

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was published in a newspaper called "The Wheatgrower" and that is not the only place I have seen it.

Mr. Leslie: It was not in a reputable newspaper.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Will the Minister deny that he had reason to believe that the Legislative Council would not agree to the Bill unless it contained this provision?

The Attorney General: I have never given that point any consideration. I think it should be extended only to the end of 1949 as provided for in the Bill.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Attorney General denies having stated at any time that the reason why this legislation was being limited to 1949 was because the Legislative Council would not accept the legislation if it provided for a long period.

The Attorney General. Yes, definitely.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course, I have to accept the Minister's assurance; but I have been advised otherwise.

The Attorney General: You may have been. I know by whom.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Who was it?

Mr. Leslie: "The Wheatgrower."

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Whether the Minister has or has not given consideration to the point before, someone has done so, and in view of the reason given that the Legislative Council would not accept the legislation otherwise, that explains the appearance of the clause in the Bill. Possibly some members of the Government were tipped off by someone in another place that the legislation would not be agreed to if a longer period were provided for, and so the limit of 1949 has been inserted in the Bill. There is no need for that limit at all because, if the Government decides on the discontinuance of price control prior to the end of 1949, it can take the necessary action without coming to Parliament, simply by annulling the regulations. I suggest the Minister will lose nothing by agreeing to the deletion of the clause, and we shall then at least test out another place.

Mr. LESLIE: I move—  
That progress be reported.

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

Ayes .. .. .	22
Noes .. .. .	15

Majority for .. .. . 7

#### AYES.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Needham
Mr. Doney	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Graham	Mr. Read
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Watts
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. May	Mr. Rodoreda

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Murray
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nimmo
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Smith
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hill	Mr. Yatea
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Brand
Mr. Mann	

(Teller.)

Motion thus passed; progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.17 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 25th August, 1948.

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

**QUESTIONS.****RAILWAYS.**

(a) *As to Availability and Re-conditioning of A.S.G. Engines.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) How many of the 24 re-conditioned A.S.G. engines have been continuously available for "traffic" during the past two months?

(2) Is a separate account kept of maintenance costs for this class of engine?

(3) What has been the amount paid for oxywelding broken chassis frames and spot welding tenders of these engines since they have been operating in the Eastern Goldfields area?

(4) How many of them (throughout the State) have broken their framing during the past two years?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Seven.

(2) Yes.

(3) £235.

(4) Eleven.

(b) *As to Shortage of Panel Pins at Midland Junction Workshops.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that panel pins of various sizes have not been available in the Midland Junction Workshops for several years?

(2) Will he explain the reason for the shortage, in view of the fact that these pins are being used by private firms who are apparently able to obtain them?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Supplies have been short in recent years.

(2) The shortage has been more acute in certain sizes, but orders placed recently are being supplied.

(c) *As to Soap Supplies to Workshop Employees.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that for several years soft soap and washing soap have been issued

to employees of the Midland Junction Workshops?

(2) Is he aware that during the last two or three months washing soap has not been available to employees, and soft soap only in limited quantities?

(3) Will he advise whether the soap is unprocurable, or whether there is some other reason why it is not issued?

(4) If the former is the case, is he aware that soap is available at all stores?

(5) Will he take steps to ensure that a supply is made available for employees?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Washing soap and soft soap have been in short supply, but are issued when available.

(4) Yes, but in limited quantities only.

(5) Answered by Nos. (3) and (4).

**MIGRANTS.**

*As to State's Voice in Selection.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is it a fact that the State Government has a voice in regard to the choice of migrants coming to Western Australia?

(2) Is it a fact that British immigrants are given a priority by the State Government?

(3) Has the Government made any approaches or complaints to the Commonwealth immigration authorities regarding the nationalities and occupations of alien immigrants who have been coming to this State?

(4) Has the Government made any representations to the Commonwealth in an endeavour to get immigrants from particular countries?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes, but nationalities and occupations of alien immigrants are matters entirely within the Commonwealth authorities' sphere of investigation and responsibility.

(4) No.

## SHIPPING, INTERSTATE.

*As to Cargo Returned to Eastern States.*

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

(1) Is she aware that cargo imported for use in Western Australia, including sugar, tobacco and newsprint, is being shipped to the Eastern States?

(2) That as a good deal of such cargo had previously been shipped from the Eastern States, will she take steps to see that such commodities remain in Western Australia?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) If the Member for South Fremantle will read Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act he will have a complete answer.

## TASMANIAN ELECTION.

*As to Reactions of Minister for Education.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the obvious enthusiasm with which both the Premier and he were pleased to make public statements following the Victorian extraordinary election which was precipitated by the Legislative Council in that State last November, will he now state his reactions to the result of the Tasmanian election, which was held last Saturday also because of interference by the Legislative Council with the rights of a democratically elected Government?

The MINISTER replied:

There is considerable doubt in my mind as to whether the question is one that should be answered at Parliamentary question time as it deals merely with a matter of personal opinion not associated with Western Australian State affairs. However, concerning the Tasmanian elections my view coincides with the Labour view from Canberra that there is "no need to comment on a miracle." Concerning the latter portion of the question the legally constituted Legislative Council of Tasmania in carrying out its functions no more "interferes" than do other legally constituted bodies such as the High Court of Australia.

## BILL—PRICES CONTROL.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill

Clause 18—Duration (partly considered):

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am amazed that either the Acting Premier or the Attorney General has not something to say on this matter because, when progress was reported last night, I, with several other members, was under the impression that that action was taken to enable the Government to consider the move made by the Leader of the Opposition to have the clause deleted. Presumably the Government has decided in favour of retaining the clause. The Attorney General told us last night that the clause was desirable to ensure that the measure shall come before Parliament next year for reconsideration, amendment and so forth.

The Attorney General: It is emergency legislation.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is not the position as I understand it. If, towards the end of next year, the Government finds it necessary to continue the Act—and I am sure no other decision will be possible—the only section that it would be necessary to bring before Parliament would be the one dealing with its duration. Therefore the argument offered by the Attorney General for the retention of the clause contained no logic at all.

The Minister for Lands: Does not a Bill for the continuance of an Act open up the whole measure?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: No.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No. That is news to me.

The Minister for Lands: I think you could have a full discussion on the measure if you were continuing it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Parliament could have a discussion on it, certainly, but there would be only one section before the House, the section providing for an alteration dealing with the date.

The Acting Premier: We have been faced with that position 20 times in 10 years.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Exactly.

The Acting Premier: And you have been responsible for facing us with it.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It was different legislation altogether.

The Acting Premier: No.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Acting Premier is not correct. This legislation will certainly have to remain in force for more than one year and I am fairly sure that the Acting Premier is of that opinion, too.

The Acting Premier: And so did most of the legislation which you put into annual Bills.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That might be so.

Hon. A. H. Panton: In one or two instances the Legislative Council insisted on it against our will.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: This legislation will have to continue in force, in my opinion, for at least five years. I therefore cannot see any advantage in retaining the clause, as it might lead many people to the wrong conclusion that the legislation will continue for only 12 months.

The Attorney General: You hope it will go as soon as possible.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not.

The Attorney General: That is all right.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I hope it will be permanent.

The Attorney General: That is what I want to know.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: You know now.

The Attorney General: You differ from your leader.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I may differ from my leader. That is what probably the Attorney General will never be guilty of doing.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He was last night.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think last night his leader disagreed with him.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Disapproved of him!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The present Government, if it remains in office for five years will, I think, continue this legislation. If the clause remains in the Bill, it will give those in the business world who desire to profiteer upon the community a good lever to use against the Government for the pur-

pose of having the Bill restricted to one year. I see no reason why the clause should remain in the Bill, but every reason why it should be struck out. I hope the Committee will vote against it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Acting Premier, by interjection, sought to show that, by fixing a period in the Bill, an amending Bill would require to be introduced into Parliament within 12 months to ensure its continuance, and that such action was similar to that taken by the previous Government with regard to other Bills. The position is very different. The Bills to which the Acting Premier referred did not depend upon regulations for administration, but contained principles which had to be renewed or rejected as occasion arose. One example was the Bill to continue the Lotteries Control Act.

The Attorney General: And the legislation dealing with mortgagees' rights restriction and the financial emergency.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: They did not depend entirely on regulations, as this piece of legislation would.

The Attorney General: That is all the more reason why it should be brought up for consideration again.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the Government desires to continue this legislation, the only way it could do so—as the member for Northam pointed out—would be to bring in an amending Bill to alter the duration of the Act. But if the Government does not wish to continue the legislation, then all it need do is to cancel the regulations or disband the officers, and nothing further would be done in the matter of price control. The legislation would expire by effluxion of time. I submit that this clause has been inserted in the Bill to meet the wishes of another place, because the Government feels that if it is provided that this legislation shall continue for more than 12 months, the Legislative Council would not agree to give the powers. Has the Government considered this aspect, that it is much easier now to get another place to agree to price-fixing legislation than it would be in 12 months? That should be quite obvious.

The Attorney General: I do not agree with that at all.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think the Attorney General ought to, because it is as plain as a pikestaff.

The Attorney General: I differ.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Members of another place do not view this type of legislation kindly, as they say it is analagous to fixing profits and that, of course, is anathema to them. It is almost certain, as the member for Northam pointed out, that this legislation will be required for more than one year, as there will still be many goods in short supply. It is because those goods are in short supply that we want price control. If the Government does not take the opportunity to provide for the Bill to remain in force beyond next year, it might be exceedingly difficult at the end of the first year to get another place to agree to its extension. What a hole the Government would be in then! There is no danger to the Government, or the Government's policy, in allowing this legislation to continue for five years, because at any time before then, if the Government decided to discontinue price control, it could do so by the simple expedient of cancelling the regulations made under the Act. The Attorney General knows full well that if he agreed to the insertion in the Bill of the year 1952, for example, and he wished to discontinue price control in 1949, he could do so.

The Attorney General: I have to get the regulations through both Houses. Have I not?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Attorney General could discontinue price control simply by cancelling the regulations and disbanding the officers.

The Attorney General: I cannot cancel any regulation without the consent of both Houses of Parliament.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course the Attorney General can!

The Attorney General: I cannot under this measure.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Attorney General does not have to submit to Parliament the cancellation of a regulation. When he decides he no longer wants to work under certain regulations, he does not use them; that is all. He lets them lapse. It is futile for the Attorney General to say that he would be obliged to continue to

operate the regulations for the time mentioned in the Act. He could discontinue price control at any time up to the time mentioned in the Act but he could not go beyond the time mentioned in the Act if it were necessary to do so unless he had an amendment passed for that purpose, and he might find extreme difficulty in getting such an amendment through in 12 months' or ~~two~~ years' time. If the Minister is wise in this matter, he will take advantage of existing conditions which will give him ample time to enable things to right themselves. I repeat that he would not be obliged to continue price control for the full period mentioned in the Bill. It is better to have too much time than too little.

Mr. HEGNEY: I wish to register my protest against the limitation of the operations of the measure to the 31st December, 1949. I might differ from some of my colleagues, but I hold the opinion that the time has arrived for some permanent measure for price-fixing to be placed on the statute-book. Last night I referred to meat. What happens in connection with milk? There is legislation on the statute-book, more or less of a permanent character, designed for the express purpose of controlling and regulating, among other things, the price of milk. If it is right that this Parliament should control the price of milk, it should control the price of meat and a number of other commodities which are everyday requirements.

I believe the Minister is anxious to get this Bill through Parliament and, from my observation, I believe he will sincerely try to make the subsequent Act a success. But if there is anything designed to kill or sabotage this Bill, it is this last clause. The inspectors who will be appointed under the measure will read it and see that it is to operate only until the 31st December, 1949, and no longer. I put it to any member of this Chamber: If he were an inspector and he knew the Act would expire at the end of that period, would he not be restless? Would he not have his mind diverted from the real object of his appointment? Would he not use every opportunity—human nature being what it is—to look out for something better or of a more permanent nature? Of course he would! Any one of us would. If this Bill is passed in its present form, there is not the slightest doubt that the staff will be more or less discon-

tented and their minds will not be fully occupied on the work to which they will be assigned.

There should be certain legislation to prevent profiteering and excessive prices for commodities, whether there is an ample supply or not. Commerce today is different from what it used to be 50 to 100 years ago. There are now employers' organisations, manufacturers' organisations, retailers' organisations and wholesalers' organisations, and there is not the competition in the business community that existed even 40 years ago. After the first World War, there were ample supplies of commodities, but they were dribbled on to the market as those controlling them thought fit. In future, there may not be a shortage of footwear, but that does not mean that unlimited stocks will be made available to the public. They will be put on the market at a price determined by those in control of their manufacture and supply. The same applies to bread. Remove all the restrictions tomorrow from that basic commodity, and what would happen? There are bakers' associations, and one baker does not compete with another. These people use commonsense today. Competition has given place to combination. I believe that if we are to have goodwill in industrial life in Western Australia, some permanent measure for price-fixing must be placed on the statute-book.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I think that from the standpoint of courtesy, if for no other reason, the Minister might reply to the comments made.

The Attorney General: I am quite willing to do so. I thought of doing it in one bite.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Several points have been raised, and for the time being I am prepared to listen to what the Attorney General has to say.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think it must be generally admitted that at the referendum the people of Australia voted against permanent price-fixing.

Opposition members: No!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In my opinion, that was the decision of the people. It has been the custom of all Parliaments in dealing with legislation that has arisen out of a crisis to tackle it on a temporary

basis; hence, we have had the Financial Emergency Act, the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act, and a number of other measures—we have even had a Profiteering Prevention Act—which have been dealt with on a temporary basis only. I regard this as an emergency Bill and not one to be permanently placed on the statute-book. I have dealt with it on that basis, and I think the Leader of the Opposition will agree that it is customary to provide for such measures to last for a definite period and, if necessary, to be renewed from time to time. I have followed the usual course. If my policy were to have permanent price-fixing, as suggested by the member for Pilbara, I agree that I would be using the wrong method. But I do not agree that we should have permanent price-fixing in Western Australia.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There have been many angles presented to this Committee to which the Attorney General has not replied or commented on. An important one was mentioned by the member for Northam, and that is this, that it will not be possible for any amendment, unless separately introduced, to be dealt with on a continuing Bill once the measure is passed.

The Attorney General: I admit that.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Attorney General under pressure admits one thing today and another tomorrow, just as he has for a month been changing from his advocacy of the Profiteering Prevention Act, as being able to meet the situation entirely, to disowning, yesterday, any chance whatever of that measure covering the position. So, we cannot place any reliance on his views. Another important point is that in connection with the staff position. During the last 24 hours it has been made known to me, from persons who were present at a meeting the Minister had with the staff, that their uncertainty has already led to serious dissatisfaction; that they were encouraged to believe that they had better be prepared to shift for themselves.

What is going to be the position of the senior officers to be taken over? Fortunately for the Deputy Commissioner—Mr. Mathea—he is a Commonwealth officer, so his services cannot be dispensed with by the Minister even though this legislation lapses or collapses. But there are other members of the staff not similarly situated.

Many anticipate becoming permanent officers in some avenue of the public service, but they know not where they are today. If anything is to promote mistrust and dissatisfaction in public relations, it is to have disgruntled public servants. In the interests of efficiency and better control, I think it is necessary for the clause to be amended to provide for a later time, or to be entirely deleted. To test the Committee, I move an amendment—

That in line 3 the word "forty-nine" be struck out with a view to inserting the word "fifty-one."

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

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	21
Majority against	..	..	..	1

AYES.	
Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Read
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Smith
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. May	Mr. Rodoreda

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Bovell	Mr. North
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Seward
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hall	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hill	Mr. Yates
Mr. Mann	Mr. Brand
Mr. Murray	

(Teller.)

AYES.		NOES.	
Mr. Leahy	Mr. McLarty	Mr. Leahy	Mr. Triat
Mr. Triat	Mr. McDonald	Mr. Triat	Mr. Styants
Mr. Styants	Mr. Leslie	Mr. Styants	Mr. Collier
Mr. Collier	Mr. Keenan		

Amendment thus negatived.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	20
Majority for	..	..	..	1

AYES.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Bovell	Mr. North
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Seward
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hall	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hill	Mr. Yates
Mr. Mann	Mr. Brand
Mr. Murray	

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Read
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Smith
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. May	Mr. Rodoreda

(Teller.)

AYES.		NOES.	
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Leahy	Mr. Leahy	Mr. Triat
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Triat	Mr. Triat	Mr. Styants
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Styants	Mr. Styants	Mr. Collier
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Collier		

Clause thus passed.

Schedule:

Mr. MARSHALL: The schedule deals with the matter of secrecy. Can the Minister show the Committee where in the Bill provision is made for a penalty to be imposed on any officer who, having signed the declaration of secrecy, divulges information coming under that provision? There is provision in the Bill for the punishment of any person who breaks any of the regulations, but there is no provision for punishment for breaking the undertaking as to secrecy. Members have not had the opportunity of seeing the regulations but, even if such a provision were contained in them, I doubt whether we could have provision in the Bill for certain things and then have that provision enforced by regulations.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Clause 12 provides—

A person shall not, except in the course of his duty pursuant to the provisions of this Act, or the regulations in operation from time to time under the provisions of this Act, directly or indirectly communicate or divulge any information relating to any matter which comes to his knowledge in consequence of his official position.

If he did so it would be contrary to the provisions of the Bill. There is provision for a general offence and for a penalty not exceeding £100 for an offence against the Act.

Mr. Marshall: That does not deal with this aspect.

The Acting Premier: It deals with any offence.

Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** I move—  
That the report of the Committee be adopted.

*As to Re-committal.*

**Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN:** I move—

That the Bill be recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 8.

When I tried to secure an amendment to Clause 8 last night the Chairman ruled that the amendment would be consequential, but I now see that that will not be so, and as the Legislative Council is not at present sitting I feel that we should do the job here and not rely on another place to do it for us.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The necessary alteration has been made in the Bill.

**Hon. J. T. Tonkin:** On what authority?

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The Chairman of Committees ruled that it was a consequential amendment. The Bill has been reprinted.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is the member for Fremantle now satisfied?

**Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN:** Yes. I will withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

*Debate Resumed.*

Question put and passed; report of Committee adopted.

*Third Reading.*

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—North Perth) [5.18]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [5.19]: I think this measure calls for a Message from His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor before it is passed. Has that Message been received, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Message was received, and was read on the 17th August.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Eleventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the 18th August.

**MR. NIMMO** (Mt. Hawthorn) [5.20]: The first matter I wish to discuss on the Address-in-reply is connected with housing. The other evening the member for South Fremantle spoke about an Ex-Servicemen's Concrete Home Company. I agree with the hon. member's remarks but feel that stronger words should be used when speaking of the activities of that concern.

**Mr. Fox:** I did not speak about the Concrete Home Company, but about another company. There were two of them.

**MR. NIMMO:** This is the Ex-Servicemen's Concrete Home Company. The company started in October, 1946, and I wish to draw the attention of the House to some of its methods. Its activities were first brought under my notice by a young fellow who wanted to build a shed in my electorate. He applied to the Perth Road Board for a permit, which was not granted. I advised this young man to apply to the Housing Commission but he told me that he was already in possession of a permit and that he had had it for six months, whereupon I informed him that he would have to get busy or otherwise have the date on the permit altered. He thought this rather strange and told me that it seemed "fishy." On checking up on the matter I found that this man had paid £300 to the company.

Another case is that of a widow in my electorate who approached me a few days afterwards and advised me that she had already paid £100 to the same company. I can supply the House with quite a number of other cases as well. One lady mentioned to me that while her husband was away in the Forces she saved both his money and her own and had lost the lot after investing it with these people. I approached the Attorney General on the matter and he advised me that it was a case for the Police Department. The C.I.B. took the matter up and eventually closed the company down.

**Mr. Graham:** I think there were two of us responsible for that, were there not?

**MR. NIMMO:** There may have been. The member for East Perth and I discussed the matter and I made several other inquiries. I do not think we could have taken any other action.



The other day several questions were asked about the housing problem and the number of people who want to build or desire Commonwealth-State rental homes. At the present time we are building at the rate of 3,000 homes per year. I have figures which show that there are 12,407 families in need of houses.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They are nearly all in my electorate.

Mr. NIMMO: I do not think that is correct. I consider this is a matter for the whole Commonwealth because it is of national importance. The sooner we can get together all the bodies concerned, the quicker this problem will be solved. I have spoken to men who belong to trade unions and they are very concerned about the matter. The reason for their concern is that 90 per cent. of the people requiring homes belong to one union or another. I am not concerned about the 40-hour week because I will be glad when it is down to a 35-hour week. With such a state of affairs existing it is necessary for us all to be prepared to work more hours in an endeavour to house the people or to arrive at some solution. One way of overcoming the difficulty would be to build a thousand huts similar to those at No. 5 P.D. Wembley which could be utilised to solve the worries of two-unit families.

Mr. Marshall: It has been resolved as far as Middle Swan is concerned. Hundreds of houses are being built there.

Mr. NIMMO: If there was a war on, such worries would be soon overcome. Military and Air Force units would not stand on any ceremony about 40 hours or even 80 hours and I do consider that something should be done about the matter.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Government which you support is putting men off the building of houses.

Mr. NIMMO: I might say something about that later. At present we require approximately 12,000 homes and we are building at the rate of 3,000 per year. It would take four years to provide houses for all those people if applications ceased today. There are approximately 3,000 marriages per year and we have not taken our immigrants into account. Where can we house them if we do get them?

Perhaps I should not say that I am satisfied with the rate of building in my elec-

torate as I would like to get double the number of houses if that were possible, but the number of homes built there is satisfactory. In the City Beach, Floreat Park and Wembley areas, from August to July, 1947,—which is only nine months—47 homes were completed. From July, 1947, to June, 1948, 102 homes were completed in the same area, which is a satisfactory increase. In the Scarborough area, which comes under the Perth Road Board for the issue of permits, 77 permits were issued for the year 1946-47, and for the year 1947-48, 129 permits were issued, valued at £97,000. The reason why I have shown the number of houses completed in one area and only the number of permits issued in the other area is that the Perth City Council figures show the number of homes completed whereas the figures issued by the Perth Road Board show only the number of permits issued.

In the Mt. Hawthorn area, which is fairly thickly populated, there are very few vacant blocks, but for the nine months to the end of 1947 there were only ten homes completed. For the twelve months ended June, 1948, for the same area, there were 18 homes completed. In the Floreat Park-Wembley area the figures include only half-a-dozen Commonwealth-State rental homes and there has not been one such home completed in the Scarborough area. In the Osborne Ward, 186 permits have been issued for this year and the majority of them are for Commonwealth-State rental homes. I have not been supplied with the figures for the number of homes completed last year in this ward, but I do not think they will differ much from the figures I gave for this year.

During the war period, and since the war terminated, a number of committees have been formed throughout the metropolitan area for the establishment of kindergartens. I consider kindergartens should be taken over by the Government. My reason for this statement is that one of the kindergartens recently formed has had a very difficult job to find a teacher. The position is that when the kindergartens are built, there are insufficient teachers to staff them. We cannot expect to secure the services of teachers at the prevailing rate of pay. In these days young ladies will not undertake the work. I give credit to the Kindergarten Union and the teachers who are at present in charge of the various schools run by that

body, for the work that is being carried out. They are doing a marvellous job, and so are the parents of the children. I claim that, in connection with the planning of new schools, provision should be made for the erection of kindergartens in association with infant schools, with clinics for the study of children attached to them. Certainly children of the kindergarten age require special care. If effect were given to what I suggest, all children would get an equal opportunity to share in the advantages. At present the kindergartens cater for only a limited few.

We find that in one district 50 children may be accommodated in the kindergarten, while not far away is a school with between 300 and 400 children who at no stage were able to gain admission to the kindergarten. As I say, only a small percentage are able to avail themselves of that opportunity. To give members some idea of what it costs to conduct a kindergarten, may I say I am very interested in one, the financial obligations associated with which cost us £523 for the last financial year. The Government made a grant of £200, which meant that it actually cost us £323 for the 12 months.

Hon. A. H. Panton: How many children have you in that kindergarten?

Mr. NIMMO: We have 50. I may add that we received a bill from the Water Supply Department for £11 10s.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do as I did with ours—pay half and the department will let you off the other half.

Mr. NIMMO: I am deeply concerned about the condition of Lake Monger, about which there has been quite a lot of talk from time to time. Two-thirds of the lake are covered with water hyacinth. According to the latest report I read in the Press, the Perth City Council is expected to do something about it in November. I shall have quite a lot to say about it if that does not prove to be correct. Under the present set-up, the Perth City Council has the necessary money to do the job required there, but anything of that sort is held up because the Perth Road Board is in control of one section of the lake and has not the money to enable it to carry out essential work there.

I intend to ascertain whether it is worth while asking for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire

into the matter. Lake Monger could be one of the beauty spots of Western Australia. It is a marvellous sheet of water and there should be nothing to prevent the aquatic sports taking place there that were conducted in past years. The trouble is that the hyacinth is covering the lake. A Select Committee could inquire into the position, particularly with reference to the portion owned by the Perth Road Board, which will not release its control of that section of the lake and has not the money required to do the job.

Mr. Marshall: What job do you want done there? I understand the reclamation of the shallow area is being proceeded with.

Mr. NIMMO: That is all on one side of the lake.

Hon. A. H. Panton: On the Leederville side.

Mr. NIMMO: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: What should be done?

Mr. NIMMO: What the Perth City Council wants to do. It desires to erect a retaining wall right round the lake. The council will not do so because it controls only about 80 per cent. of the lake and the Perth Road Board has no funds with which to carry out its portion of the undertaking. I mention that fact because we are faced with a problem in the Osborne Ward where there are some Commonwealth-State rental homes and the road board has not the money to enable it to build roads for the convenience of the residents. Some of the people there, such as those living in Joon-danna Drive, have been informed that they will not be provided with roads for at least two years or perhaps longer. I think we should appoint a Select Committee to inquire into these matters and force those concerned to take the necessary action.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is said that Dog Swamp was where the hyacinth trouble originated.

Mr. NIMMO: Worse luck, that also is in my electorate! I cannot see the road board doing anything there.

Hon. A. H. Panton: At any rate, that is where the hyacinth trouble started.

Mr. NIMMO: Yes. Dealing with the flood water question, I have a problem at Wembley. Last year some houses in Cambridge-street were adversely affected and

at one the water was an inch above the lawn for a period of three months. That house was situated one block off Cambridge-street. The Perth City Council has a pump and three big sumps. I believe that some time ago the council wanted to run the water into Jolimont Lake. If that could be done, it would save us a lot of trouble. Dealing next with the beaches in my electorate, I have those at Scarborough, Wembley and Graylands and also City Beach.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Under the redistribution of seats, the beaches are provided with a new electorate.

Mr. NIMMO: In my opinion, the time has arrived when the Government should take control of the beaches and convert them into national reserves. Those who patronise the beaches largely come from outside the district, and I guarantee that if a census were taken at Scarborough on a hot day, it would be found that 80 per cent. of the people on the beach were not local residents. Some time ago, a visitor, who had just completed a tour of the world, said to me, "You have some of the finest beaches one could wish to see, but they are a disgrace to Western Australia." The amenities of our beaches are not all that they should be, and it is time that some Government department, such as the Gardens Board, assumed control of them all.

At North Beach we have been trying to get a boat harbour, hoping that the fishermen of Fremantle would use it as an emergency base. I understand that the fishermen of Fremantle were not keen on doing so, but the people of North Beach and a number of the yachting fraternity in my electorate approached me and expressed the opinion that it would be useful in that it would provide a port for yachting on the coast. I was in Hobart when the yachts arrived on completion of the race from Sydney, and it occurred to me that if we had somewhere where we could keep our yachts, it would be of great benefit to the sailing men of this State.

There has been a good deal of discussion about traffic accidents. During my trip to Tasmania, I found that drivers adhered strictly to the stop signs on the major roads. Before any vehicle may enter a major road, the driver is required to pull up.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That applies in South Australia also.

Mr. NIMMO: Yes, but the regulation is not so rigidly observed there as in Tasmania. In South Australia, I noticed that if there was nobody in the vicinity of a stop sign, drivers passed on, but if anyone did that in Tasmania, he was prosecuted. I do not think there is any State where that law is so well observed as it is in Tasmania. In Victoria, if the police are about, drivers do stop but, if not, they continue on their way.

Mr. Marshall: The same thing applies in this State. If the police are about the regulation is observed.

Mr. NIMMO: One may see 12 cars cross Stirling-highway and only one out of the 12 will stop before entering the highway.

Mr. Marshall: What happens if the police are about?

Mr. NIMMO: Then the 12 observe the regulation and stop. I wish now to refer to the subject of tourist traffic. When I called at one of the large hotels in Melbourne, I looked for a newspaper from Western Australia, but every State was represented except this one.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Parliament House is the only place in Victoria where you will find a Western Australian newspaper.

Mr. NIMMO: The possibilities of the tourist trade should be investigated. I am referring now to means for attracting tourists from the Eastern States. The Tourist Bureau has buses making trips to the South-West but if one made a check, one would find that nearly all the patrons are town people and very few are from the Eastern States. It is time we made an effort to secure some of the foreign capital available from this source, just as Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania do. We in this State seem to be lagging badly, though we have scenery to offer tourists as fine as has any State of the Commonwealth.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Most visitors complain about the hotel accommodation in Western Australia.

Mr. NIMMO: Then it is time that was improved. One other matter on which I wish to touch is fishing. Just before last session I was shown certain documents in

confidence, and said I should like to refer to them in Parliament, but was promptly asked to return them. I sought them again this session, but unsuccessfully. Two or three years ago, the ex-Navalmen's Association devised a scheme, though it really originated with Mr. Frank Anderson and Mr. Bill Talbot, following which four or five others were drawn in. It was to be a co-operative scheme, the idea being to establish two stations in each State right around the coast to Brisbane and, for the purpose, some of the sloops and trawlers were to be used. These bases would be similar to those used by trawlers in the Old Country. The Commonwealth Government was approached but made no response and the proposal died a natural death. If any member happens to be interested, I shall be pleased to let him read a few paragraphs dealing with the scheme.

**MR. PERKINS** (York) [5.47]: I wish to take the opportunity that the debate on the Address-in-reply affords to speak on the wheat position. The production of wheat bulks very large indeed in the economy of our State. A considerable portion of the State is directly dependent upon the prosperity of the wheat industry. This prosperity not only affects the men who produce the grain but also many of our country towns. If the wheatgrowers are doing well, their prosperity is very quickly reflected in the country areas and later extends to the rest of the community. It is generally accepted that no industry reflects its prosperity or poverty more quickly throughout the community generally than does the wheat industry. It also affects industries very remote from wheatgrowing—

Mr. May: We are all interested in it.

**Mr. PERKINS**:—and this applies to wheat perhaps to a greater extent than to most industries. Therefore I make no apology for stressing the importance of adopting proper conditions for the wheat industry so far as that is possible. I am afraid that the public judges the prosperity of the wheat industry largely by regarding only a comparatively few individuals engaged in it. If a limited number of wheat farmers are getting new cars, if perhaps some of the old farmers pass on and it is found that their estates are valued for probate at perhaps £10,000 each—although there may be only six of such estates in a year—people

draw the conclusion that the whole industry must be prosperous. I have heard those very conclusions drawn in this House, where one would at least expect a more thorough examination of the real position to be made.

I hope that members who are not directly concerned in the wheat industry, when they observe the prosperity of a comparatively few farmers, will not be tempted to conclude that all the people engaged in the industry are very prosperous, and well able to contribute whatever benefits the rest of the community seek to obtain from them. I would emphasise that point, because at present a great many of our young ex-Servicemen, besides other young people, are seeking to establish themselves in the industry. It is difficult enough to make headway in any walk of life at present, owing to the exceedingly high taxation. We must therefore be particularly careful not unduly to handicap these young people who are seeking to establish themselves in the industry.

I listened with great interest to what the member for North-East Fremantle had to say about the international wheat agreement. I think all farmers studied very carefully indeed whatever information was available to them in regard to that agreement, because it proposed to fix the international price of wheat for a considerable time, at least five years. International monetary affairs are such at present that any long-period agreement, in fixed money terms, is very dangerous. It is evident from the bits and pieces of news we see reported in the daily Press from time to time that serious consideration is being given to an alteration of the exchange rate between Australia and England. Members will have observed that within the last few days the exchange rate between New Zealand and England has been altered from a discount of 25 per cent. to par with sterling.

If these international agreements are fixed in terms of sterling, then obviously by just one such alteration of policy, the advantage of the agreement to Australian farmers could be altered by 25 per cent. That would have a material effect, from the growers' point of view, upon any international agreement. I also heard the member for North-East Fremantle say that a price of 20s. per bushel to consumer countries in Europe was an outrageous one, that is, in terms of our currency. Well, it does sound

very high, when judged by the returns we have received for our wheat during recent years. But members must not overlook the fact that the prices which the consumers in Europe have had to pay were very much higher than the prices which the Australian growers received, by reason of the policies adopted by those European countries.

For instance, during the depression period, at which time our growers were receiving as low as 2s. and 2s. 6d. a bushel at ports in Western Australia, the European producers, so far as I can remember, received as their lowest price about 6s. or 8s. a bushel. That was done for various reasons of national policy, largely the self-sufficiency policy which many countries in Europe were forced to adopt owing to international complications. Though we as an exporting nation were violently opposed to the policy of self-sufficiency and would have liked to see the consumers in those countries obtain wheat at a much lower price, the fact remains that, because of the conditions then existing, the cost to the consumer in Europe was very high indeed. In Germany, for example, I think the producer received about 15s. per bushel expressed in our currency, even at the time of the depression. I believe some prices were even higher, but I have not troubled to take out the exact figures as I do not think they are material.

Mr. Reynolds: The point is very material, because the franc was 25.25 per pound before the war, and at the time of which you speak it jumped to nearly 600.

Mr. PERKINS: The fact is that the cost to the consumer was much higher in those countries than ours, owing to the policies adopted by their own Governments. Therefore, while present prices appear high to us, they are not so outrageous as the member for North-East Fremantle thinks they are.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You are trying to prove that £1 per bushel is not an unconscionable price.

Mr. PERKINS: I say it is not so high, when considered in relation to the other prices I have mentioned, as the member for North-East Fremantle seems to think. I quite agree that a price of £1 per bushel is high judged by our standards, and I think it inevitable that there must be some scaling down in the future. If not, obviously it

will mean a major revolution in world economy. I do not know whether members have paid sufficient attention to a small article which was quoted by the member for Irwin-Moore.

Mr. Reynolds: It would be small!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PERKINS: I intend to quote from the article at greater length. It was written by Sir John Boyd Orr, retired Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, an entirely independent body set up by the United Nations Organisation. I confess that when I first read the article I could hardly credit that things were as serious as he would have us believe, but he is a man of undoubted international repute who has been working with a body set up by the United Nations Organisation and therefore I think we must respect his views, almost alarming though they be. I quote as follows:—

There are 150,000,000 more people in the world today than there were in 1938; during the lifetime of our children it is estimated that there will be 500,000,000 more, and if the world health organisation succeeded in its work of controlling preventable disease that figure might rise to 1,000,000,000. These teeming millions would demand more food and better food. Before the war two-thirds of the world population suffered from something approaching starvation, but standards of living had risen; in the United States alone food consumption was up by 15 per cent. a head. In Britain, where the former poor were now richer and the old rich were poorer, the consumption of protein had gone up by no less than 10 per cent. and that of the main vitamins and minerals by 25 to 50 per cent. While food consumption was rising fast in the comparatively well-fed countries, the demand for food among the previously badly fed 80 per cent. of the peoples of the East and of Latin America was going up still faster.

This increase of population and the demand for food were no new things, but in the past they had been met by the exploitation of the western and southern hemispheres. "There are now no new continents to be discovered, and in the new continents there is no more virgin land to be exploited," Sir John said. "The conclusion of the 17 nations who considered the matter from November, 1946, to March, 1947, was that in the next 25 years food production would need to be doubled to meet the justifiable demands of the world.

"The gravity of the situation is increased by wasting fertility due to the erosion of lands we have already exploited. It takes nature 300 to 1,000 years to build up one inch of fertile soil; man by his wanton misuse is destroy-

ing eight inches in two generations. This destructive process is proceeding today at an alarming rate. In the U.S.A., which has lost half of its original forests, three trees are being cut down for every two planted. About one-quarter of the original crop and pasture lands has already been ruined, and it is estimated that three million tons of fertile top soil are lost every year. The same process is going on to some extent in all continents.

"This rising tide of population and falling reservoir of land fertility is the greatest threat to our civilisation."

Now that is a very alarming statement for a man of the standing of Sir John Boyd Orr to make. In face of it, I think we have to realise that whatever policies we adopt they must be directed to producing the maximum amount of food possible. There is always the fear at the back of producers' minds that the same sort of situation may develop as developed in 1930. That did incalculable damage. It resulted in very poor living conditions indeed, and for many of our producers it caused untold hardship. Members today see the farmers who came through and weathered the storm, but they forget about the people who did not come through; and I can assure them, as one who has lived in the agricultural districts all his life, that a great many did not come through. I do not want to see those conditions recur.

Men have come to this State with £10,000 and lost the lot in a couple of years. I know of a man who is working in this city at present. He spent quite a number of years shearing through the North-West and Queensland with his three brothers. They put all their savings into a property in the Northern Midlands and lost the lot in two years. Since then, this man has been working in the city, but I understand that he and his brothers are having a shot at farming again but have once more struck a bad year. For everyone who came through, there are plenty of others who did not. In the agricultural districts one does not find any feeling of jealousy or a grudge, on the part of those who fail to succeed, against those who make good, because it is realised that in many cases what has been necessary has been just that little extra luck that has led to affluence. I am afraid that work in our agricultural districts must always be something of a gamble, but anything we can do to take as much of the gamble out of it as possible should be done.

That is something for which growers generally are looking.

I do not know whether the member for North-East Fremantle recalls the discussion on the Estimates during the last session in which he was Minister for Agriculture. On that occasion I had something to say about the approach on the international plane to this question of wheat marketing and certain negotiations I suspected the Commonwealth Government had in train. From certain information that was coming through, that looked to be a pretty good guess. I referred to it as a rumour, and the member for North-East Fremantle spoke of rumour being a lying jade. I am afraid that rumour in that particular instance was right on the mark and our worst fears were realised.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What were the fears?

Mr. PERKINS: The point I was making was the contrast in the approach to the marketing of wheat and the marketing of our other primary products. The arrangements which have been made for the marketing of wool under the Joint Organisation Plan—an agreement between the Australian Government and the British Government—provide for a reserve price. If any wool, at auction, does not reach that price, the amount is paid by the Joint Organisation. But if the wool happens to bring in a figure above that reserve price; if the buyers' agents from all over the world, meeting in our auction rooms, are prepared to pay any higher figure at all—it may be twice the reserve price—the wool is sold for that price and the grower gets the full benefit without any deductions—other than a five per cent. levy, which, as a matter of fact, has now been reduced to one per cent. by the Commonwealth Government for certain purposes into which I need not go. The grower gets the full benefit without any material deductions being made for the purpose of subsidising anybody else. Even the wool required by the Australian manufacturers of cloth is sold at full export parity. The buyers for the Australian mills have to compete with those from the rest of the world, and the growers get the benefit of the open competition.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That policy is not likely to be continued.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know about that.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You have heard of it.

Mr. PERKINS: That policy has been accepted by the Commonwealth Government, and has been carried on in recent years.

Mr. Reynolds: What a wonderful Commonwealth Government!

Mr. PERKINS: That may be. A somewhat similar policy applies to meat. There have been certain regulations in regard to price-fixing and so forth, but I do not wish at this stage to start a discussion on price-fixing. Prices generally had to follow the international price of meat because otherwise meat simply did not come on to the Australian market with the result that the consumers got none. So meat has largely followed the trend of the world market. Something the same has applied to butter, but as I am not very conversant with butter I shall not discuss it. Both wool and meat are produced in some degree by the same people who produce wheat, and I desire to contrast the treatment meted out to the producers of wool and meat with that accorded the wheatgrowers. When it comes to the wheatgrowers, it is a horse of a different colour.

If it is desirable that the cost of flour, which affects the price of the loaf, should be kept down to a certain figure in Australia, I have no objection whatever, and the wheatgrowers are meeting that particular subsidy. That is a matter which the wheatgrowers willingly agreed to in 1938 when the flour tax legislation was brought down. It operated for the benefit of the wheatgrowers at that time, because the home consumption price for flour was then higher than the export value of wheat, and no doubt at some time in the future it may operate to the advantage of the growers again. Since about 1943 when the export parity of wheat rose above the home consumption price fixed for flour, this agreement has operated against the wheatgrowers. I, as a wheatgrower, and I think most others, have no objection to accepting the lower price, as long as it is equal to the cost of production of course, for wheat for home consumption flour. But it is an entirely different picture when it comes to the concessional sales for stock feed and various other concessional sales that have been made at the direction of the Commonwealth Government.

Members will recall that a sale was made to the New Zealand Government at the rate of 5s. 9d. per bushel which was, at that time, 4s. or 5s. a bushel below export parity. There was also ministerial interference with a number of other export sales. In addition, there was the policy adopted to provide for stock feeders to obtain their wheat at the same price as the grain supplied for home consumption flour. During the depression period—from 1930 to 1940—when the export prices were very low—down as far as 1s. 6d. and 1s. 7d. to the farmer and 2s. and 2s. 6d. at ports—the stock feeders never offered to pay more than export parity for their wheat. When the flour tax legislation was brought in, it was expressly provided that only wheat needed for flour for home consumption would be sold at the higher than export price of 5s. 2d. per bushel f.o.r. Williamstown. The stock feeders continued to buy their requirements at whatever the world parity was. In 1939 it again dropped down to the very low figure of 1s. 9d. per bushel to the farmer.

I have no objection to the stock feeders getting their wheat at export parity, and I never have had. But when export parity goes up to a very high figure it seems to me unreasonable to expect the wheatgrowers to subsidise the sales to the stock feeding industry. Obviously this question of concessional prices to the stock feeder is one for national responsibility and not that of the wheatgrower. It is a responsibility which Australian taxpayers as a whole, should shoulder if it is necessary for the stock feeders to have their wheat at low prices in order to sell their product at lower prices within Australia.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What will happen to the stock feeders under the State marketing plan?

Mr. PERKINS: I have not got round to that: I will come to it later. But I will say this, that two wrongs do not make a right in any circumstances.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. PERKINS: Before tea I was speaking of the International Wheat Agreement and certain factors arising from it. Any long-term international agreement—with world conditions as they are—is extremely dangerous and needs to be watched care-

fully. It is necessary only to look at the prices we are paying for imports from European countries, or from anywhere outside Australia, to realise that prices fixed at present-day values are liable to sharp alteration. To that extent such agreements need careful scrutiny. The question of marketing is much discussed at the moment, and it may be necessary to take action in this House in regard to the matter. Perhaps we could have some prior discussion on the question to give members the opportunity of thinking it over and formulating their views. The Farmers' Union is discussing the position at a special conference and will, I have no doubt, come to certain conclusions. As a member of that union, I am prepared to accept its decisions—whatever they are—with regard to Western Australia, and I think most members in this House will be ready to implement them.

Mr. Reynolds: Do you favour State marketing?

Mr. PERKINS: I will say something about both proposals in a moment. That is a matter that the growers will be given a chance to decide when the facts are placed before them.

The Acting Premier: And when all the fancies are placed before them, also.

Mr. PERKINS: I have heard it said that perhaps it would be best if we left marketing alone altogether and went back to the pre-war position of free marketing. Even if a majority of the growers were in favour of that course it would still be impossible because free marketing, as we knew it before the war, pre-supposed a multiplicity of sellers and of buyers and also a free grain exchange. I understand that the Liverpool Grain Exchange is not now operating at all and that the Winnipeg and Chicago Exchanges are operating to a limited degree only, because of the international restrictions on exchange, and so on, and other complications with which members are no doubt conversant.

I do not know whether members are aware how the private buyer of wheat operated before the war. The system then was that if a buyer was offering 3s. 6d. per bushel here, as soon as he made a purchase he covered himself on one of the international grain exchanges—preferably the Liverpool Exchange—because obviously no

wheat merchant, no matter how large his operations might be, would be capable of financing operations on the scale involved in the marketing of the wheat crop, not only of Australia, but of any other country where the merchants operated. The fact that the international exchanges are not open to buyers makes it impossible to return to that system. An even more cogent reason is that in Great Britain at present there is practically only one buyer of wheat. The British Government has set up a national body to handle the whole of its wheat requirements. It would therefore be stupid for a multiplicity of sellers here to attempt to deal with a single buyer in Britain, which is the largest consumer market for the grain that passes internationally. The same argument applies—to a greater or lesser extent—to many other consuming countries in the world.

We must accept the position that, no matter what our views on wheat marketing might be, it is necessary, in order to meet the present situation, to have some form of Governmental marketing to handle the Australian wheat crop. That is the point that has been reached in deciding what we are to do with the current wheat harvest. The growers in this and the other States of the Commonwealth are being given the opportunity to decide by ballot what they want and whether a Commonwealth or State marketing scheme should be agreed to. From a great many points of view I think it is desirable that the marketing should be on a Commonwealth-wide basis. It is undesirable to have discrimination and variations between the States in that regard. A Commonwealth scheme must be proposed and agreed to by the Commonwealth Government. Negotiations have been in progress for a considerable time between the accredited wheatgrowers' body, the Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation and the Commonwealth Government.

Many of the difficulties have been ironed out, but two major problems remain. One is interference by the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce—or the Commonwealth Government, for which he is acting—in the affairs of the Australian Wheat Board, the marketing body, by direction as to where and at what price both internal and external sales shall be made. This is an important question from the growers' point of view. Then there is



the matter of concessional sales of stock feed. Probably 99 per cent. of the wheat-growers are opposed to the concessions involved in the concessional sales of stock feed that are being met by the wheatgrowing industry. As I was saying before tea, the opinion held by the wheatgrowers is that it is a matter of national policy and should be met by the people of Australia as a whole and not by the wheatgrowers alone. The growers as a body have no wish to cause difficulties for brother producers in the stockfeeding industry, and I think the last thing any responsible wheatgrower would want to do would be to drive wedges between the producers of primary commodities. The policy has been adopted by wheat-growers generally that concessional sales should be met by the people of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Reynolds: Would not the cost index take that up?

Mr. PERKINS: No!

Mr. Reynolds: It would.

Mr. PERKINS: No. The point involved in the concessional sales has been contentious, and as a compromise—not because the wheat-growers as a body have abandoned the principle of such sales being met by the people as a whole—and in order to meet the position to some degree, the Australian Wheat-growers' Federation has agreed that the amount to be sold at concessional prices for stock feed should be limited to 15 per cent. of the amount exported in any one year. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to reach an agreement with the Commonwealth Government on that point. The Commonwealth marketing scheme is contentious to the degree, that the proposal does not provide for the policy as set out by the Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation.

I consider that neither the Commonwealth scheme nor the State scheme, as has been proposed, meets fully the wishes of the wheatgrowers. I have discussed the matter with various growers and they have stated that the only way properly to express their opinion at the coming ballot is to vote "No" to both proposals. They say that because they do not entirely agree with either scheme.

Mr. Reynolds: I thought you said two wrongs did not make a right.

Mr. PERKINS: I will have something to say about that in a moment. It is obvious that the difficulties involved in the Commonwealth scheme apply to a greater or lesser extent to the State scheme. Under a State wheat marketing scheme some provision will have to be made to meet the needs of the stock feeders. These people have legitimately built up an enterprise and it is impossible to put them out of business. If provision is made in a State scheme for concessional sales to stock feeders, as well as for flour for home consumption, the amount exported in normal years will be very much greater in proportion to the amount used within the State than the total Australian exports in proportion to consumption within Australia. The fact remains that the principle of concessional sales at wheatgrowers' expense is a bad one and the principle is no better when applied by a State Government than when it is applied by a Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Reynolds: Very nicely put.

Mr. PERKINS: And to that extent it does offend against the principle. There is also the difficulty in regard to a State scheme that the fluctuations in returns would be even greater than when spread over the whole of the Commonwealth. Obviously, in a poor year the amount used for stock feed and flour for home consumption in Western Australia would be a much bigger percentage of the total crop than in a year when the total local production was much higher and therefore net prices to growers would fluctuate proportionately. Those difficulties must be faced by the wheatgrowers as a whole, and it is a matter for decision at the ballot as to what they are going to do about it.

Mr. Reynolds: Very involved! It has got you tied up.

Mr. PERKINS: I am afraid the question of concessional sales for stock feed is difficult to resolve. However we tackle the matter, it cannot be worked out in a moment. Until there is a change of heart on the part of the Commonwealth Government and until it recognises its responsibilities in regard to concessional sales for stock feed, I think, whatever marketing scheme is adopted, it will find severe criticism among the wheat-growers.

It has been suggested by spokesmen for the Commonwealth scheme that if a period of lower prices occurs for the wheat industry, the wheatgrowers will be very pleased that they have a market with the stock feeders and for home consumption. This is an absolute illusion because it must be obvious to the House that if the price for export wheat falls below the price fixed for home consumption and consumption by stock feeders, the people who produce pigs and poultry in other countries of the world will be placed at an advantage as against the same people in Australia. If the price for home consumption grain within Australia is fixed at 6s. 3d. per bushel, the presumption is that stock feeders will have to pay that figure; and if the value of export wheat drops to 3s. a bushel, it will mean that people producing pigs and poultry in other parts of the world will be able to get their wheat for 3s. per bushel as against 6s. 3d. per bushel charged in Australia. That would be putting the pig and poultry producers here in an absolutely impossible position and would force them out of business. It is inevitable that the producers of pigs and poultry in Australia will make a demand to get their grain in periods of surplus production at the same price as producers can buy it overseas.

If that were not the position, the stock feeders would be forced out of business. I have mentioned the difficulties regarding the Commonwealth and State schemes. We must face up to that position on whichever side of the House we sit. I believe we are all interested in seeing a proper system established for the marketing of the grain. I understand that the executive of the Farmers' Union carried a resolution must face up to that position on which at a recent meeting to the effect that a third question should be put on the ballot paper, reading: That the Australian Wheat Board be continued for one further year. Personally, I am in favour of that. I have had some discussions with the Honorary Minister for Agriculture and I do not know that he views it in a favourable light.

Mr. Reynolds: Tell us the advantage.

Mr. PERKINS: There are many attached to it from the growers' point of view. In the first place, seeing that neither the Commonwealth nor the State scheme

entirely meets the wishes of the growers, if they vote "Yes" to either, it will mean that they will agree to something that is not quite what they want. Surely, by means of further discussions, it might be possible to get a bit closer to what they desire. By continuing the functions of the Australian Wheat Board for a further year, during the interval between now and the time when preparations have to be made for handling the next harvest, it would be possible to go further into the matter. An even more cogent point is that, supposing the Commonwealth plan as proposed by Mr. Pollard is accepted, because nothing better is presented—

Mr. Reynolds: It is not proposed by Mr. Pollard but by the A.W.F.

Mr. PERKINS: I prefer to put it "as proposed by Mr. Pollard." Supposing that scheme is acceptable, it means that the growers will agree to marketing proposals that will operate for longer than the life of the current Commonwealth Parliament and of the succeeding Commonwealth Parliament, which does not seem to be a satisfactory position from the growers' point of view. If the Australian Wheat Board were to carry on for a further year, we must remember that in 1949 the Federal elections will be held and that will give all parties an opportunity to decide upon their respective policies regarding this matter. That will mean that by the time something had to be done about the marketing of the next crop, it will have been necessary for each of the Federal political parties who will go before the people to state clearly to the wheatgrowers what they were prepared to do. From the wheatgrowers' point of view, I believe that would be infinitely preferable to agreeing to the Commonwealth scheme at present proposed, which means that the growers would be committed to that arrangement for the life of the present and the next Commonwealth Parliament. Even assuming there will be a change in the Commonwealth Parliament—

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You have great faith in the Opposition block.

Mr. PERKINS: It is something that some of us expect. At any rate, assuming that there will be a change in the Commonwealth Government, the wheatgrowers would still be at a disadvantage because they had agreed to a scheme that continued to

operate during the life of the next Parliament. It would not be incumbent upon the next Commonwealth Government, even though it might be one of a different political complexion from that of the present Commonwealth Government, to alter the plan immediately although I am hopeful that with the change of Government a scheme might be advanced that would more adequately comply with the growers' wishes.

The last point I shall make regarding wheat matters and the forthcoming ballot, is that I am somewhat afraid that if the growers, under duress because they are unable to secure the exact conditions in the marketing scheme that they desire, decide to vote in favour of the Commonwealth scheme at the forthcoming ballot, the Commonwealth Government will imagine that such a vote is an indication that the growers are entirely satisfied with the Federal marketing scheme as proposed by Mr. Pollard on behalf of the Government. That will not be so. The position is so confused at the moment that it is difficult to say what will be the result of the ballot. There are so many issues that affect the matter of wheat marketing that the result is hard to foretell.

Mr. Reynolds: You know definitely that it will be a "Yes" vote.

Mr. PERKINS: We can have our own opinions about that. Unfortunately, the wheatgrowers are in a dilemma, seeing that neither of the proposals placed before them entirely meets with their approval. I do not desire to go into the whole of the pros and cons, for that is for the wheatgrowers themselves to consider. The whole subject has been discussed at many branch meetings, and growers are taking a great interest in it. The question is not nearly so simple as some members, including the member for Forrest, might imagine. I heard that hon. member read in the House the other night a list of branches that, he stated, favoured the Commonwealth scheme. Among those mentioned was the Bruce Rock branch, of which I happen to be a member. The trouble was that he read only part of the resolution.

Mr. Reynolds: I would not be guilty of doing anything like that!

Mr. PERKINS: I have heard hardly any grower express preference for other than a Commonwealth scheme provided it complied

with the A.W.F. conditions. The State scheme has been prepared because a satisfactory Commonwealth scheme can not be obtained. What the member for Forrest did not tell the House was that at the meeting when the subject was discussed, a further portion of the resolution stated that the meeting was entirely opposed to any concessional sales of wheat for stock food.

Mr. Reynolds: That is quite right.

Mr. PERKINS: That does not fit in with the scheme as proposed by the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce. The position is very involved and it is one that the growers will have to sort out as best they can when the forthcoming ballot is held. Personally, I would like to see a third question placed on the ballot paper with the object of enabling the Australian Wheat Board to carry on for a further year, thereby providing more breathing space to enable the position to be clarified a little more, and, if possible, to secure a more satisfactory Commonwealth marketing scheme. However, whatever is done, I am quite certain that, should there be an affirmative vote in favour of the Commonwealth scheme, it will not be so recorded because the growers are by any means satisfied—

Mr. Reynolds: Do not apologise!

Mr. PERKINS:—with the scheme proposed by Mr. Pollard.

Mr. Reynolds: Do not make excuses.

Mr. PERKINS: Amongst other matters I desire to mention is the difficulty being experienced by many country hospitals administered by committees. Almost all the rural committee hospitals with which I have made contact are in greater or less financial trouble. There are reasons for this, the main one, so far as I can gather, being the falling off in revenue due to the number of free patients being treated and the inadequate return they receive for such patients under the Federal scheme. To discriminate between one person and another is very difficult. Patients arrive at the hospital and one goes into one room and another into another room, largely as a matter of convenience from the standpoint of hospital administration, and it is difficult to do otherwise when the hospital has a limited number of wards. The result is that the deficits in the funds are becoming bigger and bigger.

The Health Department, to its credit, has met the deficits that have been occurring.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The hospitals are to receive another 2s. per patient per day.

Mr. PERKINS: A small increase is contemplated, but I am afraid that it will not be nearly sufficient, bearing in mind the way in which costs of treatment are rising, and I foresee more trouble for these hospitals in the future. I have discussed this matter with hospital committees and I consider it necessary that we should take stock of the position. Obviously, the matter is not a simple one to deal with. I believe that, in the long run, it will be necessary for the Commonwealth to stand up to the obligations entailed in free hospital treatment far better than it has done in the past. We have knowledge of the recent experiments in free medicine, which do not seem to be working out very satisfactorily. If one-half of the money that the Commonwealth is prepared to spend on free medicine were earmarked to better the hospital services, I am satisfied that it would go a long way further towards improving the health of the people.

Many of the members of the staff and management of country hospitals in particular are working under great difficulties and I sometimes wonder how these hospitals manage to retain a staff at all. It speaks well for the members of the staff that they are prepared to carry on under such handicaps. I have a feeling that there is a tendency—though this has not been stated on the part of officers of the Health Department and prominent members of the medical profession in Perth to further the regional hospital scheme. This scheme may be satisfactory up to a point—

Hon. A. H. Panton: They have done nothing about it.

Mr. PERKINS:—but we should not run away with the idea that it will be possible to place all the up-to-date equipment in a few regional hospitals and leave the rest to function with the absolute minimum. Much heart-burning exists over the lack of equipment in small country hospitals, and I believe it will be necessary to prescribe a certain minimum of up-to-date specialist equipment in those hospitals if we are going to maintain a decent medical service in small

country towns. We cannot expect to retain the services of first-class doctors in small country towns unless adequate hospital facilities are available to them. I hope that members will watch the position carefully and see that no policy is adopted that is likely to result in the most up-to-date equipment being provided for large regional hospitals while partly out-of-date equipment is supplied to the smaller hospitals, as I fear will be the case unless great vigilance is exercised.

Another requirement is the need for extending the ambulance service generally. A limited number of ambulances are operating in country districts and they are doing excellent work. I hope it will be found possible to extend this service greatly. There is hardly likely to be any argument on that point.

Finally, I wish to offer a few remarks on country water supplies. The season so far has been such that during the approaching summer great difficulty will be experienced in the drier areas of the State. In the eastern portion of my electorate and in the districts running south from Bruce Rock, Narrembeen, Corrigin and Kondinin, the difficulty is already apparent, and it is obvious that restrictions will have to be imposed in the towns before the summer has fairly started. I impress upon the Government the urgent need for proceeding as quickly as possible with the comprehensive scheme designed to serve that part of the State. This is a highly productive area and the recurring water shortages cause great hardships in the towns, make living conditions such as to offer little incentive for people to stay there if it is at all possible for them to get away, and cause great economic loss in the farming areas. The only real solution is to extend the Goldfields water scheme through that area, as has been planned by the Public Works Department. I therefore stress the great urgency of getting the first section of the comprehensive scheme under way as soon as possible and extending it as rapidly as possible.

Members are doubtless aware that a number of blocks have recently been purchased in that area under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. The whole of Hedges's estate at Koolberrin—over 20,000 acres—has been purchased and settlers have already been

placed on it, although the water supplies are entirely inadequate to their needs. I understand arrangements are under way at the moment to excavate dams so as to tide over the immediate urgency of the position. Personally, I consider the excavation of dams is largely a waste of money in that area. In years of low rainfall they will not fill and it will be necessary to cart water for long distances. In years of high rainfall probably the existing catchment and supplies will be adequate. Now that the settlers have been placed on their farms, however, something must be done for them and, in my opinion, at least a certain amount of work should be carried out to tide them over their present difficulty.

The Government should press on with the proposed extension south of Merredin, in order to serve the area as rapidly as possible, even if only a portion of the pipeline is laid, some 20 miles south of Merredin, to serve the town of Bruce Rock and link up with the dam at Wadderin, as is proposed at present. That would alleviate the position to some extent, because the head of the pipe-line would then be within carting distance of the Koolberrin estate. But experience in previous summers has indicated that, if there is a severe shortage of water, it is necessary to cart very long distances in order to supply that area. In an exceptionally severe summer it may even be necessary to cart water by rail from Merredin and supply the area with water carted by road. The Minister for Railways has enough worries on his hands without having to make provision for the haulage of water, if it can possibly be avoided. Therefore, I urge the Government to proceed with that proposed work as soon as it is physically possible to do so.

**MR. HEGNEY** (Pilbara) [8.13]: I intend to make some comments on matters of first importance as far as the political life of the State is concerned. I shall also reply to certain statements which have been made by at least one member. It is usual for a private member to take the opportunity of the Address-in-reply debate to bring before the Government matters affecting his district, but I do not propose to adopt that policy on this occasion, as I believe that objective can be achieved

by personal communication with the Minister concerned or by asking appropriate questions in the House concerning the member's district. First, I give the lie direct to a statement made by the member for Middle Swan a few nights ago, when he accused many members on this side of the House of being either Communists or closely allied to Communists. I shall not traverse in detail the Communist ideology or Fascist ideology, but I propose to prove in a very few words how unfounded is his unwarranted assertion so far as I and other members on this side of the House are concerned.

I have been a member of the Australian Workers' Union for over 30 years. I have a succession of A.W.U. tickets of which I am extremely proud, just as proud as is my colleague and friend, Hon. A. H. Panton, whose position I recently took over, that of State President of the Australian Workers' Union. I shall quote the appropriate rule, which I was largely instrumental in having inserted in the constitution of our union, and then leave it to members to judge whether I am a Communist or have got into a Communist corner. Rule 42 of the Australian Workers' Union reads:—

No person shall be eligible to be a candidate for any office in the Union if, in the opinion of the Executive Council, there is reasonable ground for believing that (a) within twelve months prior to the date of his nomination he was a member of any body of persons, incorporated or unincorporated, which by its constitution or propaganda or otherwise advocates or encourages the overthrow by force or violence of the established government of the Commonwealth or of a State or of any other civilised country or of organised government or (b) he himself advocates or encourages, or has, within twelve months prior to the date of his nomination, advocated or encouraged the overthrow by force or violence of the established government of the Commonwealth or of a State or of any other civilised country or of organised government.

That rule has been in force for quite a long time.

Mr. Grayden: Why do they not abide by it?

Mr. HEGNEY: The rule has been registered under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act. I also propose to read for the benefit of members an extract from the presidential address which I submitted to a recent branch executive

meeting of the Australian Workers' Union. This is it—

It is pleasing to note that a number of other unions are following the lead given by the A.W.U. in excluding from office in the Union any member of the Communist Party. Years ago, our organisation, realising that Communism was pledged to red-ant the Union as a prelude to destroying the Labour Movement, as we know it, decided that no known Communist could continue to hold office in the organisation. Experience has amply demonstrated the wisdom of our Union's attitude towards this foreign ideology, which is one of uncompromising hostility. The Australian Workers' Union for more than half-a-century has played no mean part in the moulding of Australian democracy, and we must oppose any party which aims at setting up a dictatorship in our midst. The truths to be learned from economic history are that without united effort the workers will gain very little and that without political power they may lose much that they have gained.

The Labour Movement, of which the A.W.U. is a prominent part, represents the striving of the workers to reach a higher standard of living and economic security. Our activities are a continuation of that effort to satisfy humanity's yearning for a fuller and better life.

There is no equivocation either about the rules of the A.W.U. or the extract which I have just read. I have been an executive officer of the Australian Labour Party for some 17 years; and it is incumbent on every delegate to the State executive of the party, and on every delegate to the biennial or triennial congress of the Labour Party and on every delegate to a district council of the A.L.P., to sign a pledge that he or she is not a member of any other party, including the Communist party, and it is understood that the Fascist party is also included. That provision is embodied in the rules of the Australian Labour Party. I would like to clarify a point that our friend from Middle Swan tried to make, but ignominiously failed to make.

Mr. Grayden: What I said was substantiated, as you know.

Mr. HEGNEY: The point he tried to make was that the Eureka Youth League was part of the Labour Party. The Eureka Youth League is not recognised by the Labour Party. It was refused admission to march in the Labour Day procession. Reference was also made to the University Labour Club. That club has been disbanded.

Mr. Grayden: It was not disbanded at that time.

Mr. HEGNEY: There is an A.L.P. branch at the University under the jurisdiction of the Australian Labour Party. I have made that explanation, not by way of apology but to let members know the position. I think that most members opposite with reasoning propensities realise the absolute futility and hopelessness of the case put up by the member for Middle Swan.

Mr. Grayden: Pamphlets were issued jointly by the Eureka League and your party.

Mr. HEGNEY: I come now to the matter of the Tasmanian elections, and that opens up a field of discussion which to my way of thinking is very important to the people of the Commonwealth. It is not my intention to traverse the constitutions of the various States, but to take a little time to read an extract from a sub-leader of "The West Australian" of the 23rd August. This sub-leader is most amusing, though most amazing. It deals with the Tasmanian poll and amongst other things says—

Tasmanian Labour has been decrying as "undemocratic" the action of the Tasmanian Legislative Council in refusing supply. That argument is hardly tenable. Obviously the Legislative Council misjudged the temper of the Tasmanian electors to some extent, but it gave the electors an opportunity to say what they thought, which is scarcely to be stigmatised as undemocratic. It has to be admitted that when an Upper Chamber acts as the Tasmanian Legislative Council acted it runs a risk. Now that house is faced with the prospect, if Labour succeeds, of a strong effort to liberalise its franchise and to end its power over money Bills.

Without the shadow of a doubt, anyone who knows anything of the Constitution of the Tasmanian Parliament, or this Parliament, or some of the other State Parliaments will recognise that the action of the Tasmanian Legislative Council—that Upper House which is as much a party House as the Legislative Council of this State and as much a party House as this Chamber—will recognise that the action of the Tasmanian Legislative Council indicates, whichever way one looks at it, and no matter how "The West Australian" or any individual or organisation tries to camouflage the position, that there is a minority dictatorship in Tasmania; and that minority dictatorship in the form of the Legislative Council forced the Cosgrove Labour Government to

the country. But the Tasmanian Legislative Council did not dissolve itself. It did not go to the country, but just sent the Legislative Assembly to the country. Now, despite all the propaganda that was levelled against the Tasmanian Labour Government; despite all the money spent and the organisers who were sent to Tasmania; despite the innuendoes and misrepresentation; despite the efforts made to prove Mr. Cosgrove a criminal—and he was declared a free man in the Courts of Law—despite all these things Tasmanian Labour is able to form another Government tomorrow. So much for the efforts of the Legislative Council!

Let us see what Mr. Cosgrove had to say. And before anyone interjects to ask me what paper I am reading from, let me mention that this extract is from the official organ of the Australian Labour Party "The Westralian Worker." The headings are as follows:—"Tassie Liberals Spending Freely. £10,000 a Year on Radio: £150 a Week on Spruikers." The article reads—

In a recent Press statement, the Premier of Tasmania (Mr. Cosgrove) made it clear that the Liberals in the island State have plenty of money to throw about at the approaching election. He said:

"The campaign to oust Labour from the Tasmanian Treasury Benches has gathered momentum in recent months. Lately a survey has been handed to me showing the number of sponsored radio sessions controlled by the Liberal Party and its subsidiary organisations in this State at the present time. It might interest you to know that the Tories are spending about £10,000 a year on radio propaganda alone.

"In addition, the Liberals are busily importing officers whose task they state is to teach Tasmanians politics. The cost of these hired experts and other officers is in the vicinity of £150 a week. Where do you think this money is coming from, and why do you think it is being spent? The answer, of course, is that it is being provided by big business solely to bring about a change of Government in Tasmania."

But the Labour Premier is not dismayed by this display of money power; he went on to say:

"Labour has governed well during the 14 years it has been in office, and it has always enjoyed the confidence and trust of the people. We will not falter in the fight to defeat the forces of reaction; we will marshal our strength and I am confident that we will triumph."

And he did triumph. He is the leader of a great party and notwithstanding all the

forces arrayed against the Labour Party in Tasmania, it was able to win the day. We will see how far the Tasmanian Legislative Council will go in the direction of interpreting the wishes of the people of Tasmania! We will see whether, if the Labour Government introduces a Bill to liberalise and widen the franchise for the Tasmanian Legislative Council, that Council will receive the Bill with open arms or treat it in a similar way to that in which like measures have been treated by the Legislative Council here when the Labour Government has endeavoured to bring about adult franchise for that Chamber.

The time has arrived when a very definite protest should be made to the Commonwealth Government and, through the Commonwealth Government, to the British House of Commons for the purpose of radically altering the Constitutions of the different States to bring them at least into line with Great Britain where the right of veto by the House of Lords of measures introduced in the House of Commons was wiped out 37 years ago. While I am in this Parliament—and even when I am out of it—as long as I am able to raise a protest against the injustice of our Parliamentary institution, I shall do so.

Now we come to the matter of the composite Government and I consider this of vital importance to the people of Western Australia. I am referring to the coalition of what used to be known as the Country Party though it is now called the Country and Democratic League, with the Liberal Party. I am rather interested to know why there is not a complete amalgamation. I have here a report by the President of the State branch of the Liberal Party. This is from "The West Australian" of the 13th July. In this report, in which, incidentally, he trenchantly criticised the Minister for Railways on his transport policy, he makes reference to amalgamation between the two parties. The heading of the newspaper report is "Joint Council Not Favoured." It reads—

After a debate which lasted all yesterday afternoon the State Council of the Liberal Party decided not to accept in their present form the proposals of the Country and Democratic League for a joint political council of the two bodies. The council agreed to the following motion—

I do not know whether members of the Country and Democratic League have read this, but it is of interest to them—

This council affirms its belief that only complete amalgamation between the Liberal Party and the C.D.L. can successfully achieve the objects of the published policies common to both parties. While not able to accept the proposals of the C.D.L. in their present form the council, in an effort to bring about closer relations between the two parties, instructs the State executive to appoint a committee to consider ways and means to achieve this object.

It is evident that the Country and Democratic League must have some cogent reason for not completely amalgamating with or, in other words, not being swallowed by the Liberal Party. I wonder what it is. The two leaders—as obtains in the Federal sphere with Mr. Fadden and Mr. Menzies, to whom I shall refer later, although I believe there is more unanimity between the leader of the Country and Democratic League and the leader of the Liberal Party in this State than there is federally—are reported in "The West Australian" of the 3rd February, 1947, as follows:—

The Leader of the Country and Democratic League (Mr. Watts) and the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. McLarty) said yesterday that the two parties would present a united front at the forthcoming elections.

The policies of the two parties would have the same objectives, they said, and if the elections resulted in the defeat of the Labour Government the people of the State would be assured of a composite Government of the two parties with a comprehensive and progressive programme of legislation and development in which both parties would be in complete agreement.

If both their objectives are the same, why are their names different, and why have a multiplicity of organisations? If the Government consists of 24 or 27 members, all opposed to Labour, why is there not amalgamation? I would be pleased to know the answer. There must be something very important which prevents this amalgamation to which I refer, because in "The West Australian" of the 8th July, 1947, the general president of the Country and Democratic League, Mr. Milford D. Smith, is reported to have referred in his annual report to the proposed merger with the Liberal Party as under—

He said that in the early part of his term he had believed that a merger was a practical proposition. After four years, however, he had been forced to the conclusion that the majority of the league members did not desire a merger

and that no good purpose would be served by sinking the identity of the league.

I say quite candidly that as the years go by the people are wakening to the fact that the Country and Democratic League is becoming more and more a mere appendage or cog in the wheel of Liberalism. Some members of the Country and Democratic League realise that. Not long ago, speaking from memory, the constitution of the C.D.L. was, I think, varied to provide that in no circumstances would it coalesce with any other organisation. If members cast their minds back to the time when the Country Party was first formed, they will recall that one of the reasons for its creation was that its members were dominated by city interests, and they considered the time had arrived when the country section should cut the painter and form the Country Party. I think it was in 1930 that the combined forces opposed to Labour obtained a majority and decided to coalesce.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They fell from grace.

Mr. HEGNEY: Yes, and they may again. I suppose we may, as time goes on. If the Country and Democratic League is a separate entity, why has it the same objective and policy as the Liberal Party? I have no doubt that the farming community, primary producers and country people generally are beginning to waken to the fact that the Country and Democratic League is just being dragged at the heels of the Liberal Party. When I speak of the Liberal Party in these terms, members know I am not speaking in a personal sense, but of the party as constituted of commercial interests, and they are very strong.

Mr. Grayden: That is in your opinion, which does not count for much.

Mr. HEGNEY: They are strong enough to over-ride the other Party. Here is an extract from the leading article of "The News Review" under date 19th July last—

The Liberal Party therefore being a senior partner, should be entitled to the balance of power or authority so far as overall policy is concerned. In any case, the fundamental principles of the two parties comprising the Government disclose no real difference or basis for disagreement on main policy.

Furthermore, the election which saw the return of the present Government was fought on the broad basis of private enterprise in preference to socialism, and action in lieu of complacency.



Although the Government successfully weathered its first Parliamentary session, it did not achieve anything spectacular or really outstanding.

Mr. Marshall: It is not likely to!

Mr. HEGNEY: The article continues—

Perhaps the slender majority which it enjoys and its dependence to some extent upon the two Independent members has made Cabinet over-cautious in regard to policy and action.

If anyone saw the face of the Acting Premier when a division was taken just before tea, he would have said, "There is something in that."

Mr. Marshall: Last night, more particularly.

Mr. HEGNEY: In passing, I would like to make this reference to the coalition Government: I well recollect that in 1930—and as far as I am concerned as a member of the Labour Party I am under no illusions as to what this composite Government would do in certain circumstances—

Mr. Grayden: You have not the faintest idea.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am speaking now from experience, and we must always try to profit from our past experience. In 1930 there was a coalition Government. I do not think you, Mr. Speaker, adorned this Chamber at that time.

Mr. Marshall: He was here then.

Mr. HEGNEY: Mr. Lindsay was Minister for Works.

Mr. Marshall: He is gone.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am prepared to have challenged what I say, which is this: There was an honourable agreement between the Australian Workers' Union and the Ministry of Labour that had operated for some years. It was not registered in the Industrial Arbitration Court at the time because the A.W.U. was a composite organisation and did not have all its sections registered under the State Act. Mr. Lindsay was not Minister for Works very long when he repudiated the agreement, and for three years there were members of the A.W.U. who, because there was a hostile Government in power with a good majority, had their margins over the basic wage cut out. If this Government had a good majority, it would not show such a pleasing attitude towards the workers.

Mr. Grayden: You have a lively imagination.

Mr. HEGNEY: It would certainly adopt a policy more closely allied to that of those it represents.

The Minister for Lands: You are talking rot.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You know how you tried to slash the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. HEGNEY: When the frogs stop croaking, I will proceed.

The Minister for Lands: We have improved it.

Mr. Marshall: You know what you did with it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. HEGNEY: I will refer later to certain legislation attempted to be passed during the life of that Government. I come now to an extract from the policy speech of the present Premier, wherein he said something to the effect that there should be a policy of profit-sharing in industry. I am sorry he is not here tonight, but would like to know from him or those representing him, what he meant by a "system of profit-sharing." If profit-sharing, as I visualise it, were inaugurated it would be all right, but anyone who has looked at the systems of profit-sharing in industry since they were introduced many years ago will come to the conclusion—I do not speak in a particular but in a general sense—that the idea underlying their introduction was to divorce the workers from the trade union movement.

Where profit-sharing schemes have been brought into being they always seem to have had strings attached to the basis of the sharing. In addition—in some cases—minimum wages have been sidestepped and other obligations got over, though that could not obtain in Australia today under our industrial laws. There is also the system of co-partnership and the sharing of profits by the issuing to the workers in an industry of bonus shares. There again, there have always been tags attached. I believe the workers' shares carry a reduced interest rate and if the worker takes part in an industrial dispute his shares are cancelled. The shares give their holders no

right to sit on the board of directors of the company and, in the final analysis, all such schemes can rightly be termed "profit-snaring" schemes. If the Premier intends to develop the idea mentioned in his policy speech in February, 1947, I would be interested to know just what he proposes to do.

I will quote word for word another extract from that speech and then link up the reply with that of the member for Middle Swan. I am sorry to have to bring the Premier's utterance down to the level of the reply of the member for Middle Swan, but I have no alternative. During a speech delivered at Pinjarra on the 17th February, 1947, referring to Labour's record, the present Premier said—

I would ask my fellow citizens to cast their minds back over the Labour Government of this State which has now existed for 20 out of 23 years and on the Labour Government at Canberra which has now lasted between five and six years. I would ask them what hope they can derive from any survey of the record of these Governments.

I will deal first with the Federal aspect and give the background to the election of the Labour Government in 1941 so that members will know whether there is any substance in the policy speech of the Premier. I will read an extract from a statement made by Sir Earle Page regarding Mr. Menzies, shortly after Mr. Menzies became Prime Minister. Sir Earle Page said—

The national leader must have courage, judgment and loyalty. Mr. Menzies does not possess these qualities.

He added that Mr. Menzies resigned at a critical time from the Lyons Government, when its efforts were strained to put the defences of the country in order. Mr. Menzies was criticised in the "Daily Telegraph," which is not a Labour paper, by members of his own party. On the 29th July, 1941, several U.A.P. members severely criticised Mr. Menzies in that paper. Duncan Hughes, U.A.P., of South Australia, said that the nation's leadership was weak and uninspiring and a change was imperative. Senator Sampson, U.A.P., Tasmania, criticised the Government for its handling of the war. He said Mr. Menzies' conduct showed an ignorance of war and its requirements. In March, 1943, a move was made by members of the U.A.P., among whom was Mr. Menzies, to oust

Mr. Hughes from the leadership of the party. The move was defeated. In a broadcast address on the 6th April, 1943, Mr. Hughes characterised these men as saboteurs and a group of wreckers and said—

Mr. Menzies deplores self-seeking whispering campaigns and petty intrigues, he passionately urges the need for unity, but is himself the great self-seeker, the man behind the scenes in every intrigue, the fountain head of every whispering campaign, the destroyer of unity. Nothing short of leadership will satisfy Mr. Menzies. Mr. Menzies says a great deal about great principles, but the only great principle upon which he can be relied to stand firm is his leadership of the party.

Mr. Fadden and Mr. Menzies are the opposite numbers of the leader of the Liberal Party and the leader of the Country and Democratic League in this State. They formed a coalition Government before our present State Government came into office. For the 1943 elections Mr. Fadden was the leader of the campaign for both the U.A.P. and the Country Party. During the campaign Mr. Menzies denounced certain proposals put forward by Mr. Fadden. In describing Mr. Menzies' action as "a stab in the back," Mr. Fadden said—

This stab in the back makes another betrayal in the series for which Mr. Menzies has become notorious.

The Melbourne "Herald" stated—

The decision of Mr. Menzies and his party in withdrawing from the War Council was as inexplicable as it was regrettable.

The Sydney "Morning Herald" said—

By deciding to withdraw from the Advisory War Council, the U.A.P. claims to have regained freedom of action in Parliament. In the absence of proof that such freedom ever was lost or even seriously compromised, the claim must be regarded as of dubious validity.

In the Sydney "Morning Herald" of the 17th August, 1943, the following criticism of Mr. Menzies appeared—

Anyone who attempted to place complete and absolute confidence in Mr. Menzies was likely to become bewildered.

The Sydney "Morning Herald" of the 21st August, 1940—before the Labour Party was elected to office—had this to say—

The mass of electors would feel more confidence in Mr. Menzies as Leader, if they were convinced—and they by no means are convinced—that he means to place national needs before Party exigencies.

A criticism of the U.A.P.-Country Party Government by "The Daily Telegraph" of the 23rd May, 1940, states—

Do not let us deceive ourselves. There has been bungling,—

That is referring to the U.A.P.-Country Party. It continues—

—inefficiency, temporising and confusion. It is now on the Government's own head to get us out of the mess.

The "Sydney Morning Herald" of the 26th July, 1940, stated—

The Government has become stale. It contains too many dissentient factions and its personnel is sadly lacking in administrative ability.

One could go on quoting extracts, and I have done so, to show that during the period when this country was facing the most important crisis in its history, those who were supposed to be its leaders were stabbing one another in the back.

Mr. Grayden: What were you doing about it and what have you done about it? Nothing!

Mr. HEGNEY: I now come to the election in 1941—

#### *Point of Order.*

Mr. Grayden: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I object to the statements being made by the member for Pilbara. There may be no limits to the depths to which the hon. member may descend, and he may be this State's leading exponent of political hypocrisy and everything that is rotten, but I consider there is a limit.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: On a point of order! Is the member for Middle Swan going to make a speech?

Mr. Grayden: Although there may be no depths to which the member for Pilbara may descend in this matter there is a limit to the tolerance—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Is the member for Middle Swan going to make a speech or is he speaking on a point of order?

Mr. Speaker: What is the point of order?

Mr. Grayden: There is a limit to the tolerance of members and I ask that the member for Pilbara's statements be withdrawn.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They are all quite true. Has the hon. member the right to

make a speech? If he continues, I may have to move that he be no longer heard.

Mr. Speaker: To what statements does the member for Middle Swan object? I cannot see anything objectionable up to date.

Mr. Grayden: The statements with regard to Mr. Menzies! I object to them on behalf of myself and members on this side of the House. He is linking up those statements with members on this side. I consider that is sufficient ground for asking that the statement be withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: There is nothing so far, that I have heard, that should be withdrawn. The member for Pilbara may proceed.

#### *Debate Resumed.*

Mr. HEGNEY: I have quite a number of other extracts but I stated that I would not weary the House by reading them. However, if I hear any more stupid interjections I will quote some further extracts.

Mr. Grayden: You are linking up these statements with the Liberal Party. That is the point.

Mr. HEGNEY: I was explaining, before the noise interrupted me, the circumstances under which the Labour Government was elected during the war period, and I am making direct reference to the remarks in the Premier's policy speech, that a Commonwealth Labour Government had been elected, and was there for the last five or six years and had done nothing. The Labour Government was returned to office in 1941 because the people of Australia recognised that there was so much underground engineering politically, and so much back-stabbing among the parties opposed to Labour. The people showed their desires in no uncertain terms, and Prime Minister, Jack Curtin, took office in charge of a Labour Government in 1941.

It is true that this Government has been in office ever since and I propose to quote—this is because the Premier invited such comment—a few of the things that the Commonwealth Labour Government has done. I shall deal with State matters before I conclude. The Labour Government was elected on the 7th October, 1941, I will bovrilise some of the legislation and some of the administration when I come to the State matters referred to by me, but

I will make a precis of the matters dealt with by the Commonwealth Parliament.

The Commonwealth Labour Government increased the pay to Servicemen and women and their dependants, provided protection for soldiers and dependants under the War Time Moratorium Regulations, set up a Legal Aid Bureau for soldiers and dependants, enacted special regulations to ensure that soldiers' dependants would not be evicted from their homes, increased social service pensions from 21s. to 37s. 6d.—they will be increased to 42s.—increased income under the Old Age Pensions Act from 12s. 6d. to £1, increased child endowment, inaugurated widows' pensions and contributed £100,000 to the States for implementation of control over the T.B. curse, placed unemployment insurance on the statute-book, enacted sickness benefit insurance and hospital treatment and granted the primary producers over £2,000,000 for drought relief. Primary producers were also granted a subsidy of over £7,000,000 for the dairying industry. Will any member deny that? The Commonwealth Government guaranteed a price for oats, barley and maize.

The Honorary Minister: But the consumers pay.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Commonwealth Labour Government enabled farmers to purchase super during the war at less than cost. It stabilised the price of potatoes and granted assistance of over £40,000,000 to primary producing industries. The Commonwealth Bank Act was amended in 1945 and the Government pegged rents and controlled prices to the best of its ability. It amended the Commonwealth Employees' Compensation Act. Those are a few of the things carried out by a Commonwealth Labour Government during its term of office. That Government faced another election in 1943, during the war period, and was returned. It came before the people again in 1946 on an adult franchise basis and was again re-elected. So the Commonwealth Labour Government must have had some of the people's confidence.

Mr. Smith: It has a record of achievement.

Mr. HEGNEY: Yes, it has a record of achievement. As a matter of fact the Commonwealth Labour Government from 1941 up to the present time has, to my way of thinking, been the best Government that

Labour has ever had for the purpose of implementing its policy. It gave no beg pardons to the big financial interests of this country and everything it has done has been done with a desire to uplift the Australian people as a whole.

Mr. Mann: On Karl Marx's idea.

Mr. HEGNEY: I propose to deal for a time with the matters raised by the member for Middle Swan in his recent remarks. The hon. member quoted a number of items and at the end of each item in an imbecilic or puerile way referred to members on this side as liars. "Hansard" will disclose that but I do not propose to inflict the reading of "Hansard" on members who were here during the course of the speech.

Mr. Grayden: They were all substantiated.

Mr. HEGNEY: Higher wages, shorter hours and industrial security are some of the items with which I propose to deal.

Mr. Grayden: Deal with better factory conditions.

Mr. HEGNEY: I intend to quote two or three items for the purpose of educating, if it is possible, the member for Middle Swan with respect to some of the achievements of Labour organisations in the Commonwealth. I will leave the matter of higher wages for the time and turn to the question of shorter hours. Some member on this side of the House interjected and the member for Middle Swan stated that it was "open hypocrisy and deliberate lies." I intend, for a few moments, to the best of my ability—

Mr. Grayden: Which is not very great.

Mr. HEGNEY: —to show what has happened over the last 100 years as regards working hours. I will go back shortly to the year 1900. As a matter of fact, it was just close on 100 years ago that the tradesmen in Melbourne agitated for an 8-hour day. At that time they were working 10 hours a day. It was in 1855 that the stonemasons there fought for and gained an 8-hour day for their occupation.

Mr. Grayden: Are you dealing with every item or merely singling out one or two?

Mr. HEGNEY: I would like to inform the member for Middle Swan that there are four exits from this Chamber, and I would not raise any objection to his using whichever he chooses.

Mr. Grayden: You come with me, and I will gladly go out.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HEGNEY: As I remarked, the stonemasons in Melbourne gained their 8-hour day in 1855 and from then on till the early nineties, there was a continuous struggle not only for the reduction of working hours amongst the various trade unions but also for the recognition of trade unionism. I would remind the member for Middle Swan that in those days there were what were known as the anti-combination laws, which made it illegal for men to organise and improve their working conditions. Despite that, on account of the injustices to which they were subject in those times, and because of the fact that they realised they had to organise industrially to get anywhere, over a long period of years they succeeded, bit by bit, in breaking down the prevailing conditions of labour, and eventually the 8-hour day was standardised throughout the States in many industries. The same old arguments were advanced in those early days—the time was not ripe!

Recently the member for Canning, in referring to the 40-hour week, said he was not against that proposition—but the time was not ripe! History shows that the same arguments were advanced in opposition to any reform that has been proposed. When a 56-hour working week obtained and an effort was made to reduce it to 52 hours, the arguments against the reduction were—the time was not ripe, production would be reduced, chaos would follow, the country would go bankrupt! So we go down the years, until it was decided that the 44-hour working week would prevail. A big case was heard before that eminent judge Mr. Justice Higgins, in 1920, as the result of which after continuous organising and agitation on the part of the workers, the 44-hour working week was established, and it was done with the aid of political action. I must explain that up to 1890 or 1894, the organised workers of Australia relied solely upon industrial action, while their opponents in Parliament controlled the legislation of the country.

Mine are not wild and woolly words. My statements can be proved by a perusal of "Hansard" and of the statutes passed in years gone by. When the workers found

that the machinery of government was being trained against them, they decided to organise politically. As a result of that they were able to bring about the adoption of the 44-hour week. In this State, my memory is very vivid about what happened regarding the 44-hour week in 1921 or 1922. The Nationalist Government of the day took steps to re-inaugurate the 48-hour working week for all men employed on public works. Subsequently a Labour Government was elected in March, 1924, and from the 1st July next by administrative act it restored the 44-hour week for men on public works.

Mr. Marshall: What did they do in 1930? They took it from them again.

Mr. HEGNEY: I intend to read excerpts—the more important ones—from certain platforms of the various State Labour Parties and the Commonwealth Labour Party with respect to their aspirations and ideals in bygone years. I will start by quoting from a book entitled, "Trades Unionism in Australia" by J. T. Sutcliffe, who was tutor in industrial history for the Workers' Education Association of Victoria and secretary of the Piddington Basic Wage Commission in 1920. The book shows that the first inter-colonial labour congress was held in 1879, and the platform set down by that body included the following items:—

The eight-hour system—its extension and consolidation.

Legalisation of trade unions.

Factory and workshops regulation law.

Education.

Workmen's compensation for injuries sustained while following their employment and caused by negligence of others or through deficient appliances.

Conciliation and arbitration.

Extension of the early closing movement.

Those were the main planks of Labour's platform at that time, when there was actually no political Labour Party. In fact, that advance did not take place until some years later. Next I shall quote from a book entitled "Australia's Awakening," which dealt with the industrial history of Australia up to 1909. The editor of that book was the late W. G. Spence, the first president of the Australian Workers' Union and a former Labour member of Parliament. During the course of his political career, Mr. Spence left the political

Labour Party; I will say no more! The contents of the book are interesting as showing just what happened when there was no Labour administration. I shall quote from the N.S.W. platform of 1891, mentioning only the following important planks:—

Electoral reform to provide for the abolition of plural voting.

Abolition of money deposits in parliamentary elections.

Extension of franchise to seamen, shearers and general labourers by the registration of votes.

Extension of franchise to policemen and soldiers.

Mr. Marshall: Apparently no-one had a vote in those days!

Mr. HEGNEY: Other items were—

Abolition of the six months' residence clause as a qualification for the exercise of the franchise.

Parliamentary elections to be held on one day and that day to be a public holiday with public houses closed during the hours of polling.

Eight hours legal maximum working day.

Workshop and Factory Act to provide for prohibition of sweating system.

Supervision of land boilers and machinery and appointment of representative working men as inspectors.

The State Labour platform of N.S.W. in 1909 included amongst other planks the following:—

Regulation of hours of labour.

Workers' compensation.

Full civic and political rights to all State and municipal employees.

Then we come to the general platform which included—

Anti-sweating legislation, providing for punishment by imprisonment for breaches.

Various amendments to the Arbitration Act.

Now we come to the Progressive Political Labour League of Victoria in 1891, and among its planks were the following:—

Abolition of plural voting.

Special provisions for seamen and others following migratory occupations to record their votes at parliamentary elections.

Reform of labour laws.

A law enacting a maximum labour day of eight hours.

A mining Act providing for proper ventilation and safety in gold, coal and other mines.

The establishment by law of courts of conciliation and arbitration for the settlement of disputes between employers and employees.

Similar provisions are set down in the platform of the Australian Labour Federation, Queensland, in 1890 as also in the Queensland Labour platform of 1893. The South Australian Labour platform of 1892 and the Queensland Labour platform of 1897 included old-age pensions, conciliation and compulsory arbitration, public fire, life, marine, accident and general insurance, University free to all qualified by examination. So one might go through the platforms of the Labour Federations in the various States that set out for the information of the public the ideals and aspirations of the trade union movement on the political side in those times.

I said previously that the early struggles of the trade union movement forced the adoption of political action. When political action was first taken in Australia, the conditions of the working people generally were very bad indeed. We have on record instances of sweating, in Victoria particularly, but also in this State. Men, women and children were compelled to work long hours for very little pay. Labour Parties in all the States have for years had on their platforms provision for a 40-hour week—a progressive reduction from 48 to 40. Now we have been told, in reply to the statement that Labour was responsible for the shorter working week, that we are liars.

In all the States, Labour Governments, by legislative enactment or administrative act, awarded a 44-hour week to many of their employees. Where it was possible to make provision by legislation, a 44-hour week was introduced. While it is true that last year the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, in effect, awarded a 40-hour week, let me say quite definitely that, had there been a Liberal-Country Party or an anti-Labour Government in the Commonwealth Parliament, the result might have been different.

Mr. Marshall: There would not have been any application.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Commonwealth Government instructed its representatives to go into the Arbitration Court and assist the workers to get the 40-hour week. I do not wish to speak of the attitude adopted by this Government to the 40-hour week. The Liberal-C.D.L. coalition here took office just when the case was being heard, the advocates were changed and an application was

made to the State court, which followed in the wake of the Federal Arbitration Court. Whichever way one looks at the matter, one must concede that the 40-hour week was the result of continuous, persistent and incessant advocacy on the part of the trade unions of this country.

Social security is another matter that was mentioned by the member for Middle Swan. True, a complete measure of social security has not yet been implemented in Australia, but anyone comparing the experiences during the last depression with the conditions prevailing today must realise that the Commonwealth Labour Government, by reason of being able to operate in an Australia-wide sphere, has done a very fine job in the interests of the great mass of the people. If anyone is out of work through no fault of his own or is unable to accept work on account of its unsuitability to his condition, he is not allowed to go without; he is paid an allowance until he is placed in employment. The same principle applies in the case of sickness and, in a measure, to child endowment, motherhood endowment, old-age pensions, widows' pensions and other schemes designed to alleviate the condition of those people on the lower rungs of the social ladder.

Now I wish to deal with another matter. Although a certain measure will probably be introduced later in the session dealing with the subject on which I am about to touch, I intend to take this opportunity of giving the lie direct to the member who made the statement that Labour was not responsible for the provision of better compensation for workers. When that statement was made, a member on this side of the Chamber said, "Incorrect," and the immediate retort of the member for Middle Swan was "Liar."

Mr. Grayden: I said nothing of the sort. That is a deliberate lie.

Mr. Marshall: You will find it in "Hansard."

Mr. Grayden: On a point of order! The member for Pilbara has stated what is a deliberate lie. He said that I termed his remark a lie and I did nothing of the sort. Therefore I ask that he withdraw the statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member asks that the statement be withdrawn.

Mr. HEGNEY: It is in "Hansard."

Mr. Grayden: If the hon. member can point to it in "Hansard," I will donate £50 to the Perth Hospital.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am not permitted to read "Hansard" at this stage.

Mr. Grayden: Read it!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HEGNEY: The position regarding workers' compensation is that the first legislation here was introduced in 1902. The Act was amended in 1909, and the Labour Government of 1912 introduced a more comprehensive measure. Under the Acts of 1902 and 1909 restrictions were imposed to the effect that no compensation would be paid if the incapacity lasted less than two weeks. The compensation where death resulted from injury was the equivalent of three years' earnings or £200, whichever was the larger, but not exceeding £400, and a weekly payment for disability of half wages, the maximum £2 a week with a total liability of £300.

I believe it was the 1909 Act that brought wharf labourers under the compensation laws. The member for South Fremantle can correct me if I am wrong in that statement. In 1923, the Act was amended to provide that, when the injury lasted less than a fortnight, no compensation was payable for the first three days. I do not propose to enter into details of the amendments effected in 1937, 1941 and 1944, but what I do wish to stress is that in 1924 a comprehensive measure was introduced by a Labour Government headed by the member for Boulder, and the Minister for Works and Labour of the time had charge of the Bill.

Up to that time certain percentages were set down in the Second Schedule payable as a proportion of the total lump sum in the case of loss of a limb, a toe, a joint of a finger, and so forth. Those percentages had been comparatively low relatively to those provided in the Act of 1924. Anyone who doubts my statement may peruse the respective Acts at his leisure. Up to 1924 the magnificent sum of £1 was payable to a worker for medical expenses when he was injured. He received £1 and £1 only. The 1924 Act, which was passed by a Labour Government, increased that £1 to £100. It also increased considerably the amounts payable under the Second Schedule for loss

of limbs. In some respects, it also increased the total amount payable. I used the name of a gentleman in the earlier part of my speech. He was the Minister for Labour in the coalition Government of 1930. In that year, Mr. Lindsay introduced a Bill to amend the compensation law. I have a copy of it.

I shall not give complete comparisons between the Act passed by the Labour Government in 1924 and Mr. Lindsay's Bill of 1930, when the Nationalist-Country Party Government had a clear majority. I have, however, made some comparisons. After I have finished reading them, I think that even the member for Irwin-Moore will agree—I can see him smiling like a billy-goat in a cabbage patch—that the Government has not a leg to stand on and that the member for Middle Swan must swallow his words. The following is the comparison:—

	Act passed by Labour Government in 1924.	Bill Intro- duced by Nationalist- Country Party Government in 1930.
Loss of leg .....	£600	£475
Loss of leg just below knee .....	£582 10s.	£450
Loss of a foot .....	£525	£395
Loss of arm near shoulder .....	£675	£600
Loss of arm at or above elbow .....	£675	£475
Loss of hand .....	£600	£400
Loss of a forearm .....	£600	£450
Loss of sight of one eye .....	£375	£270
Complete loss of hearing .....	£600	£450
Loss of a joint of a toe .....	£75	£40
Loss of part of a thumb .....	£212 10s.	£180
Loss of a toe or joint of a finger .....	£90	£22 to £75
Allowance for medical expenses .....	£100	£52 10s.

The Nationalist-Country Party Government of 1930 proposed to chisel the amount allowable for medical expenses down to £52 10s.! I have the Act and the Bill of 1930, both of which are available for inspection by any member, especially the member for Middle Swan. Members may peruse them at their leisure.

Mr. Grayden: What did your Government do? Nothing!

Mr. HEGNEY: I am glad of that asinine interjection, because it gives me an opportunity to explain that since 1924 up to the present time, progressive improvements have been made in the Workers' Compensation Act. As the hon. member knows, for 20 years out of 23 the Labour Government held office. Most members opposite know that in the late thirties the Act was amended. It was again amended in 1941 and in 1942. Among the amendments were provisions for the payment of hospital charges in addition to medical expenses, an enlarged definition

of "worker," bringing the income range from £400 to £500, and also a provision that weekly payments over a period made to workers should not be deducted from a lump-sum payment. Provision was also made for a dependant, for instance, a widow, to receive the full £750 instead of £600.

Mr. Grayden: A Royal Commission had to be appointed to go into the matter of workers' compensation.

Mr. HEGNEY: I give the present Government credit for having appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into all aspects of workers' compensation. I believe the Minister in charge of this matter and his colleagues are sincere in their attempt to get a Bill through. That certainly shows a vast change from what their policy was in 1930. It is very pleasant to note the change is one for the better.

I now come to easy access to the Arbitration Court. I shall not go into detail on this aspect of the Speech, but anyone who has taken an interest in industrial laws and in the welfare of the people knows that the first Industrial Arbitration Act was passed in 1902. It was amended in 1912, and in 1924 it was comprehensively amended. Each amendment was designed for the express purpose of clearing away all technical and legal disabilities in the way of approaching the court, whether such approach was by employers or by workers. I invite any member who holds the view that the Labour Party has not attempted to make access to the Arbitration Court easy to have a look at the existing Industrial Arbitration Act. He will there see for himself the machinery which is provided to obviate industrial disputes that might arise. Incidentally, we have in this State a policy which has worked very well between the Employers' Federation and the Australian Labour Party, under which many disputes are settled before they see the light of day. The disputes committee of the Australian Labour Party meets the Employers' Federation and an agreement is frequently arrived at without approaching the Arbitration Court.

Workers' homes were also mentioned. Speaking from memory, I think the first Workers' Homes Act was passed by a Labour Government in 1911. The object was to enable workers on comparatively low incomes to build homes. Over the years the Act has been amended to meet difficulties with which



workers were faced. Provision is now made whereby the board may build houses for rental.

Mr. Grayden: You are distorting my remarks.

Mr. HEGNEY: Profiteering and price-fixing: I need hardly labour this point. A Labour Government put the Profiteering Prevention Act on the statute book, but the present Government, in accordance with its policy, has seen fit to introduce price-fixing legislation. I tell members that price-fixing is one of the planks of the Labour Party's platform.

Mr. Grayden. Who introduced it? That is the point!

Mr. HEGNEY: There is another unwarranted interjection! Price-fixing was effected on a Commonwealth-wide basis by the Commonwealth Government under National Security Regulations.

Mr. Grayden: By the Menzies Government—not a Labour Government.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Public Trust Office! I do not need to delay the House on that point; nor on interest rates, because they also are controlled under National Security Regulations. Rental houses and materials control! These were mentioned. Also third-party insurance! Those were measures introduced by Labour and sometimes—I am saying this in no critical way—with the closest co-operation and collaboration of the then Opposition. Pensions for coalminers! They were introduced by the Labour Government. The regulation of dangerous trades! One such measure that comes to mind is the Scaffolding Act. Then there are the Coal Mines Regulation Act and the Mines Regulation Act, and Acts dealing with mines generally, and with safety in factories and shops.

Long-service leave! I recollect well that in 1927 thousands of workers in this country—Government workers on wages—were granted a measure of long-service leave by the Government, and for the last 21 years conditions have been modified and long-service leave introduced generally. As a matter of fact, the Government has given a lead to private employers to recompense in this way the long service given them by their employees. Standard leave and holidays! The Labour movement has been agitating

for these things for years. It is only as a result of agitation, and again with the co-operation of the Commonwealth Labour Government, that we have been able to get that through the Arbitration Court, and now there are standard holidays and leave for all workers under Arbitration Court awards. Promotions Appeal Board and Rent Control! They have been duplicated. That is all right; there is nothing wrong with that. The Promotions Appeal Board was established by the Labour Government, so far as I know, to enable railway officers to appeal on matters concerning their industrial welfare.

New award for nurses! I am open to correction, but as far as I know—the member for Leederville is more acquainted with the position than I—under the Industrial Arbitration Act the court cannot award any more than is requested. On one occasion the nurses asked for a certain amount and were given everything they sought in the court. No one wishes to make political capital out of this, but it is pleasing to know that the conditions of nurses have been improved, because they constitute one section of the community that deserves every consideration that can be given them. Higher wages! I am not going to say that wages are high enough, but I do contend that it has been due to the efforts of the industrial organisations over a long period of years that we have been able to a great extent to stabilise the minimum standard of wages in the Commonwealth.

It is interesting to delve into the early history of Western Australia and of Australia in regard to the establishment of the basic wage. I have done so, and I find that the doctrine of the basic wage was enunciated by Sir Samuel Griffiths, one of the leading Australians of his day, who was Premier of Queensland in 1890. The same principle was propounded by Mr. Justice Heydon in later years. He was President of the New South Wales Arbitration Court. Although wage-fixing tribunals were in operation in 1896 in Melbourne and were later established in New South Wales, it was not until 1907 that the first definite principle was enunciated, and it is interesting to recall that the declaration was made by Judge Higgins, President of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court at the time. And he was not dealing with wages but with an appli-

cation by McKay's the Sunshine Harvester people, for an order in terms of Section 2 of the Excise Tariff Act of 1906.

By this Act the Commonwealth Parliament had imposed certain excise duties on agricultural implements, but provided that the Act should not apply to goods manufactured in Australia under conditions as to the remuneration of labour which were declared by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to be fair and reasonable. Judge Higgins was charged with the responsibility of determining a fair and reasonable standard wage under the Excise Tariff Act, and he discussed at length the meaning of "fair and reasonable." He said the provision for fair and reasonable wages was obviously designed for the benefit of employees in the industry, and he could not think of any standard appropriate other than the normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being living in a civilised community.

That exposition was the foundation of the sections written into the different Arbitration Acts of the States and the Commonwealth. As a matter of fact, it is practically word for word in our own Act. After the inquiry, Judge Higgins awarded 7s. a day as the appropriate standard, and here is what Mr. A. B. Piddington, who conducted the basic wage inquiry in 1920, said about the matter in a book he wrote called "The Next Step"—

... it is clear that the evidence, though uncontradicted, was very slight in volume. We hear of "a land agent" as to rent, "a butcher," as to meat, and "nine housewives" as to rent and food combined. In the history of the new social jurisprudence it will seem surprising that a decision, upon which the way of living of millions of Australian citizens in the intervening 13 years has ever since depended, should have been reached upon such slender materials even as to rent and food. But more serious still is the lacuna left by the absence of all evidence as to clothing—always a formidable expense, as it is a primitive essential—and the absence, too, of any evidence upon the multifarious needs called in such investigations "Miscellaneous requirements," and including "light (and fuel), furniture, utensils (being casual, not weekly expenditure), rates, life assurance, savings, accident or benefit society, mangle, school requisites, loss of employment, union pay, books and newspapers, intoxicating liquors, tobacco, sickness and death, domestic help or any expenditure for unusual contingencies, religion or charity" (Items mentioned in the Harvester case).

The real basis, however, of the Harvester case is not to be found in the facts as to the

cost of living thus mentioned, for these only accounted for £1 12s. 5d. per week (the cost of food and rent), there being, as mentioned, no information of any kind as to the missing sections (clothing and miscellaneous), and no evidence therefore upon which to base, with even an approach to calculation, a finding of £2 2s. any more than of £3 3s. or £4 4s. per week.

There is Mr. Piddington's comment on the finding of Judge Higgins as to the 7s. per day. The 7s. was awarded in 1907, and it was not until 1920 that a full investigation into the basic wage was made. I am not going to traverse the history of the basic wage decisions in various parts of the Commonwealth. Suffice it to say that up to 1926 in this State, the Harvester award of 7s. per day formed the base and the standard was harnessed to the cost of living index figures about 1911 or 1912. But when the amended Industrial Arbitration Act was passed in 1925 it provided for an annual declaration of the basic wage in Western Australia. Mr. Dwyer, who was the President of the Arbitration Court, followed to some extent, as far as food and clothing were concerned, the basis set down by Judge Piddington. From 1926 to 1938 the basis remained the same. For 12 years the principle on which the basic wage was founded did not alter. The only difference was in the nominal wage, which was rendered necessary by the change in the cost of living figures. In 1938 a comprehensive inquiry took place under the provisions of the State Industrial Arbitration Act, with the result that the workers gained an increase of 5s.

In 1941 or 1942 wages were pegged under National Security Regulations. It was not until February, 1947, that the State labour organisations were able to submit a further case to the State Arbitration Court. They were then successful in obtaining another increase of 5s. a week. In the Commonwealth sphere, up to 1922, the basic wage decision of Mr. Justice Higgins applied to the industrial awards. In that year, however, Judge Powers granted an additional 3s. a week to enable the workers to get the benefit of the lag between the Harvester figures and the actual cost of living. Between 1922 and 1937 numbers of increases were granted. But in the Commonwealth court there is what is called a needs wage and a loading of so much per week. That court introduced some time ago what it calls the "C" series of index figures which have relation

to variations in the cost of commodities and elements forming the basic wage. The Commonwealth and State basic wages today are practically the same—there is not a great deal of difference.

The point I wish to make is this: I do not believe wages are high enough, because wages are always chasing prices. It is due to the activities and advocacy of Labour representatives, and to legislation being placed on the statute book, that increases have been gained over the years. It must be recognised that in trades and callings where there is no industrial regulation, wages are much lower. I am not going to delay the House much longer. I purposely set myself out in reply to the statements made some little time ago by the member for Middle Swan, to explain the attitude of members on this side of the House so there would be no misunderstanding.

Mr. Grayden: You have succeeded in distorting most of the statements; that is all.

Mr. HEGNEY: There was a time when there was no unemployment insurance, no regulation of working hours, no workers' compensation, no child endowment and no factory laws, despite the unwarranted suggestion by our friend opposite in regard to those laws. There were no old age or invalid pensions. Although a Labour Government was not in power in the Commonwealth Parliament when the Old Age Pensions Act was introduced in 1909, the Labour Party in the Parliament decided it would support the then Government if it promised to introduce the Old Age Pensions Act. That is how that legislation came to be placed on the statute book in the first place. Over the years the industrial organisations have fought for the betterment of their conditions and have adopted political action during the last 50 years with some measure of success. I do not hold myself up, as a Labour representative, as being infallible or immaculate, and neither does any other member on this side of the House, as we are only human. But when a member sets himself out deliberately to misrepresent the position—

Mr. Grayden: You are doing that tonight.

Mr. HEGNEY: —it is time for a definite and clear reply to be submitted, and that is what I have done.

Mr. Grayden: You have distorted the position.

Mr. HEGNEY: I remind the member for Middle Swan—and I say this in all sincerity—

Mr. Grayden: You could not be sincere if you tried.

Mr. HEGNEY: —that it is not too late for him to learn. No matter what our age, we can always learn. Before he utters such statements again, I suggest he makes sure of a few of the facts. Those gentlemen on the other side of the House, who are in the early afternoon of their lives, know what the conditions were when they were lads. They were not what they are today, and probably their fathers told them something of the earlier conditions that existed. Although they may not be Labour members yet, some are imbued with a spirit of humanitarianism, and if the member for Middle Swan has a yarn with them they will tell him that much of what I have said is absolutely true, and that much of what he said the other evening was unwarranted. When, by phrase after phrase, he tries to bring decent men into disrepute it is hardly cricket. The Labour organisations of the Commonwealth have made many mistakes, and so have Labour members. But the hon. member has tried to derate and bring into disrepute the political motives of the industrial Labour movement as a whole.

Mr. Grayden: I was referring to members opposite.

Mr. HEGNEY: This party, since its inception, has been the Australian Labour Party. It has not had to change its name once. It was the Australian Labour Party in 1890, and it is today. I am not saying this in any personal sense, but the hon. member's forebears were Conservatives and Liberals. Up to the last war there were Whigs and Tories, and Conservatives and Liberals. About the middle of the 1914-18 war they changed their name to the Win the War Party and after that to the National Party.

Mr. Marshall: No, the National Labour Party.

Mr. HEGNEY: The National Party! Some years ago they called themselves the United Australian Party, and when that became unfavourable with the people they

called themselves the Liberal Party. I am not slinging off, but why change the name at different periods? This Labour Party was born in adversity. It was only because of the unjust conditions prevailing that the struggles of the early pioneers of the Labour movement made it possible for every man in this Commonwealth to have a vote.

It was only through the sacrifices of the men who fought for trade unionism, and were prepared to go to gaol for their rights, that trade unionism has become such a force in the public life of the Commonwealth to-day, and the same remarks apply to the political aspect of the Australian Labour Party. While we have made mistakes, and we may be misrepresented by the daily Press and some of our opponents, and at times some of our leaders have left us and gone over to the enemy, the Labour movement has gone forward since its inception in 1890. There must be some substance and foundation in it when it can withstand all the onslaughts made on it from time to time.

On motion by Hon. E. Nulsen, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.50 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 26th August, 1948.

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

## QUESTIONS.

### SHIPPING, INTERSTATE.

*As to Tonnage of Cargo from Eastern States.*

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

What is the tonnage of cargo which arrived at Fremantle from other States—

(a) for the six months ended the 31st March, 1947;

(b) for the six months ended the 30th June, 1948?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

For the member's information, the following figures were the tonnage for the year for Fremantle alone:—

Year ended the 31st March, 1947—  
391,614 tons.

Year ended the 31st March, 1948—  
401,384 tons.

Increase of 9,770 tons.

Notwithstanding strikes and hold-ups.

### POLICE.

*As to Transfer of Detective-Sergeant R. Kendall.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

What conclusion did Mr. H. D. Moseley, P.M., arrive at in connection with his inquiry into the transfer of Detective-Sergeant R. Kendall from the C.I.B. to the uniformed branch of the Police Force?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

That reasonable grounds existed for the transfer.

### NORTH-WEST.

*As to Wharf Charges at Port Hedland, etc.*

Mr. HEGNEY asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Is he aware that wharf charges at Port Hedland have been increased?

(2) Will he supply details of such increases?

(3) Are any other northern ports similarly affected?

(4) Will he accede to the request of residents of the Port Hedland district for a reduction of such charges?