by the Chairman of the Commission—that would be Mr. Dumas—that as he would often be absent on other important duties, future directions and operations were to be undertaken by Mr. F. C. Edmondson, also a member of the Commission, and by the way, General Manager of the Perth City Council Electricity and Gas Department.

In view of this somewhat unorthodox arrangement, I should like to know whether this appointment, temporary no doubt, has been sanctioned by the Minister in control and, if so, whether he took the opportunity to satisfy himself that there was no senior officer employed in the system or elsewhere in the Public Service who was capable of assuming managerial control pending the appointment of a successor to Mr. Taylor.

The Minister for Works: I suppose you realise that Mr. Edmondson is a member of the Commission.

Mr. SHEARN: I have already said that he is. I take it that this will be merely a

temporary appointment, and will continue only until a successor to Mr. Taylor, who retired from the service some weeks ago, is appointed. I wish to make it quite clear that I am not raising any question whatever as to the capabilities of Mr. Edmondson. Quite the contrary! I point out, however, that to me it seems extraordinary that a concern involving a capital of £5,000,000 of public money should be virtually handed over to the control of a man who is the department's biggest customer. The situation, as I view it, involves a vital principle affecting public service promotions. There may be some good reason for that, but it is not apparent on the surface. No doubt the Minister will in due course explain the position as an important principle is involved, one which affects the promotion of public servants.

The Minister for Works: Where did you happen to see what you are just referring to? I mean the appointment.

Mr. SHEARN: I think I spoke loud enough for the Minister to hear. I told him that a number of employees had acquainted me with this position. I shall read their exact words, so that the Minister will not be misinformed—

That the staff were officially advised by the chairman of the Commission—
I presume Mr. Dumas—

—that as he would be often absent on other important duties, future directions and operations were to be undertaken by Mr. F. C. Edmondson.

The Minister for Works: Mr. Edmondson is at present only acting as deputy chairman of the Commission. He is not the general manager of the Commission.

Mr. SHEARN: I might be somewhat unsophisticated, but I put it to the Minister that when men are told that future directions and operation are to be undertaken by Mr. Edmondson, does that not mean he is in complete managerial control? If not, I evidently should have another look at the dictionary.

The Minister for Works: You may please yourself on that point. No such appointment has been made.

Mr. SHEARN: I am asking the question.

The Minister for Works: I am telling you that no such appointment has been

made and that the information passed on to you is wrong.

Mr. SHEARN: I can prove to the Minister that I made the statement I did with a full sense of responsibility. I am not prepared to make hearsay statements. If the Minister wants the information authenticated, I will get it for him. What I tell him is perfectly true.

The Minister for Works: It is true that you have been told it by somebody.

Mr. SHEARN: I tell the Minister that I will produce the evidence.

The Minister for Works: That will be very interesting to me.

Mr. SHEARN: The Minister is out of touch with what is happening.

The Minister for Works: Do you think I am out of touch?

Mr. SHEARN: I ask the Minister whether he can explain. I am quite impersonal as far as Mr. Edmondson is concerned, but he is in charge of an instrumentality involving £5,000,000 of the State's money and it is virtually being handed over to the consumers.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Could the Minister tell us who is at present in charge of the East Perth power house?

Mr. SHEARN: I was intending to ask that question. I am satisfied with the veracity of my information and I would ask the Minister to tell us, by way of interjection, who is the manager.

The Minister for Works: I will give him the information in my own way. It is that I have absolutely nothing whatever to do with the City of Perth Electricity and Gas Department.

Mr. SHEARN: I have not suggested that.

The Minister for Works: Therefore I am not in a position to authorise any appointment.

Mr. SHEARN: I presume the Minister knows who is managing it at present.

The Minister for Works: Do you understand that I am not concerned about that and am not in a position to speak with authority regarding that department, as I have nothing whatever to do with it?

Mr. SHEARN: It is no use the Minister trying to evade a direct question which I put to him. He interrupted me, which I pre-

sume he has a right to do, even if not so permitted by the Standing Orders, and I now ask him to say, by way of interjection, who is the manager. Does the Minister know who is the manager of the State Electricity Commission?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Who is managing the East Perth power house?

Mr. SHEARN: Who is giving directions and orders to the men on the job proceeding at South Fremantle?

The Minister for Works: I will answer in respect of undertakings over which I have authority; but I will not answer questions in connection with the City of Perth electricity department.

Mr. SHEARN: Will the Minister tell me now who is at present managing the State Electricity Commission?

The Minister for Works: Why, Mr. Dumas, of course. You were alleging that it was someone else, were you not?

Mr. SHEARN: The Minister has been a member of this House much longer than I. I have the greatest possible respect for his political astuteness, but I am concerned with facts. Political astuteness does not answer my question. All I can say is that I believe there is a growing tendency—a dangerous and undesirable tendency—to overload Government executive officers with a multiplicity of duties, any one of which is sufficient to occupy his whole time. Why is not something done in this respect? No commercial venture, soundly run, would assign to one of its responsible officers so many duties. For instance, consider the State Housing Commission! We have capable and estimable men conducting its affairs, but, after all, they are only human, and I contend that the duties of any one of the other offices held by those men are sufficient for him to perform. This is a matter which the Government should tackle, so that these men may be given an opportunity to discharge their duties in a manner satisfactory to the State. I suggest that Mr. Dumas is considerably overloaded with work. His duties as Director of Public Works are quite enough to occupy one hundred per cent. of his time, yet he is called on to manage our huge Electricity Commission.

Whilst speaking on disagreeable subjects, I shall say a word or two about the Milk Board. I personally am pleased, as I have

no doubt other members are, that the Government has decided, following on the deplorable condition in which the community found itself some time ago, to overhaul the legislation dealing with the production and distribution of milk. Although I deplore the attitude of the retailers, in plain fairness it may be said that the statements made by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture and the Premier were not only conflicting, but also not in consonance with their responsibilities. The Premier said in one of his statements that the matter had nothing to do with the Government; it was one entirely for the Milk Board. From a statutory point of view, one could argue in that way; but surely, in the final analysis, it is the Government's responsibility to ensure a constant supply of so essential a food as milk.

It is an evasion of its responsibility for the Government to say that the matter is not its concern. I therefore hope that the legislative proposals which the Government has in mind will ensure that we shall have no repetition of what recently occurred. I think it is public property that the Milk Board is not distinguished for its harmony, but rather for its lack of co-operation. I recently read a statement made by the chairman dealing with one aspect of the industry and later I read another statement by a member of the board. Both of these statements were diametrically opposed to each other. That clearly shows there is no uniformity of policy in the board itself. That being so, how can the community expect to receive reasonable consideration? In order that there shall be no mistake about the position of the retailers, for whom I hold no particular brief, I propose to quote one or two points that were given to me in relation to their case. My information is that the Commissioner's finding was made law on the 1st February, 1948. This was to pay the producer an extra 6d. per gallon in lieu of the subsidy which had expired. The 6d. was obtained as follows:—4d. per gallon increase to the consumer; 2d. reduction in the distribution margin.

This met with an immediate protest from the vendors. Approaches were made to the Milk Board without avail. Audited figures from eight vendors were presented to the board on the 22nd May, 1948, which proved that the existing margin was inadequate.

The vendors then had a deputation to the Honorary Minister for Agriculture at which Mr. Stannard was present; but without result. On the 6th July, the vendors had a deputation to the Premier and delivered an ultimatum that, if no relief were granted, delivery would cease in seven days. On the 7th July, the Honorary Minister for Agriculture had headlines in the "Daily News," and stated that if retailers were to cease delivery, the public would not go short of milk as the Government had a secret plan. Deliveries did cease on the 13th July and there was no milk available except to hospitals, where services were maintained by the vendors themselves. I understand that with regard to the 11d. margin, this was 15 per cent. less than that fixed by the Milk Board and Prices Branch in October, 1942, six years ago.

I consider that both the board and the Government showed bad tactics in this matter; otherwise a strike could have been averted. My information is that these men presented their case to the board; and because Mr. Stannard—who, by the way, seems to constitute the board—decided their figures were wrong, he said there was nothing to be done about it. All sorts of appeals were made with a view to the case of these men being impartially investigated, but this was refused. They have no independent tribunal to which to submit the facts. When workers cannot agree with their employer over any aspect of their employment, involving wages or conditions, they have a tribunal to which they can appeal. I wonder in what position they would find themselves if that were not so!

The Acting Premier: You set up this tribunal with the rest of us. Parliament agreed to the establishment of the Milk Board.

Mr. SHEARN: To me it was extraordinary that Mr. Stannard should have been appointed a Royal Commissioner to investigate this industry. I read somewhere that he said these men were making exorbitant profits. If that is so, what has he done in the way of trying to have legislation introduced to curb those extravagant profits? Nothing was done in that connection, so we should not blame the men but the system. I am not admitting that the position is as Mr. Stannard stated; but if

it is, the board and the Government are to blame.

Mr. May: What happened about the secret plan?

Mr. SHEARN: Out of consideration for the staff and for you, Mr. Speaker, as well as other members, I do not propose at this late hour to speak at length on other matters with which I had intended to deal. But I do want to say a word or two about the Titles Office. This is an instrumentality the importance of which is immediately apparent to all members. I have before me the report of the Registrar which points out that—

The value of properties transferred to the 30th June, 1948, was £9,000,000 and mortgages were registered to secure amounts totalling more than £10,000,000.

The accommodation for staff purposes is inadequate, and that available to the public is altogether insufficient. The storage space for certificates of title and documents has nearly reached its limits, and the provision of a more suitable building will be essential in the very near future.

The drafting and computing work is still in arrear, and until qualified draftsmen are available the present conditions will continue.

I want to draw attention to the unfair conditions under which the highly skilled staff of this office, who are entrusted with the most important aspect of our economic life—our securities—have to work. Apart from that, there is the grave injustice to which the commercial community and the public generally are being subjected owing to the inadequacy of the accommodation and lack of sufficient officers. I do not expect the Government to produce miracles overnight; but I would urge the Attorney General, who has had considerable experience of conveyancing, to have a look at the conditions under which these men are working, if he has not already done so. I wonder what Dr. Cook has been doing to permit some of those conditions to prevail! They provide breeding grounds for all sorts of diseases, and are not conducive to 100 per cent. efficiency on the part of those employed there. If a private employer required people to work under such circumstances, he would be faced with all sorts of repercussions. The community is being seriously inconvenienced, too, because of lack of skilled staff, and I urge the Minister and the Government to do something about the matter.

I feel that as a community we should have the same clarity of thought and singleness of purpose that prevailed in the war years in regard to our problems. If we had that outlook, those problems would be readily solved. And we can get it. One after the other, members have risen and offered assistance to the Government. So much has been said about Communism, that I do not propose to weary the House by discussing that matter; but I do want to say that when we speak about communists we should remember that we, too, have some responsibility in this community; and we have no right to abuse any section of the people—be they communists or otherwise—unless we are politically honest with one another and are making our individual and collective contribution towards the betterment of conditions.

The member for Victoria Park and I are in a most invidious position. We have been subjected by members in this House to almost insulting epithets because we have endeavoured to be of some assistance to the Government and, in turn, to the community. When, under those conditions, we have a man like the president of the Liberal Party having the effrontery, after the last Victorian elections, to say, "These Independents have got power altogether beyond their responsibility," I would like to point out to him that it is about time he himself acquired a sense of political responsibility. It was positive effrontery on his part to say what he did in view of the fact that the very Government he supports in this State was asking two Independents—the member for Victoria Park and myself—who receive no emoluments at all, to carry equal responsibility with that Government in the interests of the community. Unlike him, the member for Victoria Park and I have endeavoured to stand up to that obligation. So far, I do not find that Mr. Downing has appeared to raise himself to that standard of political prestige.

So I warn him, and those associated with any political party, that when they try to put over cheap jibes like that, they should remember they are taunting members to do things which, if they were on as low a plane, they might be tempted to do. I add, in conclusion, that the member for Victoria Park and I will at all times endeavour to carry out our duty to the community as we

see it, even though our doing so does not please members of the Opposition or the Government. If all of us do that this session and in succeeding sessions, communists will ultimately disappear from this country, and members of the public who are looking to Communism for their salvation will regain some of the respect they formerly had for political parties.

On motion by the Acting Premier, debate adjourned.

PRIVILEGE—NEWSPAPER STATEMENT.

Announcement by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Referring to the matter of privilege raised by the members for Avon and Beverley when they recited offensive and untrue statements about Parliament from an article in the "Workers' Star," I wish to announce that the tickets of admission proposed to be issued to reporters from the "Workers' Star" to the Press gallery have been cancelled.

House adjourned at 11.19 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 2nd September, 1948.

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