

also been concerned with the question of the High School; but today I received a letter from the Minister for Education, who tells me that he is sending one of the prefabricated buildings there as soon as it is available. Accordingly I will not say any more on that point. The railway rest-house has been a bugbear with me for some time and I am glad to see that the Minister has placed that at the top of his list for consideration. It should be commenced at a very early date.

Hon. H. K. Watson: This Government is doing quite a lot for your province.

Hon. G. Fraser: A lot of promises and nothing else.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: There are more materials available now, and no matter what Government was in power, we should still be able to have this done.

Hon. A. L. Loton: There is far more being done now.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: A short while ago I was talking about the milk position. It is bad right through the outback. I do not know whether the Government has taken into consideration the fact that we have to import all our powdered milk. I should have thought that the South-West would be in a position to produce powdered milk and thus prevent the importation of this commodity. I do not know what will happen as a result of the recent floods in Victoria. It looks as if we will be set back much further, as Victoria has not yet recovered from the previous floods. I hope, therefore, that the Government will do something more than it is doing at present.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Powdered milk is being made at Waroona now.

Hon. H. Hearn: Is that a Government job? Should not private enterprise be doing it?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I do not care who does it as long as powdered milk is produced. In conclusion, I would like to urge that when the Minister leaves tomorrow for the Eastern States he will give some consideration to the mining industry. Like the Premier, he is well acquainted with the industry in this State and I hope that he will be able to bring back some good results which will help keep that industry going. This is my last chance of saying all I want on these matters, as next year I shall be facing my electors and may not be returned. Accordingly I have brought these subjects up so that they may benefit the people who live in the remote areas and also that they will be continually before the Government and this House. I hope some good will result, therefore, from what may have appeared to be a long and tiresome speech.

On motion by Hon. J. Murray, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 3.7 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 21st August, 1951.

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

### ELECTORAL—BOULDER CONSTITUENCY.

#### Seat Declared Vacant.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received the following letter from Sydney:—

Dear Sir,

I hereby tender my resignation as member for Boulder in the Legislative Assembly, to take effect from Thursday, the 16th August, 1951.

Yours faithfully,

C. T. OLIVER.

The ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling): In consequence of that letter, I move—

That owing to the resignation of Mr. C. T. Oliver the seat of the member for Boulder be declared vacant.

Perhaps I may be permitted at this stage to say that, so far as this Assembly is concerned, it is a matter for regret that Mr. Oliver has tendered his resignation, although I am well aware that he goes to another sphere in which he will occupy a most important position. I feel sure that the capacity for balanced judgment which he displayed during the short time he was in this House will be used to good effect and with advantage to the community in general in the position he now proposes to occupy.

Question put and passed.

### QUESTIONS.

#### IRON.

*As to Imports and Local Production.*

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) How many tons of iron were imported into Western Australia during the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1951, from—

- (a) Eastern States; and
- (b) oversea, such as—
  - pig and scrap iron;
  - ingots, blooms, etc.;
  - angles, tees, bar, rod, etc.;
  - plate and sheet, including galvanised;
  - structural iron and steel; or
  - any other form of iron or steel?

(2) Of the above, what was the Western Australian production?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) 44,931 tons of iron and steel, of which 971 tons were pig iron.
- (b) 55,765 tons of iron and steel, of which one ton was pig iron.
- (2) 9,270 tons pig iron.

#### CEMENT.

*As to Tabling Files on Government Plant for Company.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Education:

Will he lay upon the Table of the House all papers and files dealing with the installation by the Government of plant and equipment at the Swan Portland Cement Coy's works at Rivervale?

The MINISTER replied:

I shall be glad to make the files available to the hon. member for his perusal later today.

#### IRON AND STEEL.

*As to Financing Establishment of Industry.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

Has the Government yet developed any proposals or ideas relative to financing the establishment of the suggested large-scale iron and steel industry?

The MINISTER replied:

Although the possibilities of establishing in Western Australia a large-scale iron and steel industry have aroused interest in a number of quarters, no proposition has been placed before the Government in sufficiently concrete form for methods of finance to be discussed.

The report on this industry to be supplied by H. A. Brassert & Company of New York, on which it was expected our planning and future discussions would be based, has not yet been received, despite frequent requests for the submission of the report to be expedited.

However, the Government has constantly in mind the desirability of such an industry and, through the appropriate departments, is continuing to collect information concerning our raw material resources, and the various methods of iron and steel production, which might be best applicable to our particular conditions.

#### FRUIT CASES.

*As to Requirements and Estimated Output.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) What are the estimated dump fruit case requirements for the season 1951-52 for apples and pears?

(2) What is the estimated output from all mills for the season 1951-52?

(3) Can he give the estimated output from—

- State Saw Mills;
- Kent River Mill;
- Millars' T. & T. Co.;
- Bunning Bros.;
- Kauri Timber Co.;
- other saw millers?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Although the average annual requirements are 1,650,000 cases, it is too early to say what the 1951-52 crop will be.

(2) Taking last year's supply as a basis, this would be 1,250,000 to which, however, will be added the cases produced at the Kent River mill and the increased plant at Pemberton which should be in operation by October.

(3) State Saw Mills—With the new machinery it is hoped to reach .....	500,000
Kent River mill—Full year's production for this mill will be 500,000 but it is not known yet exactly as to how much of this quantity it will be possible to cut until the mill has been running for a few weeks .....	500,000
Millars T. & T. Co. ....	45,000
Bunning Bros. ....	20,000
Kauri Timber Co. ....	—
Others (this includes the mills operated by West- Australian Farmers) ....	633,000
	<hr/> 1,698,000

### FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

#### *As to Dumping of Waste from Ships.*

Mr. HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Have any steps been taken towards the implementation of that section of the report of Mr. Meyer that deals with the prevention of waste matter being dumped from ships into Fremantle harbour?

(2) If so, will he enumerate the steps taken?

(3) If no action has taken place, will he explain the reason for such inaction?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Harbour Trust has given this matter active consideration. The existing regulations covering the prevention of waste matter being dumped from ships into Fremantle Harbour are being rigorously enforced. The general manager has conferred with the municipal council, and this body is now examining the feasibility of installing a plant which could deal with the waste matters. In the meantime disposal is made by dumping at sea which, after examination, the Director-General of Health, Canberra, has reported as satisfactory.

(3) Answered by (2).

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

#### *As to Printing Regulations.*

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is he aware that printed regulations under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act are unobtainable by the public?

(2) Can he indicate where printed copies can be obtained?

(3) Will he take early action to ensure that a reasonable number of copies of the present regulations is printed and made available to the public through the Government Printing Office?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) and (2) Yes.

(3) New regulations are in the course of drafting and these will be completed and issued as soon as possible.

### "SUNSET."

#### *As to Alleged High-handed Behaviour of Official.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it the policy of the present Government to have civility and courtesy shown by heads, and sub-heads of departments to employees within the respective institutions or departments?

(2) If so, will she give some attention to the dissatisfaction and discontent prevailing at the institution known as "Sunset," because of the alleged high-handed behaviour of the officer-in-charge of that institution towards its employees?

(3) Is she aware that as dissatisfaction seemingly exists at "Sunset" the inmates most certainly suffer from an attitude of apathy and indifference, on the part of the employees, and that such requires immediate correction?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) I do not believe that there is any such behaviour. If the hon. member makes any specific charge, I shall inquire into it.

(3) Answered by (2).

### TRANSPORT.

#### *(a) As to Late Night Bus, Nedlands Route.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is it a fact that the Government now runs the early morning and late night bus service to Nedlands, which was at one time the service rendered by the No. 7 tram, and which was later a part of the service handed over to the United Bus Coy.?

(2) If this be so, why was the United Bus Coy. not compelled to continue this part of the service as provided for when it took over the service on the discontinuance of the No. 7 tram to this terminal?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

(1) The Tramway Department operates a "special" in the morning and also in the evening for the conveyance of its own employees.

(2) These two trips were never regarded as part of the regular timetable catering for the general public.

#### *(b) As to Privately-owned Bus Services and Routes.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) What was the total number—excluding taxis—of privately-owned passenger omnibus services operating in the metropolitan area as at the 1st April, 1947?

(2) What was the total number of such services operating as at the 30th June, 1951?

(3) What was the total number—if any—of new routes granted to either new or existing companies during the same period?

(4) What was the total number of extensions granted to such individuals or companies during the same period?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) Eighty routes were listed on licenses current to the 30th June, 1949, but these have since been redrafted and simplified. At the 30th June, 1951, 158 routes were defined, but these figures are not directly comparable.

(3) and (4) Owing to the redrafting of licenses mentioned above it is virtually impossible to assess accurately the number of new routes and extensions approved. In many cases the 1947 licenses carried extensions to original routes which have since been gazetted as separate routes.

(c) *As to Chairman of Board.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

On what date was Mr. Drake-Brockman appointed chairman of the Transport Co-ordination Board?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

The 31st August, 1949.

(d) *As to Buses for Inglewood Tram Route.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is it intended to replace the tram service on the No. 18 route with diesel buses?

(2) If so, when?

(3) If and when such service is implemented, will consideration be given to linking up with the present Bayswater service, for the creation of a circular route to and from Bridge-street?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

(1) It is intended to supplant trams progressively with other forms of transport, and it is proposed to operate diesel buses over No. 18 route?

(2) It is unlikely that this will take place for some time.

(3) A circular route is not considered desirable, but consideration will be given to extending the service north into Bayswater.

#### FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST.

(a) *As to Contributions to Consolidated Revenue.*

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

Will he inform the House what amounts were paid to Consolidated Revenue by the Fremantle Harbour Trust in the years ended the 30th June, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950 and 1951?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

Year ended.	Amount.
30th June, 1944—	£91,148 2s. 7d.
30th June, 1945—	£158,384 16s. 11d.
30th June, 1946—	£123,837 6s. 4d.
30th June, 1947—	£52,843 16s. 3d.
30th June, 1948—	£105,169 9s. 11d.
30th June, 1949—	£195,880 3s. 2d.
30th June, 1950—	£311,468 5s.
30th June, 1951—	£150,063 19s. 11d.

(b) *As to Cargo Charges.*

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

What shed and direct charges and port dues are levied by the Fremantle Harbour Trust on the following items:—

- (a) General cargo.
- (b) Chaff—hay and straw.
- (c) Baked coke, per ton.
- (d) Manures in bags.

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

	Shed.	Direct.	Harbour Dues.
(a) 10s.	plus 43¾%	3s.	plus 43¾% 5s. 6d. plus 20%
(b) 14s. 6d.	plus 43¾%	5s. 4d.	plus 43¾% 5s. 6d. plus 20%
(c) 14s. 6d.	plus 43¾%	5s. 4d.	plus 43¾% 2s. 6d. plus 20%
(d) 10s.	plus 43¾%	3s.	plus 43¾% 2s. 2d. plus 20%

#### ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

(a) *As to Current Frequency for Fremantle.*

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

Is he aware—

(1) That to give Fremantle 40-cycle frequency from the South Fremantle power house, current would have to be taken 18 miles to East Perth, put through the frequency changer and returned to Fremantle at 40 cycles?

(2) That a main has been laid direct from the South Fremantle power house to Fremantle?

(3) For what purpose was it laid, and what is the distance?

(4) In view of this, will he inform the House whether Fremantle is to be the first district to be served with 50 cycles?

(5) If not, in what order will the Fremantle district be supplied with 50 cycles?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Fremantle, in common with other metropolitan areas, draws its supply from the East Perth power station, which station generates approximately two-thirds of the total supply of electricity.

(2) The main is not yet complete. Switchgear and other equipment is not available.

(3) To convey electricity. The approximate length is 3½ miles.

(4) The order in which the districts comprising the metropolitan area are to be changed over to 50 cycles has yet to be determined. Technical factors which may arise from time to time will affect the position.

(5) Answered by (4).

*(b) As to Current Change-over Cost, Collie.*

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that at Collie, as a result of the change-over from D.C. to A.C. current, hardship is being caused pensioners and those on fixed incomes with regard to meeting the cost of the change-over?

(2) Is there any provision available whereby relief can be given to such cases?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Where the wiring in a house is to the standard required for D.C., no extra charge is incurred when changing over to A.C.

The change-over from D.C. to A.C. current has now been carried out in several towns in the South-West without causing hardship.

(2) Answered by (1).

**CEMENT BRICKS UNLIMITED.**

*As to Operations and Apparent Exploitation.*

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

(1) Has he heard of a firm called Cement Bricks Unlimited which has quoted £25 per 1,000 for cement bricks of the size of normal clay bricks made from materials supplied by the purchaser, and £5 per 100 for bricks made from materials supplied by the firm?

(2) Have any inquiries been made concerning the activities of this firm and its source of supply of cement in view of its offer of immediate delivery?

(3) Does he contemplate taking any action to prevent the apparent exploitation involved in transactions of Cement Bricks Unlimited?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. My attention has been drawn to a recent newspaper advertisement.

(2) Yes. The principal of the firm was interviewed immediately the advertisement appeared.

(3) Yes. No cement has been, or will be, released to this firm for manufacturing purposes. Other action is in course.

**STATE BRICK WORKS.**

*As to Releases and Deliveries.*

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

(1) On what date was the release given for 25,000 bricks for a residence, at the corner of Forbes and Kintail-roads, Applecross for R. G. Smith, which was to be erected by T. W. Lees?

(2) On what date was the first delivery of bricks made by the State Brick Works on this release?

(3) On whose releases, respectively, were the following quantities of bricks supplied by the State Brick Works to T. W. Lees—

- 1,750 bricks on 18/6/51;
- 1,500 bricks on 20/6/51;
- 1,500 bricks on 25/6/51;
- 1,500 bricks on a date between 25/6/51 and 30/6/51?

(4) On what date were the above releases issued?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Release given on 11/5/51.

(2) No bricks have yet been delivered by the State Brick Works against this release. Work has been possible on this job by reason of the fact that the contractor was working on a trade allowance established during the period of decontrol of bricks. The client had made arrangements some months previously with the builder to carry out the work.

(3) All bricks referred to were supplied to release of R. W. Stevens.

(4) Release was issued on 4/8/50.

**HEALTH.**

*As to New Hospital, Midland Junction.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Health:

Can she give any indication of when tenders will be called for the proposed new hospital at Midland Junction?

The MINISTER replied:

It is hoped that tenders will be called in three months' time.

**HOUSING.**

*As to Homes Completed, Collie.*

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Housing:

Will he supply information regarding the following:—

- (1) How many Commonwealth-State houses have been completed since the 1st January, 1947, to date, at Collie?
- (2) How many workers' homes have been completed since the 1st January, 1947, to date, at Collie?
- (3) How many war service homes have been completed since the 1st January, 1947, to date, at Collie?
- (4) How many private homes have been completed since the 1st January, 1947, to date, at Collie?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) One hundred and thirty-two.

(2) Nil.

(3) Forty-nine.

(4) Information is available only for period the 1st July, 1947, to the 31st March, 1951. One hundred and forty-five homes were erected privately in Collie during this period.

**GOLD.***As to Sale to Australian Mint.*

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Education:

Is all the gold now being produced in Western Australia being sold to the Australian Mint?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE.**

On motion by Mr. May, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Kelly (Merredin-Yilgarn) on the ground of urgent public business.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.***Sixth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 16th August.

**MR. W. HEGNEY** (Mt. Hawthorn) [4.51]: Shakespeare wrote, among other fine pieces, the following:—

Who steals my purse, steals trash;  
But he that filches from me my good name,  
Robs me of that which not enriches him,  
And makes me poor indeed.

In the next few moments I propose to justify the actions and character of one of my mates in the Labour movement. I refer to the general president of the A.L.P. in this State, Mr. Harry Webb. I have known Mr. Webb since he was a young man. He graduated, through industrial circles, to the position of secretary of the Locomotive Enginedrivers and Firemen's Union and subsequently acted as president of the Metropolitan Council of the Australian Labour Party. Later he was elected by the delegates from all the unions throughout Western Australia, through their various district councils, to the position of general president of the Western Australian branch of the Australian Labour Party.

At the recent Federal elections he was a Labour candidate for the Swan seat. He lost the election. That is a secondary consideration because men who hold seats are on the stage for only a few years before they pass on, as many have done who have occupied seats in this Chamber, and as we will do eventually. However, while a man is a citizen of the State and mingles among his fellow men, he is entitled to have his character undefiled where it is justified. I know that certain tactics are adopted at elections, some doubtful, some questionable; others reasonably fair.

Since I was a boy I have taken an active part in the political and industrial affairs of this country but in all my experience I have never come across a more serpent-like, a more scurvy, a more scurrilous or a more diabolically lying circular than the pamphlet that was issued

and distributed throughout the electorate of Swan during the last Federal election. That circular was signed by Mr. J. H. Ackland, M.L.A., acting as joint campaign organiser with a Mr. C. Palmer, who is the secretary of the Liberal Party. I have information that so diabolical was the pamphlet and of such a back-stabbing character that special arrangements were made for its issue in the dark hours of the night about the 23rd April. To perform them, dark deeds require dark hours and I give every credit to the organisation that worked in the dark hours so that that pamphlet could be distributed throughout the length and breadth of the Swan electorate.

As I have said, Mr. Webb was defeated, but that is a secondary consideration. I now repeat the invitation and the challenge that was made to the Liberal Party of this State, to the responsible officials, to the man who signed the pamphlet in conjunction with the secretary of the Liberal Party, Mr. Ackland, the member for Moore, and to all those who are concerned. That invitation and challenge was issued in "The Daily News" of the 30th June and I propose to read it for the edification and benefit of all those concerned. It reads as follows:—

The State Executive of the Australian Labour Party, W.A. Branch—  
of which I happen to be Vice-President—has given much thought as to the action that should be taken to protect its president (Mr. C. H. Webb), against the scurrilous imputation contained in a document circulated in the electorate of Swan in furtherance of the candidature of Mr. W. Grayden, Liberal M.H.R.

This document produced the impression that Mr. Webb was a communist.

Its authors sailed very close to the law of libel.

Action could have been taken under the Electoral Act on the ground that untrue statements had been made for the purpose of misleading electors in casting their votes.

Mr. Webb would not countenance this action, as it would have savoured of the "squealer."

The Labour Party therefore challenges Mr. W. Grayden and the Liberal Party organisers responsible for the publication to have sufficient courage to publicly state that they believe Mr. Webb is a communist, as inferred in the published document, and thus give him the right to defend his integrity in the manner demanded by British justice.

Mr. Styants: They will wait until the Red Bill goes through and then they will inform the Gestapo.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: As a candidate for the electorate of Swan, Mr. Webb signed a pledge. Every member on this side of the House signs the same pledge and on his nomination form for the position of general president of the Western Australian branch of the A.L.P., Mr. Webb signed the following—

The following pledge shall be signed and be binding on all officers and delegates of the A.L.P.

This is made under the jurisdiction of the West Australian branch of the A.L.P.

I hereby pledge myself to adhere and support the principles of the A.L.P. and to support candidates selected by the A.L.P. for public offices, and I also declare I am not a member of any other political party (including the Communist Party).

I submit in all sincerity that any person—and I include members opposite—who did not know Mr. Webb and who read the contents of this violent, scurrilous pamphlet, at the same time looking at the drawings upon it, would come to no other conclusion than that Mr. Webb was a communist. During elections there are times when candidates might get a little hot under the collar, but this is character assassination in its worst form.

Mr. Grayden: Is not every word true?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: One of the statements dealing with the banning of communists and also the Dissolution Bill of 1950, contained, among other things, the following—

Mr. Grayden: Read the lot.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Incidentally, Mr. Webb is not a squealer and I hope the member for Nedlands is not one either. The statement reads—

On the 27th September it was made public that the Western Australian delegates, contrary to expectations, and the feeling in their State, had voted against allowing the passage of the Bill!

That is wrong! That is a lie! Continuing—

Hailed by communists as saviours of their party, Webb and Chamberlain returned triumphant to the West.

But their triumph was short lived. With the same alacrity as they returned rejoicing they were sent scurrying back East by the irate rank and file of Western Australian trade unions.

That is a lie!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Two lies!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Continuing—

Ordered to obey the instructions of their executive, they voted to allow the Bill to go through. A hypocritical reversal of form unprecedented in the history of Australian unionism.

I will touch on that aspect, in relation to the Prime Minister of this country, later in my remarks. In another part the pamphlet quotes an extract from the "Worker" in connection with the Garratt engine strike as follows:—

Deregistration of a union like the Locomotive Engine Drivers', Firemen and Cleaners' Union, is the climax to successful communistic tactics, which, whilst engineered with skill and tactical prowess, relies for its success . . . on the condition that there must be at least one of them in a strong executive position.

Just beneath appears in heavy type—

Harry Webb was, and still is, the secretary of the union concerned in that strike.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether, if you had this pamphlet before you and did not know the fine character of the man Harry Webb and you visualised him from the worst photograph that could have been taken of him—though I admit that neither he nor I can make much claim to personal beauty—and in addition, seeing the hammer and sickle depicted on the pamphlet, you could come to any conclusion other than that he is a communist. I give the member for Moore the lie direct and invite him publicly to prove that Mr. Webb is a communist or publicly to apologise to him.

For many years Mr. Webb has been, with me, a member of the Disputes Committee of the Australian Labour Party, and I know that Mr. Webb is a man who is sincere in his ideals and does his best in the interests of the Western Australian and of the Australian trade union movement. I say that deliberately because I know him so well, and when we find a pamphlet of this sort circulated amongst 40,000 people in the Swan electorate, we can come to only one conclusion, namely, that it was circulated to mislead people into believing that Mr. Webb was a communist. For some years Mr. Webb has been the consumers' representative on the Metropolitan Market Trust, and if he is the diabolical gentleman this pamphlet would lead us to believe—and the Liberal Party and Country Party decided he was—why did the Minister for Agriculture recently invite him again to accept nomination on the trust?

I gave the member for Moore an opportunity of proving that Mr. Webb was a communist. He cannot deny responsibility for the allegation because the pamphlet was authorised by C. Palmer and J. H. Ackland, M.L.A., joint directors, 1140 Hay-street. If Mr. Ackland, as one of the joint campaign directors, did not intend to convey to the electors of Swan that Mr. Webb was a communist, what did he mean to convey? I put it to him in this way: Let him put himself in Gilligan's place, doing unto others as he would that they should do to

him. How would he like a pamphlet of this description circulated against him in the Moore electorate? Would it not be the gentlemanly and manly thing to do, something with a bit of principle in it, to find out definite information about the views of a man before snatching away his character? The words of Shakespeare written nearly 400 years ago apply with equal force today.

The Minister for Lands: That must be a libellous document.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It was suggested that Mr. Webb should take legal action on that ground, but he is anything but a squealer. Before passing on to other aspects, I again give the Liberal and Country Party joint organisers an opportunity of publicly proving their charge against Mr. Webb or publicly apologising.

The Minister for Lands: Why does not Webb take action?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Because he is not a squealer.

The Minister for Lands: That is all nonsense.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am not a squealer, either. All I am doing, in the interests of the movement I represent, is to defend a man's character, and give those who stabbed him in the back an opportunity to justify their action.

The Minister for Lands: If it is all lies, he has his remedy.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I propose now to deal with one of the most vital measures introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament for many years. I refer to the Act I mentioned in my remarks about Harry Webb. A referendum will be conducted on the 22nd September and the proposal is that the Commonwealth Parliament shall have power to make laws with respect to communism and communists. When the referendum is taken, people who have not had an opportunity to see the Communist Party Dissolution Act will be expected to cast an intelligent vote upon it. By the referendum the people will be asked to validate the Communist Party Dissolution Act of 1950 and, if they approve, it will actually be written into the Commonwealth Constitution. Not only that, the people will also be asked to give the Commonwealth Parliament the power to make laws that will alter the Act of 1950. I maintain that the provisions of that Act cut right across the principles of British justice as we understand them. The Commonwealth Parliament passed a law and the High Court, as the interpreter of the powers of the Commonwealth, by a majority of six judges to one, ruled out the Act as being unconstitutional.

The Federal system provides for the transferring to the Commonwealth of powers from the States, which were the original authority. The Commonwealth could thus obtain the extra power if it

were referred from the States or by the consent of the people at a referendum. Although many people will not have an opportunity to make themselves conversant with the provisions of the Communist Party Dissolution Act, they will be asked to vote at the referendum, and if they give an affirmative vote, that power will be written into the Constitution. If that is done, I contend that, from the standpoint of British justice, we might as well wipe out the Constitution.

I propose to deal with a few phases of the Act. The Act generally and one of the sections particularly is a blow, not at the Communist Party, but at the Australian trade union movement, and that is what I am concerned about. Section 5 provides for the banning of unlawful associations. The Governor-General, by declaration published in the "Gazette", may declare what constitutes an unlawful association. There are provisions in the Act designed automatically to dissolve the Communist Party, but there are other provisions for the declaration of unlawful associations, which could include bodies other than registered industrial unions. Any person or group of persons of the Liberal Party or Country Party or any party opposed to Labour could arrange to have even the Australian Labour Party regarded as an unlawful association.

Mr. Grayden: You surely do not seriously mean that.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: They could have the Trades and Labour Council, the Metal Trades Federation or the Industrial Council of Trade Unions of Western Australia declared as unlawful associations. The Western Australian branch of the A.L.P. could be declared an unlawful association.

The Minister for Works: Could not it operate the other way when Labour was in power?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: To grant such a power would be to the distinct disadvantage of the Australian trade union movement as it exists today. There is another section of the Act which provides for the declaration of any person, and when my friends opposite ask whether I am serious in putting up these suggestions, I say I am speaking in all seriousness when I assert that the provisions of the measure would permit the ruling authority to besmirch a man's character in terms even more drastic than those in the case to which I have just referred.

Under the Act, the Government could arrange for the declaration of any person. It could also declare any industry. Coal-mining, transport, railways and one or two other undertakings are mentioned as being vital industries, and any other industry may be declared to be vital. If such an industry were declared to be vital, what could happen is this: Any official of a union who administered the organisation or had members working in an



essential industry could be declared, and when I use the word "declared," it amounts to this, that the person declared is to be regarded as one who is dangerous to the security of the Commonwealth of Australia and of the British Commonwealth.

That is a terrible power to place in the hands of any Government or any ruling authority—power to besmirch a man's character and place upon him the onus of proving that he is not dangerous to the community. I go further and say that I would not put it past Mr. Menzies and those who support him to do this. I have told the House what happened in the Swan electorate. That could happen again. We could have Labour candidates who are union secretaries and they could be accused of being communists, and the onus of proving their innocence would be placed upon them. Even if their innocence were proved in the meantime, their characters would have been dragged in the mud throughout the electorate and the Liberal Party would have scored again. That is one of the reasons why I am raising my voice in protest and warning the people of what could happen under the provisions of this legislation.

Another section in the Act stipulates that search warrants may be granted to an authorised person on application to a special or police magistrate. Of course, anyone who desired to do a union secretary a disservice could cast suspicion on him and forthwith have a search warrant issued so that his home could be searched, and this could be done without any proof whatsoever being advanced in the first place. In the past the onus has rested on the Crown to prove its case, but the Act casts the onus on the declared person or organisation to prove his or its innocence. I know it has been said on previous occasions that the Labour Party is hand in glove with the Communist Party. I think that myth has been exploded, although a lot of unthinking people are still subject to the misleading propaganda of the Liberal Party of Australia.

I will just give one or two instances. When there was an attempt to boycott certain defence projects in this country, a Labour Government took action. Such a Government introduced the Defence Projects Act, and it was successful in ensuring that the necessary work was proceeded with. In the coal strike of 1949, the Commonwealth Government was faced with the responsibility of seeing that supplies of coal were maintained. But it did not throw the onus on to people to prove themselves innocent. It did not put any persons into gaol because they were Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Methodists, communists or independent workers of the world, but had them taken before the courts of the country because they had broken the law, and they paid the penalty.

I just do not know the name of the man who said that he would welcome a foreign army in this country, but his utterance was regarded as seditious. The man was not gaoled because he was a communist, but was charged under the Crimes Act and paid the penalty. These are just a few aspects of this Act which could be used to the detriment of the great mass of the people. It is my firm belief that the Act is not an attack on the Communist Party of Australia, but on the Australian trade union movement, and that is why I rise on my feet in protest. Anything I can do to maintain the freedom and the proper carrying out of the duties of the Australian trade unions will be done.

One or two of my friends opposite objected in the earlier part of my remarks when I was dealing with the case with regard to Mr. Webb. It is not so long since the Prime Minister held the same opinion as I voiced. Mr. Webb's character was dragged through the mud because he did not vote in favour of the banning of the Communist Party. But when Mr. Menzies, the Prime Minister, was Leader of the Opposition he opposed the banning of the Communist Party, and in the House of Representatives on the 15th May, 1947, he remarked as follows:—

One reason why I have repeatedly expressed the view that these people should be dealt with in the open is that I have complete confidence in the basic sanity of our own people. If we deal with these people we shall defeat them; but we cannot deal with them openly unless their operations are known; unless they, themselves, are known.

That appears in "Hansard."

Mr. Grayden: It took more than a week for him to change his mind, though.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: In an article in the Melbourne "Herald" of the 22nd June, 1946, this is what Mr. Menzies is reported to have said on behalf of the Liberal Party of Australia:—

Our views are these. In time of war a ban was placed on the Communist Party on the ground of national security. In time of peace, it is a very, very serious step to prohibit the association of people for the promulgation of any particular political views. Therefore, in time of peace we do not propose to place a ban on the Communist Party as such.

We believe that if the Communist Party's views constitute a real danger to the public, they will be expressed through acts which will represent breaches of reasonable law.

If the communists are, on investigation, found to be committing breaches of this law, then they will be among the first people prosecuted.

In other words, we should deal with the communists as breakers of the general law of the land and not purely as communists.

Mr. Griffith: Will you tell us the reference in "Hansard"?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The article continues—

And the reason for that is that in any country in normal times, all doubts about freedom of speech, thought and assembly ought to be resolved in favour of freedom.

Mr. Griffith: Will you tell me the reference in "Hansard"?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The position in regard—

Mr. Griffith: Have you not got a "Hansard"?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The action of the Commonwealth Liberal Government, of which the Western Australian Liberals are a part or appendage, clearly indicates, as I mentioned earlier, that it is out to weaken the Australian trade union movement. It introduced a Bill to amend the Conciliation and Arbitration Act by providing for secret ballots. That sounds all right, but many unions today arrange for secret ballots in connection with the election of their officers.

Mr. Styants: I would say 98 per cent. of them.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Most of them do it. The Act recently placed on the statute book makes it obligatory for the Federal unions to alter their rules to provide—I do not propose to go into the whole of the details of the legislation—for secret ballots for the election of officers; and the definition of "officer" is included. But there are cases—they occur in connection with limited companies—where the executive is elected by the rank and file, but the management committee elects the secretary for an indefinite period—for as long as he carries out his duties in an efficient and capable manner. If a particular union desires to do that, it is entitled to do so.

I am a member of an Australia-wide union—the Australian Workers' Union—which elects its secretary by an Australia-wide poll. But the advisability of doing even that has been questioned at times because men in Wyndham might have to vote for a man living in Sydney—a man they had never met and did not know. Possibly other organisations desire that their management committees shall be elected, and then, those committees would do their utmost to secure the most appropriate and qualified persons to act as their respective secretaries. This is an attempt, I would say, to make the unions more unworkable.

The main point is that there are 700,000 trade unionists in Australia, and I know of no individual industrial union, either Federal or State in character, which has

asked the Government to make these alterations. I now come to an important point in the amendment of the Act, namely, that the court has power to order secret ballots to obtain the opinion of the membership on an industrial dispute where there is a case pending in, or likely to be submitted to, the Commonwealth court. That sounds all right; that sounds democracy itself; but when one examines the position, one finds it is impracticable.

I can give a clear example. If the shearers throughout Australia were disaffected and decided to stand up for their rights, how could a secret ballot be taken in a reasonable time throughout the length and breadth of Australia? Strikes do not always take weeks to foment. Sometimes, in individual shearing sheds, industrial disputes arise, and they are dealt with on the spot. The men do not strike for nothing; and very often the happening is spontaneous. A secret ballot of the shearing industry throughout Australia would be just too silly. I now come to another serious aspect, and I invite any member opposite to give me the answer. Provision is made for a secret ballot on the question of a strike. Assume that a ballot has taken place and 100 per cent. of the membership of a particular union votes in favour of a strike, what is the answer?

Mr. Lawrence: It is declared illegal.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: This is a form of legalising an industrial dispute or strike. The membership would be right in saying, "The majority of the members were in favour of strike," and the strike would take a lot longer to settle. Then the question arises: How often is the court going to conduct a secret ballot? Will it conduct one every week, month or quarter? These provisions have been placed in the law, not at the invitation of the trade union movement but because someone has advised the Prime Minister that it is one way of getting at the trade unions.

We come further to this point—and we have been fighting for compulsory unionism for years, but we have never had any support, and we did not expect it, from the Liberal Party of Australia—that if there are to be compulsory secret ballots in connection with industrial disputes, then it naturally follows that there must be compulsory unionism.

Mr. Grayden: Why?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: We may have working in a particular industry men and women belonging to more than one organisation. That being the case, who will take part in the ballot—the members of a particular union, or all those affected? This measure will cause a lot of discontent. Instead of making for industrial peace it will antagonise the unions. There have been, as far as I know, only two attempts to hold secret ballots through the agency of the court. One was in

Queensland in 1948 when the Amalgamated Engineering Union was ordered to conduct a ballot under the provisions of the Queensland industrial law, and the ballot papers were burned.

The other took place in 1929 as a result of Judge Lukin's infamous award in the timber industry, which caused the timber workers throughout Australia to become a seething mass of discontent. A ballot under the provisions of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act was ordered. About 15,000 members were affected, and some 6,000 voted on the question as to whether they were in favour of working under Judge Lukin's award. Of the 6,000 ballot papers returned, 5,318 voted against working under the award which, among other things, provided for an increase of working hours from 44 to 48 per week, a 10 per cent. reduction in wages, and a dilution of cheap labour to the extent of double what it was under the provisions of the previous award.

The action of the Commonwealth Government in trying to force secret ballots, and other provisions in this industrial law, on the unions of Australia is not going to make for co-operation or industrial peace, but, as I said previously, will only have the result of making them suspicious and antagonistic with respect to the intentions of the present Government. I now propose to deal with another feature of Commonwealth legislation because it also directly affects the great mass of the people of Australia.

I refer now to the Defence Preparations Act. I will preface my remarks in connection with this law by saying that the Commonwealth Liberal Party of Australia in 1949 rode to power on promises. That party assured the people of Australia that if it was returned to power it would get rid of all controls, reduce taxation, control the cost of living and bring about peace and prosperity in Australia.

Mr. J. Hegney: And put value back into the £.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Yes, that party promised that it would put value back into the £. I am not going into the question of price-fixing and price-control but suffice to say that the Commonwealth Liberal Party of Australia has failed miserably in its attempt to put value back into the £. Not only has it done that but it has also stated that it is not in favour of rationing or controls. Yet, in the provisions of this Defence Preparations Act we find sections which have the object of removing from the Commonwealth Parliament power to make laws and carry on the government of this country. When the Defence Preparations Act is put into force, it will have the effect of imposing more rigid controls on the people of Australia—not only wage-earners but also industry generally—than any controls imposed during the war period when a Labour Government was in power.

As members know, the Curtin Labour Government took office in 1940 when the present Prime Minister, and his officers, walked out; the Labour Party carried on until 1949. The Defence Preparations Act gives power to the Governor-General to make regulations under the provisions of the Act and, furthermore, the Minister can delegate to civil servants, in any part of the Commonwealth, authority to carry out the provisions of regulations made under the Act. I will give a list of items that will be removed from the control of Parliament and placed in the hands of Executive Council—one might say three members. Section 4 of the Defence Preparations Act states—

(1) The Governor-General may make regulations for or in relation to defence preparations.

(2) The regulations which may be made under the last preceding subsection include, without limiting the generality of the power to make regulations conferred by that subsection, regulations—

Not laws, but regulations—

—for or in relation to—

- (a) the expansion of the capacity of Australia to produce or manufacture goods, or to provide services, for the purposes of defence preparations or for the purpose of enabling the economy of Australia to meet the probable demands upon it in the event of war;
- (b) the diversion and control of resources (including money, materials and facilities) for the purposes of defence preparations;
- (c) the adjustment of the economy of Australia to meet the threat of war or the avoidance or reduction of economic dislocation or instability caused by, or impeding, defence preparations.

In another subsection these things are provided for—

Nothing in this section authorises the making of regulations—

- (a) imposing taxation;

The Government already has power to do that.

- (b) with respect to the borrowing of money on the public credit of the Commonwealth;

The Government has power to do that now.

- (c) for or in relation to the compulsory direction of labour; or

- (d) imposing any form of, or extending any existing obligation to render, compulsory naval, military or air force service.

There is not the slightest shadow of doubt that the Commonwealth Government, by the making of regulations under the provisions of this Act, can abrogate all the powers of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. I would say that the provisions could provide for an increase of working hours from 40 to 48 per week—that, I think, is one of the aims of the present Prime Minister. Regulations could provide for the setting aside of awards or industrial agreements. Although it is indicated in the Act that the statute does not provide for the compulsory direction of labour, it does provide for the diversion of financial resources—of money, facilities and goods. It is obvious that if the Commonwealth Government diverts money from one particular industry, or series of industries, to another, then labour must follow in order to obtain a livelihood. That is an indirect direction of labour.

Under this measure we will have controls more rigid than were imposed during the war period. Yet, if we cast our minds back a few years to the date of the referendum, we can hear our friends opposite, and their counterparts in other parts of Australia, speaking from platforms throughout the country and publishing in the Press day after day, the slogan, "No more power to power-drunk Canberra. Get rid of Chifley and his socialist controls." But what do we find now? Less than two years later we find that the Commonwealth Government has taken steps to impose controls on the people of this country, more severe than they have ever experienced before.

Mr. Grayden: You are only guessing, because they are not there yet.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: At his recent anti-inflation conference the Prime Minister asked for co-operation. But, he assured the people of this country that if he were elected he would save Australia. Now he is asking for the co-operation of the trade union movement and I am afraid, in the light of the legislation to which I have referred, he cannot expect that co-operation. The Prime Minister and his party can expect the degree of co-operation—in my view, any way—that he extended to the late John Curtin during the war years. In the darkest hours of the war period, Mr. Menzies and Mr. Fadden, as he then was, walked out on the Government.

Mr. Manning: Do not give us that!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Curtin Labour Government took over and carried on. In 1944 the War Advisory Council was functioning and Mr. Menzies was Leader of the Opposition. But, he walked out of that council and did his best to induce his mates to do the same. He tried to induce Mr. Spender to walk out of the Advisory Council, but Mr. Spender refused. Yet, we have the Prime Minister—the leader of the Liberals in Australia today—asking us to co-operate with him!

I am suspicious of the aims and the objects of the Commonwealth Liberal Government and also of Mr. Menzies. He said he would save Australia but he is now in a panic and can expect the same co-operation, with his anti-inflation measures, as he extended to the Labour Government when he was sitting on the front Opposition bench.

For the time being the Prime Minister has a majority in both Houses but one can see, by the type of legislation being enacted, that he is out to weaken the Australian trade union movement. He wants to use Gestapo methods or the methods of the Russian secret police. What he wants, and what he is hoping for, is a number of union officials in this country who, through fear, will bow at the hips when Mr. Menzies passes. I have no doubt that if the Prime Minister is given that power and the opportunity, the working people of this country will rue the day.

Mr. Griffith: You talk tripe!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Before I sit down I will devote one or two words to my young friends opposite, in the hope that if they have any thinking propensity they will give a little attention to one who has at least tried to give some thought to the problems of this country, and who has grown up through the vicissitudes of Australian trade unionism. In conclusion I want to address a word or two to the younger members on the Government benches.

Mr. SPEAKER: Through the Chair.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would not dream of doing it otherwise, because it would be distinctly out of order. But, my friends opposite are apt to interject and try to ridicule what I have in a sincere way tried to say.

Mr. Grayden: But you answer when it suits you.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: My friends opposite have the idea that Mr. Menzies will not do anything to the Australian trade union movement. But, only a few years ago, both in this country and in Britain, it was illegal to join a trade union. As a matter of fact, men were transported to this country for trying to form the Agricultural Labourers' Union in Britain.

Hon. E. Nulsen: What about the martyrs of Tolpudde?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Yes, there were the martyrs of Tolpudde and we have evidence over the years that when opponents of labour and trade unionism have the opportunity, they try to weaken the power of the trade union movement.

The Attorney General: It was the Liberal Party that gave you your freedom.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am surprised at the Attorney General making that interjection.

The Attorney General: You know it is true.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Liberal Party tried to squeeze the Country Party out of existence.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: As time goes on the more youthful members of the Liberal Party may come to realise that there is some substance in what members on this side of the House put up from time to time.

The Minister for Lands: You were youthful yourself years ago.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I have not tried to misrepresent the position as I see it, and I have made a close study of the Acts to which I have referred. I sincerely believe I am correct when I say that we cannot ban the Communist Party. A few years ago Mr. Menzies refused to ban the communists and I believe that we cannot ban ideals. If we ban the Communist Party tomorrow we will have to deal with it in some other way. I now direct my remarks to the Australian trade unions. Any State or Federal election figures will show that there are only a few thousand people throughout Australia who vote for the Communist Party. No communist would hold office in any Australian union if it were not for the apathy and the indifference of the Australian trade unionists themselves.

Mr. Grayden: That is the answer.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: In order to believe in communism one must be an atheist. Sincere men who are God-fearing and who are opposed to materialism; men who are religious in their convictions, whether Anglicans, Methodists, Roman Catholics, or Baptists, should take a responsible part in their industrial unions. If they do that, there will be no place for the communists.

Mr. Grayden: That is quite correct.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: A number of unionists, and people generally, are mentally lazy in regard to certain responsibilities. The onus should not be placed upon the Government to abrogate the fundamental principles of British justice or abolish the Communist Party, because it cannot be done. However, it can be done if the responsible citizens of this country, who belong to trade unions, take an intelligent interest and a prominent part in their associations with those trade unions. With those few remarks I shall close my speech on the Address-in-reply. I thank members for their patient hearing.

Hon. A. H. Pantton: We had no alternative.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The hon. member knows as well as I do that there are four doors to the Chamber, but I will not pursue that point.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [5.46]: It is my intention this evening in speaking to the Address-in-reply to endeavour to make some constructive suggestions to the House in connection with the superphosphate problem. I have no intention of casting any reflection upon the officers of the Department of Agriculture, particularly on the plant nutrition officer and the agristologist. It is unfortunate that at this stage, with the superphosphate problem a very serious one, the Department of Agriculture is unable to make a definite recommendation as to the method of rationing that should be adopted.

Probably the blame for that should more properly be laid at the door of previous Governments over many years rather than at the door of the officers of the department. I think they have done a very good job in the past under most difficult circumstances, particularly the officers to whom I have referred. They have a tremendous job to do. It is possible for them to deal only with some of the more acute and immediate problems, and they are unable to indulge in any long-range or constructive research. It has been more a case of attempting to stop holes rather than to carry out the research that perhaps they themselves would have preferred to do.

I do not wish to comment at any great length on the report that has been presented to the House by Senator Seward, but I think it unfortunate that the terms of reference under which the report was drawn up do not make any suggestion to Senator Seward to endeavour to find alternative agricultural methods that might be applied to alleviate our present super. position. I would like to direct the attention of the House to methods of fertilising that have been adopted for some 20 years or more by Mr. Eric Farleigh, who has a property some 18 miles from Boyup Brook. The property is one of 2,100 acres and is classified as third-class land.

It was condemned for soldier settlement in World War I, and on it Mr. Farleigh pays about £16 a year in rates, his unimproved value being put down at 3s. an acre. Yet, despite the fact that his land is generally regarded as poor, he is carrying on that property 4,300 sheep, of which 1,500 are breeding ewes. To the end of July this year he had marked 1,300 lambs; that is well over two sheep to the acre. Besides that, he is carrying 199 head of cattle of all ages. I think most of us will agree that, regardless of the quality of the land Mr. Farleigh is farming, he is carrying a considerable quantity of stock, and his super. allocation is 122 tons.

To some members, it might be of interest to learn that last year he took 116 tons of that allocation of super. in ground rock phosphate. It might be said that Mr.

Farleigh is carrying a lot of cattle on his property. He is too, and he is also carrying them very well. There is no question of the quality of the stock he is producing. Last July we had some very cold weather in Blackwood. He sold 43 head of cattle at an average price of £41. When we bear in mind that the 43 head of cattle included two 13-month-old steers, we will realise that that is very good money.

At this juncture one might ask what are the agricultural methods adopted by Mr. Farleigh in comparison with the generally accepted methods? The main difference, I believe, is that Mr. Farleigh believes in a limited use of lime. He does not believe in using large quantities but feels that the use of lime in small quantities is decidedly beneficial. He applies his phosphate in the form of dicalcic phosphate and not monocalcic phosphate, which is ordinary superphosphate. The former is produced by mixing an equal quantity of lime and super. He has used that method for 20 years and has certainly got results.

Then again, Mr. Farleigh believes that soil acidity must be kept to a minimum and that the intelligent use of lime in some form helps to achieve that end. He considers his theory can be applied with advantage throughout our heavy rainfall areas, though it might be limited in its use in lighter rainfall areas. He regards it as necessary to determine the soil acidity and when he finds his soil is somewhere near the neutral mark, he then switches to the use of tricalcic phosphate, and, as I have said, this year he took 116 tons of his allocation as ground rock phosphate.

No sulphuric acid at all is needed in the production of ground rock phosphate; it is simply phosphatic rock ground up. It might be reasonable to ask what the views of departmental officers are on this subject. They will say with a good deal of truth, that they have conducted no experiments which would indicate that there is any economic value in the use of lime in the South-West. That is probably true. The departmental officers did conduct some experiments before the war and they said that if a man had any extra money it would be better for him to put it into super. With super. at £3 17s. 6d. a ton, it might not be an economic proposition to lime the land. Some 10 or 12 years later, however, and with super. at the price it is, the economics of the earlier experiments might not be sustained. In any case, the department has carried out no investigations which would enable it to form an opinion about the actual methods used by Mr. Farleigh of mixing super. and lime together and applying it in that form. He actually mixes equal quantities of super. and lime.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Is that fully burnt lime?

Mr. HEARMAN: Any sort of lime. There is no problem attached to the supply of lime in Australia.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Would that be burnt lime?

Mr. HEARMAN: It could be. I do not think the Department of Agriculture has given its blessing to this proposition, and I realise that officers such as Dr. Dunne are in a difficult position. They cannot advocate a method which they are not prepared to justify scientifically. In their own minds they may think there is something in it but, as departmental experts, unless they are able to give a complete and scientific basis for their recommendation, they would be leaving themselves open to criticism. Therefore I can appreciate their position, and I do not blame them.

In Victoria, however, there is a good deal of acceptance of these theories by the Department of Agriculture there. Mr. H. A. Pitman, who for many years was plant pathologist in Western Australia and who is now in Victoria, has been advocating the use of a mixture of lime and super. since 1941 to such an extent that today super. factories are turning out increasing quantities of what is known as a fifty-fifty mixture, which is really half lime and half super. Therefore there is some scientific support for these theories. In New Zealand, very extensive use is being made of lime and the consumption has gone up very rapidly. In Great Britain also, in later years, lime has been coming into increasing favour as an agricultural fertiliser.

The costs in the factory of the lime-super. mixture are in the vicinity of £2 a ton less than the ordinary super. mixture, and it is contended that by the use of this mixture on soils which are not unduly acid, or even on some of the more acid types, a larger proportion of phosphate would be available as plant food than with ordinary super. When super. is used, the useful portion of the manure is water-soluble phosphate which is a relatively unstable form of phosphate. If the phosphate is not used immediately a considerable amount of it is absorbed in chemical combinations—particularly with iron—and in that way it is lost to agriculture.

It is quite possible that a heavy dressing of super. applied in various areas has been lost. Mr. Pitman, who, of course, knows Western Australia well, considers that these methods could be applied in this State with greater advantage than in Victoria. It is interesting to note in passing that our present method of topdressing with super. does nothing to add any calcium or lime to the soil. For every ton of clover produced, 30lb. of calcium per acre are taken out of the soil. Therefore we could not go on growing clover without replacing the calcium. It is well known that cal-

cium is leached out of the heavy soil and that clover only feeds on the top two inches of the soil. A serious depletion of the soil in our wetter areas must have taken place, and I believe the advantages of this method of applying super. in the wetter areas would be very considerable.

I believe that we would obtain greater productivity by the use of lime. If a farm such as the one I mentioned can produce in the way it has, obviously considerably greater productivity could be expected from the whole of the South-West if these methods were adopted. I believe it would make our existing supplies of phosphate go further and we would obtain better returns for the money expended on phosphate. It would make a considerable contribution to our super. shortage; because, if by the use of dicalcic phosphate we can create a condition in the soil whereby the use of ground rock phosphate is an economical proposition, I think that the sulphur saved would be very considerable. It would also assist our railways; because, if we have to rely on pyrites as a source of sulphur, the railways will have a tremendous problem in trying to haul the necessary quantity.

Furthermore, dicalcic phosphate does not rot bags. Ordinary super. does rot them, particularly if it has not been allowed to mature. Dicalcic phosphate can be mixed with the seed and left for weeks without any harmful effect, unless it is wet, in which event the seed germinates and grows. In Western Australia we have considerable supplies of lime in a form in which it can be used straightaway, without any treatment. Near Karridale, at a place called Barranup, there are large deposits, running into millions of tons, of lime sand of a carbonate calcium content averaging between 85 and 95 per cent., which is eminently suitable for this particular use. Considerable quantities of that lime sand are being used at the moment by Mr. Farleigh.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Is it useful on heavy land or light land?

Mr. HEARMAN: On any land it is useful, so long as the rainfall is there. But the finer the lime the more effective it is. There are other deposits at Lake Clifton and elsewhere of ordinary, quite suitable ground limestone. This morning I discussed with Mr. Jones, of Cuming Smith-Mt. Lyell, what the reaction of his company was to this proposition, and he said that the firm had no objection to making ground rock phosphate available. There are no technical difficulties, and the company has no objection to mixing lime and super. at the works, which is of obvious advantage; because when lime is mixed with ordinary super. a further chemical reaction takes place. The product gets hot and it takes a month or six weeks for the action to be completed, and when it is finished the super. has gone lumpy and requires crushing.

On his own place over the last 20 years Mr. Farleigh has been adopting the methods I have outlined, and crushing the manure. There are no technical difficulties from the viewpoint of the super. works, but manufacturers are very concerned at the moment about the sulphur position, which they know perfectly well is extremely grave. It could become increasingly so if we found ourselves cut off completely from oversea sources; and any scheme or method which would permit the greater use of ground rock phosphate would suit the companies, because they are wondering how they are going to keep going if they suddenly find themselves faced with the prospect of having to rely entirely on pyrites for the manufacture of super. At the moment I do not think they could do it. They have neither the plant nor the necessary machinery to convert their works for the use of pyrites.

At the Picton works in the South-West they are depending entirely on imported sulphur. They turn out 60,000 tons of super. a year; and obviously if the sulphur supply were cut off, the Picton works could not function. It would require considerable extensions and additions to the acid plant to enable the works to be converted for the use of pyrites. Another fact which underlines the importance of not relying on outside sources of supply is that 2500 tons of nitrate of soda are lying in Melbourne on order for Western Australia; and unless some of it is brought here rapidly, super. manufacturers will have to cease operations about the middle of October, because there are not sufficient stocks here to enable them to continue manufacturing sulphuric acid after the middle of October, which is approximately six or seven weeks hence.

The difficulty is that the ship that brought the nitrate of soda from Chile had trouble all the way over and finally broke down completely in Melbourne, with the result that it cannot come to Fremantle to unload. There is considerable difficulty in getting other ships to accept nitrate of soda as cargo, because it is regarded as dangerous. Some people think it is explosive; it is definitely a fire risk. Consequently it is possible—I do not say it will happen, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility—that even this year some works may have to close down because we cannot get nitrate of soda to the manufacturers to enable them to make sulphuric acid.

The firm of Cuming Smith-Mt. Lyell has no objection to the general use of ground rock phosphate or to supplying portion of its product in that form or to mixing lime with ordinary super. But it is reluctant to implement those suggestions without some lead. The company will not take the responsibility of initiating the adoption of that particular type of manure. It feels that the department should make a recommendation, or a lead should be given by way of some public

demand for phosphate in those forms. The company is not prepared to supply any ground rock phosphate for general orders. The only orders it will supply, I understand, are those which go to Mr. Farleigh. It supplies him because it wants him to continue his work and demonstrations under practical field conditions.

The company says frankly that it is impressed with the results that he is obtaining and thinks that those results warrant further investigation and experiment. To that extent it is doing all it can to enable him to pursue his work. But I might add that there are other farmers in the vicinity, and much further afield, who are impressed with the results Mr. Farleigh has achieved and are talking about them; I think there will be a limited demand this season for ground rock phosphate and also a much wider adoption of his policy of mixing lime and super. together and sowing in the form of dicalcic phosphate.

I consider that this matter calls for immediate investigation by the Government, because it could prove at least a partial solution to the superphosphate and railway problems. The matter is one of urgency, but we cannot expect a great deal of assistance from the officers of the Agricultural Department. The department has experiments in hand designed to prove or disprove the theories I have enunciated, but it will be years before the plant nutrition officer is able to say what he really thinks. Agricultural science is a very slow science. It take approximately 12 months to discover anything. If one is experimenting with a process for the hardening of steel or something like that, having perfected the process, it is possible for one to repeat the experiment and prove its worth by repetition some 20 to 100 times in a week or a fortnight. But with agricultural research one has to try an experiment and wait a complete season for the result.

There are many conflicting factors that can influence that result. One cannot depend entirely on the first results obtained but must repeat the experiment over and over again; and it might take from six to 10 years to obtain any really concrete and consistent results from which sound deductions could be made. So I do not think we can expect the Department of Agriculture to make any very concrete recommendations in connection with rates of application of super. or alternative methods such as those in connection with which it is making experiments concerning the use of gypsum. The department does not know what the ultimate result will be. It has had conflicting results. There is one case in which the worst plot is that which has been topdressed with super. All sorts of contradictions are met with. So I repeat that the House cannot expect any direction from the department for some years.

Nevertheless, I think the matter is one of great urgency. We may be faced with a serious problem within the next 12 months. That is not fantastic; it is quite a possibility. In the event of war or anything like that, it is possible our sulphur supplies will be cut off or we will not be able to get them through regularly, with the result that we shall be thrown on our own resources. With the stress of war, I am certain that our railways would be more than hard put to handle the pyrites necessary to produce the super. we require.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There is plenty going up the smokestacks at Kalgoolie.

Mr. HEARMAN: I do not know what quantity is going up the smokestacks; but apart from whether sulphur is available or not, anything that is suggested to increase the productivity of our heavy rainfall areas and reduce the cost of manure to the farmers merits the closest scrutiny.

The Minister for Lands: The question of sulphur going up in smoke has been investigated. It is very hard to harness such sulphur and it would be very costly.

Mr. HEARMAN: I know there are difficulties attached to it. There is another suggestion that we can obtain sulphur from the lead-ore we are exporting. It is said that could be treated and the sulphur left behind. I am not in a position to deal with all these possible sources of sulphur supplies. I have no objection to their being investigated, and I do suggest that this question of the use of forms of phosphatic manure other than super. should be very widely examined at once; and if the theory is proved, immediate steps should be taken to make available supplies of lime—and we have ample quantities—in order to take advantage of the improved methods.

The Minister for Lands: Is it the Karridale lime that is being used?

Mr. HEARMAN: It does not matter in what form it is, though the finer it is ground the better. If Karridale lime were used it might be necessary to put on an extra couple of hundredweight for every ton of agricultural lime used.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There is no shortage of lime.

Mr. HEARMAN: No.

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

Mr. HEARMAN: I had almost finished my remarks before the tea suspension and I wish now only to reiterate that I consider this to be a matter of some urgency, if we are to take advantage of any suggestions that may be put forward as to a wider application of these agricultural practices. I intend, at the appropriate time, to move for the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate this problem, as I think it is an urgent ques-



tion and one in which it will take too long for the Department of Agriculture to make sound recommendations, as the questions involved are such that the scientists have to be sure of their facts and must be prepared to back their recommendations scientifically. I feel it will be years before that stage is reached, and for that reason I intend to ask for the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the matter.

**MR. GUTHRIE (Bunbury) [7.32]:** As the representative of the constituency from which it may be said the late Sir James Mitchell originated, I wish to associate myself with the expressions of regret at the passing of that statesman. His efforts on behalf of the South-West in particular will be remembered by virtue of the development apparent in that area—development which, in itself, is a noble memorial to any man. The valuable work of the late Messrs. T. Fox and H. V. Shearn in this House will be recalled by many, and I would like to record an expression of personal regret at their passing.

The reference to this State's enviable record for industrial peace, in the Speech of His Majesty's Administrator, deserves, I suggest, more emphasis. The credit for that peace may be due, in part, to circumstances, but I insist that the major reason for the harmony that continues to exist is the sense of reasonableness exhibited by trade union members in this State.

I would have welcomed some definite information with regard to steps to be taken to ensure adequate supplies of superphosphate for our primary producers. Simply to control supplies is not enough and prompt action in the production of sulphur from pyrites is called for. The transit shed for Bunbury was promised some time ago, but so far there has not, to my knowledge, been any move made in that direction. Both Esperance and Albany have had cargoes from the Eastern States, and I think it is high time that Bunbury was equipped with better facilities in order that it might receive interstate cargoes.

The South-West power scheme is to be officially opened on the 24th inst., but we do not know much about the scheme, other than that a power station is to be erected in Bunbury. We would all like to know when the work is to be commenced, when it is likely to be completed and any other available information about the scheme. I am glad to see that in response to continued and urgent representations by members on this side of the House the Government has, at long last, decided to do something in the matter of increasing payments under the Workers' Compensation Act and in the form of superannuation.

I come now to the harbour problem. Work has proceeded to schedule according to Colonel Tydeman's plan, but we in Bunbury would have liked part of a later phase of his programme proceeded with. However, I believe the powers that be have decided against us. I will comment later on the cut from the Estuary to the sea, waiting in the meantime to see if it is successful. I hope the Government will form a national trust in Western Australia because, if we are to preserve our historic buildings and maintain historical traditions we must make our people conscious of the value of such things. England has long recognised the necessity for this and America is just beginning to be aware of it. I represent a tourist centre and it is to such outstanding features as old homes, the ancient church and the abandoned mill that visitors look.

A committee has been formed in Bunbury to preserve the old Picton Church and make of it a memorial to the pioneers. That historic building has a national interest. At Busselton and other centres there are buildings of great historic value, which may at any time be demolished or destroyed unless the Government takes action to preserve them. Many have already been destroyed and, whilst they had no intrinsic value, their historic associations were priceless. I suggest that, before it is too late, a national trust should be formed. I will speak further on some of these topics and others on the Estimates.

**MR. TOTTERDELL (West Perth) [7.35]:** When I made my maiden speech in this Chamber a year ago I submitted many suggestions that I considered would be to the advantage of the State generally and the City of Perth in particular. The main hardship of our people today remains, as it was a year ago, an acute shortage of houses. We are told by the Minister for Housing that the problem is gradually being overcome, but I question that statement. We want results and not just fairy tales. The Minister is always telling us what is to happen by this time next year, but where is the target of 90,000,000 bricks promised for 1951? I am afraid we are very much short of that total.

We find the State Housing Commission still sailing along in smooth waters because there is no check on the enormous cost that it entails. I imagine that the Premier must sometimes break out in a cold sweat when he is signing the cheques for that department, and I venture to say that the wages cost alone for the administrative part of that department would be something in the vicinity of £6,000 per week, which must naturally be added, pro rata, to the cost of the homes being erected. Therefore my gospel of a year ago still stands today, and I would again advocate

the gradual closing down of the administrative part of the State Housing Commission.

I believe the Government should concentrate more on the production of essential materials, letting the builders, who know their job, do the building. On the 8th August the Leader of the Opposition mentioned the trouble experienced by builders with regard to getting supplies to carry out country contracts. I agree that what he said was correct, and it only goes to prove that if the Government would concentrate on the production of building supplies, jobs would be completed more cheaply and more quickly.

On behalf of the City of Perth, which I have the honour to represent, I wish to express the thanks of the City Council for the co-operation which exists between the two parties concerned and I feel that the nigger in the woodpile, which used to exist, has disappeared in the last few years. All concerned are now working together for the good of the great State we represent. I come now to the rent legislation, about which we have heard so much from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: And about which we have seen so little done.

Mr. TOTTERDELL: I do not believe the position of the poor persecuted tenant to be half as bad as has been suggested, and I feel that with a little polishing up the existing legislation can be made a workable proposition. I understand that is the intention of Cabinet, and I hope a satisfactory solution will result. Our great traffic problem has grown until I believe breaking point is almost at hand and I respectfully suggest that a committee be formed, consisting of representatives of the Government and of the Perth City Council, to formulate a scheme to provide parking accommodation and traffic control in our city so as to cater for those who use their vehicles in the course of their lawful business.

Mr. Yates: What sort of parking accommodation do you visualise?

Mr. TOTTERDELL: A series of parking areas on the perimeter of the city. On the question of town planning, I feel that I must again stress the need for a real town planner in Western Australia.

Mr. Yates: What about the one we have?

Mr. TOTTERDELL: We want a man capable of handling this burning question, and up to date the Government has not produced such a person. I urge the Government to make a drastic change in the matter of our town planner and town planning board. I think it would be an economic proposition for the Government to retire the present Town Planning Commissioner from his office.

The Minister for Lands: Why?

Mr. TOTTERDELL: I recently introduced a deputation to the Chief Secretary, dealing with the question of widening Hay-street. My committee put forward a sound suggestion but, much to our surprise, the Town Planning Commissioner said there was nothing wrong with Hay-street and that all we needed to do was to educate the people to walk properly. He said that if that were done, Hay-street would then be satisfactory. If any man says there is nothing wrong with Hay-street, in the matter of width, I do not think much of his opinion. Even the Chief Secretary, guided by the Town Planning Commissioner, asked, "Why do you not create more arcades?" We do not create arcades.

The City Council does not build or control arcades—and so we go on. I come now to that dreadful monster, the spec builder, referred to by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The member for Melville mentioned a particular firm which, he said, was fortunate in securing all the materials required to build 81 new homes. I would point out to the hon. member that Plunketts, the firm he mentioned, is the most progressive organisation of its kind in this State, with its own brick-yards, tile factory, timber mills and joinery works.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The hon. member should not forget that when I was asked to name the firm, and named Plunketts, he agreed and said he already knew of it.

Mr. TOTTERDELL: Yes, but the member for Melville picked a bad man when he picked Plunkett, who is the best in this State. Plunkett's target is 1,000 houses per annum, and if we had 20 Plunketts, we would have no need for the Housing Commission. The price of homes is controlled by the demand and, with 20 Plunketts in this State, we would have competitive designs and building, and competitive prices. With more homes for sale on the market, the competition would cause an easing of prices and the unfortunate worker whom the Deputy Leader of the Opposition quotes so often, would receive a better deal.

Mr. Griffith: There is not much competition at present.

Mr. TOTTERDELL: I advocate the lifting of all controls as far as possible and believe the time for price-controls has gone. We should have an open market now and let everyone get what he can.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: They are getting that already.

Mr. TOTTERDELL: The member for Melville mentioned three houses built by Plunketts, all exactly on the same plan, and sold respectively for £3,500, £3,750 and £4,000. I cannot swallow that.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The hon. member can see them for himself.

Mr. TOTTERDELL: I know Mr. Plunkett well, and I know that if he charged extra for a house he would simply be giving it to the Federal Treasurer, so I do not think there is much in the hon. member's contention. The 90 acres of land which comprises Heirisson Island, on the Causeway, has been vested in a body known as the National Fitness Council. That council is not an incorporated body and therefore, it has no responsibility and its chairman is a civil servant.

The Minister for Education: It is incorporated under an Act of Parliament and the chairman is the Minister for Education in whom the land is vested.

Mr. TOTTERDELL: In the Minister for Education?

The Minister for Education: In me.

Mr. TOTTERDELL: I am very glad to hear it. I will withdraw my statement, Mr. Speaker, because I thought Mr. Halliday was the chairman. However, that land is under the control of the National Fitness Council, and if it is to be made into a sports ground it will constitute a death-trap and a source of trouble to the people of Western Australia. The island comprises 90 acres and if sport is to be played on the area on a Saturday afternoon it will hold from 10,000 to 15,000 people. After the sports have been concluded those people will make for home and what a death-trap it will become! There is another feature and that is if there are 15,000 people either playing or watching games in that area, there must be the necessary sanitary accommodation available.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They will tip it into the river.

The Minister for Works: Like some of our predecessors.

Mr. TOTTERDELL: That might be done. So perhaps Cabinet might reconsider its decision to make this island into a sports ground and instead, transform it into a botanical garden which would be a thing of beauty and something of which the city could be proud. In conclusion, I hope and trust that we will all pull together and at the end of this session we will be able to say, "Well, we have done a good job." That is the reason why I am in Parliament, and I hope that my words will come true.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [7.47]: I, too, wish to associate myself with the remarks that have been passed in reference to the death of Sir James Mitchell. He was extremely well known in our district because he had early associations there and was well loved by all. For the time being, I suppose, people in a number of districts have forgotten the shortage of water that we experienced last year, but I can assure members that that does not apply to the residents in the Geraldton district. Although our weir is overflowing at present

mainly because of the plentiful rain this season, we are still looking to the future and trust that the Minister will, at all times, keep before him the needs of the Geraldton district.

I believe a new power station for the water scheme is to be erected at Geraldton and also a new gravitation main near the weir is to be provided. It is also expected that a new holding weir will be constructed in the Geraldton district next year together with an enlargement of the mains. We believe that if a portion of the catchment area was bituminised in the near future our water needs for the next few years would be adequately supplied. In the dry seasons the rain flows into the creeks, but does not reach the dams because of the porous nature of the soil.

However, this year, because of the continual rains the dams, fortunately, have been filled. I would like the Minister to take note of my remarks and at the same time accept our appreciation of his efforts to date to fulfil the needs of the Geraldton district. During the war years the Geraldton wharf was badly neglected and it is only in the last few months that any action has been taken to effect improvements which, of course, have not come too late. No doubt the Government will be committed to a fair amount of expenditure because of its delayed action.

I would also like to see greater benefits and improved amenities provided for waterside workers at the port of Geraldton. I think, also, that a suggestion could be put forward to the Commonwealth Minister for Shipping that oversea shipments should be directed to the outports and the people of Geraldton are anxious to share in the benefits that would accrue if such a suggestion were implemented. They look to the State Government for support in any action that may be taken in this direction. We know that main roads are a headache to the Minister for Works and the Government generally. No doubt, the roads in our district are no worse than those in any other part of the State, but they are rapidly deteriorating.

It would be greatly appreciated if the Minister could see his way clear to have the Great Northern-highway, particularly the Greenough section, repaired at the earliest opportunity because I assure the Minister it is in a very bad state. In the Press recently I noticed that a new bridge is to be erected over the Greenough River for which we will be deeply grateful because to cross that stream, when it is overflowing, is extremely difficult for people travelling from the North. The Minister assured the member for Gascoyne and me last year that the road would be kept in a good state of repair and I therefore hope that the road gang will be kept in continuous work because the travelling public in large numbers use that road, which is an important link with the North.

Last year the question of lack of school accommodation was raised in this House and I suppose it will continue to be stressed for quite a while yet. Except for renovations, no improvement has been made to the Geraldton school. The classrooms are still overcrowded and I would like the Government to enlarge the schools in that town and to expedite the establishment of a new school for the east Geraldton area. Also, a playing area has not been provided for the Northampton school and I urge the Government to take early steps to rectify this in order that the children may enjoy full and decent recreation.

Quite a deal has been heard about superphosphate and pyrites tonight. In our district we have a large area of light lands and we are anxious that they be opened up and developed. If such action were taken it would be not only for the benefit of our port at Geraldton, but also for the State as a whole. We know that we must have superphosphate and if we cannot get the sulphur from oversea for its manufacture, we will have to use pyrites. I urge the Government to make some announcement as to what its future intentions are with regard to bringing pyrites from Esperance in order that the superphosphate works can get on with their extensions and hasten production. Without superphosphate our primary production will fall by 25 per cent. or even 50 per cent. within a short period.

As to agriculture generally, I would like to pay a tribute to the Department of Agriculture and its officers for the work they have done over a number of years. Those officers work under the greatest of handicaps, particularly in their Perth offices and laboratories—such as they are. I would urge the Government to provide them with decent accommodation in which to work and conduct their researches in order that the people of Western Australia may benefit from their labours and the knowledge they have acquired over a number of years.

They have established quite a number of experimental plots in various parts of the State and if one talks with the officers one cannot but be impressed with the valuable work they have done over the years and are continuing to do. Members know that we have in the Geraldton district a valuable industry in the canning and freezing of crayfish tails. That industry is the means of bringing much needed dollars to this State and Australia generally, and I would like the Minister for Fisheries to do everything possible to assist that industry because of its importance to the town of Geraldton.

The need for more houses is just as great in the Geraldton district as it is in every other part of the State. I would again urge the Minister for Housing to do his utmost to ensure that the housing programme in Geraldton is expedited so

that the people of that centre can be decently housed and thus save a great deal of the discontent that is prevailing today among the workers. Before resuming my seat, I wish to pay tribute to the officers of the Tourist Bureau at Geraldton for the excellent work they have done over the past few years. The Government has been extremely generous in granting a subsidy to assist the bureau in carrying out its operations. The attitude adopted has been the correct one. The tourist trade is of great value to the Commonwealth and will prove of particular value to Geraldton. I consider that the set up approaches the ideal, and I suggest to the Minister that the bureau at Geraldton be given a fair trial, because nothing but good can emanate from it.

**MR. MANNING** (Harvey) [7.56]: I wish to join with other members in paying my tribute of respect to the late Sir James Mitchell, who was a man of great vision and high courage. He was truly a statesman whose name will be remembered throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia. I do not think I would be far wrong in saying that Sir James was respected, admired and loved by almost every man, woman and child throughout my electorate.

There are a few matters on which I wish to speak for the benefit of the House. The South-West power scheme, as the member for Bunbury remarked, is to be opened on Friday next, and this will mark another great step in the development of that part of the State. The electricity charges to be made are a subject of primary importance in the South-West at present and I understand a uniform rate is to be struck for all towns to be served by this scheme. I would urge that the State Electricity Commission should take steps to close the gap between the charges made in the metropolitan area and those in the country at the earliest possible moment.

Housing is another pressing matter. I wish to express my disapproval of the percentage of homes built by the State Housing Commission in the metropolitan area as against the percentage of those being erected in the country. At the 31st March, 1951, the percentage of houses built outside the metropolitan area was 40.4. I know that the Minister anticipates that the percentage for the current year will be between 45 to 50. The position that these figures indicate is not satisfactory to me. There is little difference between the number of people living in the metropolitan area and those residing in the country, but this difference in the building rate is too great for my liking.

**Mr. Graham:** Where do you think the greatest need is?

Mr. MANNING: The point is not necessarily as to where the greatest need is but the fact that we should do something to prevent this continual drift from the country to the city.

Mr. Ackland: It is merely because they have not the homes to live in.

Mr. MANNING: Yes, they flock to the city in search of a home, thereby creating what I would call false figures, that is, city against the country. I consider that this is one method whereby the State could encourage people to leave the city to go to the country, namely, by making available more homes than are being built in the city. Those figures could be reversed by stepping up the building rate in the country and attracting population from the city. Decentralisation should be our policy. It is a sound policy and it is one method of assisting the country to retain its population. We have reached a stage where the population of the city is growing too rapidly, and we shall presently find that our food production is decreasing because workers are leaving the country to live in the city in order to derive the benefit of the 40-hour week. I contend that the provision of housing is one method by which population could be attracted to country districts.

During the Address-in-reply debate a year ago, I mentioned the Old Coast-road and advocated that it should be taken over by the Main Roads Department and put into good repair so that settlers could be encouraged to take up and develop the land in that vicinity. A committee has been formed consisting of representatives of each of the road districts adjoining that road with a view to furthering the project. I understand that the Minister for Agriculture intends to pay another visit to the district shortly and I hope that this visit will bear fruit.

In the Speech, mention was made of pine planting. We were told that 2,000 acres a year is the present rate of planting. I would urge that the Forests Department give consideration to stepping up the clearing of land and the planting of pines.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The labour is not available.

Mr. MANNING: If houses are provided for the employees, the labour will be available. In the irrigation areas, we have not sufficient plant to grade the land for irrigation, and this shortage is holding up the production of whole-milk, butter, etc. I wish to impress upon the Minister for Works the need for having more of these graders made available in order that farmers may push on with the development of their holdings and the stepping up of the production of much-needed food commodities.

In recent weeks much has been said about butter; in fact much was said about it week ago, though the subject has received more publicity recently. I do not wish to comment at length because it is the subject of much discussion in the Press almost daily, but I express the hope that the butterfat price arrangement will soon be finalised and some definite agreement reached.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Seeing that the price of butter is to go up 11½d. per lb. and that the producer is to get only 1d. per lb., can you tell us where the balance is to go?

Mr. MANNING: No. I do not wish to speak at great length tonight. I have touched on one or two points of interest to my electors and to the State as a whole, and I shall defer further comments until later in the session.

MR. LAWRENCE (South Fremantle, [8.4]): I wish to join with other members in expressing my sincere regret at the passing of our ex-Governor, Sir James Mitchell, and also at the passing of two members of this House, Mr. Shearn and Mr. Fox. I feel that by the death of those three citizens, we have sustained great loss, but we have gained from the fact that they showed by example what good citizens we could be if only we followed in their footsteps.

I desire to direct the attention of the Government to the injustices that are being done to employees coming under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. I shall show by a few typical examples that it is high time the Government moved in the matter and introduced some amendments to the Act. We should pause at this stage and consider what the term "compensation" implies. I take it to mean that it is a grant made to a worker as relief for injuries received during or in the course of his employment, but while that may be the correct meaning, we find that there are so many restrictions in the Act that the worker is denied this relief. In my opinion, these restrictions amount to a denial of the right to live for a worker injured during his employment.

I could assume that Ministers would not permit such a state of affairs to exist if they knew of some of the examples that I propose to quote. Therefore, I am forced to the conclusion that the Government is not knowledgeable of many of the pitfalls and injustices in the Act. Firstly I shall refer to Clause 15 paragraphs (b) and (c) of the First Schedule, which deal mainly with the drawing up of agreements and which throw the onus on the Registrar of the Workers' Compensation Board to examine these memoranda of agreement, as they are called. It is his duty to examine them, and if he is satisfied that they provide a proper assessment of the injury sustained by the worker, he registers it.

I wish to quote the case of J. J. Murray, which arose out of an injury received by him when he fell down the hold of s.s. "Kooringa" and was badly hurt, being forced on to compensation for about two-and-a-half years. At the expiration of that time, the doctors, in their wisdom, said that Murray was permanently incapacitated to the extent of £371 16s., and forthwith an agreement was drawn up for the payment of that sum to Murray and also medical expenses incurred whilst he was under medical attention.

After Murray and the employers had signed the agreement, it was duly sent to the Registrar who, after perusal, registered it. That was in December, 1950. When Murray signed it, he signed away any claim he had under the Employers' Liability Act. While the employers stated in the agreement that they would pay all medical expenses incurred by Murray, in March, 1951, he received bills from various doctors, totalling £45 for fees. This goes to show that the Registrar did not know at the time that these moneys were outstanding and that Murray was not cognisant of the fact, otherwise he could have applied under another section of the Act to get relief to the extent of a further £50 medical expenses, which he would have done had he known these accounts were outstanding. But because the memorandum of agreement stated that the employers would pay all the medical expenses, Murray signed it. Therefore I suggest he signed it under some undue influence, and it is high time that the position was rectified.

A particular point in the Act to which I wish to refer is in connection with the weekly payment which has risen from £4 10s. in April, 1949, to the princely sum of £6, which is the maximum payment today. It is just nonsensical to speak of £6 for an injured worker, whether married or single, in these times when the basic wage is £9 16s. 8d., because that is the sum below which every court in Australia has declared no worker can live on. But, because a worker is injured, through no fault of his own, he is condemned to live—or to exist—on £6. Before I entered this House I was secretary of the Waterside Workers' Union, and approximately 1,800 men were employed in the industry. We had the alarming number of 35 men per day on compensation.

I do not wish to cloud the issue and say that we had 35 accidents a day, but I do wish to be quite clear and state that each and every day we had 35 cases. Mixing amongst these fellows as I did, I could see the bad psychological effect of accidents on them. Firstly they had to suffer pain—in many cases, terrific pain. Then, if a man is married, which most of them are, he quite frequently has two or three children as well as his wife and himself to keep. He is forced, under this

Act, to do that on £6 per week. I suggest to the Government that it is totally impossible for him to do that.

The effect on the worker is so bad that it more or less retards recovery. I have discussed the question with various people and the usual answer is, "If he has three children, he gets child endowment for them." Anyone who adopts that attitude can only be classed as in the ridiculous category. A case which came to my notice a few weeks ago was of a fellow named Gamble who was injured in the course of his employment whilst driving a truck. He hurt his back, and was under three specialists, including some of the best orthopaedic surgeons in the State. Gamble is totally unfit for work. Now, he has eight children as well as his wife and himself, a total of 10 for whom he is responsible. He is forced, the same as a single man, to try to exist on £6 a week.

Another injustice is in connection with the ceiling of compensation payable to a worker under Section 7 (3) (a) of the Act by which a worker who is permanently partially or permanently totally incapacitated cannot receive more than £1,250, inclusive of any weekly payments that may have been allowed to him. I quote the case now of one Walter Turner who, whilst in the employ of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, was knocked off a truck and fractured his hip. He has been on compensation for three and a quarter years. For part of that time he received £4 10s. per week, and for the rest—the greater portion—£6 per week.

For the period he received a total of £817. Now he has been declared by the doctors as totally and permanently incapacitated. In fact, he is a dead loss as far as both he and the country are concerned, because he cannot produce or work. Nothing can be done for him. Whilst the doctor says—and this is the State Insurance Office's doctor—that he is 100 per cent. incapacitated and will remain so for the rest of his life, he can under the Act receive only the difference between £1,250 and £817, a matter of £400 odd, which resembles approximately 33 ⅓ per cent. disability. That is definitely an injustice.

With regard to some of the minor provisions of the Act, I propose to refer to paragraph (c) of the proviso to paragraph (c) of the First Schedule. This portion relates to false teeth. I find that where a worker who wears false teeth does not suffer personal injury arising out of an accident, but simply has his false teeth knocked out of his head, he is not compensable. I do not know whether that is by design or by bad drafting; but I say it is an injustice.

I can mention the case of a man who, a couple of months ago, was working on a ship at North Wharf. In between decks were loaded cows' heels which had gone rotten. This poor unfortunate individual lifted the hatch cover, and the stench was so terrific that it revolted his stomach to

such a degree that he had to run to the side of the ship, where he vomited, and his teeth went overboard. I say that happening definitely arose in the course of his employment, and that he was compensable. However, the Act says he is not. It was suggested by the employer that he dive for the teeth. The position is that the fellow cannot swim, so, he finishes up with no teeth to eat with.

There is also room for improvement by the addition of further sections, and here I have in mind the sections of the Victorian Act which provide for compensation being payable to a worker who is injured when travelling to or from his place of employment. Such a provision should also be included in our Act. I would like members of the Government to put themselves in the position of a worker. Not that I suggest they are not good workers, but what would be the position of any member who, through overwork, fell asleep and slipped off his bench, breaking a leg in the process? Would he be placed on an allowance of £6 per week on which to sustain himself, his wife and his family? Such a position is not fully realised until it is brought home to us and I think the Government should take a more practical view of the question of workers' compensation and adopt that slogan, mentioned in this Chamber earlier today, "Do unto others as you would be done by." I intend at a later date, when opportunity arises, to speak further on amendments to the Act.

I wish now to deal with the vilification of waterside workers by the daily papers. Being a broadminded soul, I find, on going forth into public life and engaging total strangers in conversation, that they know little or nothing about the waterfront, how it grew, its present strength or many other things peculiar to it. There are today in the Press frequently to be seen anonymous statements by employers. Such statements are usually made by irresponsible people who have not worked in the industry and who know very little about it. That sort of thing has on the men it is levelled against the effect of getting their backs up, particularly if it is untrue.

While not all such statements are false, the bulk of them are. Not only in this State but also in the Eastern States we see reports of lawlessness on the waterfront. I challenge such statements and point out that the waterside industry provides only casual employment. The Waterside Workers' Federation accepts the responsibility of supplying the amount of labour determined by the Stevedoring Industry Board. That body, instituted in its earlier form as the Stevedoring Industry Commission under the Chifley Government, tells the federation from time to time what the port quota shall be.

Under the Stevedoring Industry Act, we are forced—I repeat the word "forced"—to build that quota up to the required strength. The port quota at Fremantle to-

day is misunderstood to the extent that it is advertised at 1,600 whereas we find, on examination, that the quota of the federation is 1,852. According to the ravings of certain employers and other irresponsible people, that quota is insufficient. They say the slow turn-round of ships is our fault because we do not supply sufficient men.

When I was called upon to attend a conference with the Minister for Railways, at that time Hon. H. Seward, I was at a loss to know why he had requested my presence. When I asked the Minister why he wanted to see me, he said it was with reference to the port quota. I asked, "What are your views on it, sir?" and he replied, "We want more men." I said, "Obviously, but why do you want more men, and how many more do you want?" He said, "I want more because you have not enough men and, as regards the number, we want a lot more." I asked did he know who set the port quota, and was he aware that it was set by the A.S.I.B. and, I am sorry to say, the Minister did not know what the letters "A.S.I.B." stood for. I then asked him how many men at that moment constituted the port quota, and he said it was about 700. That, in fact, was 700 short of the correct figure.

I mention that point not in criticism of the then Minister but to show that there are many people in prominent and responsible positions who do not know the true state of affairs. Frequent allegations are made about waterside workers loafing, but I would refer members back to 1949 when 2,000,000 tons of cargo—a record at that time—were handled over the Fremantle wharves. Members may take it as a fact that that cargo did not just fly about of its own volition but had to be moved by wharf labourers, and each man working below in the hatches handled from one to five tons per man per hour, a rate which, I suggest, compares more than favourably with that in most other ports, particularly in view of the outmoded method of working which was then a feature of the Fremantle waterfront.

As regards the vilification of waterside workers, let us turn to the dark old days when the waterfront worked under a system known as free selection. It was then a common sight in the morning to see 1,000 men lined up 200 yards away from where the boss stood on a dais. The boss blew his whistle and the men ran. It was not uncommon to see some of the men nearly trampled to death, because that was in the days of the depression. When they reached the dais, the boss stood up and said, "I will have you, and you—" he would then pass a man by—"and you." He passed that third man by because he could probably carry only eight bags where the other three men could carry ten.

That shows conclusively how a man had to work his soul-case out to get a job under that system. However, with the advent of the Chifley Government a system

came into being, known as the roster system, whereby an employer is forced to take his labour as it is allocated to him by the board. Having an intimate knowledge of the industry, I suggest that if that board is removed the shipping industry will fall into chaos—and well the employers know it. However, we see many wild statements in the Press to the effect that the board should be abolished, that attendance money should be taken from the waterside workers, that they are not entitled to annual leave and, in fact, that they are not entitled to anything.

We find that these men who have spent their lives in the industry, grown old in it, and built up the holdings of the ship-owners, in the last 10 years, from £310,000,000 to £900,000,000, are vilified. I wish to quote a report from Dr. McQueen, a Macquarie-street specialist, who was brought in by an outside body—the Stevedoring Board—to examine a batch of waterside workers to determine their condition. Dr. McQueen stated—

I was under the impression, when commencing this survey, that its main object was the detection of malingerers.

Having encountered only one of these crafty undesirables among the first 130 cases I examined, I realised that I was dealing with a quite unique collection of genuine and serious disabilities.

I was forced into a real and surprised admiration for a body of men earning a more or less arduous living, handicapped by gross and serious physical abnormalities. Most of the individuals examined were over the age of 40 and under 60. I can only surmise, with the most profound gloom, the condition of those over 60 years of age.

My chief impression of these men was, that all of them were prematurely aged.

It was rare to find any man who did not look at least 10 years older than his stated age. Their outward appearance was more than confirmed by physical examination. The majority of them showed the usual stigmata of abnormally early and rapid senility.

That quotation gives an insight into the real picture of life on the waterfront as it was, and I conclude from that report that the shipowners are not concerned with public interest but with how much profit they can squeeze out of the waterside workers' bodies.

Touching now on the question of the turn-round of ships, we find today that most ships spend a longer time in port than was the case a few years ago. I voice the sentiments of the waterside workers when I say that we would welcome an inquiry, by any State or Commonwealth Government, as to the true

reason for this state of affairs. Cargoes have increased greatly and I can quote a case, not long ago, of the motor vessel "Annenkirk" which, if the public could have seen it, would most certainly have enlightened them as to why that ship was held up for such a long time.

More than 450 tons of over-stowed cargo were on the one ship, which meant that 900 tons had to be unnecessarily handled; that is to say, 450 tons had to be taken out of the ship and stacked in the shed while the cargo for Fremantle was unloaded. Then, the 450 tons had to be reloaded back into the ship so that that cargo could be taken on to its port of destination. On this question of over-stowed cargo, I wish to quote from the first report of the Australian Stevedoring Industry Board, over the signature of the chairman, Mr. Hewitt. He states—

One of the factors which adversely affected turn-around in the port of Fremantle during the year was the large amount of cargo arriving from overseas, which were destined for Eastern ports, but which was over-stowed on Fremantle cargo. During 1949-50, 19,700 tons of over-stowed cargo had to be removed—so that Fremantle cargo could be discharged—and then re-stowed. This over-stow was the cause of added work to the extent of 39,400 tons handled (i.e., by the double handling of the over-stowed cargo).

That is only one of the minor reasons why these ships are not turned round at a faster rate.

Another one of the major reasons for the slow turn-round of shipping is the port itself and the facilities provided for handling cargo. Until a few months ago, at the port of Fremantle, there was not one fork-lift machine for handling cargo. Peculiarly, through the very good work of the new general manager of the trust, that matter has been rectified and, to the best of my knowledge, we have about 50 of these machines operating. While these machines have, to some extent, facilitated the unloading of cargo, the position is still bad. The machines cannot be used to their full efficiency because there is insufficient shed space for the cargo. Until these matters are rectified, work on the waterfront cannot be carried out to a proper degree of efficiency. But, that is not the fault of the waterside worker.

We also hear from the Press, and the irresponsible I spoke about, how the waterside worker loses a considerable amount of time because of strikes. It is interesting to note some figures and to quote them for the edification of these people. In the year 1946-47, the total man hours worked were in the vicinity of 31,000,000 and the man hours lost were approximately 1,500,000, which gave a



percentage of total man hours worked to hours lost on account of strikes of only 5.8. In 1947-48 that percentage dropped to 2.5 and in 1948-49 it dropped further to 1.78—ample proof, I suggest, that all this talk about the men on the waterfront not working, is misleading.

It is quite evident from those figures, which were supplied by the Government Statistician, that the position is improving and in Fremantle, for the year ended the 30th June, 1950, the percentage of man hours lost through rain was 2.3, while the man hours lost through disputes was .7 per cent. That is further proof that lawlessness on the Fremantle wharves does not exist, even though the Press would make it appear otherwise.

Further, I wish to impress upon members of the Government that the federation does not condone, in any shape or form, and will not tolerate indiscipline on the waterfront to this extent: Every member who works on the waterfront has a working record card. If he commits any misdemeanour it is recorded on the card and he is brought before a select committee of the federation. If he should miss his morning tram, which is not an unusual occurrence in these days of unreliable transport, and on arriving at his place of pick-up happens to miss his number, he is penalised to the extent that he cannot offer himself for employment or receive it for 48 hours, which in these days means a fine of over £5 10s.

If such occurrences become frequent he has to face the select committee of which I speak, and I know from my experience that we have, for repeated offences, expelled members from the federation, which means that they are denied the right to work in any port in Australia. Many times we have suspended men for one month which, in effect, means a fine of approximately £60. That is a common occurrence and I could produce facts and figures for anyone who is interested. Members are fined £5 or £10 for misbehaviour. We call it misbehaviour if we are brought before the judiciary—I refer to the ordinary court—and it is possible that such a breach may be met with a fine of 10s. or £1.

I do not intend to speak at greater length on this question but I feel I should make a plea to members of the Government to try to ensure better relations between employers and employees and that the friendship existing between them is cemented. I wish now to refer to a case which appears in this evening's Press. These six men, in the first place, were prosecuted for attending a one-hour's meeting and, together with nine others, were fined £5.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Persecuted!

Mr. LAWRENCE: That was because they refused to do what the working class commonly calls "scabbing on their mates," which is an unpardonable crime among trade unionists. In fact, I suggest it is an

unpardonable crime for any citizen of our fair country to commit. The result of those prosecutions, which I suggest were provocative and intimidatory, was that whilst the State Government was approached to withdraw the summonses, or withdraw even some of them, it refused to take any action for the reason that they were not prosecutions by the Government but by the court. However, because the Government—if we take its word for it—did not have the power, the position has arisen that shipping may be completely tied up in the port of Fremantle because these tug crews have been prosecuted and have given a week's notice.

If we have any sort of bad weather, ships, especially the big passenger liners, will thus not be able to get into Fremantle and those that are already berthed will not be able to depart, which will be a severe blow to the economy of this State. I would therefore appeal to the Government to ensure at all times that better relations are maintained between the employers and the employees and that it will adopt a more lenient attitude towards the employees because, as I have attempted to prove by reference to certain happenings, the fault is not wholly that of the employee—I refer particularly to the waterside worker—that the slow turn-round of ships occurs and that friction arises between the parties concerned. I shall again deal with this question at a later date.

On motion by the Minister for Housing, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.47 p.m.

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 22nd August, 1951.

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