

Unfortunately for us, our Prime Minister, Mr. Chifley, is of the opinion that Communism is simply a political belief, and that the Communist Party is a political party in the same way as is the Labour Party, the Liberal Party or the Country and Democratic League, whereas we know it is the spearhead of a foreign ideology. But whilst we have Mr. Chifley expressing these opinions which, if not encouraging Communism, are certainly failing to discourage it, and the complacency exhibited by his Ministers, it will remain for the State Governments to clear up this menace which is in our community.

We in this State will have to declare Communism for what it really is—a subversive, anti-democratic and illegal setting up of a State within a State. I suggest we outlaw Communism. Some people have said that if we outlaw Communism it will go underground. I say it should be underground where all the other creeping and crawling things are, rather than that it should have the freedom it enjoys today, to be able to carry on its subversive programme.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It would not get as many disciples, either.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: That is so, and if they poked up their heads from underground, we could knock them off.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are bloodthirsty!

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I think it is time every member of Parliament expressed the same feelings about Communism. I appeal to the Government to play its part and to declare Communism for what it really stands, and clear it out, so making Western Australia somewhat better than some other States. I support the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 10th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.59 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 4th August, 1948.

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

QUESTIONS.

MILK BOARD.

As to Constitution and Retail Distribution.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is he satisfied that the Milk Board as at present constituted is in the best interest of the State, including the producer-retailer and consumer?

(2) Is the present monopoly of retail distribution in the best interest of the State and consumer?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The present Milk Board is constituted by Act of Parliament and until the Act is amended there is no alternative.

(2) The distribution of milk is determined by the Milk Board in accordance with its powers under the Act.

HOUSING.

As to Ex-Serviceman's Quarters at Bunbury.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that the Bunbury Municipality is harassing with threat of action under the Health Act, a young returned serviceman and his wife, living in a tent (floored), 20 x 14, on private property in a country district not within the municipal boundaries?

(2) Will he ensure that this threat is removed until the Minister for Housing is in a position to fulfil the pledge to house two-unit families?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Inquiries are being made.

ANGLO-ITALIAN TRADING COMPANY.

As to Nominated Migrants from Italy.

Mr. WILD asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that, as a result of advertisements appearing in "The West Australian" over the name of the Anglo-Italian Trading Company, large sums of money have been transmitted to Italy in order to bring migrants to this State?

(2) Is he aware that the Australian shipping office of this company, which was recently domiciled in Sydney, has been closed?

(3) Is he aware that the persons nominating these migrants and forwarding money to Rome for their passage have been informed that the Anglo-Italian Trading Company is not *bona fide*?

(4) Will he have inquiries made in this regard?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) No.

(2) No.

(3) No.

(4) The Minister for Immigration, on the 9th July, directed that inquiries be made into this agency, and as alien immigration comes under the control of the Federal Government, a request was made to the Commonwealth Immigration Officer in this State to have inquiries made both here and in Sydney in regard to the Anglo-Italian Trading Company.

These inquiries have not yet been completed, but in view of the hon. member's questions, the Commonwealth Officer is taking action to expedite the matter.

PASTORAL.

As to Stations Purchased for Research Work.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that the stations known as Abydos and Woodstock, in the Port Hed-

land district, were purchased in 1946, with the strong support of the Pastoralists' Association, to engage in research into pastoral problems?

(2) As there is a feeling that the Government is not making much progress with this project, will he assure the House that the Government will press forward with the research work previously planned?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Considerable progress has already been made in the re-establishment of Abydos and Woodstock on commercial lines. However, this work is being retarded considerably by the difficulty in obtaining essential materials.

Consideration will be given to research projects on these two stations when their development has reached a stage when such work can be carried out satisfactorily.

NANGA BROOK BRIDGE AND PINJARRA-DWELLINGUP ROAD.

As to Progress of Work.

Mr. REYNOLDS (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What progress has been made with the construction of Nanga Brook bridge over the Murray River?

(2) When does he anticipate its completion?

(3) What is being done to repair the excessively heavy damage done to the Pinjarra-Dwellingup road by transport conveying loads of timber, Perth-bound, up to 18 tons in weight?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) I have not been able to approach the appropriate engineer about the construction of the Nanga Brook bridge. However, a tender for the job was given to Mr. R. O. Williams, and all the materials necessary are on the site and the work has been commenced.

(2) It should take, I would say according to my estimation, about three months, which would mean that the bridge should be completed by the end of October.

(3) With regard to the Pinjarra-Dwellingup road, not a great deal of damage was done to it. Such damage as did occur

has been tarred and the damaged portion, if it were damaged, will be sealed next summer.

KNITTING WOOLS.

As to Shortage in Supplies.

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping:

(1) Is the Minister aware that there is a shortage of knitting wools on sale in this State?

(2) What is the cause of this shortage?

(3) Will the Minister take the necessary action to have ample supplies of this commodity made available by producers, wholesalers and retailers?

(4) Does the Minister think that supplies are being withheld from the public hoping for increased prices, after the discontinuance of the subsidy on wool, for stocks upon which the subsidy has already been paid?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) I was not aware that there is a shortage of knitting wool.

(2) Not being aware of a shortage, I cannot say what is the cause of any such shortage.

(3) I will do my best to find out whether I can get sufficient supplies to meet the shortage—if there is a shortage—and will take action in the matter.

(4) I cannot say whether wool is being withheld from the public for the reason suggested, because I have not investigated the position. I will do so and furnish the hon. member with a reply next week.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [4.44]: This being the first occasion on which I have had an opportunity to address this House, I would like at the outset to pay a tribute to the late member for Guildford-Midland, Hon. W. D. Johnson, whose position I have taken in the House. I first knew him 25 years ago when I was associated with the co-operative movement at Geraldton. I met him again a few years later when I assumed office as secretary of the Trades

Hall at Midland Junction. I always found the late Mr. Johnson a very earnest worker for the co-operative movement and also in the interests of his electorate. To me he proved a very great friend. I feel that in the passing of William Dartnell Johnson, the Guildford-Midland electorate lost a stalwart representative and the Labour Party a very worthy member.

At this stage I desire to express to the electors of Guildford-Midland my appreciation for having paid me the great honour of electing me to the vacancy caused by the demise of Mr. Johnson. I feel at the moment that, even if I am not re-elected at the next general election, I have been very greatly favoured and I deeply appreciate the honour conferred on me. I hope that whilst I continue to be a member I shall prove worthy of the confidence the electors have reposed in me. I also desire to thank members of both parties in this Parliament for the consideration they have shown to me and the assistance they have rendered to me since I was elected in March last. They have been most helpful in any advice that I have sought. I also thank the staff of Parliament House for the help they have given me since I have been elected.

It is not my intention on this occasion to try to speak down to members or to speak over their heads. I feel that if I do so I might perhaps get into deep water; and as later on in my speech I shall be dealing with matters which might be termed shallow water, I do not want to get out of my depth. On behalf of the electors of Guildford-Midland, I desire to say how pleased we are that the Royal family is to visit this State next year. The electors of Guildford-Midland will gladly join in a right loyal welcome to Their Majesties and to the Princess Margaret. Even at this early stage the Midland Junction Municipal Council is, I am pleased to say, desirous that the Royal family should stay for a short period in Midland Junction during their visit.

Since being elected, I have found that my district is in urgent need of much attention. Many matters appear to have been overlooked, I am sorry to say, by all previous Governments. If some of these important matters are not given early attention, it is obvious to me that there may be some bad social reactions. We have in the electorate numerous secondary industries already in

operation, whilst others are springing up. We have in the electorate the biggest workshop, with the largest personnel, in Western Australia. I refer to the railway workshops, which are situated in the heart of Midland Junction. Yesterday, the Minister for Railways, in reply to a question of mine, pointed out that the production of the workshops last year amounted in value to approximately £1,750,000. In addition, we have the Government abattoirs, which are adjacent to the workshops. Alongside the abattoirs there is a most important military ordnance store. On the boundary of the electorate itself, we have brickyards, quarries, bacon factories, superphosphate works, flour mills, confectionery factories, dripping factories, joinery works, chemical works, two or three timber mills and numerous other industries, all of which employ a large number of people and carry on their activities in the economic interests of the State. Apart from the secondary industries, there are many commercial concerns conducting various businesses. There are no fewer than four local governing authorities—two municipal councils and two road boards—which are responsible to 18,000 people.

I mention this to impress upon the House the importance of the Guildford-Midland electorate to the State. Despite all the activities of the secondary industries and commercial enterprises, I regret to say that the social amenities of the electorate do not appear to have been looked after as they should have been. My attention has been drawn to the fact that in the schools there is a grave shortage—I repeat, a grave shortage—of educational facilities. The people at the moment are crying out for a high school, long overdue, a technical school and at least two infants' schools. The following letter has been addressed to me, as the member for the district, by the Parents Committee:—

The parents of the above school (the Midland Junction Infants' School) wish to bring to your notice that we are placed in a very awkward position, owing to the fact that we have a number of children who are eligible to commence school on July 1, and we have nowhere to room them, not even a hall. This is a deplorable outlook for these youngsters. I have written to Mr. Little, of the Education Department, concerning the matter; but all he says is that the matter is receiving attention. This gives us no definite answer. As a resident of Midland, you must know

the crowded condition of our school. Surely a pavilion room or two would relieve the situation for the time being. Will you do your utmost to help us get these rooms. Please, can you tell us whether the site for the new school has been arranged and where?

That is only one of a number of similar letters that I have received. I have in my pocket at the moment a petition signed by 70 residents asking that urgent consideration be given to the provision of an infants' school. I do not know whether members are aware that schoolchildren at Midland Junction, in addition to being crowded—800 of them—into the local State school, are spread over the town in public and private halls and consequently are not receiving the attention which they should have. The parents and teachers are clamouring for an early remedy of these conditions. It may be said that some of the delay in building a high school in the district is owing to the fact that the people most concerned could not agree upon a site. That difficulty has been surmounted, a site now having been agreed upon.

Another matter of vital importance is hospital accommodation. During the past 15 years, to my knowledge, various Ministers have been brought to the district and have had pointed out to them the urgent need for up-to-date hospital facilities. I regret that some Ministers have taken the view that only a small hospital is required in the district. I point out, however, that in Midland Junction and the surrounding districts there is a population of not less than 30,000. These people for many years have looked to Midland Junction to provide them with necessary hospital accommodation. At the moment, there are only two private hospitals, with approximately 20 beds each, in the district and they are always overcrowded. In this electorate there are 7,000 or 8,000 industrial workers, and to have only two private hospitals is definitely wrong.

It is said that there is a public hospital in Perth and that these people are in close proximity and can use it. In answer, I say that the people in the Guildford-Midland electorate, where the majority of toilers are salary and wage-earners, should not be expected to have to pay fares on the railway trains to go to see those near and dear to them in hospital. Most people, when in hospital, have relatives visiting

them from time to time and it helps them on their way to recovery. The position at the moment is that if a man desires to go into Perth to see a sick relative he has to pay 1s. for fares and 6d. admission to the hospital. If a man on a small wage has a relative in hospital for any length of time those costs become a hardship.

Another angle of hospitalisation is the fact that the residents in the district are concerned because one or two doctors have been heard to say that if a hospital is not built there they will possibly move their practices to Perth. The residents would then find themselves in the position that they would not have the doctors readily available, and would have to go to Perth because the doctors would not go to the private hospitals in Perth from Midland.

The next subject I wish to deal with is that of housing. At the moment, to my knowledge, in the Midland area alone to say nothing of Bassendean, Guildford, and Bellevue, over 150 people hold No. 1 priorities for houses. I have personally interviewed people in the last three months, and in some cases as many as 18 units comprising four families, are living in one house. The last case brought to my notice a fortnight ago consisted of four families, 16 units, living in a five-roomed house. When I rang the department to see what could be done, I was reminded that there were at least 150 No. 1 priorities in the district. There is ample evidence, I think, that the housing project, as far as Guildford-Midland is concerned, must be kept quite up to date. I have already said that there are numerous industries in the district. The number is growing and at the moment some new ones are being shifted by Westralian Farmers Ltd., from North Fremantle into the area, and the workers concerned will require residences. I hope the members of the Government present will realise it will be absolutely necessary for them to maintain the housing programme in order that those in immediate need of houses will be provided for, and those coming into the district will be given proper accommodation.

I mentioned earlier that I would touch on the matter of water. I want to refer to the Swan River and the fact that it is silting up. My attention has been drawn by some of the old residents of Guildford to the fact that the Swan River, on which

barges drawing up to 3 feet and 4 feet travelled some 50 years ago when the goods required for the opening up of the State were taken to what was then known as Barker's Bridge at Guildford and to Loton and Padbury's stores, is, in some parts, so shallow that it would not float a canoe. This state of affairs is causing quite a lot of concern, not only to the older residents, but to the people in the district who have children attending school. The Swan River, particularly around Bassendean, Guildford and Midland, and through into the Middle Swan area, is used considerably for recreational purposes in the summertime, particularly by the children for swimming. Owing to the fact that it is silting up and there are a number of snags and a lot of debris in it, the natural flow of the water is being held up.

Last January and February the water became stagnant in parts of the river and in such a state it is apt to cause a lot of disease to the school children. I remind members that a number of the schools in the district have quite large attendances. Here again I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that the river exists and that it is being used a lot for swimming by the children. I am concerned about their health just as are the local governing bodies. There is another aspect in regard to the river, and that is its value as a tourist attraction. I believe the river lends itself to being developed so as to constitute an attraction to tourists. That is something that has been lost sight of in the past.

Personally I can think of nothing more pleasant than for tourists to be able to get on a motor launch at, say, the Causeway and tour leisurely up the river past Bassendean, through the first established town in the State—Guildford—and see where fresh water was first discovered and where Captain Stirling landed in 1829, and also see the wonderful monument erected at the Guildford Grammar School, and so on. If the river were dredged and properly cleaned out it would be of ultimate value to the tourist traffic of the State. Tourists who have come here from time to time and seen Mundaring Weir, Yanchep and the Caves, will not come back again unless we have added attractions. I believe the Swan River can be developed along these lines. The

foreshore could be improved. I hope the day is not far distant when we will have a riverside drive from the Causeway through to Midland Junction, Middle Swan and beyond. I feel I should mention these things today so that when the Government is trying to get additional finance into the State it will consider the possibilities of the Swan River attracting tourists.

On the eve of the recent by-election held in my district, the Premier, when speaking at the Government workshops in support of the Liberal candidate, said that the amenities block had been recommended by the Royal Commissioner and the Government hoped to have something done about it in the near future. I would like to see the Premier concern himself again with the provision of that block. I can assure him that the 2,000 odd workers in the workshops would welcome some early announcement on the subject, because at the moment they are suffering a great amount of disability inasmuch as they have to queue up for their requirements at the lunch hour.

I want to touch briefly on the matter of local government. In the main the local governing authorities in the area are doing a good job, but they are experiencing high costs, and anything the Government can do towards lessening those costs will be greatly welcomed. I am surprised to know—and I believe that the Main Roads Act requires amendment in this respect—that even though there are thousands of tons of goods taken over the roads in the Bassendean area by heavily-powered and large tonnage trucks, there is no road through Bassendean gazetted as a main road. At the moment the main road deviates through Guildford down the south side of the river. The Government will have to give some consideration, and very shortly too, to having the road over the Guildford bridge, through Bassendean, Bayswater and Mount Lawley, gazetted as a main road. It is distinctly unfair that the local governing authority at Bassendean should be called upon to maintain a road, which is virtually a main road, at the expense of the ratepayers of the district, while other local governing authorities are being assisted with main roads through their areas.

Another matter which I consider worthy of mention—and whilst it may be deemed

to be a minor matter, I think it will ultimately be of major importance—is the question of natives. In my electorate, in the grape-picking season, a number of natives migrate to the district and are utilised by the growers to pick the harvest. These people remain in the area for quite a long period, and yet as far as I know nothing has been done to give them the proper facilities to which people of this description are entitled. Unfortunately at times people have supplied the natives in my electorate with alcoholic liquor and some of these natives have made a nuisance of themselves, but in the main they are decent types. They try to do a day's work and try to conform to a decent standard of living where they are given any encouragement to do so. I hope that the Government will give consideration to making some provision for these people who do this casual work in the vineyards and the surrounding primary producing orchards.

At this stage I would draw attention to the Communist activities in the Guildford-Midland electorate. I am amazed to know that in the general elections held last year and again in the by-election held this year, 1,200 people saw fit to give a No. 1 vote to the Communist candidate. I cannot understand why people are doing this, particularly when their activities in Europe, in America, and I am quite convinced throughout Australia, are well known. Most of the people who supported the Communist candidate are law-abiding and God-fearing people, and I can only put it down to the fact that they do not know or realise what a menace they are encouraging in this country. We will be playing into the hands of the Communists unless the Government is up and doing and the electors are educated.

It may be that we will have the first Communist in this House representing the Guildford-Midland electorate, but I hope I never see the day when that comes about. There is a Communist doctor practising in Midland Junction who is giving the public the benefit of the new medical and sickness facilities provided by the Commonwealth Government, with the result that people are coming from all parts of the metropolitan area to consult this man and receive free medicine. I consider that if the B.M.A.'s attitude to the free medicine

scheme is allowed to continue it will encourage people to support such Communist candidates. In my opinion, all doctors should fall into line and do the right thing by this scheme for, if industrial organisations were to take in their particular sphere the attitude now being adopted by the B.M.A., they would receive a hostile reception from the Press. In spite of this, the B.M.A. considers that its attitude is for the good of the people.

Mr. Reynolds: It is scandalous.

Mr. BRADY: The doctors, in taking the attitude now adopted, are playing into the hands of the Communists, and I trust that the medical profession will see its way clear to assist the scheme which is in the interests of our fair country. One other important aspect which is tending to force people towards Communism is the fact that the majority of young people in recent years have been frustrated from their earlier ambitions because of the high costs associated with the necessities of life. A house which could be built in 1935-36 for £500 or £600 today is costing £1,000. Firewood that could be purchased for 15s. or 16s. a ton in 1935-36 is today costing £2 per ton and £2 5s. per ton.

From those two comparisons it can be seen that costs have risen almost 100 per cent., and I can only think that it is the frustration and the non-realisation of their ambitions that are causing these people to look to the Communist Party as the one to steer them through such troublous times. I consider they are depending on the wrong party and that the young people are grasping at the wrong straw but, unless people are educated and given some consideration in regard to their social amenities, it is possible that Communist candidates will in future be given stronger support. I repeat that I hope I will never see that day, but unless people are given social amenities and a decent basic wage they will support the Communists.

Whilst speaking on this subject I am reminded that President Truman recently toured the United States and he opposed what is known as the Mundt-Dixon Bill which has been brought down in the United States Congress to outlaw Communism. President Truman opposed the Bill and had this to say—

Give the workers decent wages, decent conditions, decent social amenities and communism will be defeated.

If the people are given decent wages, decent conditions and decent social amenities the Communist Party will never get sufficient members in this country to enable a member to be elected to this House. However, I do not agree with President Truman in his statement that such a condition of affairs would eliminate Communism, because I think that the Communists are being used by a foreign power ultimately to take possession of this country, along with others.

At this stage I would like to commend the member for Wagin on his high ideals. I think he said that members should strive for righteousness, good morals and Christian principles. I agree with an interjection made the other evening that the hon. member should remind his own party to some extent of their responsibilities in this regard. When recently helping a Labour candidate for the Central Province, I was very disappointed to see a pamphlet issued by the Country and Democratic League in support of its candidate. I will read the last paragraph of the pamphlet to illustrate the propaganda used on that occasion. On the front of the pamphlet is the candidate's photograph. Mr. Logan is quite a fine gentleman and I was associated with him many years ago. In the pamphlet itself the following subjects are discussed:—Education, land settlement, housing, mining, wheat, and railways. The final paragraph is a warning which reads as follows:—

A warning—Today we are at the cross-roads. One road follows the democratic and British way of life, and this we have every reason to respect and be proud of. The other leads to domination and control by a foreign power. This is no time for hesitation or appeasement. Therefore, it is essential that you vote for the candidate whose policy is to fight the peril all out.

The implication there is that the Labour candidate, Mr. Robinson, was not prepared to carry out those principles. I consider it was very uncharitable, and I use that word because I consider it un-Christian. Mr. Robinson is a returned soldier and has been chairman of various organisations in his district; and particularly associated with the road board for many years. The Country and Democratic League should look to its laurels in the matter of running

elections. As a contrast to the statement I have just quoted is the pamphlet of the Labour candidate. This pamphlet deals with the member's activities in the district and unlike Mr. Logan's pamphlet it did not cast innuendoes about the other candidates. I therefore hope that Mr. Nalder—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must refer to members by their electorates.

Mr. BRADY: I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I hope that the member for Wagin will acquaint his party of his high ideals.

I am very anxious that the Government should do something about the matters to which I have referred, namely educational facilities, housing, hospitalisation, amenities for the workers in the district, and the question of the care of natives as well as the matter of the Swan River, which is of such historic value to this State. I am most anxious that these requests should receive attention.

Recently in "The West Australian" of the 24th July, Professor Benjamin Higgins, the Acting Ritchie Professor of Economics at the Melbourne University, warned us that there would be a "down-turn" if not a depression within three to six years. In last Saturday's copy of "The West Australian" we had a warning from Wall Street that things are not going so well on that side of the world. In Monday's issue of "The West Australian" we had a further warning by Melbourne business interests that things are not looking too bright in that State. I consider that at the moment we are on the crest of prosperity, and I do not want it said in a few years time that we would have done something for the Guildford-Midland electorate if it were not for the fact that the boom had declined.

I cannot imagine that prices will remain at their present high level, as the European countries are steadily getting back into their stride and factories all over the world are catching up with the lag. Prices of all commodities must fall and today I consider there is ample evidence of this fact. Shops in the metropolitan area are beginning to stock up because most workers are not in a position to pay such high prices. I trust that whilst I am a member of this House something will be done to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act in order that the basic wage may be brought into conformity

with modern times. The basic wage as laid down by the court under the Act is not nearly adequate, and I trust I will have the pleasure of seeing this Act amended to bring about reform. In conclusion, I thank members for their attentive hearing and I hope that the matters referred to in my speech will have the attention of the Government.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [5.15]: I hope during the present session we will not have so many Select Committees and Royal Commissions. Hardly any of them have done any good at all and, in fact, they have done no particular good in any way. The only thing they have done is to make an enormous amount of work for an already hard-worked staff. The "Hansard" staff have already a great deal to do without being called upon to do work on Royal Commissions and Select Committees. Take the Betting Commission, for instance! I think it would be almost impossible for any commission to dig up any information that was in any way new as far as betting is concerned.

The Australian people comprise a betting nation, and I take it that every member in this Chamber and almost every man in the community has had a bet at some time or other, and they should know the ramifications of starting price betting just as well as the Government knew them after a Royal Commission inquiry, or even better. One thing that resulted from the Betting Commission was that the Commissioners thought that betting on the racecourse should be legalised. I wonder whether that suggestion was made in order to give the privileged classes an opportunity to bet on the racecourse without breaking the law.

The Premier: The answer is "No."

Mr. FOX: The Premier says "No," but we will see. Some ingenious person might have had that object in view when it was suggested that the Royal Commission be appointed. We are going to give the people who attend racecourses the opportunity to have a bet legally and the patrons of the racecourse, if they so desire, can have a starting price bet there because the course bookmakers bet starting price on the Melbourne races; yet the poorest person is denied the privilege of having a bet because he does not wish to go to the races.

Not that I say that one would not be doing them a good turn at the same time by not making starting price betting available but if they want a bet they should be allowed to have it.

I know many working men finish their day's work at dinner time on Saturday and after placing five or six shillings on the horses they go home and listen to the races on the wireless. They have no motorcar, such as the Honorary Ministry for Supply and Shipping has. These people should not be denied that pleasure if they want to take their pleasures in that way. They have as much right to it as the privileged classes who go to the races and bet to their heart's content. I hope we will not have so many Royal Commissions and Select Committees during the present session of Parliament and thus give the hardworking "Hansard" reporters an opportunity to recover their health and strength. I think they are the hardest worked people in the community. I might mention that it is very hard to obtain a good "Hansard" staff. There are quite a number of opportunities in the Eastern States and if any of these men went there they would not be long out of work. If the Government is going to treat them in the same way as it did last session it is just asking them to leave their jobs and go to the Eastern States, where they will be better off. However, I hope they will not go, as we cannot afford to lose them. We have a good staff and a very efficient one. Very often they make a better job of some of our speeches than we do ourselves.

In March last a very flamboyant article appeared in "The Daily News" under the heading of "Liberal Party Views." It reads:

We, the people It will be ever with that phrase before it that the new Government will take and hold office.

Mr. Triat: Is that music?

Mr. FOX: It could be set to music. This was last year. It goes on—

The Liberal-C.D.L. Coalition Government is filled with a deep sense of responsibility to the people who have put it into power. All legislation will be animated with the spirit that it is acting on behalf of the people, not one section.

Now that sounds very grand; there is no doubt about it. If any Government wants to give itself a pat on the back it is this Government.

Mr. Styants: They throw bouquets at each other.

Mr. FOX: The article goes on—

The new Coalition Government will do its best to hold the balance of all power between all people and will display no bias towards any party.

That sounds beautiful. Let us see how it works out in practice.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Premier knows something about that.

Mr. FOX: No doubt he does. After the elections the Government dismissed the late Mr. P. Ryan from the Dairy Products Marketing Board. Mr. Ryan had very long service with the board and he was a man with knowledge that would have been of considerable use to it.

The Attorney General: Had not his term expired?

Mr. FOX: The Attorney General does not know anything about it. As I have said before, he knows as much about these things as he does about law. Mr. Ryan was recommended by the Under-Secretary for the Agricultural Department and also by the chairman of the Dairy Products Marketing Board. Yet, in the face of that, he was dismissed and a man of the same christian name as that of the Minister for Agriculture was appointed in his place. That is one Labour supporter displaced. This is the Government that was going to implement its policy without any bias or any favour and irrespective of political consideration. The next man that came up for the axe was Mr. Ulrich, of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. He was a man who had lived in the port all his life and had a wide knowledge of the whole of the conditions existing on the waterfront. He was sacked also. This is the Government that was going to implement its policy without any bias or favouritism, and irrespective of political considerations.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They will all go directly.

Mr. FOX: One would think, as far as the University is concerned, that there would be no bias at all, because education ought to be something that is handed on to the public and the rising generation by all parties. But even as far as the University is concerned—and there was no payment for the job—the ex-Minister for Education was dismissed from the Senate and

his position was given to a man named King, a friend of the late Sinclair McGibbon, who was one of the heads of the Liberal Party. This was the party that was going to make its appointments without bias, without party political consideration, and do justice to everybody. Where would one find a more suitable representative to be on the University Senate than the ex-Minister for Education who had several years' experience as a Minister, who was a schoolteacher for years and who had grown up with the Education Department. I daresay it would be difficult to find a more suitable man in the community than he is, and yet he was dismissed.

The Premier: You have already a member of the Labour Party in this House on the Senate.

Mr. FOX: Yet he was put off—

The Premier: He was not put off. Did your party ever put a member of the C.D.L. on the Senate?

Mr. FOX: The Premier was going to administer his policy without bias, without political favour.

The Premier: Has your party ever put a non-Labour man on the Senate? How many more do you want?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOX: That is not carrying out the Premier's pre-election promise to administer his office without fear and without favour.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The Government made the miserable excuse that it wanted an accountant, and the man it put off is an accountant.

Mr. FOX: I think the Leader of the Opposition has thoroughly debunked the Minister for Housing's claims that he has caught up with the housing position or has made any improvement in the housing position. Therefore, I do not think there is any necessity for me to have much to say on the subject. The Labour Government gave the present Government a splendid start. After the war, in 1945, when the Labour Government took up the job, there was no organisation, and very little labour owing to numbers of men still being in the Forces. There was no material and hardly anything at all. Yet in that short eighteen months the late Government had housing

at a wonderful stage of advancement. It was so good that the McLarty Government did not start a new house before September, 1947.

Personally, I believe the housing position today is as bad as, if not worse than, it has ever been. If it is the same in every other district as it is in mine and that of the member for Guildford-Midland, as he has stated it is, then it is in a very bad state. I want to remind the Ministers that they said they would provide homes for two-unit families. I do not believe there is a two-unit family that has been given a home yet. I have tested the sincerity of the Government on this question. While the Labour Government was in office I had made application on several occasions for two-unit families without success. I did not go to the Ministers to try to influence the Housing Commission in order to make my point.

The Minister for Housing: Good man!

Mr. FOX: I did not. I hope, if any member of the Liberal-C.D.L. Party approaches the Minister and requests his aid, that he will give the hon. member his walking ticket. I do not think he has a right to go to the Minister.

Mr. Yates: He has given me a walking ticket many times.

Mr. FOX: The hon. member had no right to go to the Minister.

Mr. Yates: I did not go to him.

Mr. FOX: He had no right to go to him! He was not playing the game if he did. I received hundreds of applications for houses and I never went near the Minister once. I hope the Minister will not receive any member coming to him looking for a home. In order to see how things were progressing I presented a case for a young couple. They had put in an application for a home when they had been married five years, and it is now six years. They are living in rooms and there are no children, and they say they are not going to have any children until they have been given a home. We are doing a disservice to the country. Here are people who have been married six years with no children, and the sooner we give them an opportunity to get a home, the sooner they will be able to raise a family.

The Minister for Housing: We are doing it.

Mr. FOX: The Government is doing nothing. I can tell the Minister a little more. At the present time many families are living under appalling conditions and I will just name a few instances that have come under my notice recently. Here are a few cases of the urgent need for houses for the few people I have come in contact with over the last two or three weeks: A mother with her three sons aged 20, 18 and 15 years live in separate houses. The three boys have been taken in by three different friends who are boarding them and housing them; the mother is living in a different place altogether. That is four places of residence for four members of one family. In a case like this I think the whole of that family should be together. The boys are just of an age when a mother's care is most necessary.

Instances of that sort show conclusively that the Minister has not progressed as far with the housing programme as he would lead us to believe. A husband, wife and four children are living in a tumbledown two-roomed house with no verandah and one of the rooms leaky. Originally, it was not intended for a dwelling. A child of eight has to sleep in a cot because there is no room for a single bed. In other cases, husband, wife and five children are living in one room; a family of 10 are occupying a sub-standard home and are under notice to quit and the Commission informed them yesterday that a camp was not available; 11 people, including girls aged 14 and seven, and boys aged nine, four and two are living in a small 4-roomed house; two families occupy a dilapidated shop with no conveniences at all; husband, wife and three children are living in one room. I could enumerate dozens of such instances, but will content myself with quoting these few to show the deplorable position of housing at present. I have a letter sent to an applicant by the State Housing Commission on the 8th July last. It reads—

I have to advise that your application for the tenancy of a home under the Commonwealth-State Rental Scheme has been considered by the Commission and as a result you have been afforded a No. 1 priority.

The granting of this priority means that you are now eligible for consideration in future allocations for rental homes. At present the demand far exceeds the supply of houses and, when making allocations, every endeavour is made to meet those cases suffer-

ing the greatest hardship. Your priority has been granted on account of the hardships revealed at the above address by the inspection recently made by a Commission officer.

While appreciating your serious housing problem, the Commission desires to point out that there are also many hundreds of families in similar unfortunate circumstances, and although every endeavour is being made to erect more dwellings, the serious position in regard to essential building materials is preventing the Commission from building homes as quickly as is desired.

Please rest assured that the Commission is doing all that is possible to provide homes for those in need.

That shows the position of housing. I am not going to blame the Housing Commission, which is doing as good a job as is possible for it to do, not as good a job as when the Labour Party was in office, but the Commission is doing its best. I am sure that had Labour remained in office, substantial progress would have been made to overtake the housing shortage, far better progress than the present Government has made. The Government has failed to live up to its extravagant election promises, and house-hungry people feel very sadly disillusioned. Members opposite made promises on the hustings that they knew they had no chance of fulfilling. All they considered was, "How can we get on to the Treasury Bench?" They fooled the people. I shall say something more in support of that later on. The Government party adopted a slogan, "Prices rise with Wise." I suggest that a more appropriate slogan would be, "Houses slack with Mac." There is not an atom of truth in the allegation that prices rise with Wise, but there is considerable truth in my statement that houses slack with Mac.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Which Mac?

Mr. Marshall: Both of them.

Mr. FOX: From the Government side, we have heard quite a lot about the horrors of State enterprise, coupled with the advantages of private enterprise. The Honorary Minister, when occupying a seat on this side of the House, was loud in her denunciation of controls. She told us that she would lift all controls, even the controls on building materials. Other members of the Government do not like controls, either. I can quite understand the desire to lift controls because this would afford an opportunity to some of her friends, big business people,

to gobble up all the available supplies. It would be a good thing for people with any amount of money to be able to speculate if they could command all the supplies of timber, bricks and other building materials. They would have a permanent income for the rest of their lives. Consequently, they do not like State building.

I feel sure that the party controlling the Liberals in this House will do its utmost to break down all controls. Let us examine the experience of a country where no controls exist, or at any rate did not exist up to the end of 1947. I shall quote an article that appeared in the American journal "Fortune," dealing with an investigation made by Mr. Rowsell into the housing position in the United States of America. This is what he said—

Fifth Avenue, New York, is full of majestic shop fronts, but ex-servicemen are living in auto courts or trailer towns, with material plentiful and 25,000 unemployed in New York alone. U.S.A. building programme did not reach one-half of the 1947 building target under free enterprise. Examination of this failure shows that it is closely related to building costs which, in Australia, are kept within bounds.

The average price for a six-roomed house in the United States in 1946 was 9,400 dollars, equal to £A2,800, and in 1947 the price was 12,000 dollars, equal to £A3,700. Today, the price is probably higher under free and unrestricted building. In the United States, timber has increased 2½ times on the price ruling in 1939. Trusts and combines control the supplies of building material and get any price that the people are prepared to pay for it.

Some people advocate the abolition of controls here, saying, "Let us have free competition." In order to show the fallacy, let me mention a statement in the same report. The United States Navy during the war called tenders for a large quantity of cement to be delivered at 15 ports in the United States. A total of 206 tenders was received, and no fewer than 203 quoted identical prices, which goes to show the close co-operation existing amongst trusts and combines in America. The report also shows that, of the 37,000,000 houses in the United States, 14,000,000 had no flush toilet, 12,000,000 had no bath, and 11,000,000 had no running water. That is what happens under free enterprise—dollars first and the welfare of the community nowhere.

I consider it time we got some more homes for Fremantle, which is falling behind in the building programme. New factories are being erected in the South Fremantle area and will employ a large number of men in the near future. When I spoke to the Housing Commission about erecting more homes, I was told that there was not too much in the way of building sites available in the South Fremantle district. The limestone would have to be taken out of the ground, and thus building costs would be too high. At Hamilton Hill, which is about four miles from Fremantle, there is a large area suitable for building blocks. This land is near to a road, transport is handy, and there is a school in the vicinity. Most of this land is cut into blocks of one acre or two acres and would be very suitable as sites for homes. There is also quite a lot of University endowment land in the vicinity.

The Minister for Housing: The Housing Commission is re-examining that land now, I believe.

Mr. FOX: I hope that is so. The only drawback is the lack of reticulated water. Anyone who takes a block in that district must sink a well 100 feet deep and install a windmill to provide a water supply. I feel sure that if the Water Supply Department ran a main from the Newmarket Hotel or from Carrington-street somewhere near Hilton Park, this area could be supplied. If people were settled on blocks of one acre or two acres, they would be able to grow some of their food requirements. The use of this land was mooted before the war, but nothing eventuated.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is the building of McNess homes. I understand that there is now no money in the trust. There is quite a number of old-age pensioners, some of whom have nowhere to go, and I think the Government might well make a substantial donation to this trust in order to maintain the building programme for aged people who have done their duty by the State but have not been able to obtain a home of their own.

The Minister for Housing: The Trust is still building, to some extent.

Mr. FOX: It is not building too many homes.

The Minister for Housing: That is so.

Mr. FOX: A man who reared a family in prewar years did not have much opportunity to save; in fact, a worker on the basic wage found it difficult to make ends meet. Some of those who were acquiring homes during the depression lost their equity in them. I hope that the Government will show some consideration for the needs of old-age pensioners. There are also some widows with children who are in need of homes. I am aware that some of the people living in McNess homes are no longer entitled to do so. However, they had the qualifications at the time of going into occupation, and although some of them have since married and members of the family have grown up and started work, it is probably difficult to put them out unless they have somewhere to go.

The Minister for Housing: There is no legal power to put them out.

Mr. FOX: I was told that on a previous occasion. Perhaps the explanation is that they have an equity in the homes. When the Labour Party was in office an experiment was tried of providing a man with the requisite material to build a house for himself. The man made an excellent job of it; the house is situated in Carrington-street, Hilton Park. I put this proposition to the Trust again, but did not meet with any success. If some of the people eligible for McNess homes are prepared to do the work of building the home without expense to the trust, except for the timber and other material, they should be given an opportunity to do so. We have had quite a lot of talk over the air and in the Press about the menace of socialism. Let us take a look at the food position throughout the world and see the mess that private enterprise has made of that—and it cannot all be put down to wars, either! Mr. Chester Bowles, Chairman of the United Nations appeal for food for children, said recently—

There are more than 230,000,000 desperately hungry children in the world, who cannot be cared for by their parents, their own communities or their own countries. In the next 12 months it is probable that more children will die of starvation and diseases of malnutrition than the number of men, women and children killed by bombs and bullets in the most devastating year of World War II. Mass hunger is not wholly a consequence of war. In 1939 two-thirds of the world's people were not getting enough to eat, and half of them were children.

That is a terrible indictment of the system under which we are living. Long ago Nature solved the food problem—well, no, we cannot put it down to Nature; but people have solved the problem. There is any amount of food in the world—food to burn—yet millions of people go hungry. Of course, while we have private enterprise—banks and big business interests—pouring out propaganda over the air, and are only concerned with profits, we cannot expect any improvement from that direction.

To emphasise the statement I have just read and to show the need for a changed outlook in regard to food production, I would like to refer to something I came across in the paper the other day—and this will be of some interest to wheat farmers. It appeared in the Press quite recently and concerns 94,000,000 bushels of wheat carried over from the last harvest. I am referring to the wheat harvest in America. In the previous harvest, there was a carry-over of 40,000,000 bushels, and the Government has asked farmers to cut down wheat sowings to 71,500,000 acres this year, an eight per cent. reduction on the previous year or a reduction of 5,780,000 acres in all. That would mean a reduction of nearly 70,000,000 bushels of wheat. One would think that with the food position so acute throughout the world, nations would concentrate on producing as much food as they could.

Every day we see in the Press remarks stressing the necessity for more production. It is more production all the time; yet in America where they have a carry-over of 94,000,000 bushels of wheat, notwithstanding the enormous amount they have exported to European countries, they are going to cut down the acreage—or the Government has asked the farmers to cut down the acreage—by 5,780,000 acres, which would represent approximately 70,000,000 bushels of wheat, at 12 bushels to the acre. I do not know what they get to the acre and whether it is better than Western Australia's yield; but I think we can count on the reduction being 70,000,000 or 80,000,000 bushels. We have that proposed reduction in spite of the fact that children in the world are crying out for food.

Even now we are taking up a collection in Australia for those children and the same is being done in England and in other

British countries. It is nearly time we produced things for use instead of profit. Of course we hear propaganda over the air all the time! I was going to refer to the remarks made by the member for Wagin, but the member for Guildford-Midland has already done that. The member for Wagin spoke of the need for strengthening the moral and spiritual forces of our State. I believe he was earnest in making that statement and, believing him to be sincere, I am going to ask him to take stock of the company he keeps. I do not know how the member for Wagin can reconcile the statements he made in his speech with his association with people who make the rotten statements we hear by way of propaganda over the air. One in particular should be sent back to the sewer where I think he came from. He makes the rottenest statements that it is possible to make and is paid for them by the Liberal Party.

Mr. Styants: That is the point.

Mr. Marshall: He does it for profit.

Mr. FOX: I cannot understand a God-fearing man like the member for Wagin associating with people of that description.

The Premier: You must get into a temper when you are listening to the wireless!

Mr. FOX: I do not listen to him for more than five minutes.

The Premier: You never miss him!

Mr. FOX: I would not miss him if I had a good stick. That is about all I would not miss him with. He is not worth listening to.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: It is no credit to the Premier that he treats the matter jokingly.

Mr. FOX: The member for Canning said that the Government had never opposed the 40-hour week. I am going to put on record again what the Government said or what the responsible Minister said when the 40-hour week was being considered. Mr. Lionel Carter, Secretary of the Employers' Federation, who controls the Liberal Party—

The Premier: Rubbish!

Mr. FOX: There is no doubt about it! Members opposite are not their own bosses. Mr. Carter said—

Reduced hours should not apply to Western Australia because it was at a great disadvan-

tage compared with its competitor States. There was a deliberate go-slow policy in certain Western Australian industries.

That is always the cry of some of these fellows who have never done a decent day's work in their lives. It is a pity some of them did not go into the coalmines and try themselves out there or in some equally arduous employment.

Mr. May: We do not want them there!

Mr. FOX: Put some of them there and take "Red" out! My extract continues, with reference to Mr. Carter's statement—

He mentioned the coalmining, timber and building industries. The State Government, which was in an unsound financial position, was not in a position to grant a 40-hour week.

There is one statement by one of the leaders of the Liberal Party in Western Australia.

The Minister for Housing: He is nothing of the kind.

Mr. FOX: In "The Daily News" of the 11th April, 1947, appeared the following:—

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

The Minister for Housing: You read the official statement!

Mr. FOX: The report in "The Daily News" continued—

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

It has never been very hard to dig up a reason why the workers should not be granted some concession. I have never known yet the time when it was opportune for them to be given a concession.

The Minister for Housing: Do you favour the 30-hour week?

Mr. FOX: Yes, I am in favour of the 30-hour week; and I am looking forward to the time when a couple of hours' work will be a slight interruption in a life of leisure. We have reason to look forward to that, too. When we have developed atomic power, a couple of hours' work will be sufficient to feed and clothe and house the lot of us. It would be enough now, if we did not have so many drones. Here is another quotation illustrating the Government's attitude to the 40-hour week. It appeared in "The

West Australian" of the 15th April, 1947, and reads as follows:—

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

Those were the two States that opposed the introduction of the 40-hour week.

The Minister for Housing: Western Australia did not oppose the 40-hour week. They left the matter to the Court.

Mr. FOX: Yes, they did! The time is not opportune. That is what the Minister for Labour said.

The Minister for Housing: The Commonwealth said the time was not opportune.

Mr. FOX: Is that opposing the 40-hour week, or telling the Court to grant it? So much for the 40-hour week. I do not want to take too long.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

The Minister for Housing: Go ahead!

Mr. FOX: I have a few more matters to discuss.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Ministers are looking very unpleasant and unhappy.

Mr. FOX: I would like to draw the attention of the Minister for Works to one or two things. I think he must be very hard-worked. I believe he is, but I would like him to do up the Rockingham-road along Carrington-street. That is part of the Rockingham-road. A number of factories have been built there and others are to be erected in the near future, and I would like the Minister to consider widening the road at least as far as that or up to Hamilton Hill. It is a main road, but the road is narrow. There is an enormous amount of traffic on the Rockingham-road during the summer—traffic to Mandurah and to Rockingham. Between 10,000 and 12,000 people visit those places during the summer for weekends and there have been a number of accidents en route. The road is narrow and in some places has been built up so that if one vehicle has to pass another at one particular spot there is a danger of the road breaking

away and the vehicle over-turning. The Main Roads Board should widen it another 10 or 12ft. at least in order to make it safe for the enormous number of people who use it, especially during the holiday period. I would like him to do the city end first in order to give better facilities to the factories being erected there.

Another matter I would like the Minister to attend to is the repair of a slip that was provided by the Government many years ago. For a time it was maintained but it has been very difficult to get anything done on it recently. I know that a deputation from the returned soldiers has waited on the Minister but without success.

The Minister for Works: What is the name of the slip?

Mr. FOX: I do not know that it has a name. It is in Marine Terrace at the foot of, I think, Ada-street.

The Minister for Works: Do you not know the name it goes by?

Mr. FOX: I do not think it has any particular name. It might be known as Mews's slip. Mr. Mews is engaged in ship-building at present. Boats have to be built in a shed some distance from the beach. Fairly large fishing boats are constructed. When I was there last they had two under construction, and they had to get them out the best way they could. There is no line and they have to launch ships as well as they can. If they had a decent slip, there would be no trouble. From £20 to £30 is involved in launching one of these boats, which supply a great need for the fishing fleet in Fremantle and district.

During last session I put it to the Minister for Education that his predecessor had promised that he would give a subsidy, on a pound for pound basis, to schools that installed wireless sets. One school in my district, which has a very progressive Parents and Citizens' Association, has already done that, and the equipment cost about £180. It would be a great help to such people if the Minister would show some sympathy for the good work they are doing, and would give a subsidy, even if not on a pound for pound basis. I have not had the opportunity of examining the report of the committee, headed by Professor Murdoch, which inquired into matters relating to the Goldfields water scheme. I think

that report coincides with the statements I made in this House last year. At all events, the report is on the Table today, though I have not had the opportunity to read the recommendations, if any.

When the member for Middle Swan was addressing the House on that subject, he made reflections on the Historical Society, and accused that body of bias and of having published misleading statements about the construction of that water scheme. I think the report of the committee of inquiry was published in "The Kalgoorlie Miner" and I am informed that it suggested that the member for Middle Swan should make an apology to the Historical Society. I think that is the least he should do. That society is a body of men interested only in facts and not in giving kudos to anyone. Its purpose is to record historical facts, as such, from authenticated documents. It made an examination of the facts and I understand that no foundation in fact was found for the assertions of the member for Middle Swan. I feel that the only decent thing he can do is to withdraw his statements and apologise to the society for the unfounded statements he made about that body.

Mr. Grayden: My statements were completely founded.

Mr. FOX: I hold no brief for that society, though I know two members of it slightly. One of them is J. K. Ewers, whom I knew when he was a teacher some years ago at the Beaconsfield school. The other is Mr. Bray, who I think was employed in the Department of Native Affairs. I became acquainted with Mr. Ewers at Fremantle and with Mr. Bray when visiting the offices of his department. I do not know any other members of the society, but I am concerned about a member rising in this House to make statements that are later proved not to be borne out by fact. He should have the decency to withdraw those statements and apologise to the society for having made them.

Mr. Grayden: I will reply to that.

Mr. FOX: The hon. member may do so, but what I said last session tallied closely with the report of the commission of inquiry. I was asked to give evidence before the inquiry but replied that I knew nothing about the matter of my own personal knowledge, and was therefore not in a position to be of any help. I said I had nothing to

say on the matter. Not very long ago a company was formed in Western Australia, known as The Service and ex-Service Men's Housing Company Ltd. It was formed to carry on building operations, with a capital of 5,000 £1 shares, and was registered in Perth. According to its memorandum of agreement it could carry on all kinds of building operations, the manufacture of building requisites, and so on. Its ramifications were to be very wide, and had it been successful it would have become a large concern. Unfortunately it was not successful and I am disturbed about the action of the agents of the company—for which I suppose the company is responsible—which amounted to nothing short of fraud.

The Minister for Housing: Has not that company been wound up by the court?

Mr. FOX: I believe so. The company, or its agents, accepted deposits from people who required homes to be built. I believe it advertised in the Press, although I am not sure about that. At all events, it accepted deposits from people who wished to have houses built. The depositors paid in their money. It was spent, and they did not know where it went; it certainly was not spent for the purpose for which it was paid in. I contend that if a man goes to an agent or a building company and puts down a deposit in order to have a home built, the money should be used for that purpose and no other. This company accepted deposits of over £8,000 from various people in the metropolitan area.

Mr. May: And some in Collie, too.

Mr. FOX: They say one fool is born every minute. At the same time the company incurred debts of approximately £3,000. I know of one man who lost nearly everything he possessed when the Japs raided Darwin and he gave this company £200 by way of deposit on a home. He was then living at Fremantle, but has now shifted to the Leonora district. When he approached the Ex-Servicemen's Housing Company for the return of his deposit, he was informed that his money had been spent and that he could not get anything back at all. He did not have a permit to build and had very little chance of getting one as his family only came under the three-unit category. This man had made several attempts to secure a

home from the Housing Commission, but eventually these "go-getters" must have told him that they would have no trouble in securing one for him. When the company accepted his deposit of £200, they gave him a receipt for shares in the company, yet Clause 7 of their Articles of Association reads that shares in the company shall not be disposed of to any person who has not served in the Armed Forces of Australia, Great Britain or any other Dominion of the British Empire. This man was given a receipt for £200 for shares in the company, but he had not served in any of the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth, or of Great Britain or of the Dominions and therefore under the Company's Articles of Association he was not eligible to hold shares.

Another case that was brought under my notice is even worse than the one I have already quoted. Representatives of the company approached a lady who was living in a beach shack at Rockingham and they sold her one share in the company for £1—they are £1 shares. The lady also paid over a deposit of £425 on a home to be built for which she received a receipt. The receipt states that the sum of £425 is a deposit on a house to be built and is signed "A. Cusworth" who, I think, was the secretary of the company at that time. A share certificate No. 119 was then forwarded to this lady. On the 31st March an agent of the company informed her that if she paid the balance of the money required for the home—namely, £800—she would get her house built more quickly. This sum was paid—or I should say, a sum of £805 was paid to the company. What the extra £5 was for I do not know, but the total amount paid was £1,230. On receipt of this balance the lady was forwarded a share certificate which stated she was the holder of 800 shares, Nos. 316 to 1115 inclusive, in the Service and ex-Service Men's Housing Company Ltd. This lady has never been a member of the Forces and she has no chance in the world of getting a permit to build as she only has a two-unit family. Yet this company accepted £1,230 from this woman for the ostensible purpose of building a home. That is pure robbery.

Mr. Triat: Of course it is.

Mr. May: Was a man named Ward mixed up with this company?

Mr. FOX: I do not know. It is one of the worst confidence tricks I have ever known. Men have been put in gaol for putting over such tricks in this State as well as in the Eastern States. They might as well have sold her the Town Hall or the Sydney Harbour Bridge and I do not consider that this company should be allowed to get away with it.

Mr. Triat: Of course it should not.

Mr. FOX: In order to satisfy myself as to the possibility of this woman receiving a permit I rang the Housing Commission and one of the officers informed me that she had no chance in the world of getting a home. I do not know whether this company, when it set out on this stunt, relied on the promises made by the Government that it would build homes for two-unit families.

The Premier: When was it operating?

Mr. FOX: It was operating in 1946 and the receipt is dated the 31st March, 1947.

The Premier: That was before we came into power.

Mr. FOX: No, after you came into power.

The Premier: It was not. It was before we came into power.

Mr. FOX: It was after the Premier had delivered his Budget Speech.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. FOX: Before the tea adjournment I was saying that the Government cannot shirk all responsibility for those sharpers' tricks in connection with housing. The fact that the Government has as a plank in its platform that it is going to supply houses to two-unit families led those house-hungry people to believe that there was something in it, and made them fall very easy prey to those sharpers that came along and put that proposition up to them.

The Premier: That company was in liquidation before we took office.

Mr. FOX: It was not in liquidation before the Premier made his policy speech.

Mr. Mann: That is very nasty language.

Mr. FOX: I suppose it is, but it was very nasty for those poor people to lose

every cent they had in the world. They paid in £8,000 in deposits and they were people that could ill-afford to lose their money. If it were some of the wealthy members on the other side of the House, it would not matter twopence.

The Premier: That has nothing to do with the Government.

Mr. FOX: The Government cannot shirk the responsibility for these sharpers putting up the tale that they could promise houses for two-unit families. They cannot do it and the Government must take its share of the responsibility. This receipt is dated the 31st March, 1947 and the Government put forth its policy speech before the 31st March, 1947.

The Premier: That is not a good argument.

Mr. FOX: That is a good argument; that is how the Premier got into office. The Government was elected on promises that it knew it could not fulfil. People put out a couple of hundred pounds they could ill-afford to spare, trying to get a house but could not get it because the Housing Commission would not build two-unit houses. The people said, "Here is a chance," and the company said, "We will get a permit for you to build."

The Premier: That crowd had ceased to operate when we took office.

Mr. FOX: That may be. In fact, I may have been one of the people who was responsible for their going into liquidation. I went into the company's office to see how matters stood regarding a man who wanted to get his £200 back. I was told that the company had no money and I was asked to wait a fortnight, but I went along and saw a solicitor and asked him to issue a writ for the £200. Shortly afterwards the company went into liquidation. The Government made the promises on the hustings and it has to take the consequences for urging these sharpers on.

The Premier: They had ceased to operate.

Mr. FOX: The Government was in office on the 20th December, 1947, and the Premier cannot deny it. I have a case which was in existence about that date. I have also another one here dated the 4th December, 1947. These are two cases of deposits on homes of £100 each. The Government cannot say it was not in office at that time.

Those cases occurred after the present Government took office, but that is beside the point.

The Premier: We will give you the facts.

Mr. FOX: The people forming that company would never have informed the public they could get houses unless the statement made on the hustings was believed. I knew the Commission could not provide a house for a two-unit family and I knew it would not give a house to two-unit families, and it has not done so up to the present. Just to show how bad this company was, this is a contract drawn up for one of the people involved. It reads: "£420 on the signing of the agreement." That is the first clause in the contract. "£300 on the issue of the company's building permit;" "£300 building permit second draw;" "£200 as final payment." These people came along and said: "Give us the whole of the money stipulated, and we will build a house quickly." Of course, the woman concerned put the money in and it disappeared. The Government cannot shirk the whole of the responsibility for the action of these sharpers. If the Attorney General has not too much of a headache when he is dealing with price-fixing, I suggest he looks into this matter with the object to getting the money returned or putting the sharpers where they belong.

Mr. Nimmo: They have not got any money.

The Minister for Education: When did they start taking money for these homes?

Mr. FOX: It does not matter.

The Minister for Education: It matters as much as the things you have been telling us.

Mr. FOX: I was dealing with two-unit families in 1947. I do not know the dates of all the other applications, but I can tell the House the date of two applications that I know of.

Mr. Nimmo: I can give you the names of 12 up to £1,500, and not in this Government's time.

Mr. FOX: I am accusing the Government of giving these sharpers an opportunity to obtain money from the people by saying it would build two-unit houses when it knew that would be impossible.

Mr. Nimmo: And I had to put the police on to them, and they closed them up.

Mr. FOX: I made a start before the hon. member did.

Mr. Yates: They started in your time, so you must have had the best opportunity.

Mr. FOX: It does not matter when they started. It may have been a legitimate company and gone along all right, but I think someone should be appointed to investigate the operations of such companies as these. We had a company in this State before—I forget its name—that swindled men right and left. The promoter of this company sold shares in it and then paid wages, salaries and everything else out of the money obtained before the police got on to him, and before the Select Committee was appointed to inquire into it. I was a member of that committee.

The Minister for Education: Do you mean Barker?

Mr. FOX: No, I mean Alcorn. The more recent enterprise used the deposits received on other buildings and I suppose paid all their office expenses out of them also. I hope to have some sort of inquiry and get some information as to where all these deposits of money went.

Mr. Yates: What about another Select Committee?

Mr. FOX: I think the Government ought to be able to do that. The company has been forced into liquidation and the liquidator ought to be able to give the necessary information. If we had a Select Committee, we would have a man competent to go into the matter. I think I have said enough on that question at this time.

I want to say a few words about one of the most boosted Ministers of the present Government; I refer to the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping. Every day in the Press we hear of the wonderful things she is doing, and all the stuff she is getting from the Eastern States. Let me tell the Honorary Minister that she is a source of amusement to the men on the waterfront and those connected with shipping. Those men know where the information comes from because that is their job, and one could get that information from the newspaper every day of the week up to the time the war started. It could not be published after it started for security reasons. They knew weeks before a ship was coming in and

agents used to put an advertisement in the paper when such and such a ship was due.

I suggest that the Honorary Minister's activities amount to about nil. When I was in the East I called on the gentleman responsible for the allocation of cargo space. I hope he does not get the sack for discussing the matter with me. He was appointed by a Labour Government and was only speaking of facts. I asked him what the arrangements were about loading ships, and he said, "We have a certain amount of stuff coming in here, and all we can do is to allocate the quota to the various States." I told him that we in Western Australia could do with more baths, wash-basins and so forth, and he replied, "You cannot get more than your quota. You get that and no more."

The Honorary Minister: That is rubbish.

Mr. FOX: Quite early in the piece, when this boom started, a paragraph appeared in the newspaper about a ship that was expected to reach Fremantle with a large cargo. I did not know anything about it and so went to the wharf and one of the lumpers asked, "What do you think of that paragraph by Mrs. Cardell-Oliver in the newspaper about a ship coming in tomorrow with such-and-such on board? That ship arrived two days ago." I do not believe in misleading the people. If the Honorary Minister were doing a good job, she should receive credit for it.

The Premier: I do not think you would give the Government much credit, whatever it did.

Mr. FOX: I cannot see that it deserves much credit to date. It has done nothing.

The Premier: That would be your tale, whatever we did.

Mr. FOX: The present Government has done nothing, though it did receive a good legacy from the Labour Government.

The Minister for Railways: My word, we did!

Mr. FOX: We were also told by the Honorary Minister that a ship was leaving Adelaide on a certain date with automobile bodies on board, whereas the vessel had left two days before. I know where the Honorary Minister gets her information. All she has to do is to ring up the secretary of the Shipowners' Association, Mr. Hardouin, the

same as I used to do when I worked in the office at Fremantle. He could advise one of any ship that was expected a month ahead.

Mr. Yates: One has to find out somewhere.

Mr. FOX: I think, too, that the Honorary Minister must be the only person in Western Australia not aware that wool was in short supply. I agree with everything the member for Mt. Magnet said when he spoke of the dissolution of the Victorian Assembly and the Tasmanian Assembly. "The West Australian," in a leading article, described the happening in the words, "This is democracy." In my opinion, it is a travesty on democracy, worse than Hitlerism. In Tasmania the Legislative Council defied the wishes of the members of the Assembly elected by adult suffrage. If the Council had given the people an opportunity to say whether the Upper House should be abolished, I would have a better opinion of that Chamber. Here there would have to be a majority of the members of the Council in favour of abolition before that House would go out of existence.

The Premier: And I think it would be pretty hard even then.

Mr. FOX: I have occupied an executive position in an industrial union and I say that, if the same thing had been done in this State, I would have done my best to see that the men did not do a tap of work. That would be the way to show the Council where it stood. Members talk about Communism. Actions of that sort drive men to become Communists. How many of the wives of members of this House have a vote for the Legislative Council? My wife has not a vote for that House; I am the only member of the family that has.

The Honorary Minister: If you are the only person in your house to have a vote you are silly. Women can get votes.

Mr. FOX: I am satisfied that the Honorary Minister is one of the most reactionary members I have ever known. However, I think I have finished for the time being with the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You have sunk her.

Mr. FOX: Not all the ships that come into the port arrive fully laden, and the Honorary Minister cannot do anything because the agents have everything to do with the loading of the vessels. They are a law unto themselves and they listen to nobody.

Mr. Mann: We can make our own arrangements.

Mr. FOX: Your bosses will not allow you to do it. The Liberal Party lives on you fellows; you did not have an opportunity to do it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. FOX: In fact, the hon. member's representatives told us that. They said, "We have no say in the matter," and I do not suppose they had any say. The hon. member's friends had their mortgages and doubtless the banks told them what to do at that time, just as the banks will tell them in future if they are not already doing so. The farmers may be having a run of prosperity at present, but they are looking to the Commonwealth to give them a decent subsidy on wheat. There have been Country Party members in the Commonwealth Parliament for 27 years and they have done nothing to help the farmers. The Labour Government was the only one that helped them.

If the State Government instructed the Harbour Trust to undertake all the shipping work at the chief port, it would be done more cheaply for the primary producers. Even for the handling of bulk wheat, it seems necessary to have another expert employer, and no matter what the farmers or their representatives might say to the contrary, he will be with them for a long time. I should now like to say a few words about the fishing industry.

Mr. Triat: You have been getting a few bites already.

Mr. FOX: Yes. The fishing industry is in a very good position to further the interests of the fishermen and ensure that the public receives fish at a reasonable rate.

[Mr. Triat took the Chair.]

Mr. Bovell: What did your Government do?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOX: We ought to have a record made, so that the Acting Speaker can press his foot in order to repeat that parrot-cry. It would save a great deal of trouble. The member for Kalgoorlie told us about the 14 years the Labour Government was in office.

During that time we had nine years of depression. We had been in office only about 18 months after the war ended. The depression was organised by the banking friends of the member for Sussex, who are doing their utmost to defeat the Labour Government at the next Federal elections. The men who engineered the depression are now saying, "We will have another depression and bring the workers down to their knees." But the workers are too well organised now and there is no chance of treating them in that way again. They will never stand for another 1929-39 period. I have heard some well-known Liberals who have money invested and who consider that the workers are not sweating enough to earn them dividends say, "What we want is another depression." They take no thought for the sufferings of women and children. I could give the names of these men, but do not want to.

The Premier: They are very irresponsible people.

Mr. FOX: Well, they belong to the Premier's party.

The Premier: You have a few irresponsible people in your own party.

Mr. FOX: I can name the men to whom I have referred.

The Premier: You know we do not subscribe to that.

Mr. FOX: When a strike occurs and the pockets of those men are affected, they say, "We want another depression to bring these men to their senses." That is a nice way of looking at things! From my experience, I know that workers do not want to strike; they live a hand-to-mouth existence, except that in the war years they did work a fair amount of overtime. That was the only chance they had of getting something together. They think twice before they go on strike.

Mr. Reynolds: They are like my poor timber workers!

Mr. FOX: As I said when I was so rudely interrupted while dealing with the fishing industry, we should have a board to control the industry in order to give it a chance to get on its feet. Other industries in the State, such as the dried fruits industry, are controlled by boards. My experience has convinced me that voluntary pools are entirely unsatisfactory, as some members of

the pool will always sell outside of it. Therefore, before long these voluntary pools are broken up. The Minister for Lands is aware of that fact. A voluntary pool was tried in the Spearwood district. It continued for about 12 months, but some of the growers sold outside the pool and the consequence was that it had to disband. Fishermen should be given the opportunity to put their business on a sound footing.

We consume but a small quantity of fish in Australia; I think it is only about 20 lb. per head, and only about 9 lb. of that quantity is caught in our waters. The reason for this is that fish are too dear. I noticed quite recently that South African fillet is coming on our market and being sold at less than the price of local fish. The Metropolitan Fisheries, Ltd., has 35 tons of fish stored in freezers, and there is not room left for another bag. About 90 tons of fish are stored in the metropolitan area. The fishing company I mentioned, in order to get rid of some of the fish, reduced the price to the wholesalers by 10 per cent., but the wholesalers continued to sell at the same price as they had charged before this reduction was made. I can understand that, too, because they have about 60 tons stored in freezers in the metropolitan area. Fishermen must incur a large capital expenditure. A fishing boat costs from £1,000 to £2,000. Some cost as much as £5,000. I know of one such vessel that is engaged in crayfishing.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Every boat in Shark Bay is laid up because of this.

Mr. FOX: About 30 fishermen associated with the company I have mentioned are idle in Shark Bay because further storage is not available for fish. I would like the Minister for Fisheries to examine the Bill that was on the stocks when the Labour Government went out of office and make an endeavour to re-introduce it, as it would prove to be of benefit to all concerned. The industry would be put on a better footing and the public could be assured of getting fish at a cheaper rate, as the price could be fixed. As I said, it is impossible to organise this industry on a voluntary basis.

MR. HILL (Albany) [7.57]: A few days ago, as I was standing by the Town Hall waiting for a tram, an ex-member of Parliament came to me and said, "I would like

you to offer my congratulations to the young member for Wagin for having the courage to stand up and say what he did."

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HILL: I endorse that remark, and am not going to say which is the more righteous side. The world would be a much better place today if the so-called christian nations carried out the principles of christianity.

Mr. Reynolds: I emphatically agree with you.

Mr. HILL: I believe that God, the Creator, or Nature, give Him what name you will, plays a far bigger part in our affairs than He is usually given credit for. The Speaker, when he takes the Chair at the commencement of a sitting, reads prayers; but we want to go a little further than that. We should consider what God intends us to do and try to carry on our job as members of Parliament. The chairman of the port authority of New York said the same thing in another way. He referred to past mistakes and missed opportunities and said the task was to apply modern science, experience and invention to the natural advantages at hand. Nature has been very generous to us, but we have not made the most of her gifts to us.

The Leader of the Opposition, in a recent speech, dealt ably with some of our natural advantages. I must congratulate him upon stealing two of my pieces of thunder. He mentioned the continual drift in the finances of the State, and I was extremely pleased when he referred to the need for developing the southern end of the State. Perhaps, when the hon. member has had a little more experience, he may advocate that we give consideration to the report on transport in Australia, with special reference to port facilities, by the late Sir George Buchanan. I am referring to transport because it is one of the world's greatest problems. Some figures relating to transport in this State will be of interest. The Labour Party took office in 1924 and, except for the three years of the depression, held office until 1947.

Mr. Reynolds: It did a wonderful job.

Mr. HILL: When they took office, our railways for 1923-24 showed a deficit of £30,707. For 1946-47 the deficit had grown to £1,568,080. The tramways in 1923-24 showed a surplus of £4,689. In 1947 the

deficit had grown to £47,766. The Fremantle Harbour Trust showed a surplus of £117,797 in 1924 which in 1947 had decreased to £78,077. "Fremantle—other" shows a deficit of £13,131. The only output for which figures are available is Bunbury, which showed a surplus in 1924 of £796. In 1946-47 there was a deficit of £2,781,700. There has been a further deficit of £4,188 on "Bunbury—other." Those four activities, when the Labour Party took office, showed a surplus of £92,575. When they went out of office the deficit was £1,582,902.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about the calamitous three years of the Mitchell-Latham Government?

Mr. HILL: Members opposite must accept their share of the responsibility. Figures for all the ports of the State are not available. There would have been a surplus in 1923-24 but last year there was a deficit of £113,000. Roads and bridges showed another deficit of £114,577. The party now in opposition has done its full share in bringing about a drift in the State finances. Ever since I have been a member of this House I have drawn attention to that drift and made special reference to transport problems.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What are you going to do about the present drift?

Mr. HILL: In addition to the figures I have quoted, there is the appalling position of locomotives and rollingstock. The member for South Fremantle referred to the legacy left by the Labour Party. That party left a legacy in what is probably the worst transport system in the civilised world. When the member for Pingelly took on the job of Minister for Transport he undertook the hardest job ever undertaken by a Minister in Western Australia, and it is the duty of this Parliament and of individual members on both sides of the House to give him a fair deal and every assistance. To clean up our transport problem we want first of all sound administration and a sound port policy. They are only two of the things we need. We read a lot and hear a lot about private enterprise. Some consider there should be more private enterprise in transport.

Let us face some facts. The responsibility of the Government is to provide the whole of the State and every portion of it

with economic transport. Private enterprise is out to make money. Under sound government the principle is that the strong must help the weak. Private enterprise is out to benefit the strong and let the Government carry the weak. Unfortunately Government control does not always mean efficiency. When Government activities make a loss they have the taxpayer to fall back on, but if private enterprise makes a loss it goes bankrupt. The biggest co-operative company in Western Australia is Western Australia Unlimited. It has over half a million shareholders. The youngest individual born is a shareholder and remains a shareholder as long as he stays above ground in this State. Every shareholder today has a debt of just on £200. When a shareholder reaches the age of 21 he has a right to vote for a director.

Mr. Graham: Not for 30 of the directors!

Mr. HILL: Yes, for a representative. It is interesting to note that there is only one place where the Leader of the Opposition and the biggest idiot of the land is on the one footing, and that is the polling booth.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: An idiot hasn't the right to vote.

Mr. HILL: If everyone could be induced to realise that Government money is his money and that the Government is not some organisation with an unlimited supply of money, things would be better. In a private concern the shareholders see that the directors do their job. The shareholders in a private concern would never tolerate a director carrying on and making a speech such as a member did in this House not many hours ago. The Government and private enterprise are both necessary and it is the Government's responsibility to regulate both. To achieve this regulation with regard to transport, I suggest that there should be a Minister for Transport as ministerial head of a department of transport and that he be assisted by a director of transport and a transport council. As the transport council, I suggest the heads of all Government transport activities, with representatives of private motor transport, shipping interests, trade unions, primary producers and commercial interests.

Mr. Hegney: Have you put this up to the Minister for Transport?

Mr. HILL: It is part of our policy. Some people will say, "Another board, with so many Government representatives!" But it has to be realised that the Government representatives on the transport council would represent an investment of nearly £40,000,000. Heaven knows how many millions of pounds would be represented by the motor transport representative or how many millions of pounds would be represented in the shipping that comes to Australia and trades at our ports. But the aim must be to have the various private and public agencies operating through a co-ordinating authority so that each activity works where it can best serve the community as a whole. In dealing with sound port policy a few weeks ago I wrote an article on this problem. I did not mention any port in Western Australia but dealt with the matter generally. I will now read the article to members. It is as follows:—

Of all major problems, that of ports is probably least understood. The late Sir David J. Owen, formerly General Manager of the Port of London Authority, in his presidential address to the Institute of Transport in 1930, dealt with the "Problem of Port Costs." He said (inter alia):—"The Anglo-Saxon people are prone to worship antiquity sometimes to the detriment of efficiency." Mr. E. H. Outerbridge, Chairman of the first Port of New York Authority, when outlining some of the difficulties confronting the newly appointed Authority referred to the general ignorance and indifference to the problem, and the stubborn adherence to old customs. Here in Western Australia one hears on all sides that each port should handle its own trade; one port must not rob another, etc., and our State is the only country in the world where the State is divided into Port zones.

The first question we must ask ourselves is "What is a port?" Sir George Buchanan, in his report on "Transport in Australia with special reference to Port and Harbour Facilities" defines ports as "The mediums or clearing-houses between sea and land transport." "On the ports," he says "their efficiency and their proper location the whole system of transport largely depends." Here in W.A. there has been a continual retrogression of our transport system over the last 20 or more years. Today our railways are on the verge of collapse. For 1946-47 our railways made a loss of £1,568,090 and the ports a loss of £113,515. In addition to these staggering figures we have the inability of the railways to haul the wheat and super; the fact that Fremantle has almost a monopoly of the State's trade, and the snowball growth of the metropolitan area and the decline in the population of the urban areas."

To improve our transport is an immense task. The Navy, the Army, and the Air Force, all played their part to bring victory. Each service had to have efficient administration, and in addition, there was a supreme command to co-ordinate all the services. Similarly, each of our various transport services has capabilities of usefully serving the community. To work effectively each transport service must have efficient administration, and in addition, we must have an administrator corresponding to the supreme command during the war. Here, in this State, we have no supreme transport administration, and no State port administration. One of the first things that the supreme command did when planning the offensive was to select suitable bases. Similarly, one of the first things that we must do in this State is to decide what ports are to be developed and for what purpose. Sir David Owen said "A port is not in itself a means of conveyance or of transport; it is only a facility for the actual instruments of transport. A port in order to be effective must adapt itself to the changing means of transport. If it does not, its trade will leave it, or if that is not possible, trade will be handicapped by increased costs and delays. We cannot have ports everywhere, as a port, as a link in the chain of transport, is an enormously costly one to provide."

There has been a revolution in transport during this century. On land, bullock wagons have been replaced by railways and motors. On sea the revolution has been just as great. The improvements in land transport have increased the area which a port may serve. The increase in size of ships and the increase in labour costs have all over the world resulted in the increase of trade at the big ports at the expense of their smaller neighbours. The problem has been the subject of expert investigation and report. Sir George Buchanan stated:—"All ports cannot be developed as overseas ports. The most suitable ports should be selected, all political wire-pulling cut out, and the selected ports properly developed as modern ports."

The Federal Transport Committee of 1929 recommended closing some of the minor ports and concentrating trade by road and rail transport on the more suitable ports. The Commonwealth Grants Commission, and every shipping man that gave evidence before the Outports Royal Commission, stressed the fact that a multiplicity of ports is uneconomic. The present position in this State should convince the most fervent worshipper of antiquity, and the most stubborn adherents to old customs, that to talk of each port handling its own trade is like flogging a dead horse, and that our port zone system has failed. On land we have constructed roads to suit motor transport, and the village smithy is replaced by a motor garage with very costly equipment. There is as much difference between a modern ship and the sailing ship as between a spring cart and a ten-ton motor truck. But a large section of the community expect modern ships to use sailing ship ports. Such a policy could be compared to

expecting a motor truck to go to a village smithy. The first consideration, when considering our port policy, is the needs of the ship. A ship is only earning money when travelling. In 1939, a coastal ship cost £200,000 with amortisation expenses of £10,000 a year, and it spent 30 per cent. of its time in port. Now a similar ship would cost £500,000 with amortisation expenses of £25,000 a year, and 60 per cent. of the time is now spent in the ports. Consequently, very substantial increases in freight charges have been made. In the case of overseas ships, costs have been similarly increased. A recent article in "The West Australian" explained that an extra day at Fremantle for a 7,000 ton freighter cost the ship approximately £400. The 10,000 ton motor refrigeration ships, before the war, cost £600,000. These vessels were the enemies submarines' No. 1 target. They are being replaced by 12,000-15,000 ton ships with a capital cost of £1,250,000 to £1,500,000. The daily cost of such a ship is very heavy.

As a matter of fact, one of these ships took a full cargo of fruit from Hobart to London, and the freight for that one voyage was no less than £131,000. My article continues—

The attempt to make ships use all outports will tend to force all ships to the capital port. This will increase the cancerous growth of the metropolitan area. By limiting the number of the outports we will encourage some of the ships to use the selected outports, instead of all going to the capital port as at present, and so establish a policy of decentralisation.

It is interesting to note that here in W.A. with a population of only 500,000, we have about the same number of ports as in South Africa with a population of 13,000,000.

A State that has a natural harbour or harbours is very fortunate as constructed ports are very costly to construct and usually to maintain. Consequently, a certain amount of extra railage to a natural harbour is more economical than interest and maintenance on a constructed harbour.

Modern wharves must be equipped with sheds of large capacity and efficient equipment, so that large quantities of cargo can be made ready for the ship. Proper and efficient road and railway facilities must be provided so that land transport vehicles can load and unload rapidly. As a ship only earns money when travelling, so do land vehicles only earn money when conveying goods. Adjacent to the wharves and port there must be considerable areas for commerce and industry. At the back of the ports there must be an efficient rail and road service. The shortest route by rail is not necessarily the cheapest. An engine that can haul 350 tons over a 1 in 60 grade will haul 505 tons over a 1 in 80 grade, and 605 on a 1 in 100 grade. Sharp curves on a railway decrease the load and increase the wear and tear both on the permanent way and rolling-stock.

To catch up with our past mistakes and to adopt a policy for the future is a herculean task. Briefly our job is to apply modern science and invention to the natural advantages at hand. Many obstacles must be overcome. No changes are ever introduced without someone being called upon to make sacrifices for the community as a whole. Any district that is called upon to sacrifice its parochial ambitions for the common good will squeal, and its political member or members will have to carry on with the squeal. Consequently, any Government in power will find it most difficult to introduce the necessary reforms unless backed by the rest of the community.

It is essential that we consider the transport problem as a whole. In the case of our primary products from the farm to the overseas market, the importance of a port lies in the fact that it is a facility for all means of transport, and our aim must be to have it as an efficient link between land transport on the one side and sea transport on the other so that our products can be placed on the overseas markets and our requirements brought to the farms, etc., at the lowest possible costs.

We need a policy today that will reduce the percentage of the trade going through the one port. This will mean a reduction of the congestion at Fremantle, and on the railways leading to that port. This policy will reduce the railway charges to the outlying portions of the State. It will encourage more production and development away from the metropolitan area, and so bring about a sound policy of decentralisation and a far more prosperous State.

Shortly after I wrote that article, I received the Quarterly Facts and Figures from the Department of Information, so I added the following:—

Since writing the foregoing I have received the last quarter's Facts and Figures from the Department of Information. Reference is made therein to the increased percentage of the population in the capital cities of Australia. The increase is the greatest in Queensland, and the next greatest in Western Australia. This is most interesting as the advocates of small ports and decentralisation hold Queensland as an example.

Sir George Buchanan in his report quotes a North Queensland paper's description of the position there as "seven starving ports and one ravenous railway." He recommended closing five of the ports and concentrating trade on the remaining two. Had that recommendation been adopted, Queensland would today have three centres growing instead of one. In Western Australia we have the division of the State into "Port Zones." The population figures disclosed by the census are still further evidence that difficult problems cannot be solved by the simple expedient of drawing lines on the map.

I am anxious to see every section of this State play its part in carrying out the work

Nature intended it should do. Last session we had a very interesting speech from the member for Kanowna. I have a fellow feeling for Esperance. Had the railway to that port been constructed 50 years ago I might have been a resident there today. As a member of the Outports Royal Commission, I visited Esperance and rather enjoyed the day we spent there. Unfortunately we travelled through the country in the dark, so I was not in a position to form any opinion as to its agricultural possibilities.

We hear about Esperance as being the natural port for the Goldfields. When we were at Kalgoorlie we found that the mining people were anxious to use it, but the business people were indifferent. We have to face the facts about Esperance, deal with its advantages and disadvantages and see if we can do something to encourage its growth and the development of that part of the State. I have here the report of the Harbour and Light Department, in which appears the following:—

Ten vessels arrived at Esperance, representing an increase of five vessels and 23,808 gross tons. A pilot visited the port on seven occasions. Imports totalled 22,198 tons, made up of 20,080 tons of fuel oil and 2,097 tons of general cargo, and exports amounted to 1,200 tons of salt.

I am sorry that financial returns for all the ports are not available. If they were, I believe we would find that Esperance is practically the only outport in Western Australia that has shown a profit, due to the fact that the capital expenditure there has been low and maintenance is practically nil. The 20,080 tons of fuel oil landed at Esperance would pay more than 6s. per ton wharfage. It is a good thing for the Railway Department at that port and I am sure that, if the figures were available, Esperance would show a slight profit. It has its disadvantages, as has every other port. You, Sir, were a member of the Select Committee on Outports when one witness said that Esperance was a difficult port to enter. That witness was one of the Douglasses, who all have the seaman's instinct. They have traded round Esperance for over 50 years, and unfortunately there are not many such men about today.

Esperance is safe for an ordinary seaman to enter only in daytime, and when ships go to that port they want to unload at night. I read in the Press, a few weeks

ago, that the unions had taken a stand and said that if efficient lighting was not provided on the Esperance jetty, they would refuse to take ships there. I trust the department will see that proper lighting is installed. Esperance suffers a disadvantage the reverse of that at Albany. At Esperance, the cargo goes inland, whereas at Albany it is empty trucks that go inland. We must endeavour to find back-loading in such cases. An effort should be made to build up a salt industry. In 1946-47, no less than 51,000 tons of salt was shipped from South Australian ports. A letter that I received on Monday from the General Manager of the South Australian Harbours Board contains the following:—

As to your enquiry re the destination of salt exported from our outports, the position is that this commodity is shipped to all of the Eastern States and New Zealand, the figures for 1947-48 being: Interstate, 40,000 tons, and New Zealand, 7,000 tons. There are also some occasional small shipments to Fremantle, but I do not have any actual figures regarding these. I believe the bulk of the export salt is for commercial use. I think I am right in saying that none of our outport salt goes to the I.C.I. works. That concern harvests its own salt from evaporating pans to the north-east of Port Adelaide, whence the salt, after being converted to brine, is piped to the I.C.I. works on the west side of the Port River at Osborne where it is used in the manufacture of the company's products, i.e., soda ash, etc. The I.C.I., however, does not market any salt and, I understand, prefers to leave that field to other enterprise.

There is a wonderful salt deposit just outside Esperance and another at Widgiemooltha. An effort should be made to build up that trade. Another commodity that could be utilised from that area is pyrites. Owing to conditions during the war, local superphosphate companies used pyrites in the manufacture of their products. It takes roughly five cwt. of pyrites to make one ton of super. This State today is losing a great sum of money because there is no superphosphate works at Albany. Such an enterprise should be started on the waterfront at Albany and the trade in pyrites built up between Esperance and Albany. Albany's economic zone now uses more than 60,000 tons of superphosphate annually, for the production of which about 18,000 tons of pyrites would be required. One development would lead to another.

I would like to see Esperance given a helping hand and am confident that profit-

able agricultural production could be developed in the hinterland of that port. I was pleased to hear what the Leader of the Opposition said about the country between the Blackwood River and the Stirling Range. When I visited South Australia about eight years ago, I met the Speaker, Mr., now Sir Robert, Nichol, who had just been to Western Australia. He said, "You have a great country at the back of Albany, and it should be carrying a population of 2,000,000 people." I looked up an old map which showed the Blackwood River as a heavy line, and I followed the line roughly between Perth and Albany. The line drawn on that map shows what is practically a second Victoria, and, holding a position corresponding to that of Melbourne, is the port of Albany. I do not say that that area has all the potentialities of Victoria, but Nature has been generous in the matter of transport facilities. In Melbourne before the war annual dredging maintenance cost £100,000 per year.

As I told the House last year, when the Duchess of Gloucester first spoke to me, her words were, "What a lovely harbour! Where are your ships?" I was asked one day to take the chair at a Salvation Army meeting, and Commissioner Dalziel greeted me with these words, "Why is a place with all these natural advantages so neglected?" And my reply was, "It is due to politics." When saying goodbye, he said to me, "Your job is to put this place on the map." A few weeks ago, a vessel came to Albany to load apples. The captain, who had served with Admiral Fraser's staff in the Pacific, said, "I arrived on Wednesday morning in misty rain. I picked up Breaksea Island and then Seal Island. I did not know where I was to pick up the pilot, but when the rain cleared, I saw what you have here. You are in the lap of the gods and there are some pretty rotten politics about to have a place such as this, with its natural advantages, so neglected." There are rotten politics about, and I will tell members when they started.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Your Government is in power at present.

Mr. HILL: Three times, in 1910, 1928 and 1943, the Imperial authorities wanted Albany developed as a naval base, but on each occasion the Commonwealth Labour Government was in office and political wires were pulled for Fremantle. The position

today is that, instead of Western Australia having the leading naval base in the Commonwealth, it has a £3,000,000 or £4,000,000, white elephant at Fremantle. When Admiral Fraser was at Rockingham, he said of Fremantle, "I will not use that place. One ship sunk and that place would be hopeless."

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What did they do with H.M.S. "Hood?"

[*The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. HILL: She went to Fremantle, but came to Albany to be fueled. What did they do with the "Anson" and the "Duke of York" during the war? They came to Fremantle but had to go to Albany to get fuel aboard. In 1944, when it was thought there would be an attack on Fremantle, the most important ships at that port cleared out and went to Albany for safety. It was because of the criminal neglect of the port of Albany by a Labour Government. The three men who are responsible for the state of affairs at Albany are G. F. Pearce, Texas Green, and John Curtin. I ask members to deny those facts if they can. A few weeks ago a ship was at Albany for several months. This L.S.T. was loaded with ammunition, sent to sea and the ammunition dumped. The ship made several trips on this work and I understand that the ammunition was brought to Western Australia because it was the intention of the Allies to start a big offensive from this State during the war. Owing to the failure to make Fremantle the base this offensive could not be carried out.

In 1911 Albany voted Labour and helped to put a Labour Government in office. It can be seen in Col. Tydeman's report that he has referred to the Thompson scheme for Albany. This scheme could have been worked in with Col. Tydeman's proposals, but because Albany voted Labour the scheme was scrapped and three years later Albany was forced to accept a new arm to the deep water jetty. Again in 1924 Albany helped to put a Labour Government in office, and at that time Sir James Mitchell was anxious to develop the end of the State which the Leader of the Opposition and Sir Henry Turner both eulogised.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The people will do the same in 1950.

Mr. HILL: What happened? The Pemberton-Northcliffe railway was constructed and the Denmark-Northcliffe railway was constructed, but the gap was left in the middle. The expenditure for the Manjimup-Mt. Barker railway was passed by Parliament and the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway was also authorised but never constructed. Between 1924 and the present day the total expenditure on the Port of Albany has been £175. I congratulate the Government on its decision to develop this section of the State and I also wish to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support. The other day, when coming to Perth in the train, I was very pleased to read that the Government had decided to accept Col. Tydeman's scheme for the Port of Albany. I have been very severely criticised for not accepting what I have referred to as the Hawke scheme, but we want not only accommodation for ships but accommodation for rail and road transport. We also want accommodation for industry and commerce and the Hawke scheme would not have satisfactorily given Albany such facilities.

This year the railways have fallen down on their job again. One fact which has contributed to that position is that in the Albany zone we have grown something like 100,000 tons of wheat during the last season and have required some 60,000 tons of super, and the fact that this trade did not go through Albany contributed substantially to railway difficulties. I now come to the proposed Karlgarin-Fremantle railway. Karlgarin is practically equi-distant between Fremantle and Albany, and I suggest that serious consideration be given to a Southern Cross-Albany trunk railway to open up that end of the State. The natural lie of the country runs from Southern Cross down to Albany.

I would like to enter a protest at the Government's action in the proposed extension of a new Perth Hospital. The Government already has a new hospital and it was justified in getting that, but I do think that, before a new wing was constructed, some consideration should have been given to hospital facilities at Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton.

Mr. Reynolds: I quite agree with you.

Mr. HILL: At Albany the hospital accommodation is very poor and I believe that

at Bunbury and Geraldton the situation is just as bad.

Mr. Reynolds: I am with you wholeheartedly.

Mr. HILL: The hospitals in those three areas are obsolete, and I do hope that the Government will be able to give the people at these centres proper hospital facilities. In conclusion, I would like to state that we have a big and a very wonderful State. Nature has been very generous to us and we should study and endeavour to find out what part Nature intended different sections of this State to take in its development. We should apply modern science, experience and invention and, if we do this, I am sure we can look forward to a very prosperous future and a very happy Western Australia.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.36]: It is my desire to make some observations on this debate to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. Before I start on matters about which I have been thinking for the last few days, I would like to say to the member for Albany that the explanation of the state of affairs about which he complains is that vested interests preferred the use of Fremantle rather than Albany, and the present Government is the Government which represents vested interests.

Mr. Graham: Hear hear!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: His Excellency's Speech is a very colourless document. I have read and re-read it looking for something which I did not expect to find and which is not in the Speech. I cannot blame His Excellency for that nor can I blame His Excellency for the fact that the Speech is a colourless one, for the Government is responsible for it. Not such a long time ago, a matter of almost two years, I heard the then Leader of the Opposition, the present Deputy Premier, leading an attack in this House on the then Government because no activity was being shown regarding the introduction of legislation to give full effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Vermin.

I can recall the then Leader of the Opposition and a number of his followers rising in their seats and making a great song about the fact that this was a most

urgent matter and legislation should be brought down forthwith. I explained that I had only a few weeks before taken over the portfolio of Agriculture, and that I had not had an opportunity to read the report or give attention to any legislation which might be required. So impatient were the members of the then Opposition that that answer did not suffice and those members protested very vigorously about the delay. Subsequently I introduced legislation which I stated would be effective. The present Deputy Premier said it was not worth anything at all, and that it did not give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission and was therefore almost valueless. That legislation was passed. Either the then Leader of the Opposition was very much astray and the legislation was most valuable and effective, or else he is afraid to bring in legislation which he undertook to introduce when speaking on the hustings. I quote from his policy speech as follows—

Steps will be taken to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Vermin.

Members will recall that the major recommendation was for a scheme of mobile units which was a very costly proposition. To finance this scheme it was proposed by the Royal Commission that a tax should be levied on all lands, urban as well as rural. This meant that all the people in the metropolitan area, the wage earners and the property owners, would be called upon to make a contribution to a fund in order that the farmers should be relieved of their obligation to get rid of the vermin on their own properties. That was the proposition, and if anybody doubts my word I suggest he gets hold of a copy of the vermin report and reads it for himself.

One can see why there is so much reluctance on the part of the present Government to proceed to give effect to this promise because it involves the expenditure of a particularly large sum of money to finance the establishment of these mobile units. In order to get that money, in accordance with the recommendations of this Royal Commission, the Government would have to impose a special tax on the voters of the metropolitan area. But that does not suit the Liberal Party, and so I can imagine that the Country Party has made several attempts in Cabinet to give effect to this undertaking because it

suits them, but the dominant partner, the Liberal Party, will have none of it because it fears the political consequences.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Premier looks guilty.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That obviously is the position because this matter, which was of such grave urgency some three years ago, apparently is not urgent at all. Either that, or the legislation which was brought in by the Government with which I was associated was completely effective, and the Leader of the Opposition at that time was woefully astray! I shall be glad to hear from him in due course as to which explanation is the correct one. The other evening, when my Leader was dealing with the financial position, he told the present Premier that he had advocated the return to this State of its own taxing rights and the Premier denied that.

The Premier: I denied it?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes. He had better read "Hansard" and refresh his memory. As a matter of fact, not only did the Premier ask for the return of the taxing rights of the States but the Deputy Premier did so as well, and so that I shall not be misunderstood I propose to quote from the reported policy speech of the Premier. The subject heading is: "Taxation Relief." There is no doubt about this statement. There is no room for an alternative explanation. I will quote:

The Liberal policy is that the States shall, as soon as possible, resume control of their own finances. Our policy is income tax reduction on a substantial scale.

That is the Premier's pronouncement. Now this is the Deputy Premier's—

Besides aiming at reduced taxation, the Opposition would strive for the resumption by the States of control of their own revenue.

Perfectly clear, straightforward and definite! Lest there be any doubt about that being the attitude of the Government parties on that occasion, I will quote from a cutting from "The West Australian" published at a time when the Premiers of South Australia and Victoria came to this State by invitation of the Premier. They came for the purpose of discussing financial relationships and making some decisions. This newspaper cutting is headed and the extract reads—

STATE TAX RIGHTS.

Perth Discussions Next Week.

A plan for greater Commonwealth uniform tax reimbursement to the States will be discussed at a conference of the three Liberal Premiers which will be opened in Perth next Tuesday. The plan will be submitted to the Commonwealth if a plea for the States to be given back their rights to levy income tax is rejected.

The Minister for Housing: Who wrote that?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not know, but it might have been written by the Government Publicity Officer.

The Minister for Housing: I think you should take the resolutions of the conference.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I should take the pronouncements of the Premier and the Deputy Premier, and of "The West Australian" which is next door to being the official organ of the Government. I do not think that leaves any doubt whatever as to what the attitude of the Liberal and C.D.L. parties was at the time of the elections. Since the Premier has been in office however, and has seen his deficit figures mounting and has been able to calculate just what taxation figures to impose in order to obtain the same amount of revenue which is now being made available to him, he has been appalled. He knows quite well that if the Commonwealth Government did return to this State its taxation rights he would be ruined.

The Premier: I said repeatedly that the avenues of taxation would have to be defined between State and Commonwealth. I never agreed to a blank cheque.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then the Premier does not want returned to the States the right to levy their own taxes?

The Premier: I do, with clearly defined avenues of taxation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Supposing the Commonwealth Government said to the Premier: "You have the right to levy your own taxation and get your own revenue, but we are also a Government and have commitments for old age pensions and the like, so we also have to raise money?" Would the Premier be perfectly happy about that situation?

The Premier: I would not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is the answer.

The Minister for Housing: The States also have the right to raise income from taxation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I hope the Commonwealth Government does not return to the States the right to levy their own income taxes. That would be ruinous. The taxpayers of Victoria and New South Wales are at present finding a substantial proportion of the money we are spending. If the taxation rights were returned to Western Australia we would have to get from our own people money that is now provided for them by the people in other States of Australia.

The Premier: The Leader of your own party advocated a convention in regard to Commonwealth-State financial relationship.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Quite right.

The Minister for Housing: This party advocated the same thing; it followed a good example.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Having caused some disagreement on this question and given some food for thought I propose to go a step further. The Premier will no doubt recognise this rag, the "Liberal News."

The Premier: Not as a rag.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Premier does not recognise it as a rag? Then he is proud of it; he does not disown it?

The Premier: No, of course I do not disown it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then he is proud to claim it as his own?

The Premier: Go on, let us hear what you are going to say.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Well, we want to be clear as to where we stand.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He will not be very proud of it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: We want to know where we stand. Either the Premier owns or disowns it. There is no halfway. This is the official organ of the Liberal Party of Australia and the man who makes the major number of contributions to this rag is one named Palmer, who the Premier considers is a rattling good man.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: He is rattling!

The Premier: Rattling you!

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Mr. Ananias Palmer!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: As this is issued for the purpose of winning support for the Liberal Party, as it is the official organ of the Liberal Party, and as it is compiled by a rattling good man, who is the secretary of the Liberal Party—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: To whom facts are nothing.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —we shall see what type of propaganda is put forth in this—

Mr. Graham: Rag!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I quote from page 8 of the issue of January, 1947.

The Minister for Housing: I did not know that that paper was so widely read.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is not generally read. Only when matters of this sort crop up do I take notice of it. Ever since the Government has been in office, it has been all out to please as many people as possible, and this article is therefore most interesting. It is headed, "Lumpers' Insolent Attitude," and says—

No country is greater than the persons who compose it. Therefore every Australian should pause and think when he or she expresses a wish for less work and more pay. If this wish is carried to its logical end it would mean that no one produced anything and that food and clothing and every other service in life would no longer be available. By some distorted thinking, sections of the community to-day are prepared to stand and fall by these aims.

Perhaps the most obvious place to see this doctrine being put into operation is on the wharves at Fremantle. The lumpers have adopted a go-slow policy, which will eventually starve the State. Already the shipping companies are thinking of by-passing Fremantle because of the irritating delays caused by the lumpers. Courtesy and consideration are no longer part of the average lumper's make-up. Business firms complain that not the slightest consideration is given to any request, however slight. As little work as possible is done and no opportunity is lost to extort more pay from shipping firms.

Penalty rates are claimed on the slightest or no pretext, while the fortunate lumpers draw 12s. per day for doing nothing. It was 16s. Perhaps, exercised properly, it is not a bad principle that casual workers should receive some extra consideration. That consideration has generally been in the higher rates of pay ruling. Now they want more and "to hell with everyone else."

Some ships are unable to remain in harbour sufficiently long to be unloaded, so slow is the

unloading. Generally, lumpers are doing about half the work they did a few years ago and are proud of it. The Harbour Trust is powerless or acts ineffectually. Goods are strewn without system or organisation in several sheds from one ship. At one time certain men were allotted to control the stacking of goods to assist in their orderly disposal, but this is no longer the case.

That is a wonderful article to be issued by a party which declares that it stands for all the people without sectional interest. This rattling good man of the Premier's is responsible for that rubbish. What he wrote about the lumpers in January, 1947, he would write about the timber workers and the miners when it suited him. Now let me quote from the editorial in the same paper—

The blight which affects other States of the Commonwealth inflicted with Labour Governments has descended like a cloud of grasshoppers on Western Australia. A recent visitor from Melbourne, a man who has some knowledge of government and a large amount of knowledge of industrial matters and human psychology, recently told us that he was appalled at the blatant disregard for liquor laws which set U.S.A. off on a shocking decade of gangster, political chicanery and general pollution of public life.

We also informed him that the disregard for the two laws he referred to was not limited to Perth—it pervaded the whole of the State—and in certain areas where the Labour Party secured its majority by the dubious means of pocket-boroughs which would have stank even in the days of Pitt, the Labour Government saw that the electors had every opportunity to indulge in the lawbreaking. On the goldfields, for example, betting was openly carried on in the streets, and wireless sets were provided to keep the bettors informed of racing results. Two-up was also tolerated and open disregard of licensing laws.

Next to coal-getting, bookmaking is the most important industry in Collie. On the goldfields it takes practically all the high wages from the men who risk their lives underground. But a "benign" Labour Government smiles upon this law-breaking because it thinks the people want it. The Labour Government can do next to nothing for improving education, but it permits bookmakers to wax fat.

I should like to ask the Premier through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what has this Government done, either on the Goldfields or at Collie, to effect any alteration in the state of affairs which it is alleged obtained when it took office.

Mr. Styants: Or in the Premier's own electorate.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If those things existed at the time the Government took

office and if they were so blatant and the Liberal Party knew of them, why has the Government stood by without taking action?

The Premier: We did appoint a much-derided Royal Commission.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Oh, appointed a Royal Commission!

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But what have you done?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And the Commission has made a report.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And the Government has let the matter drop.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But the hands of the Commission were so tied from the outset by the limited terms of reference as to make it impossible to do a worthwhile job. This blatant disregard of the law, which was supposed to exist and which was going to result in anarchy, has been remedied by the appointment of a Royal Commission.

The Premier: As a first step.

Mr. Marshall: And the Government dare not act on the report.

The Premier: You will have a chance to act on it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I now desire to make a few observations on educational facilities, what ought to be expected and what has not been done. The Government made a great deal of the fact that we, in common with every other State of Australia, were very short of teachers and very short of accommodation. That was a fact. We were short then and we are short now. I remind the House that for six years we were at war, and during that time it was impossible to get buildings erected. Brick kilns were closed down, artisans were taken into the Forces and the young men who were eligible for training as teachers were not allowed to train because they had to go into the Forces. This applied also to the women. Consequently there was the greatest difficulty in equipping young people for teacher training, and so there is only a very limited number, scarcely any at all, undergoing training to make up the wastage in the teaching staff.

Surely no fair-minded man would criticise the Government because during six years of war it could not do anything to remedy a worsening of the situation so far

as accommodation and staffing were concerned. The war ended. From a standing start, it would not be possible to commence building immediately. Demobilisation was a slow process and some months elapsed—no matter what Government had been in power, the situation would have been the same—before it was at all possible to start building on a reasonable scale. And, of course, teachers cannot be trained in five minutes. However, that did not matter to the Premier and those supporting him, nor to the present Minister for Education. It did not count at all. The Minister for Education said—

While we do not deny that the war was responsible for some of the difficulties, it must be noted that in other States, notably South Australia, these war difficulties have been speedily overcome.

That was not true. Shortly after the defeat of the Labour Government, a report appeared in "The West Australian" to the effect that the South Australian Government was intending to ask the British Government to let it have 200 teachers, because it could not get them in its own State or elsewhere in Australia. In other words, South Australia was going to try to get out of its mess and push the British children further into theirs. I am glad the British Government did not facilitate the transfer of those 200 teachers. The mere fact that South Australia asked for those teachers shows that in that State there was a considerable shortage of teachers. It cannot be charged against the Labour Government that it did not put a record number of people in training at the first opportunity, because when the Minister for Education took over he found in the Training College a record number of trainees, who yet had some considerable time to go to complete their training.

The point I make is that if the South Australian Government had had ample time—some 15 months after the war ended—to put these matters right, why has not the present Government put them right, as it also has had 15 months? The present Government has had a comparable period to that which the previous Government had. Allowing for the fact that a couple of months would have to elapse before anything could be done, the period available to the previous Government was no greater than that which has been available to this Government since

it assumed office. What has the present Minister for Education been able to accomplish with regard to education? The member for Irwin-Moore says that the Minister has removed chaos from his electorate. If so, he has transferred it to the metropolitan area. I suppose every member has read that it was necessary for 40 children at Inglewood to be put in a tennis pavilion because there was no room for them at the Inglewood and North Inglewood schools. The Minister had 15 months to provide for that situation. Why did he not do so?

Mr. Grayden: The accommodation will be ready in a few days.

The Minister for Education: A new school is being erected at North Inglewood.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The fact remains that, notwithstanding the Government has been in office for 15 months, those children have had to go into a pavilion.

The Minister for Education: You cannot build schools in five minutes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But the Minister had available to him as much time as I had available to me. Will he deny that? Of course, he cannot. Being an honourable man he cannot deny it, because he knows it is a fact.

The Minister for Education: At least, there are a few nearly finished.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am glad to hear it. I had the pleasure of accompanying the Minister to Cunderdin, where a fine school was declared open by him. I am very grateful to him for having so arranged the programme as to give me the opportunity of speaking at the function. This school at Cunderdin was the first school built under the Labour Government's new policy for education in the country, that of a complete replacement of out-moded buildings by entirely new schools, thus providing for country children all the facilities we wanted to make available to city children. The Labour Government had the plans drawn up for the Cunderdin school, decided upon the policy, had tenders called, approved the expenditure and let the contract before it went out of office. There was nothing the present Government could do in connection with it. The contractor was responsible for proceeding with the work and carrying out his contract. All this Government had to

do was to sit back and see the school go up. I was amused at the opening to hear first one and then another of the supporters of the present Government rise and say that this school was an example of the Government's new policy. It was not its policy at all. It had nothing whatever to do with it; it was signed, sealed and delivered before this Government took office.

The Minister for Education: Unfortunately I spoke first.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is typical of what the Government has been doing all along the line.

Mr. Marshall: Absolutely!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Shortly after we vacated office, a small school was opened at the Children's Hospital. It is a fine little building and was provided for the purpose of giving special facilities to the spastic children at the hospital. That school was completed before the elections.

The Minister for Education: We have 39 under way now.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It would have been opened by me had I not had the misfortune of being involved in an accident at the time the opening was planned. So the opening had to be delayed. The elections ensued, the Labour Government was defeated and, of course, it was then not possible for me to declare the school open. But this Government did so, nor did it neglect to give the impression that this was a case of, "See what we did."

I would like to make some observations with regard to another important school. I refer to the school at Lord-street. Members will recall that I was subjected to considerable criticism and pressure when I proposed to have this school erected as a co-educational technical high school. All sorts of methods were tried to force me to alter the decision I had made. One group of persons even went so far as to endeavour to induce the Premier to receive a deputation with a view to his bringing pressure to bear on me to change my decision. It did not work. The school was erected, and a very fine school it is. It, too, was completed before the election, but the opening was not arranged until some time afterwards.

To the credit of those responsible for arranging the ceremony, I say that they

did not overlook the fact that the Labour Government, and I as its instrument, were responsible for that school, although the present Minister had the pleasure and privilege of declaring it open. I suppose that in the ordinary course of events the situation will be reversed and the day will come, sooner or later, when this Government will leave unfinished some schools which the succeeding Minister for Education will open, and I hope that he will not on those occasions, if no credit is due to him, claim it, and not do, as some members who were present at Cunderdin did, throw out his chest and say, "This is part of our policy."

The Minister for Education: Did I, or did I not do that?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister did not. He is absolved completely from any criticism I am making along those lines. He acted in a most gentlemanly and generous way in every respect and I have no complaint on that score. But he might indicate to his supporters that it is as well to be fair and take credit for what they are responsible for and give credit where it is due.

The Minister for Education: The trouble is they do not think your supporters are fair and find difficulty in changing that view.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: They cannot give any instance in which I have been unfair. The other evening, the member for Sussex referred to the improvements made at the Busselton school, and proceeded to throw the bouquets to the present Minister and Government for the job. Here again is a matter initiated by the Labour Government, for which Treasury approval was provided by the ex-Premier. The £10,600 involved in the job—that was the estimated cost; I do not know the final cost—was approved by the ex-Premier before the election, and the work would have been commenced long before had it been possible to have it undertaken because I said more than once that the delay in putting this work in hand was holding up the consolidation of the Busselton area, a matter which I regarded as very important because I had the greatest faith in the efficacy of consolidation for improving education. However, the Labour Government gave approval and would have been prepared to find the money for the job, but there was a change of Govern-

ment and the present Government has carried it on.

Now let us see the changed attitude with regard to these schools. Some two months before Treasury approval was given for this, Treasury approval was given for the erection of the Carnarvon school, which was to be a residential institution for the children of the North. Despite the fact that Treasury approval had been given and plans had been drawn, when this Government came into office it just slashed those plans in such a way as was nobody's business, and then decided to proceed with a much-modified plan. There is the difference. One was the case of the seat of a supporter of the Government—the other was the case of the seat of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Minister for Education: That had nothing whatever to do with it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Oh no! Well, we will go a step further. The Premier recently made a trip to the North, and of course he would have to placate those people whom he had deprived of these extra facilities. The impression had got abroad that the Government thought the Labour Party's proposals were too good for the North. The Minister for Lands as much as said it when he interjected on me last session while I was referring to this matter and said, with all the emphasis he could command, "What a beauty!" As much as to say, "You propose something for the North which is much too good." "What a beauty," he said. The Premier had to break that down; so when he came back to Perth he made this statement: He said he realised that the children of the North should not be obliged to come to the metropolitan area for their schooling and should have residential facilities provided for them in the North and educational facilities comparable with those in the city. That is precisely what the Labour Government proposed to give them and precisely what the present Premier took from them, and, when he came back from his trip, decided to give them. I commend the Premier for not having a fixed idea in connection with education and on being man enough to change his mind.

The Premier: I never had to change my mind.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is an admission that he made a grievous error before when he denied the people in the North those

facilities that Labour proposed to give them; because now he realises they should have those residential facilities and education on a standard comparable with that in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Lands: Were residential facilities in the plan for the Carnarvon school?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, and if Cabinet does not know it, that shows that they turned down the proposition without thoroughly examining the proposals. And that is what I think happened.

The Minister for Lands: It shows nothing.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, it does! The Minister was present at the Cabinet meeting. I understand he is a regular attendant. He was present and must have agreed to its alteration without knowing what was involved in the proposals.

The Premier: We have a complete answer to the whole thing; you will get it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If that is typical of the way the Government is carrying on the business of the State, Ministers making decisions without knowing what is involved—that is the only conclusion to which I can come—then Lord help us!

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: We will need all the help the Lord can give us.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: A matter of very considerable importance this session will be legislation in connection with wheat marketing. This is a matter about which we will have great differences of opinion. I am very surprised at the views which have already found expression in the newspapers and in this House from members of the Government and those supporting it. Most of the criticism arises from the fact that an attempt was made to arrive at an international agreement for the marketing of wheat. What should be the object of any international agreement? Governments of various complexions for years have been endeavouring to get an international agreement. Not only the present Labour Government but practically every Government before it, in the Federal sphere, has been endeavouring to negotiate an international agreement for the marketing of wheat; and there is very good reason for it. I would say that the object behind any international agreement is that of assuring supplies to importing countries and assuring

markets to exporting countries at equitable prices. I think that is a perfectly laudable object on the part of any Government and of all Governments: that they should assure supplies to importing countries, assure markets to exporting countries and ensure that prices are equitable.

If there is anything wrong with that, I should like to hear it. That is what actuated the countries which gave consideration to the most recent proposal which has been under consideration and in the agreement arrived at I see nothing contrary to the expressions of the Fifth Article in the Atlantic Charter. We would find very few self-respecting people who would not agree to accept the Atlantic Charter, in which some wonderful expressions of humanity and for improved conditions for humanity are to be found. The Fifth Article says—

A desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security.

That was the aim of the International Wheat Agreement. We will find members here who will stand up and quote Scripture and talk about the need for being generous to others, who will yet condemn the wheat agreement because the price is not high enough. I say quite frankly that I think £1 a bushel for wheat is an outrageous price. When we consider that those who consume the greater portion of the wheat are working people on the lowest rung of the ladder, we realise what a burden it is upon them when wheat reaches such a tremendous price. It is a recognised fact that the large families of the working people are the ones who take the 12 and 14 loaves of bread a day as against the half-loaf and the loaf of the wealthier families who have a much more varied diet. So, the high price of wheat bears heavily upon the bottom strata of society, and in the long run does not do the producer any good. We should aim at what I have already stated, namely, the assuring of supplies for importing countries, and markets for exporting countries at equitable prices.

We might not be much concerned about markets today, because the demand is greater than the supply and we can sell as much wheat as we can produce at £1 per bushel, or thereabouts, but that will not always be

so; the time will come again when we shall be looking for markets. So, it is worth something to get a scheme which will at once assure markets as well as supplies. What more can we ask than that the price shall be equitable? We were told that this agreement was one in which Australia had been jockeyed into a disadvantageous position; that the more powerful American country had got the agreement to suit itself and we had been forced into it, and that our negotiators had not been sufficiently astute. We were also told that it was foolish for us to throw away our advantage of being able to sell in the sterling area because America could not sell there and she had difficulty in disposing of her crop in the dollar area. The fact remains that this agreement, which was supposed to favour America, was not ratified by that country. So, the Americans must either be particularly stupid to throw away such a tremendous advantage which they had battled to get, or else the advantages they were supposed to have were not there.

The Government proposes to enable the growers of this State to make a declaration as to whether they want a State wheat marketing scheme, or whether they want to come in with the Commonwealth. Although the Honorary Minister for Agriculture keeps on saying that he does not want to influence the growers in favour of a State scheme it is perfectly obvious that he does. It will be a bad day for them if they do decide on a State scheme. It is quite clear, too, that the Ministers for Agriculture in the other States, despite the fact that they belong to non-Labour Governments in some instances, do not like the idea of Western Australia standing out and thus impairing a scheme which would otherwise be satisfactory. In order to have this poll taken, the Government has handed over the whole business to a partisan body. It is well known that some members of that organisation stand to gain by the introduction of a State scheme, as lucrative positions will be available. It is wrong for the Government to place men in that position.

I can imagine what a howl there would be if we proposed to take a referendum on some industrial matter and we gave Trades Hall the job of carrying out the plebiscite. The Government should realise that this is

not a fair proposition, and that those controlling the referendum should be above any suspicion. The Minister said, in answer to a question I asked the other day, that two ex-electoral officers were to assist. I suppose they will be there as advisers, or on-lookers. Their presence will not guarantee what we have a right to expect, that this shall be carried out by some body that is absolutely impartial. Just imagine holding a State election—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: With Mr. Palmer as the Chief Electoral Officer!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, or with the general secretary of the State Executive of the A.L.P. as Chief Electoral Officer. He could be a man of the highest integrity as I believe he is, but that would not keep him above suspicion. There would be the deuce of a howl about it. This proposition is wrong, and the Government knows it.

The Minister for Housing: The farmers are independent people, and they will express their opinions.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: They are not taking the ballot, but will be voting. What roll is going to be used?

The Minister for Housing: The wheat-growers', I presume.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What is the definition of a wheatgrower?

The Minister for Railways: A registered wheatgrower.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Registered where?

The Minister for Railways: At the pool.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Is it to be taken from the record which the Wheat Stabilisation Committee had during the war? No, it is not.

Mr. Leslie: That committee had the licensing of them.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Co-operative Bulk Handling did not handle that business.

The Minister for Railways: You had better have a look and find out.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I have had a look at the Press statements of the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: You do not understand the position.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the Minister for Railways will give a guarantee that the roll

to be employed will be that used by the Wheat Stabilisation Committee, I will be satisfied.

The Minister for Railways: I am not in a position to do that, but I would say the Minister concerned will do so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how they squib the issue.

Mr. Leslie: That is the only roll available.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the member for Mt. Marshall were the Minister, would he give the assurance?

Mr. Leslie: Certainly!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister who interjected now says he is not in a position to answer my question. I do not think the method which the Government proposes to adopt will give satisfaction to the general body of farmers.

Mr. Nalder: What would you suggest?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am suggesting (1), that the plebiscite be carried out by a person or body which is not a partisan person or body as is the Co-operative Bulk Handling organisation, and (2), that the roll to be used be the roll of wheatgrowers used by the Wheat Stabilisation Committee.

The Minister for Railways: You will find that that is the roll which will be used.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If these two points are met, my objection falls away. It is a wise thing, and the only thing, to allow the growers to make a pronouncement as to which scheme they want. But I do not think the Government should endeavour to influence them to have the State scheme, because numbers of its members are so wedded to it.

The Minister for Lands: We have no intention of doing that. We are just asking the wheatgrower to decide for himself.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Whom will you get to arrange the two sides—the pros and the cons?

Mr. Ackland: Would you agree to put up the side for the Commonwealth, if you were asked?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: No, but I think a partisan from each side should prepare it, just as was done at the time of the referendum on prices.

Mr. Leslie: Let those in favour of it put up their own case. Let the growers put up

the arguments themselves. That is the logical way.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I agree that the growers—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I was thinking that when this matter was satisfactorily settled, I would proceed.

Mr. Leslie: We are helping you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The hon. member is not helping me.

Mr. Leslie: We were getting you out of some trouble.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I regret that I must refer to the remarks of the member for Irwin-Moore. It seems that each time he speaks in this House he says something that raises my ire and leaves me no option but to deal with his statements.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He may not mean it in that way.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I propose to deal, as fairly as I can, with some of the utterances he made in this House the other evening, and I will subject his statements to some analysis. If they will not stand up to analysis, they are unworthy statements and should not have been made, because they were made with a definite purpose in view. I do not blame the hon. member for trying to build up the prestige of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., of which he is a director. He would be less than human if he did not attempt to speak eulogistically of an organisation to which he belongs and in which he takes some pride. I feel that in this House we must require the hon. member not to make false claims. If he wishes to take credit he should state the facts and not endeavour to mislead. I propose to show that he has not stated the facts.

Last year when this matter was raised I made some reply to the utterances of the member for Irwin-Moore and there was a report in the Press, by Mr. Braine, dealing with some of the things I said. It was headed, "Bulk Loading of Wheat. Ex-Minister's Statement Answered," and read as follows:—

The manager of Co-Operative Bulk Handling Ltd. (Mr. H. E. Braine) said yesterday that Mr. J. T. Tonkin, M.L.A., was wrong when he stated in the Legislative Assembly recently that Mr. J. H. Ackland, M.L.A., had

conveniently omitted to mention that a tenth ship had been loaded by the company since it had been given charge of the bulk installations at Fremantle.

I was not wrong, as the member for Irwin-Moore did not mention that ship. The report continued—

The rate of loading of the four vessels which were loaded before Co-Operative Bulk Handling Ltd. took over the installations was 234, 380, 341 and 302 tons respectively a net working hour, an average of 302 tons an hour.

That was the average of loading at Fremantle prior to the present Government handing over the State's assets to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. To continue—

The next nine vessels loaded after the company took over were loaded at an average of 405 tons per net working hour.

That is correct. On these figures depends the case that I propose to build. Before the company took over the rate was 302 tons per hour, and for the first nine vessels after it took over the rate was 405 tons per hour. It must be remembered that the four vessels loaded before Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. took over included the first vessel loaded. It was an experimental ship and the machinery had not been tried or worked. There were anticipated delays.

Who could expect to press a button and obtain efficiency with the very first ship dealt with? That ship had a poor record. It was the "Rocky Mountain Pass." The rate of loading on the time worked was 277 tons per hour, admittedly a very low rate. The second ship was loaded at the rate of 375 tons per hour. That is the average rate of loading for the last seven ships that have been loaded recently by the company, after it had been running this business for a long period and had handled 13,000,000 bushels of wheat. The average for the last seven vessels was no greater than that obtained with the second ship loaded. The figures are as follow:—

Ship.	Average on time worked.
"Trevider"	390 tons
"Ocean Vagrant"	402 tons
"Fort Rouille"	349 tons
"Jersey City"	384 tons
"Baluchistan"	401 tons
"Indian Exporter"	309 tons
"King Robert"	379 tons

That gives a rate of 375 tons per hour, no greater than that obtained for the second

ship loaded before the company took over, yet the member for Irwin-Moore throws out his chest and says, "Today I am in a position to give the figures for a full season's wheat handling, a season in which more than 13,000,000 bushels of wheat have been handled through these Fremantle terminals. These figures fully justify the Government's action. Prior to the Government taking over the control at Fremantle the average rate of loading of all ships loaded up to that date was 302 tons per hour. Since then 40 ships have been loaded and the average has been stepped up to 407 tons per hour for all ships that have been loaded, and the secret of the great improvement lies in the fact that this was done under single control instead of dual control." Let us examine that great improvement.

The Minister for Railways: Have you the figures for the third and fourth ships loaded by your people?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I have given the average and will give the figures. The four ships averaged 302 tons. The average for the first ship was 277 tons; for the second it was 375 tons; for the third 367 tons and for the last 302 tons.

Mr. Ackland: Had any of those a 70 per cent. trimming?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The hon. member did not give an explanation or mention trimming with regard to the first four ships. He did not say that the first ship was experimental, and that those factors could justifying the poor loading in the first place. He conveniently omitted to mention all that. I will give the full figures and will omit nothing. The figures I have given show that the first nine vessels loaded after Co-operative Bulk Handling came along gave an average of 405 tons per hour. After a whole season's handling the average was 407 tons per hour, a wonderful improvement to become excited about and to put forward as proof that the Government was justified in its action.

The average for the second last ship was 309 tons per hour, which was worse than that of any of those loaded before the Government took over, with the exception of the first, and the average for the last ship was 379 tons per hour. I do not blame Co-operative Bulk Handling because they have not obtained a better record, for it is

not possible for them to do it. They are not responsible for the improved loading or they would not have been responsible if the rate of loading had deteriorated because the fact of the matter is that the Australian Wheat Board takes the wheat on its conveyors which have a maximum capacity of 600 tons per hour. The Government galleries have a capacity of 1200 tons per hour, but if the first belts can only bring it along at 600 tons per hour that becomes the maximum of the second lot of belts.

Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. have the second lot of belts and they are oiling the lines and maintaining the machinery and are taking the wheat along and delivering it as fast as the ship can take it. The control of Co-operative Bulk Handling ceases at the spout at the ship's hold. When the wheat comes along the conveying belts to the spout where it is loaded into the ship's hold their control ceases. If the stevedore on the ship can take and stow the wheat at 600 tons an hour that is the rate at which the vessels can be loaded, and if the stevedore and his gang cannot take the wheat and stow it at any greater rate than 300 tons an hour then 50 Co-operative Bulk Handling Companies could not improve the loading rate.

Mr. Marshall: Of course they could not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The controlling factor is the stevedore who is engaged by the Master of the vessel, because he takes and stows the wheat according to the Master's orders, and the rate at which he can take and stow such wheat determines absolutely the rate of loading of that vessel. If the stevedore can take the wheat at 600 tons an hour then that would be the loading rate because the Australian Wheat Board galleries can deliver wheat at that rate. The stevedores have been endeavouring to step up the loading rate because they realise that it requires some improvement. They have been trying out all sorts of things but, when a vessel which is not well constructed for the taking of bulk wheat has to be loaded, the task is made much more difficult. Some vessels are so constructed that quite a large proportion of the wheat has to go between decks and when the "Indian Exporter" arrived, the loading of this vessel became difficult because it is a three-decker. In view of this fact, the loading rate was only 309 tons per hour, which was 66 tons lower than the second ship loaded since the scheme has been in operation.

It is futile for the member for Irwin-Moore to say, "Look at what Bulk Handling has done. What they have done fully justifies the Government's action." It has done nothing of the sort. I am happy to say that we can look forward with some confidence to a very big improvement in the loading rate in the near future, and Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. will not be responsible for it. The stevedores have been giving considerable attention and making numerous inquiries concerning wheat loading and they have ascertained that in America, by the use of a certain device, an amazing rate of wheat loading was achieved. From memory, I think the loading of one Liberty ship of about 8,900 tons was completed in a matter of 18 hours. That is a very high rate of loading and is certainly much better than our figures. I understand there is a possibility that the machinery which was used, or machinery similar, will shortly be available in Australia. The stevedores will thus be able to dispense with a number of time-using methods and the loading rate should be considerably increased. I trust when this state of affairs comes about and a rate of some 450 to 500 tons per hour is achieved, we will not have the member for Irwin-Moore stating that Co-operative Bulk Handling are responsible.

Mr. Ackland: The company is getting the machinery out for them.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, it is not. That is another mis-statement. I do not know from where the hon. member is obtaining his information, but he has been misled. The company is not bringing out this machinery. It may like to, but it has slipped. The plain fact is that the figures which the member for Irwin-Moore gave to this House were entirely misleading. It can be seen that 407 tons per hour compared with 405 tons per hour is not such a wonderful improvement at all and certainly nothing to cause one to throw one's chest out. The important fact to remember is that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. is not responsible for the rate of loading as that is determined by the stevedores and the gangs of men employed on the ship. If more difficult ships arrive, such as the "Indian Exporter," with three decks, then this much-vaunted average given by the member for Irwin-Moore will be knocked sideways.

Has the member for Irwin-Moore any right to mislead members on a question of importance such as this? He is giving an entirely wrong impression, although he is perfectly justified in claiming what credit he can for Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

The Minister for Housing: His facts were quite correct. You are drawing the wrong inference.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But his deductions are very much astray.

The Minister for Housing: That is a matter of opinion.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What is the Minister's opinion of an increase from a loading rate of 405 tons per hour to 407 tons per hour.

The Minister for Housing: I cannot speak as an expert but I would say that the improvement is a good performance.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is an improvement of two tons per hour.

The Minister for Railways: But that improvement is over a complete season and is a lot of wheat.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the figures are correct.

The Minister for Housing: It seems to be a good performance for the season.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I would like the member for Irwin-Moore to show me how he can get the result on the figures he has given, because from the figures available to me the result is quite different. Even if we assume that the figures are correct, then I see nothing in a mere two tons per hour for the hon. member to crow about in the way that he did, and to cause him to say that the Government's action was fully justified. I claim that if there had been no change in the control of the wheat galleries the average wheat loading would be the same as it is now.

Mr. Leslie: For the first ship.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is nonsense! The second ship loaded had a higher average than the last seven. Well, of course, if I cannot cause that to sink into the hon. member then I cannot deal with obtuse minds.

Mr. Marshall: It is only because it is unpalatable to him that he cannot digest it.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: When any member advances a case of this nature it must be factual because he is supposed to be dealing with facts.

Mr. Ackland: They are factual, all right.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: If he is dealing with facts, then the House has a right to expect him to present his facts in a proper light and not mislead. The test of whether the hon. member misled or not is in the answer to this question. Did not members, after listening to the member for Irwin-Moore the other night, believe that marvellous improvement had resulted; that it was due to the efficiency of Co-operative Bulk Handling, and that that fully justified the Government's action? That could be the only conclusion to which members could come. I have subjected his statement to analysis and my schedules are available to any member who wants to check them. They are guaranteed to me to be the authentic record of the actual results obtained, the names of the ships, the number of loading hours, the actual time worked, the time delayed, the delays due to shipping, the gantry, or the silo, the total shipped, and so on. On those figures I show that for the last seven vessels—the most recent set—the average rate of loading was only 375 tons per hour; no greater than the rate of loading of the second ship of the 40 that had been loaded. If one can tell me there is anything in that to crow about then I will take a lot of convincing.

On motion by Mr. Read, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 5th August, 1948.

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

QUESTIONS.

TIMBER INDUSTRY.

(a) *As to Government Subsidy for Cartage, etc.*

Mr. REYNOLDS asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) By how much has the Government subsidised sawmillers for the cartage of timber?

(2) What would have been the railway freight received from sawmillers for this tonnage of timber?

(3) What tonnage was carted?

(4) What tonnage was carted from each country centre?

(5) Does the Government still allow a discount of 12½ per cent. to sawmillers on all timber hauled on State railways?

(6) What is the total amount of discount allowed by the Government on timber hauled on railways since March, 1947?

(7) Why is this discount or rebate allowed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Subsidy paid for timber carted by road to the 30th June, 1948, was £1,802 11s. 1d. The subsidy ceased on the 31st July and subsidy claims covering timber carted in July have not as yet been received.

(2) To the 30th June, £3,243.

(3) To the 30th June, 5,150.