

ment of the colony without asking people to impose fresh taxation upon themselves, particularly as in many instances the people concerned can ill-afford to undertake the added obligation. This matter is of particular importance to the people on the Goldfields as tuberculosis is a secondary disease that in many instances develops consequent upon the industrial diseases, such as silicosis, which are so common among workers in the goldmines. If this problem were tackled seriously, it would mean much saving in the present great waste of human life. I feel sure that members will agree that it is more important to save the lives of Australians than to hunt the Continent for immigrants. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 20th August, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

SHIPPING, INTERSTATE.

As to Tonnage of Imports.

Mr. GRAHAM (on notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

What was the total tonnage of imports which arrived at Fremantle from the Eastern States during—

(a) the last three months of the Wise Government's term of office;

(b) the first three months of the McLarty Government's term of office?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(a) 89,095 tons (January, February and March, 1947).

(b) 76,177 tons (April, May and June, 1947).

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

MOTOR LICENSE FEES.

As to Granting Reduction.

Mr. GRAHAM (on notice) asked the Attorney General:

(1) For what reasons were the license fees for motor vehicles increased as from the 1st July last?

(2) In view of the present restrictions on the supply of petrol to consumers and the proposed further reduction as recently announced, will action be taken to grant immediate relief to motorists by way of reduced motor vehicle licenses, together with rebates to those who have already paid excess amounts?

(3) If not, why not?

The ACTING PREMIER (for the Attorney General) replied:

(1) (a) Local Government Group Associations urged the repeal of the 25 per cent. reduction on license fees on petrol-driven vehicles. The Traffic Branch of the Police Department also favoured restoration.

(b) As at the 1st July a great proportion of motorists were receiving very substantial use from their vehicles not only for business but also for pleasure. Observations on roads at week-ends and holidays and ordinary traffic at other times indicated how substantial was the approach to normal use.

(c) The concession was originally granted at a time when petrol was at a premium and most private vehicles almost stationary, and business vehicles heavily restricted unless they used gas producers. Consequently gas producer vehicles received no reduction.

(d) There are scarcely any gas producers in use now and it is obvious, therefore, that the removal of the restrictions had been so considerable as to render their use unnecessary.

(e) The reduction was not granted until after severe restrictions on the use of petrol were imposed. When petrol rationing first started no reduction was made and the quantity of petrol allowed was fairly considerable, approximating that now contemplated.

(f) The position of local authorities had to be considered. Road-making costs have greatly increased, as have all other costs. It is necessary for them to expend money on roads, and motor vehicle license fees form a substantial portion of their revenue. The lack of good road maintenance is detrimental to the motoring public. Cabinet agreed to the increase as from the 1st July, 1947.

(2) and (3) Action cannot be taken to refund to owners any portion of the license fees already paid unless a request is made in each case by each licensing authority in the State for ministerial approval to do so.

CHIEF JUSTICE, RETIREMENT.

As to Tabling Files.

Mr. GRAHAM (on notice) asked the Attorney General:

Will he lay on the Table of the House the files relating to the retirement and granting of a pension, to the ex-Chief Justice (Sir John Northmore)?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Attorney General) replied:

Yes.

HOUSING.

As to Prefabricated Homes, Timber Requirements, etc.

Mr. REYNOLDS (on notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Have prefabricated houses been purchased in the Eastern States for erection in Western Australia?

(2) If so, what is the cost per house landed here?

(3) What is the cost of erection?

(4) How much local timber will be required for each house?

(5) How long will it take to erect these houses?

(6) Are any of these houses being purchased from the Myers Emporium, of Melbourne?

(7) How many tons of Western Australian timber will be used for the 3,800 houses promised by him for 1948?

(8) When can Donnybrook expect completion of the four homes for which tenders were recently called?

The ACTING PREMIER (for the Premier) replied:

(1), (2), (3), (4), and (5) In association with the Department of Works and Housing and with the Victorian Housing Commission, arrangements are being made to bring to this State wall sections and other components of one prefabricated concrete home of a type being manufactured in Victoria. The purpose is to test the structure under Western Australian conditions. Costs and quantities are not available at present.

(6) No.

(7) No such promise was made, but approximately 80,000 tons would be required to construct 3,800 houses, which is the target set by the Commonwealth for this State for the current year. Every effort will be made to achieve that target.

(8) A tender for a contract for five homes at Donnybrook has been accepted and contract will be signed this week. It is hoped that construction will shortly be commenced and the houses completed within six months.

KOOLAN ISLAND IRON-ORE.

As to Exemption to Leaseholders.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY (on notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to grant any further exemption from labour conditions to the present leaseholders of Koolan Island iron-ore deposits at the expiration of the present exemption?

(2) If so, for what reason and under what conditions?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The matter is now under consideration.

(2) Answered by No. 1.

WATER SUPPLIES

As to Goldfields Reticulation Finances.

Mr. MARSHALL (on notice) asked the Minister for Water Supply:

What was the loss or profit, as the case may be, of all departmentally controlled reticulation systems supplying Goldfields towns, including Kalgoorlie, at the 30th June, 1947?

The MINISTER replied:

The accumulated surplus or loss in the reticulated Goldfields Water Supply towns as at 30th June, 1947, are as follow:—

	Accumulated Surplus.	Accumulated Loss.
	£	£
Big Bell, from 1937-38	2,145	
Cue-Daw Dawn		36,611
Leonora		3,259
Meekatharra		21,567
Reedy, from 1937-38	1,679	
Goldfields Water Supply		2,184,431
Totals	3,824	2,245,868

RAILWAYS.

As to Refreshment-Room Finances.

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

Will he lay on the Table of the House the monthly financial statements of departmentally controlled refreshment-rooms since their inception?

The MINISTER replied:

The financial results from inception to the end of June are not yet finalised, but information will be supplied later.

EDUCATION.

As to Candidates for Scholarship Examination.

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

(1) Will any child of the required age, whose intention to be a candidate for this year's scholarship examination has been made known to the Education Department within the proper time, be permitted to sit for the examination despite failure to pass the preliminary test which has been given?

(2) If not, under what power can such children be excluded from taking the scholarship examination?

The MINISTER replied: I ask that this question be postponed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Minister: Following on the Minister's request to have the question postponed, is he aware that the examination is to take place this week?

The MINISTER replied: I understand that that is so. I am having the matter investigated and will reply to the hon. member in full tomorrow.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to Completing Roleystone Extension, etc.

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

(1) Is the shortage of high voltage transmission insulators the only reason for the non-completion of the power supply to Roleystone?

(2) If "Yes" is the answer to question No. 1, then how many insulators are now required to complete the job?

(3) If "No" is the answer to question No. 1, what equipment is required and how much?

(4) How many insulators of a similar type needed for the high power transmission lines on the extension to Roleystone have been received by the Electricity Commission in Western Australia since the 1st January, 1947?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) —

(3) Materials in short supply are high tension insulators and poles for low tension services.

(4) 234 high tension insulators have been received since 1st January, 1947, all of which have been used for urgent maintenance work.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Geraldton) [4.41]: May I add my congratulations to you, Sir, on being elevated to the high position of Speaker of this Assembly. I feel quite sure that you will uphold the traditions of the office. I would also extend my congratulations to the member for York on his elevation to the position of Chairman of Committees, and I desire to congratulate those members who have been returned to this Assembly for the first time and to sympathise with the members who have been defeated.

I would like to express my desire that two former very fine members of this Chamber will be spared to enjoy many happy years in retirement. They are gentlemen who, I am sure—though, having formerly been

associated with another place, I did not come in close contact with them as members of this House—stand deservedly high in the estimation of the whole of the people of Western Australia. I refer to Messrs. Stubbs and Wilson. May they long be spared to enjoy their well-earned rest!

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It would be very unfitting and unbecoming of me to fail to pay tribute to the gentleman I follow as representative of the constituency of Geraldton, Hon. J. C. Wilcock. I cannot hope to reach the heights attained by that gentleman—

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: —either in the political sphere or in the good that he did for the people I now have the honour to represent. I can only say that I shall endeavour to do my very best and no more than that can any man do. I well remember when he was first returned to Parliament, and I say unhesitatingly that he was the first member in my memory who devoted his whole time to the job. I think it was largely that which contributed to his holding the seat for so many years. I have always maintained and still maintain that a position in the Parliament of this State or any other State is a full-time job.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Hear, hear!●

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The reason that we do not make the progress I think we are entitled to expect to make is that too many members of both Houses of Parliament treat the job as somewhat of a sideline.

I will now deal with the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, and the first item I come to is the most important one of the relationship existing between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government. I concur entirely with a statement made here that in the great task of re-construction and development that confronts the State, our Ministers are keenly desirous of co-operating with the Commonwealth Government; but I desire to say very decidedly that I consider that first and foremost there is a job to be done, and if the State Government finds it impossible to accomplish that job it should have no hesitation at all in urging on the Commonwealth Government the necessity of doing so.

Referring to unemployment, the Speech states "Unemployment is at a minimum." I am glad to think that it is; but I will quote from "The West Australian" of the 17th of last month figures compiled by the Government Statistician as affecting the whole of the Commonwealth. According to these figures we find that during the ten months ended the 30th April, the Social Services Department paid out £1,416,711 in benefits to 1,41,895 persons. The main causes of unemployment are given as men on strike and in lock-outs, 15,473; seasonal work, 8,510; power rationing, 8,422; The fact that strikes me is that we are paying unemployment benefits, through the Commonwealth, to men who are out on strike.

Mr. Marshall: That is not quite right; it is those workers who are unemployed because of other workers being on strike.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That is what I thought, but these figures refer to men on strike and this is compiled by the Commonwealth Statistician. The next item in the Speech deals with revenue and expenditure. It is manifestly impossible for the State Government—and it does not matter which party occupies the Treasury bench—to do its duty to this State by and large. Western Australia is a great, undeveloped, sparsely populated State; and without special Commonwealth financial assistance we will be unable to do the job that should be done. We are talking about getting people here but we cannot do that unless we have something for them to do. There are big public works projects which should be in hand but which cannot be initiated without money; but the State has not the money to do the job. That being so, we will be unable to people this State as it should be peopled not only for the benefit of Western Australia but for the benefit of the whole Commonwealth.

We listened to the member for Irwin-Moore the other evening during his very interesting and informative speech in connection with primary production. If primary production is to be developed as it ought to be in this State, more attention must be given to making available to primary producers plant and machinery to enable them to produce goods and get them to market. The member for Irwin-Moore also dealt with wheat marketing and stabilisation and treated us to a very informative

and interesting address. I have nothing to add to his remarks except to say that I think the record of accomplishment under what is known as the Co-op. Bulk Handling Scheme is worthy of special mention. The Co-operative Bulk Handling Company borrowed £600,000 to equip approximately 280 sidings and that money was all repaid to the lenders by 1943.

Up to that time a conservative estimate of the saving to the wheatgrowers was £2,000,000. With the increase in the price of bags, the savings have increased progressively until this year the wheatgrowers of Western Australia have been saved no less than £1,250,000 in the price of bags alone, without taking into consideration the saving in labour. It sounds like a tale from "The Arabian Nights," but it is true that every grower who put wheat into Co-op. Bulk Handling Ltd. automatically became a shareholder in an asset that today is valued at something like £1,000,000 or £1,500,000. I know of no record to equal that put up by this great co-operative society.

Mr. Ackland: It is worth £500,000.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am indebted to the member for Irwin-Moore for the correction. I come next to the testing for T.B. of dairy cattle, and I am pleased to be able to congratulate the Government on the fact that, though it has only been in office for such a short time, it has already taken action in this matter. The delay on the part of the past Government was inexcusable. I hope that attention will now be given to the testing of herds supplying milk to country towns.

With a Minister and a Director, both of whom are returned men—the Director being a man who on all sides is admitted to be of outstanding ability—I look forward with every confidence to an acceleration in the allotment of land to returned men. We are told that a Bill will be introduced during the session to amend the Rural Relief Fund Act. Such an amendment is long overdue and it is satisfactory to note that this Government intends to bring in that amendment. The goldmining industry which is of such great importance to this State, is deserving of every assistance and consideration, and particularly of special financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government. There are members in this House bet-

ter acquainted than I am with the goldmining industry, but, having for so long represented a province in which goldmining has played an important part, I gladly add my advocacy to the plea for consideration being given to this industry that has contributed so much to the progress of my native State.

The next item in His Excellency's Speech is coal. As we were told the other evening—comparisons are odious—coal is a basic industry and of the greatest importance to any country. I listened with interest to the speech of the member for Collie. He is a man of whom we heard a lot before his advent into this House, and I feel that we should pay due attention to any statements that he makes. I took note of some of his remarks. He said the conditions under which the miners have to work are revolting. He used the term "revolting," and called on the present Government to protect the lives of the miners by lessening the risks under which they work. He said, "I earnestly make the plea that the present Government will do its utmost to protect the lives of the men engaged in the mines." For a man belonging to the Labour party to have uttered those words and to have made that plea to the present Government, after the Party to which he belongs having been in power for so many years—for the member for Collie to tell this House that the conditions under which these unfortunate men are engaged in this important and necessary industry are revolting, and that measures have not been taken throughout the years to protect their lives, is a most damning indictment of the past administration.

Mr. Styants: What is the death rate there?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: When after the charges of fraud misrepresentation made by the other side we get this statement from a member of the Labour Party, it is a wonder that the electors of Collie did not do what many other electors did, and administer a deserved rebuke for the delay of the past Government in facing up to the difficulties that confronted it. I will now give the House the opinion of a Labour member of the House of Commons. In a letter written in 1946 Mr. Duggan said—

The nation does not yet realise the price paid by the producers of coal for the right to work. In the 12 years 1932 to 1943 we lost in the mines no less than 10,306 workers.—

That is equal to the population of a fair-sized town.

In addition more than 1,500,000 mine workers were injured and rendered incapable of working for three, six, or more days. More than 261 boys under 16 years of age were killed in the production of coal and more than 60,000 were injured and rendered idle.

If anything more were needed to impress upon the new Government the necessity for protecting the lives of men engaged in this essential industry, that should help it to realise the position, and to face up to the fact that these employees are deserving of special care to protect them from the risks they run. The position has been allowed to slide for so many years by those who profess to protect the workers and promote their interests—

Mr. Marshall: How did you vote on the Coal Bill last session in another place?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Where I came from, Mr. Speaker, all interjections were considered highly disorderly.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You will get used to them here.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am sorry to note that lead was not mentioned in His Excellency's Speech. As is well known to members, lead is found in abundance in my electorate. The price at present ruling for lead is very profitable, and I think the Government should endeavour to expedite the production of that metal in every way possible. I come next to the question of timber production. I listened with interest to speeches by members from the timber areas. I believe that before timber is allowed to be exported the most careful consideration should be given to the matter, as we must realise that timber is one of the essentials in the housing of our own people. I will read a letter that I received from a gentleman in Tasmania. It is addressed to me, is dated the 9th April last and is as follows—

Some weeks ago I met Mr. R. Coath at the Burnie Club, Tasmania, when we discussed your State and its possibilities in respect to saw-mill waste for manufacture into pulp and paper. He told me that he would write you reference our talks.

As I am unknown to you, I may say that, in 1945 I left Russia where I had for four years been consulting engineer to the Soviet Government. I arrived in England and was invited to come to Australia to consider the manufacture of pulp and paper from eucalypt-

tus hard wood. The result was that I designed, built and operated as general superintendent Burnie Mills for Associated Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd. At present I am technical adviser to Tasmanian Paper and Timber Mills Ltd., Launceston, Tasmania, where we propose to erect a pulp and paper plant with a capital of £3,000,000 using slabs, or "cut offs" from 20 saw-mills which we control, and the quantity of wood required above the available waste will be cut from Crown Lands. The Tasmania Paper and Timber Mills Bill, 1946, passed the second reading in the House last week.

Before going to Russia I spent 25 years in America and Canada designing and operating pulp and paper mills.

Mr. Coath suggested I write this letter as you were very interested in the industrial development of your State. If you are considering any development along these lines, I shall be happy to offer you any assistance I can provided it does not interfere with my associations here in Tasmania.

I am at present discussing a project in Queensland having for its object the manufacture of fine papers from bajsasse (sugar cane waste). I do not mean wall boards, but white and coloured printing papers, etc.

That letter was signed by Mr. Robert Woodhead. I forwarded the original of that letter to Mr. Fernie some months ago and I very much regret to state, after allowing some little time within which he could get in touch with this gentleman, that when I called at his office Mr. Fernie informed me he was very sorry that he had lost the communication. I shall hand my copy of the letter to the Minister for Industrial Development in the hope that he will institute inquiries, if they have not already been made, to see whether anything can be done to utilise some of our own waste products.

Dealing next with the fishing industry, the statement is made in His Excellency's Speech that fish production is at a record level. That may be so; I believe it is correct. On the other hand, I must say that the price of fish today places that commodity absolutely beyond the scope of the purchasing power of any basic wage earner who has a family. Fish is supposed to be a very necessary article of diet, but today the price of it is out of all reason. I understand from those who know, that the industry has received quite a lot of consideration in Queensland. Legislation has been passed in that State which resulted in the appointment of another board. I am informed that the board is operating

to the satisfaction of all concerned, and the sooner the Chief Secretary, who I understand is the Minister controlling this particular industry, gets busy and finds out for himself what is done in that State, the better it will be for all here.

Hon. A. H. Panton: All the information is in his office.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I understand that the member for Leederville went into this matter fairly fully when he was acting for one of his ministerial colleagues. Although I know many of us do not altogether like the creation of boards, I recognise that sometimes they are necessary. For that reason there are boards dealing with all sorts of things. Fishing represents a very important industry.

Hon. E. Nulsen: At any rate, we have too many boards.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I agree with that statement, but at times they are necessary. If the one in Queensland is operating satisfactorily to all concerned, then let us follow suit. Before leaving the fishing industry, I intend to utter a word of warning which I have already given to the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. There are too many things about which I do not know anything at all for my own peace of mind.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: A most unnecessary explanation!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Having lost some of my hard-earned money before I became a member of Parliament in consequence of my investments in this particular industry, I think I am entitled to express my opinion. I was interested in a company operating a small crayfish canning plant on the Abrolhos Islands. I was told by men who, like myself, had been born in Geraldton and knew all about crayfish, that there was an inexhaustible supply at the islands. Let members not believe any such statement! I have yet to learn that nature provides us with an inexhaustible supply of anything the possession of which is worthwhile. Only in inexhaustible supply are those things for which we have little or no use.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What about fresh air?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not propose to be led aside by interjections. Figures published in "The West Australian" in this morning's issue indicate the extra large

quantities of fish that are being handled and that double the quantities are being taken away that were formerly caught. Personally, I am very much afraid that the Abrolhos Islands being so far from the mainland makes it a physical impossibility for the Fisheries Department effectively to police the regulations up there. The spawning season continues from October to February and when the boats arrive at the islands from Fremantle, fishing goes on ad lib. Something has to be done about it, otherwise the crayfish will be interfered with during the breeding season to such an extent that the supposedly inexhaustible supplies will soon peter out. We have a factory at Geraldton now that is doing very well, and certainly we do not desire—I do not, nor do I think anyone else would so desire—to deprive those people of the means of making a living out of the canning of crayfish. On the other hand, the Act and the regulations framed thereunder should be complied with, although I readily admit that the policing of them will not be very easy! I warn the Chief Secretary of the necessity of looking through the information that, by interjection, we have been told is already in his office and urge him to give the matter his serious consideration.

There are many important problems occupying the attention of the Government and of Parliament, and the next important matter mentioned in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech is that of housing. One approaches this very vital matter with a considerable amount of trepidation. Perhaps I may not so frequently visit the office of the Housing Commission as some metropolitan members do, but I can say with all sincerity that if ever a little man endeavoured to do a big job, it is the secretary of the Housing Commission. I have the greatest respect and admiration for the whole of the Commission's staff.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You would have.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Unfortunately, it has been stated that if one can go to the office with a five or a tenner, one can get things done. All I can say is that is a very unfair remark.

Members: And untrue.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The fact remains that things are happening.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They always do.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Recently I brought particulars of a most distressing case under the notice of the Commission and of the Premier. In that particular instance, someone did get away with it and that man—I do not like saying it but he was an ex-parson—got a home to which he was not entitled. A fuss was made about it. I am satisfied that there is something in the set-up that is definitely wrong, and the responsibility for that may be traced to the previous Government.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is lovely! Now the department has gone wrong.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: When members opposite have finished snapping and barking—

Hon. A. H. Panton: You threw the line out!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: —I would like to point out that last session legislation was introduced which, among other consequences, changed the name of the Workers' Homes Board to the State Housing Commission. To me the most important point was that the chairman of the Workers' Homes Board remained the chairman of the Housing Commission. I have nothing to say against that gentleman who, I understand, is a very efficient officer. I refer to the Under Treasurer.

Hon. A. H. Panton: And a very honest one.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: However, if what we were told the other evening by the present Leader of the Opposition—we did not need to be told of it by him, although he had a perfect right to tell us if he so desired—was correct and that the finances of the State demand the whole and undivided attention of the Under Treasurer, I can say with just as much earnestness and emphasis that if we are to carry out the promises we made to the people, the provision of houses equally demands the whole and undivided attention of any man holding the position of chairman of the Housing Commission. I do not agree with the tendency to make such positions part-time jobs.

Mr. Graham: They are all part-time jobs.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: But that was done by the previous Government. I am sorry the Premier is not present but we know that he is in the Eastern States engaged upon very important business. I hope my remarks will

be passed on to him by the Deputy Premier, but if they are not, I shall do so myself.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is right.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And do you think he will take any notice of you?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We must have in such a position a man who will give his whole and undivided attention to the job, and the sooner we do that the better it will be for all concerned. My experience tells me that in such activities the driving force must necessarily come from the top. From what has taken place, I am assured that there is something wrong. There will always be something wrong—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Of course, there always was!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: —seeing that human beings are what they are. We will always be able to find fault with matters of administration, just as we can find fault with ourselves in the discharge of our own duties. In view of the provision for a part-time chairman of the Housing Commission, I welcome the remarks of the new and young member for Canning who last night indicated to this House, in quite calm and measured terms, his conviction that he was not satisfied with the set-up. I also welcomed the not-quite so calm but definite remarks of the member for Middle Swan last week when he also said that he was not quite satisfied.

Any member who knows the position and has come into contact with the unhappiness that is being experienced by hundreds of our young married people who are living with their "in laws," and are endeavouring to bring their children up in surroundings and under circumstances that cannot be other than harmful, must realise that no effort we can make and nothing the Government can do to hasten the provision of homes, however humble they may be, for these people, should be left undone in the interests of these people, so that our young men may have their wives and families to themselves. I have here a paper published in Perth, the July issue of "The Democrat," in which I read with much amazement an announcement by the Labour Premier of Tasmania that building restrictions in that State have been abolished. He said that there is no necessity for those restrictions in Tasmania and that the State was getting on quite well without them. I do not know whether that would work out here in the same way, nor

do I know how they have been able to abolish the restrictions in Tasmania, but I would commend that action to the present Government.

I cannot see how a man with very little money will have a chance against a man with plenty of money if the restrictions here are abolished. I would like to relate a personal experience. Within ten minutes of my home in West Perth, permits have been granted to no fewer than four people occupying big homes to convert their houses into flats. In each case, no person can rent one of those flats at a rental of less than £4 a week. Is that catering for the type of family we desire to cater for? I say, decidedly no! That happened last year. The permit system needs to be tightened up.

The next matter I wish to deal with is water supplies. Members are doubtless aware of the value of the tomato industry to this State and particularly to the town of Geraldton. There is not much we can export to the Eastern States and I was as happy as a sandboy when the then Commonwealth Government placed an embargo on Japanese crabs, some years ago. This enabled me to export canned crayfish to the Eastern States. Unfortunately, the embargo did not last long. The then Minister for Customs, Hon. T. W. White, wrote to me stating that he was out to compose our trade differences with Japan at the earliest moment and that therefore the embargo could not be continued one day longer than was absolutely necessary. This occurred just when I was arranging with some friends to float a company. Within six weeks of the removal of the embargo we did not sell another tin to the Eastern States. We are exporting thousands of pounds worth of tomatoes to the Eastern States, and that is something for which we can thank Nature. We have an early season which enables us to export these tomatoes; but the tomato growers are up against water difficulties. The following is a letter from the Geraldton Tomato Growers' Association written to me on the 14th April of this year:—

At a very large meeting of the above Association held at Bluff Point on 8th April instant a resolution was passed expressing the opinion that the proposed expansion was totally inadequate for the town's requirements. From figures we have obtained from the Water Supply Department the proposed expansion will not meet the present-day requirements.

Last year we understood 50 new connections were made in Geraldton despite the restrictions which prevent homes being built here. In the near future we expect to see many more homes being built with a further drain on our present water supply. We earnestly request you put our views before your Government and try and impress upon them that while endeavours are being made to improve the water supply provision should be made that it will serve to some extent the requirements of the future.

The requirements of the future seem to me to have been entirely overlooked by previous Governments. I do not know of my own knowledge whether what I am about to say is absolutely correct, but I am assured that it is. No fewer than three times have pipes of different sizes been laid. Why did not the then Government look to the future, as our earlier Governments did? What would have happened if the honoured man whose centenary we shall shortly be celebrating had laid small pipes to convey water to Coolgardie? But he was a man of vision. Today the smallest pipes are being laid, with the result that in a couple of years they will have to be re-laid. As I said, that has occurred on three occasions. I am aware that it has been difficult to procure pipes, but the pipes to which I refer were laid before the shortage occurred. Before leaving the subject of water supplies, I desire to express the opinion that it is nothing short of disgraceful to think that we are not conserving water in the South-West division where we have regular reliable winter rains. Millions of gallons of rainwater are allowed to run into the sea, simply because of the lack of vision of those in authority. We must have water conservation, even if it costs thousands of millions of pounds, as it means so much for us.

Mr. Smith: That is where the fish get their food from.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Really! With regard to outports, we heard on this subject from the member for Kanowna last night. I sympathise with him because of his want of support. I would make a suggestion that those interested in the trade of the outports should get together. I do not mean only the Parliamentary representatives, but the business people of Esperance, Busselton, Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton. I honestly believe that they would be able to make arrangements with the merchants in the Eastern States from whom they obtain their supplies to fill a steamer of small size with

goods for those respective ports, and thus the cost of transshipment at Fremantle would be avoided. I intend to get into touch with the Chamber of Commerce and with the Traders' Association in Geraldton, and I shall make it my business to contact the member for Kanowna. I am sorry he is not listening to me. I hope he and the member for Bunbury and the other members concerned will take similar action, as I feel there might be some chance of achieving something in that direction.

Mr. Styants: You have to get the steamer.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am aware of that difficulty, but if the State Government were to make representation to the Commonwealth Government we might be able to get one.

Mr. Styants: It is worth trying.

Hon. A. H. Pantou: It has not been tried.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The member for Leederville says it has not been tried and by the tone of his voice I take it that he means it has been tried. I would remind him of the story about the Scotsman, Robert Bruce, "Try, try again." That is what we must do. It is not much satisfaction to members to speak in this House year after year and implore the Government to do this or to do that, but we have to keep on doing it and not take a knock-back. Before leaving the subject of outports I wish to tell members what the lumpers of Geraldton have to say about the Government that was in power for so many years in connection with the port of Geraldton. I was reminded the other day by a Labour supporter that some millions of pounds had been spent on the harbour, but we will not go back to that time, because the Labour Government did not start the construction of the harbour. On the 27th May last the branch secretary of the Lumpers' Union wrote to me as follows:—

In reference to your letter of recent date, I would like to point out that the Wise Government did promise space on the m.v. "Kybra" and "Koolinda" for the purpose of carrying cargo to the port of Geraldton. My union would like you to carry on the fight for this port, and to ask the present Government to reconsider its decision and allow the two vessels to carry cargo to Geraldton.

We consider we are not asking for anything we are not entitled to, and as you know a high percentage of our members are returned soldiers. These men should at least be entitled

to some kind of livelihood and we therefore consider it the duty of the Government, regardless of whether Labour or Opposition, to attempt to help them by placing as much shipping as it is possible in this port.

Here I would like to make further reference to the housing problem as I did not refer to an important item. I have here a cutting from "The West Australian" dated the 5th March, 1945. It read as follows:—

One million copies of the book "Australian Story" had been ordered from the United States and would be distributed throughout the world to publicise this country, Senator Largie said on Friday in the Senate. The "Australian Story" featured a foreword by the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) and would cost £3 a copy.

Three pounds a copy! One million copies at £3 each amounts to £3,000,000, and that sum was to be spent on a booklet publicising Australia. The cutting continues—

"It would never sell in Aberdeen," interjected Senator Grant.

Another book being prepared, added Senator Largie, would be an illustrated publication featuring Australia's history from its earliest days to the present time. This would be sold at one guinea a copy.

This publication was to be distributed at £1 1s. a copy. If the Commonwealth Government has money to throw away in this fashion, surely we might ask it to provide a cash subsidy to every man building a home in these days. Such action would help to publicise Australia much better than any booklet issued at such huge expense. It is astounding and staggering to read of such a thing. In "The West Australian" of the 27th December, 1946, we find the following reference, in the column headed "Personal," to the Minister for the Interior (Mr. Johnson)—

At Fremantle he will welcome 200 British tradesmen who will arrive in the Largs Bay. The tradesmen will be employed on housing and other building works at Canberra.

At Canberra! This is not the only body of men that have come to erect buildings at Canberra. I cannot say whether all of them went to Canberra, but I cannot recall any of these men being distributed throughout Western Australia. And not a word of protest at these men being taken over to erect what I think are mostly public buildings in Canberra! I now approach a matter with considerable trepidation. I have a solid block facing me here and it is something I have not been used to. But this

has to be done, and I am here to do my job. The next item in the Governor's Speech deals with railways. In "The West Australian" of the 8th of this month the Commissioner's representative is reported to have said that the Railway Department would have to pay £198,000 a year extra if the claims for margins alone were granted. Further, he is reported to have said—

Expenditure on wages could not be increased without increasing freights and fares or obtaining additional funds from the Government.

The President: This has had to be faced in all the States, and the tendency is to increase freights and fares.

I do not care what the tendency is, but if this or any other Government is going to try to increase freights to people who are in the back areas of this country endeavouring to make a living, and who are opening up and developing the State, it will not be with my vote. That is an entirely wrong attitude. Last night I heard a member on my left express the opinion that in a few years' time we would have a million people in this city. I hope he is wrong. I remember when a million club was started in Sydney with the aim and object to build up the population of Sydney to 1,000,000. I think those people are now sorry for it. What we do want is 1,000,000 people distributed through the back areas of the country. I would impress upon young members that we do not want a million people in the metropolitan area, but if we have a million people throughout the country there will be a big increase in the population of the cities.

Mr. Nimmo: If you had a million people in the city, would you not have a bigger population in the country?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I would ask for notice of that question. We had no less a gentleman than the secretary of the railway workers' union, Mr. Keating, saying that the railways should be free! A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind, and that statement is not so silly as it may seem. The railways are serving a national purpose in opening up the country. Mr. Davies, another authority from Trades Hall, is reported last month as having said—

For years these requests have been submitted to various Commissioners, but they have not been agreed to. We realise that the first call is for houses and the second for hospitals, but the third should surely be these amenities which have been turned down year after year.

The request has been turned down by the Commissioners, and not by the Government. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether you have heard this old gag—the Commissioner is responsible for administration, and the Government is responsible for policy. During my 19 years' tenure in another place, I have not been able to find out where policy began and ended, or where administration began and ended.

Mr. Marshall: You never will, either, no matter how long you stop here!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: In 1945, the member for Kalgoorlie is reported in "The West Australian" as having made a constructive speech on the railways.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He always does.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: He exploded the idea, and he was speaking as a practical railway man, that we could not get faster trains because we had a narrow gauge. He instanced what had been done with the same gauge in Japan, New Zealand and South Africa. But I think little, if any, notice was taken of him because he was only an enginedriver before he came here.

Mr. Fox: Ben Chifley was an enginedriver.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Then he is not supposed to know anything about administration. I have here a letter dated the 14th November, 1946, and signed by F. J. S. Wise, Premier. This was sent to members of Trades Hall, to certain key unions and to others. It states—

On behalf of the State Government, I am anxious to place before you personally the major aspects of the existing railway dispute. . . . Following the receipt by the Government of Royal Commissioner Wolff's report on the Garratt engines, the Government agreed to give effect to his recommendations. These recommendations involve many alterations to the engines which the Government has arranged to have put into effect.

I want to say, quite dispassionately, that the responsibility for that railway strike, which was one of the most disastrous industrial upheavals ever experienced in this State, was due entirely to the Wise Government not acting as stated in that letter!

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is not true!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I repeat—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It does not matter how often you repeat it.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I ignore the interjection. I repeat, this carries the hon. member's own condemnation. This was written on the 14th November, and states that the Government agreed to give effect to the findings. Of course it did, but did it act?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Yes, immediately. You get the files and have a look, and you will see the sort of nonsense you are talking.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Why the strike?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: This sort of stuff might be all right at Geraldton.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: These men went out on strike because the Government did not act and give effect to the Royal Commissioner's report.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is not true.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They went on strike because they would not have a Garratt on the line, and you know it.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Here is a statement made, not by a railway enginedriver but by the Commissioner of Railways in Queensland, in 1945. He reported to the Queensland Parliament at great length on these Garratt engines. I will quote the final paragraph.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: These lies might go over all right at Bluff Point!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: He said—

For several weeks past, all the Garratt engines have been laid up, due to the refusal of enginemcn to operate them, following on a series of derailments.

I say that any employer, let alone a State Government, that expects its employees to risk their lives and limbs in operating the class of engines described as that gentleman described the Garratt engines in 1945, is expecting just a little too much.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You will get a couple of stripes!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Due to the unwarranted delay in effecting these necessary repairs—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: If you keep on saying it, you will believe it yourself.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is not true. I will get the papers tabled later.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You must have been a key railwayman to get that letter.

Hon. N. Keenan: Do not talk to one another.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Many years ago, the railway wages men asked the then Labour Government to extend to them advantages similar to those enjoyed by what is known as the railway salaried staff. Ultimately, a motion was moved in this Chamber for a Select Committee to inquire into these demands. If my memory serves me aright, the member for Perth was on that committee; he was not chairman of it. The committee sat, made its inquiries, and furnished a report. Again, from memory, I think the report was favourable to the men's demands, but it was never honoured. Not many of those old men are left, but I do ask this Government to inquire very closely into the men's claims and, if at all possible, to extend to them the benefits enjoyed by the salaried staff.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The members of this Government promised it to them.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not know that the member for Fremantle has any right to speak for the members of this Government.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There are many things you do not know.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Before leaving the railways, I will touch on what is known as the Midland railway. I do not think many members have travelled on it. I have here a Perth paper dated the 31st August, 1946, and I refer to a paragraph headed "Modern Coaches for Railways," in which the Commissioner is reported to have said—

Saloon type construction is planned for day trains on country services. These coaches will follow the general design of the new suburban coaches, with necessary additions for the comfort of passengers travelling longer journeys.

That is being done whilst we, who use the Midland railway, are riding in carriages that have been in service since I was a little boy. I am now going to quote from the report that the chairman of directors of the Midland Railway Co. delivered to his shareholders. It was reported in "The West Australian" of the 3rd April last, and states—

The stations and buildings, including workshops, I was pleased to find in a fair state of repair, but the rail position is bad, and be-

fore I left I instituted a re-laying programme. This, I am afraid, will be a heavy strain on our profits and cash resources, but I am convinced that it is necessary in the interests of all classes of stockholders, whether the railway's ownership remains as it is or if at some future date ownership should change.

What about the interests of the passengers who risk their lives travelling on that route? I have always been under the impression that that line was subject to an annual inspection by the Commissioner's officers. But it takes the chairman of directors to come out here to find out that the rail position is definitely dangerous. I have one other short quotation from this report, as follow:—

For the current year, I feel I cannot hold out any hope that we shall do better than last year; in fact, for some years to come we must expect increases in expenses, which can only be countered by increase in the volume of traffic. This, I am sure, will come in Western Australia, but I fear it will not come quickly, apart from a slight acceleration due to returned soldier movements. Ultimately, it seems logical that our railway will become part of the Western Australian State railway system, though, unlike in this country, there is no urge to nationalise for nationalisation sake, at any rate in Western Australia. One thing is certain, that is, whatever the future holds for us, continuing as an independent system, or becoming part of the State-owned railway, at this juncture it will pay us to maintain our line and improve where we can.

I do not know what is in the mind of the present Government or what was in the mind of the previous Government. We know that the previous Government favoured nationalisation of all it could possibly get hold of, that it was in power for a long period, but that no attempt was made to do anything in the matter.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We were never in power while you were in the Upper House.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That no attempt was made by the previous Government in this direction is somewhat surprising. It is altogether wrong for an important railway such as this to be handled by a private company. The Government of the day found it advisable to buy out the company that owned the Great Southern Railway, and the Government of the day nearly accomplished the purchase of the Midland Railway. If the interests of the people living along the Midland Railway line are to be considered it is time attention was given to the project of buying the railway. I

say this because people living along that line pay higher freights for their goods and higher passenger fares than are paid on the Government lines. That does not seem to be British justice.

Mr. Fox: I suppose the same thing would apply to the banks.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The next matter I come to is that of transport. I am not satisfied with the present set-up. I was not satisfied with the one-man control that was so long tolerated by the previous Government, and even now, when a board has been appointed, I do not think we are very much better off. I have read in "The Daily News" from time to time the number of allocations made to people residing in the metropolitan area. I wonder why we cannot have made public the total number of allocations made and where they go. Motor transport is of great importance to people who are endeavouring to do their job in the country, and these are the persons who should have priority. Apparently, however, that does not obtain. It may obtain, but I do not know of it. If it does not obtain I ask the Minister controlling that matter to look into it and satisfy himself that people in the country do receive the priority to which they are entitled.

Education is a big subject. I am satisfied that the new Minister in charge of this department will stand up to his task and discharge his duties to the best of his ability. I have been struck by the claim that has endured for many years that our system of education is free, secular and compulsory. Emphasis is laid on the word "secular." What is wrong with us? Are we afraid to set up to our professions? We claim to be a Christian community but we leave religious or Christian instruction in Government schools to the parsons. It may be said that no one is better fitted to give such religious instruction than is a parson. The small time allotted to that aspect, however, is not sufficient. I want to know what influence is responsible for the fact that teachers are not allowed to teach at least the Ten Commandments. Surely there is no difference of opinion on that point.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: He never did know.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We know about our duty towards our neighbour and towards God. I had been under the impression that the Ten Commandments were not taught. I am not unacquainted with teachers.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Special scripture lessons are given by the teachers at the schools.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: A member of my family was a teacher. It may be as the member for North-East Fremantle says, but I am afraid that the teaching is honoured more in the breach than the observance.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Nonsense!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Minister is not out and about to enable him to see these things.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The inspectors are out and about and have to make a report.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I still contend that this is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. What has urged me to say all this is the evidence that was given by one who is now the Commissioner of Police in Western Australia on the occasion when he appeared before the Select Committee appointed to inquire into delinquent children. That officer said that in his opinion it was lack of religious training in our State schools that was largely responsible for the rate of delinquency. At that time the Commissioner was the Chief Inspector of the Police Department.

Mr. Marshall: That was only his opinion.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: He has spent a lifetime in the police force.

Mr. Marshall: Did he submit facts to prove his statement?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The next matter with which I will deal is the Child Welfare Department. The Speech says—

Measures contemplated to extend and improve the functions of the Child Welfare Department include the reorganisation of the Children's Court and the appointment of a qualified staff.

If any reform were long overdue it is this particular one. I do not think I would have any difficulty in persuading an impartial tribunal on that point. In 1937, before the war which has been such a convenient excuse for failure to do this and that, a deputation waited on the Minister concerned, the present member for Northam.

It was introduced by the present member for Perth. The latter hon. member pressed the need for the re-establishment of a psychological clinic with a trained psychologist in charge. He said that the State had suffered because the previous clinic had been discontinued. He thought it was a penny wise and pound foolish policy. Dr. Moss and Dr. Williams were also on the deputation. Dr. Moss said that as a visitor to the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, he had found that two children were sent there because there was no other place for them to go. To his horror he found that they had been sent to that place after they had escaped from the Seaforth Home for Boys. Dr. Williams said that a full inquiry as to the best methods by a qualified commissioner should be undertaken. Dr. McMahon, the Rev. K. Baxter and Mrs. Rischbeith were also on the deputation. Now I come to the Minister's reply. I will read it carefully so that it may sink in. He said—

The fact that there is a difference of opinion even among members of this deputation shows the difficulty of the problem. We will have to proceed carefully and, in fact, we are proceeding carefully, but we are getting somewhere. Since the original scheme was submitted twelve months ago we have done much work and given a great deal of time to the matter, and we are slowly and surely reaching the stage when definite proposals will be ready for the consideration of Cabinet. I hope that this day will not be far distant.

That was in 1937 and it was a most important matter affecting the young delinquents of the State. The war then intervened and the Government had orders to get the prisoners away from the Fremantle Gaol. It had them removed to Barton's Mill, thereby doing something which is unparalleled in the history of the British Empire. It sent boys to an adult prison.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Who did that—the Government or the magistrate?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Government! I am grateful for that interjection. The magistrate complained bitterly. References were made in the Press on scores of occasions to the fact that he had nowhere else to send the boys. An article written by a gentleman who is listening to me, but is not a member, appeared in "The Daily News" and has brought about some improvement. He said that the conditions of this place were a disgrace to the Government and

the people of the State. I called upon him and said, "Is this some sensational yellow journalism on your part? Order me out of your room if you like." He said, "I will show you something I received from a sailor." Sailors are not the most sensitive of people. This man had missed his ship and was sent out to Barton's Mill and wrote the letter to which I have referred. Subsequent to that I moved a motion in another place for the appointment of a Select Committee. It was hotly and strongly opposed by the Chief Secretary. Members for once stuck to me and the Select Committee was appointed.

Hon. P. Collier: It is about the only time in your existence that they did so.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The member for Boulder has come to life. I have done something if I have brought him out.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You had better not bring him too far.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The committee was afterwards turned into a Royal Commission. We examined all the people who knew anything about that sort of thing. The witnesses included the Commissioner of Police, the chief of the C.I.D., the Director of Education and many others. The Royal Commission was representative of all sides of the House. The findings were unanimous and were duly presented to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor. The Government, however, took the view that because the Royal Commission came from another place there was no need to take any notice of it. It said, in effect, "We resent the appointment of the committee, and now it has put in its report we will ignore it."

To be accurate, I shall say that the Government did accept one recommendation. There had been only one probationary officer, but after the inquiry a second probationary officer was appointed. Then there was the disgraceful building in which these boys were locked up pending trial. I understand that it had previously been decided to make necessary alterations but the work was held up on account of a petty dispute between various departmental officers. We cannot claim any credit for that. Except for what I have just stated, no notice was taken of our recommendations although to carry them into effect would have cost very little money. The principal recommendation, taken from evidence which

had been given in South Australia, was the formation of a Children's Council, on which were to be officers from the Child Welfare Department, the Education Department, the Police Department and so on. The idea was that the departments concerned would co-ordinate their knowledge and action, a system which has operated with marked success in South Australia. No action has been taken here, however, to carry that out. Now we have a new Government which has already taken action.

Might I at this stage mention something which, in my experience at any rate, was unprecedented? Yet no notice was taken of it! When the member for Northam was controlling the Child Welfare Department, he got hold of Mr. Schroeder and, believe it or not, appointed him magistrate of the Children's Court. I have not one word to say against Mr. Schroeder, but I have against the member for Northam, who with his well-known eloquence must have persuaded Cabinet to appoint Mr. Schroeder. As I have indicated, there was not one word of protest from anybody.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Mr. Schroeder did an excellent job.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: If a non-Labour Government had done that, the Civil Service would have gone on strike. Have we reached such a state of affairs that the personal friend of a Minister can be put into an office like that? Anyhow, it will not pass without a word of protest from me.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You are quite vicious in suggesting that he was appointed because he was a personal friend. That was not the reason.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am glad to hear it, but if it was not for that reason, what is the explanation?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Mr. Schroeder was not in Northam when he was appointed.

The Minister for Education: He had been.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Why was an inexperienced man like Mr. Schroeder appointed over the heads of other men who had been in the department for years?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: In what department?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: In any of the other departments. I happen to know the gentleman who vacated the position of secretary to the department some time ago.

I have not discussed this matter with him, but what would have been wrong with appointing him to the position?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I advise you not to press that question, or I might tell you why he was not appointed.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I speak with some experience. Why were applications not called for the position? I do not say that the member for Northam should necessarily have confined himself to making an appointment from the Civil Service, but the filling of the position of magistrate of the Children's Court was an important matter.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I have never heard of applications being called for magistrates or judges.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Then the hon. member has not heard everything.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Could you give us an instance?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: From information supplied by the department, there are 426 boys on probation. Are we going to toy with this important matter still longer? Do we want to give those boys a chance? If so, let us get somebody who can help those boys back to the right track. There are all sorts of reasons to account for boys behaving as they should not do, but to expect two probationary officers—there was only one for years during the regime of the Labour Government—to look after that number is to expect an absolute impossibility.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: How many boys were on probation when you made your report?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Children's Court meets in Perth on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at Fremantle on Thursday, and at Midland Junction on Tuesday, and one or other of those two officers must be in attendance. Yet they have 426 boys to whom they must be friend, counsellor and guide. I should like to know when those officers find time to do their work. Mostly they have to contact these boys during leisure time, which means that they have to work long hours. We had an outstanding man in the person of Mr. Bulley, who acted alone in that department for many years. To meet him was an inspiration. He was not a bit soured by the shocking examples of youthful delinquency with which he had to deal. He retired, and we have two very good officers in his place.

The Minister for Education: Two more are being appointed.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am pleased to hear that. To expect two men to do justice to such important work is both ridiculous and unfair. I have shown how important matters can be side-tracked and how procrastination can continue from year to year. Steps were to have been taken to improve matters years ago, but then the war broke out and nothing could be done, could it? The present Government has seen fit to appoint a magistrate to make an inquiry into native affairs.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Did the Government call for applications in that instance?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I should like to know whether the gentleman who has been appointed has any special qualifications or any knowledge of native affairs. He may have; I do not know, but I think it would be far better to give effect to the recommendations of the Moseley Royal Commission than to hold another inquiry.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: How many of the recommendations of that Commission have not been put into effect?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We heard the other evening from the member for Irwin-Moore something of the state of affairs still prevailing at the Moore River settlement. Mr. Moseley dealt very trenchantly with the shocking conditions there and according to the member for Irwin-Moore, there has been little, if any, improvement. Rather than hold another inquiry, I think it would have been better had the Government endeavoured to give effect to Mr. Moseley's recommendations.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: How many of his recommendations were not put into effect?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I wish to pay a tribute to the present acting Commissioner of Native Affairs. In him we have a man who, I believe, is conscientiously endeavouring to do his best in what is admittedly a very difficult job.

I listened with interest to the member for Mt. Magnet when he was speaking of the great development work likely to be carried out in the North-West and also when he referred to something which I hope will prove to be of great value to the State, namely, the gasification of coal. While he was

speaking, I could not help wondering why the Labour Party, which was so long in power and which the hon. member supported, did not give attention to this very important matter.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It did.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The member for Mt. Magnet urged the present Government to give attention to the matter. Did he urge the previous Government to do so?

Hon. A. H. Panton: It did so. The results of today are due to the action taken by the previous Government. Surely you will admit that!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I should like to mention the claims of two societies in this city. I refer first of all to the Braille Society, which is doing a very noble work, and to the Industrial School for the Blind, with the work of which we are all familiar. The Braille Society is sorely in need of decent premises, and it is high time this State followed the example of the other States by setting aside a site where proper accommodation could be provided for these people. Another society engaged in doing noble work is the Children's Protection League. Notwithstanding the little time I have at my disposal, I have been appointed to the executive of both those bodies and am acquainted with their excellent work. The Children's Protection League undertakes the care of children while their mothers go out to work. The mothers leave their children with the society in the morning, go out and do a day's work and then pick them up in the evening. Surely such a society has a claim for financial support from the Government! I hope the Government will do something for it.

I cannot conclude my speech without referring to some remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition the other evening. He said—

I say with all modesty and humility that it has not been the lot of many men in public life in Western Australia to have an opportunity of saving a million of money.

I would remark, as the member for Kanowna said yesterday, that as in business, so in politics, risks must be taken. It would be a comparatively easy thing for a man enjoying the position held by the member for Gascoyne to put by a million if he neglected—and I am of opinion that he did—to undertake very essential public works. There is

an old saying that one cannot have one's cake and eat it too. The hon. member might congratulate himself upon having done something in this direction but, when he went before the people, they showed their disapproval of his actions. It was not lying propaganda on the other side that was responsible for the defeat of the Labour Government; it was Labour's failure to grasp the opportunity that came its way.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Before tea, I was receiving interjections to which I was unable to reply at the moment. I have since looked up the information and may inform the member for Murchison that the Coal-mining Bill on which I voted in another place was passed on the second and third readings without any division, and only a couple of minor amendments were made to the Bill in Committee. I would repeat a statement made by the member for Kanowna because it is worth repeating for the information of those who might not have heard it. He said that risks have to be taken in politics as well as in business. I maintain that the Government which has just vacated office had not great—a word occurs to me; I was nearly stuck—perspicacity.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What does that mean?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: They could not see advantages which were sticking out like a peninsula to most ordinary people and so, in vulgar parlance, they missed the bus, with the result that when they went to their masters—

Member: Who are their masters?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The people. When they went to their masters, the result was that, instead of sitting in the honoured position on your right, Mr. Speaker, they are now sitting on your left.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Did you not nearly miss the bus yourself?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: They were thrown out, and we can quite understand their feelings of chagrin and disappointment, feelings which have been so ill-concealed by certain ex-Ministers. I have never witnessed a more regrettable exhibition made by anyone who took part in a losing fight. Those ex-Ministers gave vent to their feelings of chagrin and disappointment. The words of an old Australian poet come to me now—

It is easy enough to be pleasant when life goes along with a song,
But the man worth while is the man who will smile when everything goes wrong.

When one is on the top of the wave and everything is going well, one is a darned good fellow; but when he is in the trough of the wave it is not so pleasant. Now we find that these chaps who yesterday were such fine fellows do not show up quite so well. We had an example of their pettiness and peevishness. I can quite understand them; they had been in office for so long, with their luxurious apartments, motorcars, attendants, secretaries and typists. Now I see them lolling about in a little poky room supposed to accommodate 50 members of Parliament, and knocking timidly on the typist's door, together with the rest of the 80 members, to get their correspondence typed. We have all had to do it. Before, they did not even press a button; they had somebody to press the button for them. They had a motorcar, a secretary and a typist and a fellow to make up their expenses account.

Can one expect men who for years and years have been surrounded by every comfort and who have enjoyed privileges and advantages to "take it"? But they have to take it, and the sooner they make up their mind and stand up to it and smile, the better they will be appreciated by the people of the State. Nobody likes to see a man take a beating badly; and, if I may say so, for the benefit of members who spoke the other night, some of the more prominent of them have exhibited a very bad spirit in tackling a team of men who have assumed office to govern this State without previous Ministerial experience and with a very slender majority. The task of those men is far from being enviable. It would appeal to any sportsman, to any man with any chivalry in him at all, to give those men a chance. Fond as I may be of expressing my opinion, I shall endeavour to curb my natural disposition to criticise them, because I know the very difficult position in which they find themselves.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Let us all burst out crying!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Had the hon. member set an example, I should have expected a couple of crocodile tears!

The Minister for Lands: He squeals; he does not cry!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: To come back to the member for Northam, who just interjected, I am no match for him, as I well know. Nevertheless, I am here to say what I think.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You do not think.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The member for Northam, in an interjection a few days ago to a member on the Government side of the House, when he was being taunted with taking it badly, said, in that easy way he has, "You have added ten years to my life." I wonder whether the member for Northam has ever witnessed that delightful comedy "The Arcadians." I wonder whether he remembers the song "A Short Life and a Gay One." The member for Northam wants to live a long time to be miserable. I would rather have a short life and a gay one. I think he has had a long life and a pretty gay one, too. Now, at the end of his days, he can stop right where he is.

I ask the indulgence of the House while I speak on a matter very important to me, namely, child welfare. I have here a number of cuttings from "The West Australian" telling the people of the State the crimes—not petty offences, but serious crimes—committed by boys. I ask any man with a proper realisation of his duty to those boys whether we are doing our duty by them. We have no psychiatrist in this State, but we have a consultant. When those boys are committed to an institution, what happens? I know, because I have visited the institutions. Let me tell the members who do not know, and perhaps some who do, that in none of those institutions is there a trained staff to deal with those boys.

Has any member ever thought of this? A child irrespective of age commits a misdemeanour and is brought before the Children's Court. The magistrate, if he finds the charge proved, invariably says, "I commit you to the care of the State." Let us follow that up. What does the State do? The child is not committed to the care of the State at all. He is taken to a State receiving home, it is true; but then the State shelves its responsibility on to various religious denominations to which it used to pay a paltry amount—1s. per day—for the upkeep of each child. To the everlasting credit of the new Government it can be said that it has already increased the

amount paid. When the member for Northam was Minister, a deputation awaited upon him from the religious bodies concerned, and it is the only time I can remember when religious differences were forgotten. Without exception, all the Churches were represented on the deputation which asked that the miserable pittance paid for keeping the State wards be increased.

Again the usual promise was made that the matter would receive favourable consideration. But it was left to the present Government to increase the rate during the few months that it has been in power. On the 14th March of this year, I received a letter signed by the member for Kanowna, who was then Minister for Justice, in reply to one I had written to him asking him to stop the abominable practice of having adults tried by a Children's Court magistrate. This is something that has been taken up right throughout the State. I have had this letter in reply. It is unfavourable. I am not blaming the hon. member. I dare say this is the advice tendered to him by his legal adviser. But I am asking the present Government—and I will make the letter available to the Attorney General on his return—to act in the matter, because I consider it entirely improper for an adult to appear before a Children's Court magistrate. We should do our duty by these boys who go astray. God knows they often do so through causes over which they have no control. My study of this question has forced me to the conclusion that they need special care and handling.

If we do not take the action we should take in this very important matter there may be dire results. I would refer to a man who was foolish enough to go around committing serious offences. I think that he lived in your electorate, Mr. Speaker. When the police raided his premises they found them to contain all sorts of stolen goods. There must be something mentally wrong with a man for him to carry on like that. When they went down and unearthed these goods what happened? A valuable member of the community lost his life; he was shot dead. The offender was tried and found guilty. I understand that it is not the policy of the Labour Party to inflict capital punishment, so he was sentenced to imprisonment for life. The other day this poor unfortunate tried to regain his liberty, quite a natural thing for him to do. In this

age of enlightenment, he was sentenced—I am not blaming the magistrate; it is the law of the country—to one month's solitary confinement and 14 days on bread and water. That was his punishment for attempting to gain his liberty.

That is not the way in which we should treat men afflicted as that man is. I am not pleading for him. I say it would have been much more humane to end his existence. I will go so far as to declare that if I could take him a little cyanide I would be doing him a kindness. To shut a man up for the rest of his life and commit him to solitary confinement for a period is terrible! Has anybody stopped to think what it means? And then to give him 14 days on bread and water! That is something handed down from the bad old days. It is time we had a little more humanitarian treatment for people afflicted as this man is.

Mr. Graham: Stretch his neck!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Anything would be better than what is being done with him now. I want to refer to something for which the late Government is very largely responsible. It is about the last item in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. I refer to the condition of the North-West. I have been hearing about the wonderful potentialities of the North-West ever since I was a boy. A little while ago, fewer people lived there than when I was young. Who has represented the North-West during several years past? Members of the Party that has just gone out of power! To show what loyalty exists up there, all those members have been returned. One nearly lost the number of his mess, but they all came back.

I have here a copy of "Hansard" of 1938, containing a speech made by a former member of this House. Even my friends opposite will say that he knew what he was talking about when I mention that I am referring to the former member for Geraldton. While he was Premier and Treasurer of this State he moved a motion concerning the Yampi Sound iron-ore deposits and this is what he said, in part—

This State lacks the necessary financial resources with which to develop the North-West.

He went on to talk about the Commonwealth Government not only refusing assistance to develop industry but having in this particular instance strangled a proposal to establish an industry within the State's borders.

That was the testimony of the former Premier and Treasurer of this State, made during a debate nine years ago. Ever since that time until recently his Party had been in power. Is it not a fact, however, that some years ago the Commonwealth Government made an offer to take over portion of this great North-West? How was the offer received? I care not to what Government it was made. Why on earth did not the Willcock Government and, after that, the Wise Government follow it up? I am not in favour of unification but I think my friends opposite are. If they could not do justice to such a large undeveloped territory as exists there, why did not they either get Federal assistance or say, "We have not got the financial resources to do our duty by this part of the State; you take it over?"

I make bold to say that no attempt has been made to get the Commonwealth to shoulder the financial responsibility that undoubtedly exists there. It is not as if attention has not been drawn to this matter by all sorts of people. I will start with the last. Mr. Dumas has this to say, "Urgent need for development stressed." That is in "The West Australian" of the 8th August last. "Empty North. Urgent research needed." That is by a man whose opinion is worth having, one of the Duracks, and is to be found in "The West Australian" of the 10th February, 1945. "Life in the North. Pastoralists' difficulties." That appeared on the 12th December, 1939, and comes from Frank Thompson, Pardoo, Port Hedland. "Northern Australia. This State's territory. Question of transfer." That is in "The West Australian" of the 18th January, 1938. "Cost of production affecting fiscal policy." That is from a letter from Mr. Sleeman, Whim Creek. He has nothing to do with the member for Fremantle.

All these men have a close knowledge of the subject, but apparently no action has been taken by the Government which has just been defeated at the hands of the people. It was not defeated as the result of lying propaganda—not as the result of fraud over a twopenny-halfpenny tin-pot appointment, but as the result of its absolute failure to deliver the goods to the people! The next matter I want to discuss is trade union domination. Some years ago I was present at a public meeting at Fremantle that was addressed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Chifley. He said,—

There are vested interests, other than those composed of wealth, who try to bring pressure to bear on the Government.

He went on to say,—

Such actions will not be tolerated.

What is the position today? We have had the humiliating spectacle for some time past of an Eastern States union absolutely dictating what might be called the foreign policy of the country. It has put an embargo on exports, and now, emboldened by its success, we have something similar occurring in our own State. Of course, this sort of thing will go on while Governments refuse to exercise their undoubted authority. Mr. Chifley, the Prime Minister, told the people of Fremantle that such actions would not be tolerated. "By their acts ye shall know them." They are bringing this country into such a condition that law and order are things to be sniffed at. An absolutely dictatorial position has been adopted. It is not for any one set—I care not what section, whether primary producers, lumpers, railway men or others—to dictate to the duly elected government of the country. At least, that is if we care a twopenny dump about our democratic system of government! What is this going to lead to unless some action is taken?

Mr. Hoar: What sort of action?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I want to speak not only of trade union domination but of something that has been mentioned frequently throughout the Empire in the last few years, and that is the matter of Cabinet domination.

Mr. Mann: A very good subject.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Those of us who are anxious to maintain parliamentary control, whether it is by a government of our political colour or not, should be jealous of the present state of affairs. I have for some years been witnessing the expenditure by Cabinet of huge sums of money. It has commenced works, without any Parliamentary authority, and then come here and said, "O.K. this, because you cannot refuse to do so as half the money has been spent." That is a travesty on democracy. Our own Party is in power and it is up to the rank and file members to see that we have some say. We have put the present Ministers in the positions they hold, and we should keep them up to the collar.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: This sounds like a revolt.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Dealing with parliamentary Government, I want to quote that great American, Thomas Jefferson. He said—

That Government is strongest of which every man feels himself a part.

That is true today. So I say to the members of my Party, "Do not let this Cabinet get away with something you do not approve of." I was pleased to hear, last night, a young member say when he was expressing his dissatisfaction, "Do not be afraid; stand up and air your views." I know what it means. My mind goes back to the courageous stand of the member for Murchison when he got up in this Chamber and trounced his own Party for bringing in something with which he did not agree. He said, "That I should live to see the day when a Party I have supported the whole of my life should be guilty of bringing in something whereby the prospector is banished from the gold-bearing and auriferous country of the State!" It was some years before he was forgiven. With the assistance of the combined parties he managed to beat his own Government. I shall never forget his courageous action on that occasion. He has set an example. It is easy to get up and fight the other side, but not so easy to rise and speak one's mind about one's own crowd. If I have not been here where Cabinets are made, I have a fair idea of what goes on. I was in the Public Service for some years, and if one did not keep in step and be a good boy, one missed the plums. It is the same here. I do not say that to these chaps, because they are new.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members are not chaps.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am sorry. Mr. Bernard Shaw is reported to have said,—

Just because a thing is old is not to say that it is right. Acquit ye like men, be strong, act for yourself and above all, and the hardest task of all, think for yourself.

That is what we have to do here. If we would do our duty to the people we represent and—as I told my leader a few weeks ago, at a mayoral reception at my birth-place, Geraldton, which I am honoured to represent in this Chamber—I intend, party or no party, Government or no Government,

to continue in the future as I have in the past. I intend, irrespective of party, to endeavour to do my duty to the people I represent. I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will pardon me for making a suggestion to you. I do it in all sincerity and hope it will be accepted in that spirit. We have in Western Australia—in common with the Eastern States—a branch of what is known as the Empire Parliamentary Association.

It has not been my good fortune to visit the land of my fathers, affectionately known as the Old Country, but my son served for five years in the Air Force and from him I gained some idea of what the people of the Old Country suffered during the last war. Today we all know what is confronting them and, although individually we may be doing all we can, I would suggest not that the Government do something, but that we all do something; that you, Mr. Speaker, confer with your co-President of this branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association, with a view to calling a meeting of members of both Houses. I think it would be a wonderful gesture to the people of this country to show that we could sink our political differences and get together to make a concerted effort to prove to the people of that dear land of ours that we appreciate the sacrifices they made to uphold our way of living. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [8.3]: I desire, Mr. Speaker, to join with other members in extending to you my congratulations on your appointment to the office that you now hold, and to express the confidence I feel that you will be able to carry out your duties, if not as well as did your predecessor, at least in a manner nearly approaching his standard. During the course of the debate we have heard a number of new speakers making for the first time their contribution to the debate in this House. The majority of them made an excellent job of it and gave many of the older members a considerable amount of food for thought. There were, however, one or two exceptions, who departed from the style of maiden speech that this House has known for so long. The previous speaker told us such a lurid story of Labour's sins that I have

already booked a berth with Old Nick, for fear that the rush would be so great that some of us might miss the bus.

The Minister for Lands: At all events you are going to the right place!

Mr. KELLY: I made only one other reservation. It was for the Minister for Lands.

The Minister for Lands: That is all right. I know where I am going.

Mr. KELLY: The excellent contribution of the member for Irwin-Moore to the debate showed that he had a thorough knowledge of his subject, but I regret to say that he fell into the same error as many others and entered the arena of criticism. I have no intention of criticising his remarks nor of joining in the recriminations that have been delivered from various quarters—not excepting either side—during the course of this debate.

The criticism levelled by the member for Irwin-Moore was sufficient to spur me to do a little research into some of the sins and shortcomings that he attributed to Labour. Some of those actions and enactments took place before I came into this House and I had to delve back a long way, but I think they are worth recording and should be given to the House, because some of the things that Labour is said to have left undone are shown by the records to have been completed. The hon. member levelled plenty of criticism at members of the Government that has gone out of office, for its agricultural or land policy, but I find that there is ample evidence that a great deal was accomplished by it and I believe that an enumeration of its achievements is well worth while.

The member for Mt. Magnet last night told the House that the Agriculture Vote, which in 1933 was £66,000, was £215,000 in 1946-47. It is interesting to see how some of the amount voted was expended. During Labour's term of office agricultural research stations were established in a number of centres, from the Ord River to as far south as Denmark. In the same period many agricultural colleges were established, among the most notable of them being those at Muresk and Denmark. They were sponsored, built, opened and carried on by Labour, to the great satisfaction of many people and the benefit of the sons of agriculturalists in this State. Animal health laboratories costing over £30,000 were established.

Perhaps the reason why it is necessary to remind members of the expenditure in those directions lies in the fact that neither the Treasurer of the day nor the Minister responsible for that department saw fit to place his name on the foundations of those buildings. In Labour's land policy also we see a great deal of vigour and vision put into the relief of people who went on the land in far-flung areas. Large amounts were written off re-purchased estates. I know that to be a fact as on many occasions I have had to put up cases for people to whom such reductions were available, and at all times I succeeded in having creditable amounts written off for them. The prices for conditional purchase land were reduced in all by £570,000. That was the reduction in the price of 4,000,000 acres of Crown Land that was affected in the outer agricultural areas of the State. Into that writing down came a large portion of the electorate that I represent, Yilgarn-Coolgardie.

The marginal area policy of the Labour Government, too, was responsible for giving a great deal of satisfaction to many people in my district. Its linking-up policy has been an outstanding achievement and was highly advantageous to the many settlers who were able to take advantage of it. The writing down of properties has also given complete satisfaction. Group settlement indebtedness to the tune of £1,879,000 has been written off since 1934. Advances under the Industries Assistance Act have been written down during the last 10 years to the extent of £1,375,000, while Agricultural Bank indebtedness written off during Labour's 14 years of office exceeded £8,000,000. The pastoral industry, too, has received a certain amount of consideration, the writing off of land rents under a scheme initiated by the Labour Government having been £522,000. Under the voluntary debt adjustment scheme, to which the Government contributed, there has been a reduction in debts exceeding £400,000.

At this stage it is well to remind members opposite that Western Australia alone was compensated for areas thrown out of production during the war period. Other States had very strong claims to similar consideration but, owing to the strong case presented by our representative, a member of the Government, we were able to obtain over a period of several years a sum of half a million a year by way of refund to assist the agriculturists of this State. My list is

nowhere near complete, and I could not be charged with levelling undue criticism at the other section of the House if I enumerated the many other advantages that the State obtained through the Labour Government.

The member for Forrest, during his speech, gave a very entertaining and instructive dissertation on the timber industry. Members, I think, will agree that the outstanding point of his remarks was that we in this State should take heed of the very timely warning he gave. I do not profess to know much about the timber industry, but one point missed by the hon. member was the huge amount of waste that prevails on almost every mill, and particularly the smaller mills. I speak of the material that is destroyed in the form of sawdust and face or first cuts. This is a matter that should receive close attention because, in both instances, valuable and useful products are simply being wasted in the fires that are continually burning. The Railway Department should consider the question of hauling much of that waste material to the city and even to the country areas, including the Goldfields, at a reduced rate in order to eliminate this extensive waste in an industry which we have been told has at best a limited life.

With other members, I must express regret that the portfolio of Mines has been allotted to a Minister in another place. The vast importance of the mining industry warranted the allotment of that portfolio to an able Minister in this House, and he should have been given that portfolio alone in order that he might devote the whole of his time to the re-building of the industry in its many phases.

I intend to direct most of my remarks to the goldmining industry. Normally, on this occasion, my remarks would have been largely parochial and confined to the requirements of the district I represent, but I feel that the national outlook is so serious that such remarks can remain in abeyance for the present in order that I may deal with the industry on broader lines. His Excellency's Speech contained very little, if any, indication of Government policy. Although the Speech was quite a long one, it contained only two lines about the goldmining industry. To me this was surprising, considering the importance that goldmining must be to the future of this State. I have awaited some announcement of Government policy as to this industry, but apart from one or two references from the Mines Department—remarks

by competent gentlemen and a department doing excellent work—we have not been given any indication of the Government's policy, although it has held office for several months.

It is time we were told what the Government's intentions are. I made the same remark about the Party that was in power previously. An announcement of policy is necessary and has been necessary for quite a long time. The whole industry is working in the dark so far as the intentions of the Government are concerned. The Minister for Mines has visited various centres and made certain statements, but no statements that would commit the Government to a definite policy. The importance of the industry is so great that no time should be lost in formulating an elastic policy, one that is most generous in every respect. Despite the increased gold production in 1946, the State's gold output was only half what it was in 1939. We have had all kinds of eulogistic remarks about the industry in the Press, the majority of them in articles which set out that the industry has made great strides. I am not trying to depreciate to any degree the advances that have been made by the industry but there is room for a tremendous amount of improvement.

I intend to give the House particulars of the various positions in which we find the industry, as I consider these should be given some consideration. I mentioned the year 1939 for the reason that it was the peak period of Western Australia's gold production. In that year, 1,214,238 fine ounces brought to this State £11,842,946. In 1946, 616,964 fine ounces were won and brought to the State £6,640,069. It is reasonable to assume that the 1947 production will approach, or perhaps even exceed, slightly over 700,000 ounces, worth from £7,500,000 to £7,750,000. Undoubtedly, the figures are gradually rising, but we are now two years from the time of the cessation of hostilities and I consider that progress to be insufficient if we are to get back to the production in the past. At the present rate of increase, five years will be required to reach anything approaching the progress made from 1934 to the peak year of 1939, inclusive. An industry which reached the top of the ladder in 1939 fell to the depth which it reached during the war years. What is remarkable is that an industry which fell so quickly will take possibly seven to eight years to regain the position it held in 1939.

The industry today is in a parlous condition compared with its condition as we knew it in the past. I make that statement after having considered the industry from many angles. Mining costs have soared above the costs of any other industry. They have reached a level roughly 30 per cent. higher than pre-war. Wages during that time have increased 20 per cent.; commodities of all descriptions, including some we can supply and others that we must import, have risen 35 to 40 per cent. But during all that time we find that the price of gold itself—the product that we are producing at such high cost—has increased since 1940 only to the extent of 2.7 per cent. It is evident that the producers cannot continue to absorb these high costs and unless some assistance is given to the industry it will suffer an irreparable setback because of the many difficulties besetting it. These rising costs are forcing the mining companies into a most undesirable position, that of working on a selective basis. By that I mean that the quantity of ore held in reserve by the mines is to-day being approached and attacked from a different angle altogether. This will result in a loss to the State of a tremendous quantity of borderline ore. Millions of tons will be lost and lost for all time, because in most instances it will be necessary to fill the various places from which the ore is being extracted today.

To bridge the gap of ever-rising costs, it has been necessary for the major producing companies to treat a much higher grade of ore and that, of course, according to the particular size of the ore body being treated, has been necessary to meet to a large extent the increased costs, and also to provide shareholders and investors, who are the lifeblood of the industry when it comes to finding capital at least some return for their money that is lying dormant. Selective mining has been proved up to the present to have been responsible for the reduction of roughly 20 to 25 per cent. of the available ore in various mines. As an illustration, a mine normally working on a 4 dwt. head value now finds it necessary to step up that head value and work on roughly 5 dwt. or better in order to obtain the same financial result as when it was working on lower-grade ore. The natural consequence of working this higher-grade ore is the reduction, to a very great extent, of the life of the mines. The cases are not isolated.

Quite a number of mines today are working on a basis which eventually will mean con-

siderable loss to the State, not only from a financial point of view but also from the point of view of the employment of those engaged in the industry. The industry today is fraught with difficulties. Experienced labour is at a premium; essential mining commodities are in very short supply; delivery of spare parts is extremely slow; new equipment is almost unprocurable and, when procurable in any form, the cost is double and sometimes treble the pre-war cost; and all reserves, except in a few cases, are becoming depleted. I am not asserting that the reserves will fizzle out in a few days, a few months or even a few years, but they are gradually being depleted because of the selective mining that is now being carried on.

I fully appreciate that some of the things to which I have referred are transitory; but I would add that the industry has been too long in that transitory state. The industry, instead of being treated as it has been during the past two years, should be in process of reaching a higher standard than it has ever attained previously. The setback which the industry is receiving now, even if remedial measures were taken almost immediately, is going to have its effect over a period of years. There is little or no evidence that the gold-mining industry is being viewed by the Commonwealth Government at present in its proper perspective; and I feel that in view of the fact that Western Australia's contribution to the gold won in Australia is 75 per cent. of Australia's total production, this State's goldmines should be looked upon as a national asset by the Commonwealth.

The industry in this State is producing a commodity in connection with which there is no possibility of a slump ever occurring. There is no chance of over-production because gold is in such very great demand in all parts of the world. On the 18th June, the Prime Minister visited Kalgoorlie and met a deputation from the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Mines which stressed the difficulties confronting the industry and made a request to the Prime Minister that he consider the possibility of providing a bounty for it, if not of a permanent then of a temporary character in order to enable goldmining to get on to a better footing. The Prime Minister said he could not see his Government agreeing to a bounty in any form at all. I do not blame him for not committing his Government, but I think that at that stage the Commonwealth Government should have had a policy, just as our State Government should have had one,

designed to place the industry on the footing it deserves. Towards the end of the conference, the Prime Minister was asked what was the Government's policy in regard to the industry and his reply was reported in the Press as follows:—

Gold was a handy thing to have but he did not think they would go on producing gold at completely uneconomic levels. It was a handy exchange medium but could be too costly. It was not any particular use at the moment except to produce dollars, but in the aggregate the amount of dollars it produced was not great. He looked upon the maintenance of the industry from the angle of employment and keeping towns in existence.

That was a truly remarkable statement to come from our national leader, when it is considered that he was referring to one of the major industries of this State. I think it can be said that those remarks were in direct contrast to those made by the same gentleman in August, 1945, during a previous visit to Kalgoorlie. At that time he gave most heartening assurances that this State was going to climb very quickly into its pre-war position so far as goldmining was concerned. He eulogised the Goldfields for the very excellent results that had come from those centres both monetarily and from the point of view of manpower. He eulogised sacrifices made by the industry and said that when he went back among his colleagues the very first thing he would do would be to "pep up" the rehabilitation of that industry.

I contend that the first statement I read is entirely out of step with the policies of the gold producing countries of the world. There is not one other country the Government of which is not endeavouring to place back on the highest possible pinnacle an industry of such far-reaching and great importance. The Prime Minister said that he looked upon the maintenance of the gold industry from the employment angle. From that angle the industry has done a wonderful job, and 90 per cent. of the revenue it has produced has gone back over a period of years in the employment of people in the industry. In addition gold has a decided intrinsic value and an important bearing on our overseas dollar position. There is no doubt that the industry has to supply to a very great extent any surplus dollars we are likely to amass, particularly in the United States.

Referring to the Prime Minister's statement that the industry has very little other value I would point out the position with regard to exports of gold and other commo-

dities in 1938-39. In that year we exported gold from Western Australia to a value of £10,750,000: wheat, £3,627,000; wool, £3,250,000; flour, £500,000; beef, £250,000; mutton and lamb, £318,000; fruit, £648,000; and timber, £750,000. It is not a very hard arithmetical problem to discover that during that year the aggregate of exports other than gold was £9,000,000 whereas gold alone accounted for £10,750,000. Yet we are told that the sole value of this industry is in promoting employment! From the remarks I have read it is clear that the Commonwealth Government is not prepared to consider a bounty for the industry. I want to know why! There is no other industry at present in such dire need of a bounty as is the mining industry.

In fact no other industry in the whole of the Commonwealth has been denied an opportunity to increase prices commensurate with rising costs. Other mining industries have received and are receiving advantages from the higher prices paid for lead, silver and zinc. The goldminer must be given at least the face value of the product he produces. It is his right to enjoy something better than the pegged price for gold. Again, without labouring the question, gold is the one product for which Western Australia has a permanent overseas market. Without disparaging our other industries, I say that they are all subject to many changes. There are price fluctuations, droughts and other things that can prevent an exportable surplus. But that is not so with gold. If we produced ten million ounces of gold tomorrow we would still have a ready market for it. Therefore I say that the future of this State is largely dependent on what the goldmining industry will do in the next few months.

I have said that we have been refused a bounty. I do not think at the present time that there is a flat refusal. But it is now two months since the request was made and I have not heard of anything in the form of a bounty having been offered. So we must consider other forms of relief which might be applicable. Before the war this industry was responsible, directly and indirectly, for the livelihood and support of one-fifth of the population of this State. That is a wonderful effort for an industry that employs so few compared with many other industries. One form of assistance—and a very practical one too—that the Commonwealth Government could render would be

to abolish the special gold tax of 17s. 7½d. per fine ounce. A tax, as we know, is taken from profits, or is an addition to selling prices. That is the general definition of a tax.

Is this 17s. 7½d. a tax? I say it is not; it is a levy because it has to be paid irrespective of whether a mine is producing on a profitable basis, or is in an unprofitable position. That is definitely unjust. If it were a tax on profits then we should continue to extract it from the industry, but not when it is taken before any profit is made; and goodness knows there are many mines in the State today that are working either on the borderline of deficit, or are making but very little profit! If the Commonwealth Government is not prepared to grant a bounty it should terminate this unjust levy on an industry which today is, instead of being in an affluent position, barely struggling. In fact, I might be permitted to say that it is floundering.

A bonus in the form of the abolition of this tax would, at this stage, be a sound investment, and would mark sane business principles. If that were done for the next two or three years it would enable the industry to bridge at least part of the gap caused by rising costs. Without assistance, the life of the operating mines will be seriously reduced and the whole industry hampered. That will have this effect, that in a few years' time, when we require far more employment on the Goldfields than we have today, the mines will not be in a position to absorb the necessary number of men. Relief could also be given by lifting the artificial, pegged price. If that were done the gold producers could sell their product at its true value.

We have been told in this Chamber, and read in the Press and in various publications that gold is bringing very high prices on the open market of various countries. Very notable converts in regard to the principle of disposing of gold on a free market emanate from some of the Frenchmen who, today, are endeavouring to bring their country through a period of chaos. The price for gold on the open markets of the world varies considerably. A table recently published is worth repeating. It shows variations, in sterling, from £44 per fine ounce to £8 12s. At the present time, or within the last six weeks, gold in India is worth £20 per fine ounce. That is allowing for an import duty of £2 10s. an ounce. In Egypt it

is worth £15 6s. per fine ounce. In Hong Kong it is worth £16 6s; in Mexico, £9 14s. for bar gold and £11 6s. for coins; in Paris, £44—that is the peak of the market; in Turkey, £11 8s. and in London, £8 12s. These figures are all expressed in sterling.

The price for gold in Australia at present is £A10 15s. We are also told—I do not know whether the authority is quite as reliable as what I have just quoted—that in Singapore £30 is roughly the price offering for gold on the black market. I am not suggesting that we should enter into black market competition with other countries, or that our product is disposed of under those conditions, because there are sufficient legitimate channels through which we can sell it to the advantage of this State and the people engaged in the industry. Mexico saw fit to dispose of half of its stored gold at 45 dollars per fine ounce. That gave a tremendous uplift to the finances of that country, and there is no doubt that, even if it retains the half it is now holding, the extra ten dollars an ounce it has received will be sufficient to recompense it for quite a long time, even if there is a falling market, of which there is not the slightest chance.

If Australian gold were sold on a free market basis it would not only help this State, but would help the Commonwealth to build up a surplus of dollars that are so badly needed at present. We are told that the dollar position is responsible for the shortage of many commodities in the Commonwealth. Shortages are attributed commonly either to shipping or the lack of dollars. If it is not convenient to attribute it to the shipping position the shortage of dollars is blamed. The same thing comes to mind when the dollar position is credited with being responsible for the continuation of petrol rationing.

The goldmining industry is playing an important part in the financing of the affairs of our country, by reason of its overseas value in dollars. I appeal to the Government to leave no stone unturned, in the interests of this State, but to do everything possible to assist the industry. Instead of the huge strides that were being made before the war we are now doing little better than marking time, when it is considered that an increase of only 100,000 ounces of gold was forthcoming during the last twelve months, while working a higher grade of ore. I say that without casting reflections on anyone. If we continue in this apathetic

spirit and if the State Government—irrespective of its political complexion—sits down and allows the Commonwealth Government to dictate terms to the goldmining industry, instead of its being the wonderful revenue producing industry that we knew in 1939, it will gradually decline and become an encumbrance to the State.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [8.53]: It is a happy change, Mr. Speaker, to receive such a reception. I am happy to associate myself with the congratulations that have been so spontaneously offered you. I will not reiterate what I know is in the hearts and minds of all members regarding your good self. I can only express the hope that what has characterised some stages of the opening of this session will not continue, because if it does I am afraid you will be disillusioned after some of the references that have been made, and I would hate that to happen.

The first thought that occurs to one regarding this session is of the unfortunate recriminations that have been indulged in. It is only natural—as every member who has fought an election campaign knows—that there will be engendered a great deal of intensity and some exaggeration, and that when the position looks precarious for either side that exaggeration develops into recklessness. I think there is a good deal to be said for an overhaul of their viewpoints, by all political parties, as to the intelligence of the public generally in the matter of politics. One frequently hears complaints about the apathy of the people towards politics but I sometimes wonder whether both parties and individuals closely associated with political matters are not in large measure responsible for the situation that exists.

If we are to have a well informed public opinion and retain or regain the respect in which Parliamentary institutions should be held, the lead must obviously come from those closely associated with Parliament. I found it interesting to listen to observations on this aspect at the beginning of the session. To propagandists associated with all parties I would suggest that they might well direct their attention to presenting to the public at election and other times factual statements rather than those bordering on gross exaggeration, and by that means bring about a greater interest in politics

and in the members who seek to be returned. The effect of that would be all to the good in relation to the body politic.

I and the member for Victoria Park, being members of local authorities, can view the picture from another angle. I say—modestly but nevertheless sincerely—that politics in the Parliamentary arena could do with an injection of the spirit that animates the work of local authorities and the approach of such authorities to their problems. I know members may say how impracticable that is, but if speeches made here during this session are sincere—and I see no reason to doubt it—there is no reason why there could not be adopted the spirit that permeates the activities of local authorities. There, where differences of opinion and of political ideas are known to exist, the interests of the district concerned dominate the situation. Looking at Australia and at the world today one must realise that the primary need is for co-operation. One feels that if the opening of this session in some of its phases is to be typical of the rest of the Parliament that has now begun, one must say, in the words of the member who sat down a while ago, “God help Western Australia,” because the outlook for our country will be poor indeed.

I think it is grossly unfair for a member sitting as I do—somewhat associated with the Opposition—at this stage to comment on what the Government should do. I shall watch from here what the Government does in relation to the many problems of great magnitude that confront it. I would say, incidentally, that I do not attribute to the Government that recently left the Treasury Benches many of the sins alleged against it. I readily admit that it did a good job, in many respects, under most difficult circumstances. Let us be fair! There are many things the Labour Government omitted to do, but I ask myself, “What good can come from indulging in a post-mortem when we have such tremendous problems ahead of us waiting to be solved.

Though I find myself in a rather difficult position, since some reference has been made to the Government's slender majority and to the fact that we two Independents will be put to the test, as no doubt we shall be if one may judge by some of the statements that have been made, I hope that my colleague and I will be able to leave this

'chamber and say that at least we acted conscientiously in our appraisal of the various measures submitted for our consideration, and that so far as our ability would permit us, we exercised that impartiality of judgment which is so sorely needed in Australia today.

I should like to say at the present stage that one feels this to be all the more necessary in relation to a happening in another political arena during the last few days. I speak of this because, in another sphere, I had an opportunity of hearing the matter discussed. I refer, of course, to the action of the Commonwealth Government in relation to banking. I appreciate the efforts of those members who have given a great deal of time and thought to the subject and have treated us to dissertations running into hours. They have impressed me as being intensely honest in the views they have voiced. The remarks of one of those members I do not intend to traverse; I bow to his superior knowledge, but reserve the right to my own opinion that, if democracy is to survive, we must preserve the fundamentals.

When the Commonwealth Government said to the local authorities, "As from the 1st August, you shall transfer your accounts to the Government institution," it did something that was definitely wrong, and at the meeting to which I have referred, I expressed myself along those lines. In my opinion, certain banks have done things that warranted a good deal of castigation and, indeed, warranted some of the drastic action that has been taken very advisedly by various Governments of the Commonwealth in order to curb and control things, of which every member has a more or less intimate knowledge.

But this recent determination of the Commonwealth Government goes much further. Banking legislation has already been passed, and any member who has taken the trouble to study the amendments to the banking laws of Australia knows that today the Commonwealth Bank has sufficient control to guard adequately against the things which the banks did in the past and which were not in the best interests of the community. If, now, the Commonwealth Government attains the objective it has in mind, we may as well say that personal initiative and private enterprise and the things that constitute the fundamentals of democracy have

passed away. I say that, irrespective of which Party occupies the Treasury benches, when that sort of thing happens, the portals of democracy have been closed and it becomes a farce and a mockery.

I could give a number of instances within my own experience of how vital it is that there should be, in relation to banking and other commercial ventures, a choice of one's trader. I could quote instances where a presumably reputable bank has decided that certain things should not be done that were justifiable, and the Commonwealth Bank in several instances has been in this position. Luckily for the institution concerned and for the State, another bank decided to do it, and two or three of the institutions I have in mind have been extraordinarily successful in increasing employment for artisans and others and making material contributions to the Federal and State Treasuries. If this proposed legislation be passed, I wonder what will happen in a situation like that.

Members know that I do not subscribe to the platform of the Labour Party, and I am equally uninterested in the platform of the Liberal Party or the Country Party. My platform is everything and anything, irrespective of whence it emanates, provided it has definitely for its objective the good of the community. That is the only basis upon which progress can be made anywhere, and when could this be more necessary than at the present stage? So I say I feel almost nauseated when a Government, having failed to get in what obviously was the thin end of the wedge, now says, "Very well, if you will not take poison, we will cut your throat because it will be much quicker."

This is the first occasion on which I have made statements regarding a definite political matter, but it is time we spoke out. I realise that every member who subscribes to the platform of that Party has a right to his opinion, and he would be a very poor member who, having subscribed to that platform and signed on the dotted line, did not support those views. However, I am happily in the position of being able to say what I think, but I should like to know what would be revealed to be in the minds of some members of the Federal and State Labour Parties if they dared to express their real views.

Somebody might tell me that this statement amounts to a charge of insincerity. I realise that you, Mr. Speaker, would not permit me to mention a famous Bill that was introduced on one occasion but, without specifying the measure, I want to say that I told the Minister concerned when I was speaking to the Bill what I thought of it. He, however, did not elect to reply to me. This is what I told him and I still mean it—"He had no more interest in the Bill than I had, which was nil, but he had to put it up because he had been told to do so." I did not blame the Minister for so doing; he had subscribed to the principle of the Bill.

All I can say is that the sooner parties generally appreciate the drift that is occurring in every direction, the sooner will they gain the full respect of the public at large, the sooner we shall not have the spectacle, as we often do, of 44 per cent. of the people, instead of 100 per cent. voting, and the sooner Australia, and Western Australia in particular, will be travelling along the road of progress. There are many matters in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech upon which one could say a great deal. The Speech resembles its predecessors so far as I am able to judge. It seems to be a foreword to a book of account and I am more interested in the possible plans which the Government has in mind. As I said earlier, however, it would be grossly unfair to criticise the Government at this stage, because we do not know what it is going to do.

Mr. Needham: It does not know itself!

Mr. SHEARN: I shall not reply to that interjection, as it takes me all my time to watch my own thoughts and express them. The Government's majority is slender. I was impressed by a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition, when he was speaking on the Supply Bill, as to the legislation which the Government has already indicated that it is bringing forward. I presume my friend on my left has been similarly impressed. The Leader of the Opposition has expressed, in essence, my attitude. In other words, I find myself extraordinary as it may appear from the remarks I have already made, in the position of saying that I believe there is some good in the worst of us and—

Mr. Marshall: A little bad in the best of us.

Mr. SHEARN: Yes. The Leader of the Opposition had this to say—

There will be from me, and those associated with me on this side of the Chamber, the keenest desire—interpreting as I do the public anxiety—that we should as a party give the new Government every reasonable opportunity of carrying out its promises. I interpret the decision of the public to mean that such reasonable opportunity should be given the Government. The Government has, in its two parties, twenty-five seats and, accepting the defeat of our Government in the proper spirit, we are anxious that the new Government should be given an opportunity to show the public its ability in that connection.

Quite apart from the fact that those words express my sentiments, it is what I would have expected the Leader of the Opposition to say, knowing him as I do. I am sincere in saying that I would have been saddened had he said anything else, because whatever may have been said against the Government of which he was the Leader and its sins of omission and commission, I do not think any member can truthfully say that the Leader of the Opposition is not utterly sincere. It might well have been that he himself could be in the position of the present Premier, with 25 members supporting him. I remember that at one stage during the counting at the last election, I could have, were I a betting man, have laid some odds as to who was going to be Premier. In fact, I heard the member for Victoria Park mentioned as the prospective Premier in a coalition Government, but luckily that did not happen. To be serious, I hope that as the session proceeds the members sitting with the Leader of the Opposition will remember the assurance he gave on behalf of himself and his Party. I trust that the Government will, in turn, appreciate the attitude of the Opposition.

I also hope that, unlike some Governments in Australia today, the Government will see to it that in relation to its proposals, legislative and otherwise, it will embrace the ideas, knowledge and wide experience which can be obtained within this Chamber. Some reference was made humorously by my colleague on my left to our omission from Committees in this Chamber. I was rather surprised that he mentioned the matter, because I have been accustomed

to being overlooked in that respect. The previous Government did not put us on any Committee, either. I have some thoughts on the matter, but as I do not wish to strike a discordant note at present and am not particularly interested in this aspect, I do not propose to utter them. I assure the Government, however, that if we are not appointed to any Committees dealing with the administration of the State or with matters upon which the Government desires to take counsel from the Opposition, it will get a savage reception from me if I am left out. I make this remark not because of the position occupied by the member for Victoria Park and myself in this Chamber. A man who would take that advantage would be unworthy to be a member of Parliament. On the other hand, the Government will be equally unworthy if it deliberately leaves the member for Victoria Park and myself out of its deliberations.

We represent a considerable number of constituents and, notwithstanding that we are not members of a Party, we have an equal right to know what the Government's proposals are before they are flung on to the Table for us to be merely voting machines. I do not propose to accept that situation, nor do I think from present indications that it is intended. However, a word of warning sometimes will not come amiss. I do not think the Opposition will adopt political tactics. I would view such tactics not only with grave suspicion but also with no inconsiderable amount of disgust. Having sat opposite the previous Government since I have been a member of this Chamber I do not expect that to happen. There will be many differences of opinion, very sharp differences, but I believe decency and sincerity will be the keynote of all Parties in our discussions here. That being so, this session can be productive of much good.

The member for Geraldton tonight referred to the crisis in the Old Country. While I prefer not to make any comment on his suggestion, we have a definite obligation to make a contribution to England so far as lies in our power. Notwithstanding the contribution that Australia made to the war effort of the Empire by providing sailors, soldiers and airmen, we must always bear in mind the tremendous sacrifices made by England for the Empire of

which we are an integral part. We must remember her great effort for civilisation when she stood alone. Not all sections of the Australian community can stand in front of a mirror, look at themselves, and say that we did as much. I do not want to go into details. Every member knows that Australia has not made a 100 per cent. effort to date. Words are not sufficient. It is our duty, if we are to maintain our prestige as Australians and Britishers, to make the best contribution we can, and to make it immediately, to assist the Old Country.

Getting back to our own State, I notice that in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech there is reference to the position regarding materials. Members will recall that during the war I had something to say about this matter. When it was perfectly obvious to the layman that the war between the Allies and Japan was almost over, I said that the time had arrived when there should be a diversion of men from the various Services to places where they were required for the purpose of preparing raw materials for the day when the war would end. But all approaches that were made, including that of the then Premier, were utterly ignored. I sometimes feel, as he expressed himself, that the Commonwealth Government was too easily led by those who wished to preserve their jobs. I do not say that that was the position of all of them but I am satisfied that no good excuse was given for the refusal to release those men who were so urgently needed for peacetime rehabilitation. So the genesis of most of our trouble with regard to shortages of building and other materials can be traced to the fact that consideration of the matter was left all too late.

When one starts to criticise the Government in relation to the building programme in Australia one has to go further back than 1947. When we do that we discover that instead of building up, as we should have done, the various supplies of materials against the moment that would arise when they would be required in great quantities, we let everything become depleted; and so we find ourselves in the morass we are in today. I am sure that the Premier and his Ministers will exercise themselves at this source of the trouble and see that as quickly as possible we get more men and machinery into the production of those needs which are in such short supply. I look

to see an intensification of co-operation between all interested in the production of materials, so that there will be an acceleration of that production. We know that today materials are not being produced at the rate at which the available manpower and machinery are capable of producing them. I believe that if there could be the right approach and the situation could be discussed frankly there would be a considerable improvement in the rate of output.

Unless this end of the problem is tackled, I consider it will be a very considerable time before it will be possible to bring about those improvements concerning which the incoming Government had something to say at election time. Every member knows just how serious this problem is and how grossly unfair it is for us to be discussing migration on the one hand and refusing young married couples on the other hand the right to have a home. I am not blaming the administration of the department for that; but every member knows that if one walks into the materials section of the Workers' Homes Board or goes down to the tenancy sub-department and makes an application on behalf of a man and his wife and child one is told that the man has not any priority. What a scandalous state of affairs that is. How can we hope to get any population under those conditions?

Every member knows of people who are living in conditions that would be objected to even in India, bad as conditions are there. I am not entirely blaming the past Government for this. But when one listens to members indulging by the hour in re-eminations, it is a bit nauseating when one thinks of the crucial problems that are awaiting attention. I would suggest to the Government that it get right down to these things and see what can be done. It is necessary for us to remould our ideas. I admit quite readily that we cannot turn away a man with a wife and four or five children, but let us not talk humbug about increased population and then tell a man with a wife and child that he has no priority for a home. I listen to that statement almost every day. Some time ago in the Federal House the Minister for Migration, Mr. Calwell, when replying to a question on the subject of migration, said—

The sad truth is that Australia, as we know it, is only 150 years old, but we are slowly bleeding to death. If the net rate of repro-

duction does not improve, we will be finished as a nation at the end of another 50 years.

He also said—

Our survival as a nation and development as a power in world affairs is very largely dependent upon a greater increase in the birth rate within Australia. It has been stated that the percentage of Australians over the age of 65 has almost doubled since the beginning of this century and the percentage of children under 15 has fallen by one-third. Childless marriages have increased from 13.3 to 22.3 in the last 30 years, whilst in 40 years the average number of children per marriage has fallen from four to two. In short, married couples are merely replacing themselves.

That is exactly what is happening in Western Australia. And we talk about migration! Commendable as the effort of the Commonwealth Government is—and I think it is commendable—in striking for a target of 75,000 migrants a year, that is only tinkering with the subject. If it were not that I feel that Government is utterly sincere, I would think that it was just hypocritical when I go to Government departments and am told that because a man has only one or two children he has not even priority for a home or for materials. That is the reason why Parliamentary institutions and Parties are disciplined at election time. Let me assure the House that the public are awakening to these things as people in other countries have awakened. As responsible citizens in a British community we do not want to see things develop here to the stage they have reached elsewhere. There is a grave responsibility resting upon us to see that we play our part irrespective of petty Party views in the building up of a Western Australia and an Australia that will be a credit to us and of great use to posterity.

I now come to a subject on which I would like to have a lot to say. But I have found that the Minister, in my approaches to him, has shown a definite inclination to recognise the shortcomings of his department and a sincerity of purpose in relation to an adjustment of the position to which I am about to draw attention. I refer to the total inadequacy of accommodation at schools in my district, in keeping with that at other centres. In one school, as the Minister knows, is an average of over 53 children per class. At election time I think the Premier said that he believed a desirable target was 30. Taking into account all the leeway that has to be made up, I am prepared to split the

difference with him and say that a definite effort should be made, as soon as it is physically possible, to bring the number down to 40. That is on two counts, firstly in the interest of children, because I cannot imagine that they can receive the full benefit of the educational facilities if there are 50 or more of them in a room; and secondly, it is equally unfair to the teacher.

It is no wonder we have a discontented Teachers' Union. I am quite sure that the former Minister for Education who, incidentally, did quite a good job, could say much more than I can on this matter and would be much more caustic. I am, as a layman, merely telling the Minister for Education that I look to him for some improvement. Associated with this, also, is the question of the equipment at the schools. In my district, in common with others, it is positively antiquated. One would be justified in putting up a cardboard sign saying, "Visit our institution of antiquity." I understand that there is a committee—and I have taken the trouble to ascertain its personnel—of representative people who understand every phase of this question. These people examined the proposed new equipment in the way of desks, and made certain recommendations. If my information is correct, the dual desk will make a material difference to the space available and, consequently, will necessarily reduce the number of children in each room.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You mean, the single desk.

Mr. SHEARN: Yes. I notice that the Minister for Education is looking at me. I assure him I am not disclosing any secrets. A Press statement of his appeared about this and that is what started me looking into the matter. I find, as an independent, that I have to get around and look for information. I would be interested to know two things: First of all, is the Minister willing to lay upon the Table of the House that particular report? I think it would be most informative and we would find whether we have been rightly advised as to its contents. If not, I would ask him this question: Does he propose to adopt the suggestions dealing with the desks? If so, will they be single or double type desks? And, in any event, what proposal has he

to make to the aspect I have mentioned as to the number of children per room? I would also like to know from him whether, if some replacement of desks is to be made, he proposes to perpetuate the obsolete articles we have now, or whether he intends to install the modern and desirable types of desks.

In my district we have two schools, in one of which there are between six and seven hundred children. This school is on a piece of land that was donated to the Government in the dim and distant past. It is down in a hollow where no-one would have paid much for it in any event, and the result is that drainage is a problem. I recently brought under the notice of the Minister the question of providing adequate drainage for the school grounds. If this were not so serious it would be rather amusing. The Education Department, on the one hand, sends people around to investigate the health of the children, and on the other it tells them to remain at school for five days a week under conditions which militate against a continuity of good health. I recognise that the Government has many of these schools, but this is not a major task, nor is it one involving stupendous sums of money. This Government was critical of its predecessor, and I look to it to produce some results in this matter within a reasonable time.

I had an idea of saying a lot about our railway service, but I feel that the subject has been flogged to the stage where one would not be justified in inflicting it further on the House tonight. Suffice it to say that the inquiry in progress today will place responsibility where it rightly belongs. It will also awaken the Government and the department generally to their responsibilities, or to a better sense of them. The department's financial structure will have to be materially altered and given some semblance of commercial practice. In addition, the Commissioner of Railways, or whoever may be in charge of transport, will have to be given power to control the transport system of this State.

Members know that many of the debts which stand against the Railway Department are legacies of past Governments which, for political expediency, established railways at times and at costs that gave them no economic future from the commencement. I hope that whatever system we have for the State's transport in the future will be established on a basis comparable with those of some of

the big private undertakings which, as well as giving consideration to their employees—a matter in which the Railway Department is well behind—provide handsome returns to their shareholders. But they have only one object in view, and that is the giving of service. They do not have to worry about political situations. As a result, they do not have the deficiencies that are apparent in State railways.

Before I leave the question of transport, I would like to say to the Minister that some time ago, the member for North Perth—now the Chief Secretary—and I brought under his notice—indeed, we approached his predecessor—the necessity for the development of additional lines in the metropolitan area, and I think that suggestion should be given due consideration. I received notification from the Minister, telling me that the construction of the Meltham station would alleviate the position about which I was complaining. It has as much relationship with the project that I was after as would an additional bus service to South Perth! But I want to confess at once that the Minister took the trouble to have a look at the Meltham station, and he readily admitted that there was no advantage to be derived by us from it. But he has not given us any promises yet, and I am assuring him that since I have been a member of this House I have always, before submitting a matter forcibly to a Minister, taken on myself the responsibility of ascertaining whether or not the project was sufficiently urgent for it to be pressed. In that respect the new service for which I am asking must be provided either by the Government or through a permit being granted to the man who has already asked permission to conduct the service.

If the Government for any good reason cannot provide this service—I would remind it that I also believe in private enterprise—it should allow private enterprise to do so. I know it is the desire of the Government that existing services should be protected, providing that they are satisfactory, but I will not be satisfied by being told that because a public service is likely to be affected adversely the Government will not do what I have asked, or allow anyone else to do it. My request is backed by the unanimous opinion of the people in that area. Mention is made, in His Excellency's Speech, of the desire of

the Government, as a social service, to instal sewerage in townships of more than 600 dwellings, where water supplies are available, provided the annual loss does not exceed one-third of the annual expense. I wish to refer to parts of the metropolitan area where pensioners, living in sewered areas, are still served by the pan system. Not only is it uneconomic to the local authority and the people concerned, but it is unfair to those adjoining who have installed sewerage. It is altogether undesirable.

In presenting this matter to the previous Government, and discussing it with departmental officers, I was told that the financial aspect was the stumbling block. In the interests of public health it should be possible to connect such places up with the sewerage and lodge a charge against the property in the same way as the Taxation Department does in relation to land tax, and as local authorities can do in relation to rates. In the main, when those properties were realised—whether on the death of the pensioner or by some other means—the money would be recovered by the Government. Sewerage is necessary in progressive areas where land values, if it were not for the pegging of prices, would have increased. I am not speaking of inflated values, but of the legitimate upward trend. I ask the Government to investigate this matter on the lines I have suggested, in order that something may be done.

I notice, also, that the Government proposes to re-organise the mental hospital services, and I would bring to its notice a matter that the member for Geraldton mentioned, which to some extent affects the mental hospitals in our State. I refer to the alarming increase throughout Australia of sex offences. That hon. member portrayed the position of a man owing to the crime of murder, but I wish to deal with the increase in sex crimes. Under an antiquated section of the Criminal Code we treat these people as criminals. They are taken before a judge and jury and are sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. I can cite cases of persons who have come out of prison with the best of intentions of leading a new and better life, but who, for psychological and medical reasons have ultimately found themselves again before the Court, and eventually serving a further prison sentence.

The community is not facing up to its responsibility in the matter. It is not only these individuals—unfortunate though they are—who are affected. It is a matter of the utmost importance to the whole social structure of Australia. I was so interested in the case of an unfortunate person who is serving a second term of imprisonment for such an offence, and so concerned about the whole set-up, that I wrote to several States in America, where I had read that the authorities were leading the way in reform in such matters. The Attorney General has, through me, copies of enactments in various States of America. While I appreciate that many of the aspects incorporated in those enactments would not necessarily be applicable or suitable to Western Australia, the genesis of the correct ideas may be found in them. I hope that in such matters the Government will broaden its outlook and take into account this alarming increase in sexual offences.

I will deal with various items that interest me under the different headings on the Estimates. I hope my remarks tonight will be taken by all members as being uttered with sincerity and a full sense of my responsibility to this House, to my electorate and the community. I hope we will see co-operation between the Opposition and the Government, without which there can be no progress either in this House or in the country. So long as the Government serves the best interests of the State and does not yield to pressure from individuals or groups in relation to its legislative proposals, I will support it. If, however, there is any possibility of a departure from that very wise attitude, then I shall be required, with my colleague, the member for Victoria Park, to consider just what attitude to adopt. In conclusion, I trust that the deliberations of this Parliament will take the State a little further along the road towards the very necessary progress, which should be part of the future of Western Australia.

MR. CORNELL (Avon) [9.51]: To the congratulations of previous speakers I should like to add my own. I feel sure that Mr. Speaker will carry out his high office with the same strict impartiality that has characterised the holders of his honourable position down through the years. I would also congratulate you, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, upon being appointed to the Chairmanship of Committees, and I trust your term of office will be equally successful. In passing, I desire to make reference to my predecessor in this House, Mr. Telfer, and to pay a tribute to what he did in the interests of the Avon electorate. Although he was in that position for a very short time—that may be the fate awaiting me as well—I want it to be recorded that he did a very good job in the interests of the constituency he represented, and for his efforts in that respect I award him full marks.

The Government of the day also did quite a good job in the Avon district. Whether that was because it is a borderline seat I do not know, but evidently while the work of that Government was appreciated by the electors there, it was not so appreciated that they did not desire some change and, in fact, there was an alteration in my favour. Having been associated with politics in a small way for many years through my father's membership of another place, I possess a full realisation and appreciation of the uncertainty of the political game. I know that the tide that washed me into my present seat in this House, might easily wash me out of it in the future. However, while I am here, I shall endeavour to do my best to carry on the traditions that my father observed in another place, and if I can do one-tenth as much good as he did, I shall have a clear conscience.

I notice from a perusal of the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that the Government contemplates an amendment of the Rural Relief Fund Act. In this regard I must express some concern. My regret is that apparently the intention of the Government does not go quite far enough, although it is a step in the right direction. The Act is rather lopsided. It has forced unsecured creditors, such as small storekeepers, to accept compositions in respect of their debts but it has not done much to recondition the debts of secured creditors. It did serve a useful purpose in the direction of rehabilitating farmers at a time when they needed help most. Although the contemplated amendment does not go as far as many of us would like, it may be that the Commonwealth Government will be induced to reverse its past decision and give the necessary consent, which would enable the Government to extinguish entirely debts in re-

spect of dues under the Rural Relief Fund Act.

In common with the member for Maylands, I am a little disappointed in connection with the Government's proposition to sewer towns where there are over 600 dwellings. Such a proposal will not mean a great deal to the country areas as not many have that number of homes. I suggest to the Government that the decision in that respect be reconsidered so that the archaic system that obtains in many rural centres can be abolished, with benefit to the health of the community. I also commend the Government on its proposal to consolidate the many Acts that exist in connection with the functions of local governing authorities.

I trust that the proposed legislation contemplates the striking of one rate only, which would be an over-all rate, thus doing away with the necessity that exists at present of striking three rates—general, health and vermin—each of which has to be determined separately. I suggest that a local authority rate be struck as the sole one to be levied, apart, of course, from loan rates. I would like some reform provided in connection with the present audit system with regard to local authorities. The reform should take the shape, for instance, of doing away with pinpricks that irritate at present due to the fact that the secretary is not treated as the chief executive officer, but in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases as a potential speculator.

Reference was made by the member for Perth to the shocking condition of the electoral rolls, and in that respect I can concur in his remarks. His experience was that many names that should have been included on the rolls were not there. I experienced that to some extent, but, on the other hand, I found on the Avon roll the names of some hundreds of people which should not have been included. The people concerned had left the district or had died, and during the election campaign the number of circulars that were returned through the Dead Letter Office was really surprising. His suggestion with regard to co-terminus electoral boundaries was commendable. I take it that in the country districts he presupposes further subdivisions but in that regard the Commonwealth authorities might not be prepared to agree. However, certain amendments of the Electoral Act are overdue, particularly one that would prevent

what is apparently possible now, namely, a dead man being permitted to exercise the franchise. When he spoke the other evening, the member for Beverley delivered what was a veritable dirge of despondency.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORNELL: He was very pessimistic about the future of the parliamentary institution. Although I am a newcomer to this House, I feel I cannot concur in what the hon. member said. I am afraid he was in a particularly morbid mood that evening and his remarks to new members were, to say the least of it, not very encouraging. I do agree that many people are cynical regarding the parliamentary system and to a large degree that cynicism is due to the fact that they consider that parliamentarians do not work. I can give that assertion the lie direct. In support of that contention, some people urge that for seven months of the year or thereabouts, Parliament does not sit. I have heard it said that we should not sit at all for the full 12 months, but obviously I cannot agree with that suggestion. On the other hand, I submit that if there were two sessions each year, the public would appreciate the fact that members of Parliament were endeavouring to carry out their duties. Furthermore, such a system would tend to prevent the rather mad rush that usually characterises the close of the session, and which is not always conducive to the passing of good legislation. I would strongly support any proposal for holding two sittings of Parliament each year.

There has been talk of political jobbery, but this has been practised by both parties and, I regret to say, seems to have become part and parcel of our political life. People seem to accept it philosophically, and when there is a change of Government there is, to a large extent, a change in certain jobs. Membership of the Licensing Bench has long been regarded as a political plum. In fact it appears to have been created for that specific purpose. After pulling in the party cart for some years the hacks are then turned out into this well pastured political paddock—the Licensing Court. This also applies to other State jobs. This obtains also in other spheres, although in this State the financial consideration is small and it does not assume the proportions experienced in the Federal arena.

Much has been said about the various boards and controls with which we have to

put up in these days. The chief complaint seems to be that boards and controls have multiplied so greatly during the last decade. In my opinion, some of the existing boards are entirely unnecessary, though some serve a useful purpose. Those that are mere excrescences could well be abolished without any great disadvantage to the community. It has been said, and I agree, that had there been boards in Noah's time the Ark would never have been built.

The subject of housing has been plastered a good deal and will continue to be so. The Government is not to blame for the present deplorable position, but it will incur blame if steps are not taken to remedy existing troubles. The housing problem is approaching the stage of bordering on a national emergency and civil servants do not seem to be able to cope with the situation. A suggestion has been made that a committee from inside Parliament would do better. This suggestion contains some merit and I think could be implemented with results advantageous to the many home-seekers who are now viewing the future with a good deal of concern.

We have had frequent pessimistic expressions about the future by leading public men. A prominent South African said that it seemed as if people were grumbling because there was not enough gloom to go round. From the Prime Minister down, we have had pessimistic utterances which, I consider, are unwarranted. Provided, as the Leader of the Opposition stated the other night, in a thoughtful speech, the will of the people to work is not undermined, posterity has nothing to fear. This is my first speech in the House, and to say that I feel nervous would be an understatement. Western Australia is a young State and a plastic State, and I urge the Government to mould it along sound lines. Members on the Opposition side of the House do not seem to be a bad lot of fellows, and I believe the future of the State will be safe in the hands of the present Government.

I thank members for the attentive hearing they have given me. I do not know whether I shall speak very often, but when I do, I hope it will be on a subject of which I have some knowledge. I thank members for their forbearance and appreciate what they have done for me, both inside and outside the Chamber, since I became a member. Much has been said about election technique. All

I can say that this is inevitable at election time. On such an occasion, one's tongue is apt to outrun one's better judgment, and possibly things are said that are not meant. As often happens, the good goes to the bottom and the rottenness rises to the top. In my electorate I endeavoured to make the fight a clean one, and I must acknowledge that my opponent did the same thing.

On motion by Mr. Styants, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.6 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday 21st August, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

STIRLING HIGHWAY BUS ROUTE.

As to Easing Picking-up Regulation.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

Will the Government give consideration to allowing privately owned buses, now licensed to operate along Stirling Highway, to pick up and set down passengers at selected points on the trolley bus route?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes, the matter is under consideration.

ROAD BOARDS.

As to Proposed Roadmaking-Machinery Pool.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE (for Hon. A. L. Loton) (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

Following on the statement in this morning's issue of "The West Australian" by the Minister for Works regarding the pro-