

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 2nd August, 1945.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Questions: Superphosphate, as to quantities hauled by railway | 72 |
| Post-war reconstruction, as to regional planning | 72 |
| Electricity supplies, as to South-West and Great Southern schemes | 72 |
| Water railed, as to charge to farmers | 73 |
| Railways locomotives, as to use of Collie coal and oil | 73 |
| Vegetables, as to production in wheat areas | 73 |
| High Court, as to sittings in Perth | 74 |
| Housing, as to homes built by the Workers' Homes Board | 74 |
| Personal explanation, Mr. North and the Liberal Party policy | 74 |
| Address-in-reply, fourth day | 74 |
| Leave to continue | 88 |

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

QUESTIONS.

SUPERPHOSPHATE.

As to Quantities Hauled by Railways.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Railways:

What was the tonnage of superphosphate hauled for the year ended 30/6/45 from—

(1) Metropolitan works to (a) Bunbury Port Zone via Great Southern Railway; (b) Bunbury Port Zone via South-West railway; (c) Albany Zone?

(2) Picton works to (a) Bunbury Port Zone east of Collie; (b) rest of Bunbury Zone; (c) to Albany Zone?

(3) Was the superphosphate hauled to the South-West hauled in trucks which would otherwise have travelled empty?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) and (b) 9,408 tons were despatched to this zone but particulars of route hauled are not readily available. Traffic was hauled by the most convenient route, having regard to water haulage, etc. (c) 8,752 tons.

(2) (a) and (b) 18,455 tons despatched from the works for the Bunbury zone, but separate totals as desired are not recorded and are not readily obtainable. (c) 7,223 tons.

(3) Yes, in some cases, but the percentage of such is not available.

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION.

As to Regional Planning.

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

(1) Has a plan of the State been prepared showing the 16 areas into which the State is said to have been divided for regional planning?

(2) If so, will copies of such plan be made available to members of the House upon request?

(3) If not, will a plan be prepared and made available as suggested?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) A special plan showing 16 regional areas has not been prepared but the areas have been coloured on an existing litho.

(2) Copy of this marked litho. is being laid on the Table.

(3) Answered by (1).

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to South-West and Great Southern Schemes.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it intended that the South-West Power Scheme should be available in the south-western districts and the Lower Great Southern simultaneously?

(2) (a) If not, what lapse of time is intended between the two, and which will be completed first?

(b) Is it not possible to arrange for the simultaneous construction and availability, and if not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) (a) Development of the South-West Power Scheme is visualised in three stages—the first stage includes Collie, Bunbury, Narrogin, Boyup Brook, Picton Junction, Dardanup, Brunswick, Harvey, Yarloop, Waroona, Donnybrook, Capel, Busselton, Balingup, Kirup, Greenbushes, Bridgetown, Manjimup, Pemberton, Boyanup, also Wellington Dam. The second stage includes supply to Albany, Kojoonup, Brookton, Pingelly, Wagin, Katanning, Woodaniling, Broomehill, Gnowangerup, Tambellup, Mt. Barker, Denmark, Nannup, Yallingup and Margaret River. It is estimated a period of five years will elapse between the com-

mencement of the first and second stage. However, this period may be shortened or lengthened according to circumstances.

(b) No, because of lack of materials and manpower.

WATER RAILED.

As to Charge to Farmers.

Mr. STUBBS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Is a charge of 2s. 6d. per 100 gallons being made to farmers in respect of water carried by rail during the recent drought?

(2) If not, what is the charge that is being made, and is this the same as in previous years?

(3) In view of the tremendous strain on rural finance in connection with water carting during the season just passed—in many districts far exceeding that of any previous drought year—would he be willing to relieve the farmer of all cost in regard to such water railed?

(4) If not, will he give the reasons why he thinks it desirable that some payment should be made?

The MINISTER replied:

The matter is under consideration. The delay in arriving at a decision has been occasioned by difficulty in obtaining water delivery from some local authorities.

RAILWAYS, LOCOMOTIVES.

As to Use of Collie Coal and Oil.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it the policy of the Government to foster the use of Collie coal?

(2) Is it a fact that the Government is considering reconditioning some of the old locomotives in the near future to burn oil instead of Collie coal?

(3) Has Mr. Fox, a carbonising coal expert, promised the Railway Department to re-condition the said locomotives for oil burning?

(4) From what State in Australia, or other countries, will the Railway Department obtain the oil?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes, as a temporary measure, to counteract disorganisation of train services due to continued short supplies of Collie coal.

(3) No.

(4) Supplies will be obtained from oil companies by public tender.

VEGETABLES.

As to Production in Wheat Areas.

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he aware:—

(a) Of the highly successful large scale production, over several years, of green and root vegetables, such as cabbages, peas, swedes, beetroot, etc., on an ordinary wheat farm near Wyalkatchem, without irrigation and without the use of animal manures?

(b) That the working proprietors of this farm, Messrs. T. E. Brown & Sons, have supplied large quantities of their products to the Metropolitan Market and the Gold-fields, as well as filling large defence contracts?

(c) That within recent weeks shipments of cabbages from this Wyalkatchem farm have been exported to Colombo?

(2) In view of the success achieved by Messrs. T. E. Brown & Sons, will he give consideration to the investigation of the possibilities of this avenue of production with a view to the encouragement of its extension in the wheatbelt?

(3) In connection with (2) will he endeavour to obtain and make available reports on the shipment, or shipments, made to Colombo, and ascertain the possibilities of establishing and extending an export trade in these products?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a), (b) and (c) Yes.

(2) Mr. Brown conferred with me both here and in the Eastern States, when he was making inquiries in connection with certain machinery types, and other matters. I have had a letter from Mr. Brown this week, and the matter of the extension of the work is being followed up by the Agricultural Department.

(3) Yes.

HIGH COURT.

As to Sittings in Perth.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) What was the date of the last sitting of the High Court in Perth?

(2) Could he state what reasons exist why no sitting has taken place since?

(3) Is he aware that appeals in Western Australian cases to the High Court have been heard in the Eastern States?

(4) Will he make representations to have the sittings resumed in Perth, thereby saving Western Australian litigants unnecessary expense?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) September, 1937.

(2) As far as can be ascertained, the High Court's reasons for not coming here were as follows:—(a) It was considered that insufficient business was available in Perth to justify a visit; and (b) during certain of the war years there was difficulty in travelling.

(3) A number of representations have been made and, although no official information is to hand, published statements indicate that the High Court will come West in September if sufficient business is available.

HOUSING.

As to Homes Built by the Workers' Homes Board.

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

(1) What number of houses (including those under war housing plans) has been built in Western Australia by the Workers' Homes Board since June, 1937?

(2) Of these, how many were completed prior to July, 1940?

(3) How many of the total were erected in the metropolitan area?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Workers' Homes Board 607, War Service Homes Commission 5, McNess Housing Trust 105, Commonwealth War Housing Trust 89 (completed); total, 797.

(2) Workers' Homes Board 353, War Service Homes Commission 4, McNess Housing Trust 24, Commonwealth War Housing Trust nil: total, 381.

(3) Workers' Homes Board 473, War Service Homes Commission 3, McNess Housing Trust 100, Commonwealth War Housing Trust 50; total, 626.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. North and the Liberal Party Policy.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): On a question of privilege I desire to make a statement to the House. In today's issue of "The West Australian" my name appeared as a Liberal. I wish to make it quite clear that, amongst other matters, I support the ten points embodied in the policy of the Liberal Party of Australia, together with any alterations that the member for West Perth may enlarge upon. I dissociate myself from any other expression of Liberal policy emanating from another place or embodied in speeches as reported in "The West Australian" or elsewhere and delivered by persons posing as Liberals but not subscribing to the Liberal policy.

Mr. Cross: Are you ashamed of the new order?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. PERKINS (York) [4.38]: At the outset of my remarks I desire to congratulate the new Premier on his taking over of the high office to which he has been promoted. I think it particularly appropriate that the Premier of Western Australia should be a man who has had an agricultural background and considerable experience of rural problems in this and other States. At times I have been doubtful whether in formulating its policy the Government has fully realised the importance of the agricultural industry in Western Australia and how dependent the State is upon it. Although there have been attempts to develop many secondary industries in Western Australia, competition in the past has been so severe that they have found difficulty in establishing themselves on a comprehensive basis, and there are no good grounds for assuming that the competition from the well-established Eastern States manufacturers will be any less severe in the future. It therefore appears to anyone who is con-

sidering the future of Western Australia that its development must to a large extent depend upon the agricultural and mining industries. If we are to develop this State, we must rely upon the expansion of those industries for which the State is particularly suited, and agriculture and mining are two industries which one immediately thinks of.

I am pleased to note that the Government has on the notice paper a Bill to deal with soil erosion and soil fertility in this State and that a reference appears in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech to that subject. It is a most important one, and were it not that we shall have an opportunity to speak on that Bill in the near future I would make some remarks on that matter at this stage.

In regard to the development of our agricultural industry, the State is facing a most serious position. Although the market for some of our agricultural products has been considerably better than it was in pre-war years, we have had to face during the war years a big drift of population from our rural areas into the city and urban areas. The people who have left the agricultural areas have, since taking up residence in the city and suburban areas, come to realise the difference between the amenities existing in those areas as compared with those in the rural areas. In order to encourage them to return to the districts from which they came, it will be necessary to provide them with the opportunity to enjoy amenities similar to those they have lately been enjoying. If we are to do that, Government policy must provide for certain things. Personally, I entirely believe in the principle of self-help. People should themselves obtain that which they require; but there are certain essential services which the Government must provide before country people will have the opportunity to provide the other amenities for themselves.

The three essential services which I regard as absolutely basic are, firstly, education; secondly, water supplies; and thirdly, transport—and in that order. With regard to the first of these items, educational facilities, I am aware that the Education Department is working under great difficulty at the present time, but nevertheless I hope those difficulties will not prevent the department from realising the big change of opinion

that has taken place with regard to pre-war educational facilities. Some big meetings have been held in country districts—I have attended some of them—at which people have made definite statements as to the kind of educational facilities that they will assuredly require in the future. This is the more surprising as some of those people appeared—I say “appeared”—to take but little interest in the type of education which has been provided over the years. That change of opinion I believe applies throughout the whole of the State and the Government should take note of it. Not only is it desirable from a national point of view that better educational facilities should be provided, but there is a strong demand for them by the people who are asking for these facilities. The Minister for Education is faced with an exceedingly difficult problem in this State, because our agricultural population is rather more scattered than the agricultural population in other States and therefore more money will be required to render efficient service. That service must, however, be provided if the people are to be induced to remain in the agricultural areas.

Those areas were opened up by previous Governments and the onus now lies on the present Government to provide the facilities I have mentioned in order that the people may live there and work and grow the products that are suited to the particular areas. Lack of such facilities in the past is definitely responsible for driving people away from the rural areas. I can quote two cases of men with young families who have sold their properties and come to the city within the past two years, solely because the educational facilities for their children were not available within a reasonable distance of their homes. I have no doubt many more cases could be cited. I know that the Government has a general policy of developing the consolidated school. I believe the policy to be a good one. It will be the means of developing larger country schools in which specialised instruction can be given. There are, however, other areas where local difficulties will prevent the putting into effect of that policy. I hope that no undue pressure will be put on the residents in those areas to induce them to accept a type of service which they do not desire.

It is a very much better policy for the Government to build up the type of service which is given in a central school, in order to attract the children from the more distant areas. That would be a better policy than bringing down regulations which will arbitrarily force the closing of small country schools in order to build up larger schools. Personally, I have no doubt whatever that if better education is made available in the larger consolidated schools, parents will be only too ready to accept the bus services which must be provided to transport the children to the larger schools. I have no information of the exact type of education that will be provided in the consolidated schools. We have very few examples in the State. There are no consolidated schools in the district which I represent that I would say are satisfactory from the point of view of the parents concerned. I believe that parents in most country areas will require the standard of education in the ordinary consolidated school to go at least to junior standard. I consider that is only a reasonable request to make. If the consolidated or central school serving a large country district—one may say the centre of a road board or of a municipality—cannot take the children on to junior standard, there is going to be hardship placed on some families.

A system of hostels might be of some help, but in many cases parents do not desire their children to be out of their control before they get to about junior standard. After that standard, it is possible for the children to be boarded at satisfactory hostels or in satisfactory private homes in order to continue to leaving standard. But it will be necessary for additional high schools to be established throughout the agricultural areas to take the children on to the leaving standard. Even though the numbers available in those high schools, in the immediate future, may be somewhat below what the Government requires at present for the establishment of a high school, I believe that in order to serve these areas high schools should be provided at strategic points, having regard more to the geographical position than to the actual population in those places. In the eastern areas, particularly, I think an excellent case can be made for the establishment of a high school at Merredin, and another possibly further south

at Narrogin, or some such centre, so that children in the intervening areas will not have too far to travel in order to receive a high school education, and so that they can get home at least at week-ends.

I think that most citizens will agree that the general lay-out of the educational system must be left to the Education Department, and that it should place the facilities in such positions that they will adequately serve the State as a whole. Not much exception can be taken to leaving that discretion to the department. But we can ask that reasonable facilities be made available so that the parents and the children concerned throughout the agricultural areas will not have to travel such long distances as many do at present. If we had that, much of the dissatisfaction that exists at present would be alleviated, and we would stop part at least of the drift from country areas to the city simply because of the lack of suitable educational facilities in those areas. I hope, also, that in developing its secondary school education programme, the department will not push a policy of specialisation at too early a stage. I know that some people have been pressing for a type of area school similar to those in Tasmania. There is some confusion of thought by many of those people between the principle of a consolidated or central school and that of an area school. Some area schools in Tasmania appear to be something of a mixture between an ordinary secondary school and an agricultural college. That might be quite suitable in some districts in Western Australia, but in the majority of the agricultural areas a general education up to leaving standard is approximately what is required. After that it is possible to specialise in whatever direction the parents deem advisable for their children.

Since the last session, some development has taken place in regard to the free lending library scheme, on which I have spoken in this House on previous occasions. I am pleased to say that the committee appointed by the Premier has got into working harness, and some centres are already functioning under the general supervision of that committee. Although it is only two months since contact was made between the committee and any of the road boards or the country people concerned, eight centres, comprising Balingup, Broomehill, Bruce Rock, Capel, Dal-

wallinu, Quairading, Victoria Plains and Merredin have had £473 worth of books sent to them and another £150 is available in the fund for further consignments. In addition, three other centres, Augusta-Margaret River, Narrogin Road Board and Municipality, and Chittering have allocated a total of £120 to which will be added the Government subsidy of £120, so that an additional £240 worth of books will be available in those centres.

The interest that has already been taken in the scheme is very encouraging indeed. I have no doubt that many other centres will come in in the near future. There are ten to 12 other centres already in touch with the Free Lending Library Committee, and I have no doubt that, before another year has elapsed, the total amount of money expended under the scheme will be at least double. I am also pleased to say that the Government has indicated that it will not see the committee short of funds, provided the country areas continue to subscribe on a pound for pound basis, and up to a limit of £50 subsidy to any locality. I regard this library work, and adult education work generally, as being particularly important because, whatever one may do in the primary and secondary schools, a large portion of any person's education must be acquired after school days. Unless we put at the disposal of the people the means to further their education, we are making it very difficult to have a really well-informed community. If we have a well-informed community, we have little to fear as to the future development of the State. When the people are well informed as to a project, there is little doubt but that they will take the right action. Where they are not informed, the way is opened for any interested parties to get support for any wild-cat schemes they put forward.

The second point I want to refer to is water supplies. Undoubtedly, unless we can very quickly extend our system of water supply in Western Australia, there will be a natural reluctance on the part of the producers to develop their properties to the maximum producing capacity. These last 12 months have raised doubts in the minds of many people as to the adequacy of their water supplies which, in the past, they thought were entirely sufficient to meet any emergency. Unfortunately it has been discovered that in an abnormally dry year, to-

gether with the increased number of stock carried in the agricultural areas, some better form of water supply is necessary. I am aware that this does not apply uniformly throughout the agricultural areas, and I am afraid that when the Government instals its comprehensive water schemes, which are being talked about at present, considerable difficulty and difference of opinion may be evident. The areas which I represent—particularly the more western part of the York electorate—are fairly adequately served. The central portion, fortunately, has a number of extensions from the Goldfields water supply system, and in other areas there are quite good local water supplies.

Portions of the eastern area are also reticulated from the Eastern Goldfields water supply system, and that is quite satisfactory, but it is most desirable that whatever local schemes exist in those areas should be connected up, as quickly as possible, with either the Goldfields water supply system or the proposed Wellington dam scheme. In view of the size of the project of the Wellington dam scheme it seems possible that it may take a number of years before that scheme can be brought to fruition, and therefore there is an extremely strong demand, throughout a portion of those eastern agricultural areas, to be connected up with the Eastern Goldfields water supply system as soon as possible. I am aware that the Eastern Goldfields system is fairly heavily taxed at the present time, but I am hopeful that if the scheme can be put in hand to raise the weir at Mundaring it may be possible to connect up those eastern areas. So far as those eastern areas are concerned, there are practically no schemes there that are satisfactory, and therefore the people in those areas are in a somewhat different position from the people further south, in that they have no alternative satisfactory schemes, and the vast majority of the people in those areas desire the water scheme to go through, even though they have to pay up to 6d. per acre rate on their properties.

Speaking of the rate, I believe that the Government could solve many of the differences of opinion and the difficulties, which seem likely to arise in regard to the water scheme, if they would agree to put it in on a consumption basis, land holders paying on

consumption with only a very small minimum fee per holding, rather than by insisting on a high rate and charging the water up at so much per thousand gallons with an exemption up to the total value of the rates paid. I believe that in the long run the Government would not stand to lose very much money by adopting that system of rating, because the experience of the eastern areas—at any rate—has been that, where many people originally did not desire these extensions from the Goldfields water supply mains, and thought that their own supplies were reasonably adequate, and for many years probably did not use very much water out of the pipelines, as time went by they have found that the Goldfields water supply was very convenient, and they have run increased numbers of stock on their properties and in the great majority of cases they are now using the full amount of water allowed under the exemption against their rates, and are probably paying for some excess water as well. Therefore, from the Government's point of view, not only would it solve their own difficulties in regard to getting a satisfactory water scheme established, but it would also, in the long run, possibly be the means of increasing the revenue under the scheme. If such a course is not adopted I am afraid that many cases of injustice will arise.

I know of some instances in the southern part of my electorate, where owners have spent up to £1,000 in providing adequate water supplies for themselves. Those supplies, even in such a dry year as this last one, have proved adequate. In one case the survey happens to run right along the edge of a man's property, and he would be rated for the greater portion of the property if that water supply scheme went through; yet over the years he has had to provide his own water supply and this additional expenditure on behalf of the comprehensive scheme will be added to the capital expenditure which he has had to incur on his own account because no satisfactory Government scheme existed. However, the position is one for the Government to work out, and we can only give the Government advice as to the feeling that exists in the areas which we represent.

The Minister for Mines: It is decent of you that you are not charging for it.

Mr. PERKINS: I next refer to transport. The three essentials which the Government has to provide, in order to develop our areas, are, firstly, education, secondly, water supplies and, thirdly, transport. The position in regard to transport is absolutely deplorable and, what is worse, it shows no signs of getting any better so far as the Government facilities are concerned. The fastest of our train services averages about 25 miles an hour, and many of them are very much slower. There does not seem to be any immediate prospect of any improvement. If we put in suggestions for improvements the Government apparently does not see fit to do anything towards meeting those requests.

Not very long ago—about nine months ago—the member for Beverley and I had a deputation to the Minister for Railways, asking for a road service from Perth to York, Quairading, Bruce Rock and Narembeen, running on alternate days to the Diesel service through those areas. For a long time the Diesel service through those areas has been seriously overtaxed, and requests have come from all the local authorities concerned asking for the service to be duplicated. Therefore the case was quite a good one, seeing that the present facilities are entirely inadequate. In addition to that, so far as the most easterly portion is concerned—the Narembeen area—there is at present only one Diesel service per week to that area. A train leaves Perth at 25 minutes to nine in the morning and gets to Narembeen, which is 180 miles by road from Perth and about 200 miles by rail, at about 5.40 p.m. It goes to Kulin and turns round immediately and goes to Merredin to meet the express.

The request has been made to the department for a long time, to hold that Diesel at Kulin or Koodinin until next morning, so as to give a daylight service next day back to Perth. Though that request has frequently been made over a period of two years the department has, up to date, refused to meet it. This means that, coming back to Perth, people have to leave the Narembeen area at about 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. and wait at the Merredin station to catch the Kalgoorlie express, which is often seriously overcrowded, and which gets to Perth about 10 a.m. next day if the train is on time. This is a deplorable state of affairs, yet, when we put up as an alternative, a

road service such as I have outlined, the department still does nothing whatever in the matter so far as we are able to gather. I therefore say that our transport services at the present time are absolutely deplorable and show no signs whatever of getting better.

Mr. Cross: So they are in most countries of the world today.

Mr. PERKINS: I think the Government should be giving very careful consideration to this question of road and rail services. The country people are going to demand—I do not think there is much doubt but that they will get them—good bitumen roads throughout the country areas. That was approved before the war, and even at the present time—

The Premier: What do you include as "country areas"?

Mr. PERKINS: Wherever people are settled!

The Premier: Do you mean from Wyndham to Esperance? You do not mean round York!

Mr. PERKINS: I will say all the agricultural areas if that makes the position clearer. They are the areas where we will have bitumen roads. The bitumen roads were approved before the war and the Minister for Works knows that his officers are already extending the bitumen roads and are doing quite a good job.

The Minister for Mines: The country roads are a credit to him.

Mr. PERKINS: I say that the Government should be giving very serious consideration to whether it is going to take passenger services over those bitumen roads or continue to try to take them over the railway system.

The Minister for Justice: It is giving consideration to it.

Mr. PERKINS: Then I suggest that it takes us into its confidence and tells us what we are going to get. All the indications up to the present are that in ten years' time this Government will still be giving consideration to it, if it is still occupying the Treasury bench.

The Minister for Justice: We cannot do everything at once, under present conditions.

Mr. PERKINS: I think the people are entitled to something better.

The Minister for Justice: We agree.

Mr. PERKINS: And unless something is done rapidly in regard to the matter, the passengers will not be there for the department to carry.

The Minister for Mines: You have to go outside the metropolitan area now to get on to a good road.

Mr. PERKINS: As soon as cars, petrol and tyres are again freely available a great many of the people will run their own transport and will give rides to their friends. So many people will do that that there will not be sufficient passenger traffic available to pay for the axle-grease used on the railway service. Therefore, even from the point of view of the return to the Railway Department, I think it is highly desirable that some change-over should take place. Not only would it give a better service to the people concerned, but it would probably halve the time required for getting to Perth from the more distant points in the agricultural areas. It would probably solve many other problems that the Railway Department has to face at the present time. Our railway lines are quite suitable for carrying goods traffic and so far as I have been able to gather the goods traffic is very much more profitable than passenger traffic, notwithstanding statements to the contrary which the Government has made in this House.

The Minister for Justice: Never! Goods are far more profitable than passengers.

Mr. PERKINS: I said that goods are more profitable than passengers.

The Minister for Justice: Of course they are.

Mr. PERKINS: The greater portion of the traffic carried by the railways, of course, is the wheat and superphosphate traffic—

The Minister for Justice: Which is not profitable.

Mr. PERKINS: And wool and other agricultural products.

The Minister for Justice: Wool is profitable.

Mr. PERKINS: My information is that the return per mile from the purely goods train is 265d. The return from the mixed train is only 161d. The return is 100d. per mile greater on the goods train than on the mixed train, so it is evident to me that the passenger traffic is not anything of a gold mine to the Railway Department at the present time, but I believe that, provided a good

service is given on the roads, it could be made into a very useful financial help in the running of the transport system.

The Minister for Justice: That aspect has been given serious consideration.

Mr. PERKINS: Those of us who go to the Eastern States have probably travelled on the road services there. I know of two road services there, at any rate, which maintain a schedule of 35 miles an hour over very long distances. They are run by private companies and those companies have shown a good return indeed on their capital. So I gather that the service is quite a profitable one. It is giving a very good service to the travelling public indeed. We in Western Australia are in a well-favoured position so far as our roads are concerned. Ours is better road-making country than is much of that in the Eastern States, and the grades are generally much better than the average grades in the Eastern States. Further, the roads have been built in such a way as to provide reasonably direct runs between the metropolitan area and the country towns they serve. If, as the Minister says, consideration is being given to the question, I hope we shall soon see some results from it.

As regards the efficiency of various Government enterprises, there is one way in which it might be increased to a considerable extent, but, to my knowledge, it has not yet been explored. This involves the question of the long-service leave granted to departmental employees. I believe the position is that after seven years of service an employee is entitled to three months' long-service leave.

Mr. Cross: No, he is not.

Mr. PERKINS: After 14 years' service, if he does not take the three months' leave, he is entitled to a total of six months.

Mr. Cross: He does not get long-service leave until after 10 years' service.

The Minister for Mines: You are both right. That refers to the Civil Service.

Mr. PERKINS: The principle with which I am dealing applies in either case. Whatever the period of long-service leave might be, when it is taken by an officer the department does not benefit in any way because it does not assist the officer to further his study of the particular type of work with which he is associated.

The Minister for Mines: That leave is granted for recuperation.

Mr. PERKINS: There are various ways of using leave for recuperative purposes. What I suggest could not be done in every case, but there are many young officers in the Civil Service who have perhaps served for a period of 14 years, bringing them to about the 35-year-old mark. If they could be assisted to take their long-service leave in the form of a tour to other parts of the world and study the types of work in which they were engaged, and at the same time enjoy the recuperation to which the Minister referred—

The Minister for Mines: That is not the reason for giving long-service leave.

Mr. PERKINS—it could be made a period of great pleasure to the officer and of material assistance to the department. It is the cheapest way in which the department could get information from other parts of the world bearing on the problems associated with the work of various officers.

Mr. Withers: If that were done, the officer might not want to come back here.

Mr. PERKINS: If an officer were treated sufficiently well in his department, he would have some sense of patriotism, and if the administration of the department was such as to give him an opportunity to put his ideas into practice, he would be only too ready to come back and carry on the task at which he had spent so many years of his working life. This is a matter the Government might well consider. Only recently the Government has sent senior officers to other parts of the world to report on various technical problems associated with their departments. These problems might not have reached an acute stage had other officers in the department, at an earlier stage of their careers, been assisted to visit other parts of the world where they could have studied the problems at firsthand and thus been able to make valuable information available to their departments. This covers the criticism I desire to make about specific Government undertakings.

The Minister for Mines: That was not criticism; you were offering helpful suggestions.

Mr. PERKINS: Dealing at longer range with State enterprise and State utilities, there are some aspects to which more of

us should be giving serious attention. Recently I had passed on to me a pamphlet containing the report of an address by Lord Cranborne, Leader of the former Government in the House of Lords, in the course of which he made many constructive statements about socialistic enterprise. I propose to read a few excerpts from his address. After the introductory remarks, he said—

First of all, I should like to make a few observations about a change which I seem, rightly or wrongly, to detect in the attitude of the more moderate section of socialist opinion in this country. Over a long period of years socialists have preached—and honestly believed—that the root of all evil, the enemy of peace and freedom, the ultimate cause of injustice and war, was capitalism. And now they are face to face with a situation which, to say the least of it, does not support this thesis. By all socialist doctrine, the unscrupulous warlike powers should be the capitalist nations; the peaceful, contented powers should be the socialist. But what is the fact? It is great capitalist countries such as England and the United States that are pacific. It is in their territories that liberty of thought and speech survives. It is they who stand for a high standard of morality in international affairs.

The ruthless autocracies, the enemies of free thought and free speech, are the totalitarian States, and these countries are socialist States, in the fundamental sense that they have applied, in the most complete manner, the cardinal socialist principle, so often recommended to us, that the interests of the individual must be entirely subordinated to those of the State. How often have we been told that, if nations would only do this, all our problems would vanish? Competition would give way to co-operation. The State, all wise and powerful, would shepherd the community along the paths of prosperity and peace. That was the socialist conception, and no one will deny that, in theory, it is a noble one.

Autocratic Socialists.—But in practice it has entirely failed to produce the results that were hoped. Why? Because, surely, there is in it one fatal flaw. It takes no account of human nature. If the socialist State is to be paramount, if it is to have a monopoly of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange, clearly those who direct its activities must have autocratic powers. Socialists seem to have assumed that, with the adoption of State socialism, there would come automatically into existence a breed of men, fitted to exercise these powers, devoid of human weaknesses, purged of human vices, to whom the community could surrender the entire direction of their lives with complete confidence that the powers thus bestowed would not be abused. But, in fact, such men do not exist.

Indeed, so far from absolute power bringing out the best in human nature, so far from it increasing the sense of responsibility of leaders for the welfare of their fellow-men, the melan-

choly lesson of history is that it tends to have exactly the opposite effect. It makes them intolerant of criticism; it inflames their personal ambitions. As a result the more absolute the socialist State becomes, the more it tends to assume the character of a dictatorship, with all the vices of dictatorship. Doctrinaire socialists would no doubt say that the totalitarian States are examples of a distorted socialism. They are, in fact, very good examples of the form which untrammelled State socialism in practice inevitably assumes. The perfect State dreamed of by socialist idealists is an illusion. For the State cannot exist apart from the individuals that direct it, and they, being men, must have their share of human faults and even vices, which are only intensified by power.

The vast majority of British political leaders at the present time, in all parties, are sincere, patriotic, public-spirited men. But to give them unlimited powers would surely be to spell the doom of that liberty which is our proudest possession. They would become increasingly certain that they were always right. They would become daily more convinced that those who disagree with them were a public danger. Before very long, liberty of speech and thought would be entirely stifled. In attempting to link State socialism and liberty as the aims of their movement, socialists are trying to combine two incompatible things. The socialist State, like the Fascist State, cannot be free.

Socialism or Social Democracy.—This, I think moderate socialists are beginning to realise. They cannot, of course, immediately repudiate socialism. They have preached it as a creed too long. What they can do, and what it appears that they are doing, is to re-interpret it, to throw less emphasis on State socialism and more on social democracy. For State socialism and social democracy are not the same. They are, indeed, poles apart. In one, the emphasis is on the executive, in the other it is on the legislature. In one, the executive decides what is good for the community. In the other, the community decides what is good for itself. The danger of the situation into which we in this country have been drifting in recent years is that socialism has come to be regarded by a very large number of people as a manifestation of democracy, whereas it is, in fact, the very antithesis.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the opinion of a capitalist. You would not ask a capitalist to define socialism, would you?

Mr. PERKINS: That is the opinion of a capitalist, but I should like members to consider the statements on their merits without worrying too much about their source.

Mr. Doney: As a capitalist, that would be the opinion of the member for Guildford-Midland, too, would it not?

Mr. PERKINS: I will pass over the next portion of Lord Cranborne's remarks and will quote another passage—

There were old people, sick people, unemployed people, who did not benefit under it,

and their lot, if they slipped through the wide mesh of private charity, was too often a tragic one. To deal with these hard cases, there was brought gradually into existence an immense edifice of State social services, until today we have come to regard it as one of the main functions of the State to act as an insurance company, where, by paying a premium the poorer members of the community can take out a policy against these great catastrophes of life, from which they know that their own resources are not alone adequate to protect them. And towards these benefits, all sections of the community make, and are glad to make, a contribution. We have also to recognise that certain public services are more conveniently managed centrally than locally. That is social democracy, but it is emphatically not State socialism. It is an extension of the State services, but it is not a general socialisation of private effort, not a subordination of the individual to the State. It has nothing in common with theoretic State socialism, the wholesale nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

The final paragraph of his speech is as follows:—

Above all, the Conservative Party must stand resolutely for Parliamentary control of the Executive. Sometimes Ministers, especially in times like these, find their Parliamentary duties a heavy additional burden. They take up a great deal of their time when they are already overworked. Parliament often seems fractious, un-understanding and concerned with trivial matters, but Parliament's primary duty is to keep Ministers up to the mark, to force them publicly to justify their actions. That is healthy and an essential duty, and on its performance will depend the survival of Parliamentary Government and of all those liberties, rights and privileges for which we have fought through the long centuries of our history.

I read those excerpts from the speech because I think they point out much more eloquently than I could have done in my own words—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We will have a practical illustration of it now; you wait and see!

Mr. PERKINS: —the changes that have taken place in political thought over the years.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Since that speech was made.

Mr. PERKINS: No; possibly as a result of that speech, in that it is very significant that the Labour Party in England has so far shifted its ground that it placed socialism at the bottom of its objectives. It proposes to socialise only certain national services. I suggest that if the Labour Party in Great Britain had set out to nationalise all the

means of production, distribution and exchange, the result of the British election might have been very different.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Labour never suggested anything of the kind!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Premier: One would almost think he was a Liberal.

Mr. PERKINS: But it has some reference to our future in Australia. I do not know how many members read the address of Sir Ernest Fisk just before he left Amalgamated Wireless to go to Britain. It was a very constructive address indeed. He dealt with the foundation and general working of Amalgamated Wireless and proceeded to draw some deductions from it. As members are probably aware, in Amalgamated Wireless 51 per cent. of the shares are held by the Government and 49 per cent. by private enterprise. The Government appoints three directors to the board and the private shareholders appoint the other three. The six directors sitting as a board appoint the chairman from outside their number. Sir Ernest Fisk, after many years' experience of the Amalgamated Wireless set-up, stated that in his opinion it pointed the way to the most efficient means of reconciling private ownership of some utilities—or almost monopolies—with the general welfare of the community and absolutely efficient management. It seemed to combine the best of both systems. Perhaps over the years it may be possible for us to apply a similar system to other enterprises that are very essential to the community and yet which do not allow for any real competition.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are coming round to our way.

Mr. PERKINS: I think there may be several points of difference between my opinions and those of the hon. member, even yet! There are many other factors we need to take note of in thinking about the future of our national economy.

One very live matter at present is the high rate of taxation. It seems that numbers of people in the community are only just beginning to realise that if we are going to have social services covering so wide a field, they will have to be paid for by someone, and that the only way the Government can get the money to pay for

them in the long run is from taxation. I believe that the present high taxation rates cannot be maintained; they are definitely having a cramping effect on initiative. We see it when we go to the wharves and notice how the wharf labourers react to the present high rate of taxation. We see it if we go to the professional man, who is perhaps even more acutely affected by the very high rates of taxation. The wharf labourer, or any worker earning £14 or £15 a week by reason of the overtime being worked at present, has a tendency, when he has obtained sufficient to satisfy his immediate requirements, to absent himself from work and avoid sharing more of his income with the taxation office than he needs to do.

Mr. Fox: That is not correct.

Mr. PERKINS: In my opinion it definitely has that effect.

Mr. Fox: It is not right.

Mr. PERKINS: I am sure it is right, because public statements have been made by many people in a position to judge and by people who are associated with the present Labour Government, in which they have stated that that effect is evident.

Mr. J. Hegney: How does it affect the farmer?

Mr. PERKINS: It has affected everybody. I saw an example quoted in the Press recently of a doctor who is earning £3,000 a year. He gets a call in the middle of the night to attend a patient. He loses a couple of hours' sleep and charges a guinea for his services. His income goes up from £3,000 to £3,001 1s. 0d. Of that extra guinea, the Commissioner of Taxation takes 17s.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do you think it is affecting the service the doctor is giving?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not think it is. Probably his professional training is such that he realises the welfare of the patient must come first. But that is just an illustration. In the long run, however, it must have some effect. So far as the doctor is concerned, he loses two hours' sleep in the middle of the night and gets 4s. for it. That is an illustration of how the rate of taxation affects any person on a high range of income; it applies to a lesser extent to the man earning, say, £800 or £500 a year. The point I want to make is that if that is continued, and possibly intensified, it will

mean that there is going to be a tendency to use the abilities of the most capable people in the community to less than their full capacity; because the tendency must always be that after a person has provided for his own immediate needs, he will say, "The greater amount of any extra money I earn for the work I am doing must be passed to the Taxation Department. Therefore the extra work will not be done."

Mr. J. Hegney: This is wartime taxation.

Mr. PERKINS: We have had a number of statements from Federal Ministers to the effect that in their opinion it is unlikely that taxation will be materially decreased. I do not know what the future holds, but I am stating what we can expect to be the reaction if taxation is not materially decreased. It is a relevant point that we should take note of in deciding what commitments the Government has to meet. When those commitments have to be met from taxation it is an extremely relevant point and one to which the Government must give serious consideration.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [5.41]: During recent weeks much publicity has been given in the daily Press to the North-West portion of this State and its attendant problems. Correspondence has appeared in "The West Australian" and statements have been given to that paper by various people. At the risk of reiteration, I propose, as member of the most important constituency—or at least one of the most important—in the North-West area, to submit a few observations for the consideration of the Government, and Parliament generally. If there is one thing on which we will all agree in connection with population it is that to have any chance of an appreciable increase we must have stability in our married population. Any remarks that I make now will not be with the object of pointing out where the Government can appreciably increase the population of the North-West, but more particularly with the object of demonstrating how to retain the existing population. I think it will be agreed that one should, in the first place, touch on the question of education because married people are greatly concerned with the facilities, or lack of facilities for education in whichever part of the country they may be domiciled.

For the information of the House, and speaking of my own electorate, I might say that there are three schools in the Pilbara district. In Port Hedland there are two schools, including the convent, and at Marble Bar there is one school. The bulk of the scholars attending the Marble Bar school come from the Comet Mine, six miles out. Those boys and girls travel to school in an open utility vehicle over one of the roughest roads, owing to corrugations, in Western Australia. When school is out they have sometimes to wait for the driver, who comes in from the mines, to be taken back to their homes. Amongst them are children of tender years—at the school commencing age. The young teacher is very enthusiastic but he cannot do an impossible job. He can only impart a primary education to those boys and girls.

My remarks now refer to Port Hedland as well. If the parents there desire to give their children a better education they must break up the family. They must send their children to Perth provided they are financially able to do so. The nearest boarding-school is at Geraldton, but most parents would send their children to Perth. The alternative at present—the only other outlook—is employment in the mining industry, and of course parents with a sense of responsibility are prepared to go to any lengths to give their children a decent education. We find that, when they are able to do so, they send their children to Perth. As I say, their home is then broken up, and just at a time when the children want the maternal or paternal hand over them they are 1,000 miles away. As a result, it is found, in the ultimate, unfortunately, that the parents follow the children so that there is an unstable population in the north-western portion of this country, and there will never be any great increase unless educational facilities are provided there. On the other hand I realise the tremendous difficulties confronting any Government in providing those facilities, because owing to the paucity of population and the consequent small number of children the orthodox way in which a Government would look at the position would be to say that there are not sufficient children to warrant establishing a hostel or a boarding-school in some central portion of the North-

West. So we have the position that these children, where it is possible, will come to Perth and the parents will follow.

Here I may remark that there is no remission in the incidence of taxation in connection with the extra expense to which the parents are subjected for these children. If when the terminal holidays come around a child desires to go to Port Hedland, Broome, Marble Bar or Nullagine, the parents are charged with the responsibility of paying on the plane at least £15—the bare fare—for the return journey. Those members who have sent their children to boarding-schools know just what it costs to keep a child there for 12 months. I leave that thought with the Minister for Education and hope that the Government will do something in the direction of erecting a hostel and providing an educational institution where the people of the North and the North-West of Western Australia will be able to give their children an education commensurate with that obtaining in the City of Perth. I have also asked that a school be established at the Comet Mine and that matter is in the hands of the Education Department. I hope that in the new year the people there will be able to send their children to a school adjacent to the mine.

The next matter I propose to touch on is transport, and my first remarks will be directed to shipping. I appreciate to the fullest extent the difficulties confronting the Minister, the manager and others associated with the State Shipping Service. I realise that they are, to a certain extent, controlled by a Commonwealth navigation authority and as a result are not actually free agents in the matter of administering the State Shipping Service. In spite of all that I regret to say that the people I represent are far from satisfied with the present operations of the service. I know that because of security reasons it is not permissible for the movements of ships to be broadcast, but at least I think the time has arrived when the traders, who look after the supplying of the people of the North-West, should be advised when a ship is likely to arrive at their port so that they may give their orders in advance. As it is, they actually do not know when a ship will arrive, and, as a matter of fact, on several occasions a ship has left Fremantle bound for certain ports with

commodities that have gone right to the terminal port and then back to Fremantle. I do not know whose fault this is.

Recently, I was approached by a lady and her son, who wanted to go to Port Hedland. They were told, at the Tourist Bureau in Perth, that there was no chance of getting a passage or of getting accommodation, and that the Tourist Bureau did not know when they would be able to get to Port Hedland. When I made inquiries I found that these people were able to get on the boat in two days' time. I would like to tell the responsible Minister that the best and quickest thing to do in regard to the Tourist Bureau would be either to close it or to see that authentic and up-to-date information is conveyed to the responsible officer of that institution.

On the next point, in connection with transport, the Minister might inquire into certain aspects of the State Shipping Service. Taking into account the tremendous difficulties which confront him, I think it is right, in fairness to him and to the management of the Shipping Service, that he should make a public announcement and let the people know exactly why they cannot be supplied with the necessary service. Some time ago the "Koolinda" was taken off the coast and, due to a series of circumstances over which the Government had no control, the people of the North were left very short of many essential commodities. I wish to take time by the forelock and suggest that, if it has not already been done, the Minister should make prior arrangements so that, if the "Koolinda" or any other vessel is taken off the coast, there shall be some means substituted whereby the people of the North-West will not be left like a shag on a rock.

In connection with transport generally, I have advocated in this House—and I propose to advocate again—the construction of an all-weather road from Meekatharra through the main arterial portion of the North to Marble Bar and places further north. At the present time, if there is any heavy rainfall, supplies and essential services generally are held up between Meekatharra and Nullagine and Marble Bar. From inquiries I have made it appears that there is a bitumen strip from the railhead in the Northern Territory running for some hundreds of miles. I submit, with all due deference to the Commonwealth authorities,

that the time has arrived when the State Government, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government, should give serious consideration to the construction of an all-weather bitumen road from Meekatharra to Marble Bar. While shipping is at its lowest ebb and the State Shipping Service is not able always to supply the northern portion of the country with necessary commodities, I suggest that arrangements be made to transport the commodities overland.

With regard to the high cost of living, the people in my district feel it very keenly, and have submitted a proposal for the subsidising of the transport system from Meekatharra to Nullagine and on to Marble Bar. At present, the traders in those areas have to pay the freight from Perth to Meekatharra, and they are also charged with the liability then of paying a further £9 10s. per ton minimum from Meekatharra to Nullagine. The price of commodities is then naturally very high in comparison with the prices ruling in the metropolitan area. I submit that the time has arrived when consideration might be given to the matter of a subsidy for road transport.

I desire to congratulate the Minister for Health on his efforts to ensure that reasonable medical and hospital facilities are provided for the people in the area which I represent. In this connection I will refer briefly to the fact that some few years ago I urged that a travelling dental clinic be sent through the whole of the Pilbara and adjacent electoral districts. I am pleased to say that, though the travelling clinic has not gone up there, there are two very good officers of the Dental Institute who have visited the northern portion of the State and who have performed a wonderful service both to the children and adults.

Mr. Doney: What was their means of transport?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: They went by air to Port Hedland and from there to Marble Bar by train. They are now on their way to Derby. With regard to the hospital position, I am pleased to say that the nurses' quarters at Marble Bar have been built, and are very much appreciated by the nursing staff. I will not harp on the question of another hospital being built at Marble Bar because I know, from the attitude of the Minister, that when the circumstances arise favourable and serious consideration will be

given to the erection of another hospital. As regards the release of medical men, I know that the Government endeavoured to obtain a medical man for Port Hedland and another for Marble Bar, but they were only able to secure the services of a doctor to look after the whole of the district between Roebourne, Port Hedland, Marble Bar and Nullagine. However, I hope the time is not far distant when a second doctor will be established in that area.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of the people of Pilbara district to express keen appreciation of the work of Dr. Dick, who, over the last six years, looked after the people in the whole of the Pilbara district. I think that at Marble Bar was the first time he had practised his profession. He is a qualified pilot, and, when Dr. Drew was taken from Roebourne, this young man looked after the whole of the Pilbara and Roebourne districts. He piloted his own plane, and nothing was a trouble to him. He flew at times from Port Hedland out to the edge of the desert and on one occasion brought in a patient and was operating on him an hour afterwards, which shows what a steady nerve he had. He would get into the plane and would travel anywhere he was asked to go, at any time. Unfortunately for the people, but I presume in his own interests, he has relinquished that office, and is now in practice in the City of Perth. Some time ago I approached the Minister as to the appointment of a clinic nurse for the district. I know the circumstances are such that the person to be appointed must be one of outstanding character, inasmuch as she will require to be a good aeroplane traveller and to have a wide knowledge of the affairs which she will be asked to look after. I hope that the Minister, when the time arrives and circumstances permit, will be able to secure the services of a nurse who will be able to fill the position that we hope will be created for her.

Mr. Berry: What will her pay be?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I must ask the hon. member to give notice of that question. I wish to point out that the possibilities for the expansion of the goldmining industry are very favourable in the Pilbara district generally, and more particularly in the Nullagine and Marble Bar areas. There are even now, with all the disabilities which confront them, a number of old-timers on

the Tamborah field and on the Nullagine, Eastern Creek belt, who are just longing for the Government to erect batteries in both centres. I believe that if the Government does erect a battery at Tamborah, and another near the Twenty Mile, it will be an inducement to other men to go to the district. I believe the erection of those batteries would be fully justified. If those batteries are erected it will be an inducement to the young men as they are demobilised, and to those who are used to a rural life, to get up into that country, and they will be an acquisition to that industry. The Government would be well advised to extend the prospecting scheme possibly in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government to rehabilitate some of our young men who might like to undertake prospecting for gold in the North-West portion of the State. If a modified scheme were submitted and put into operation by the Minister I believe it would be well received and would prove worth-while.

On the subject of rationing, I should like to give credit where credit is due. Owing to the work of the Minister for Lands and the Minister for the North-West in the earlier stages, we have been able to obtain, on behalf of the people of the North, a number of commodities not available to people in the metropolitan area. Those two Ministers collaborated with the member for Roebourne and the Emergency Reserve Stocks Committee, and instructions were given that certain commodities such as rice, dried fruit, tinned fruit, etc., not made available in the metropolitan area, should be provided for people in the outback. From inquiries I have made, I find that the department collaborated to the fullest extent with the Government and that the people of the North have thus been fairly well served.

However, trouble has been experienced lately over the supply of tyres and tubes, which are essential for the industries carried on in that part of the State. This is not due to any unsympathetic attitude on the part of the Emergency Road Transport Board. My experience has been that the officers of that board and, indeed, the officers of the various State and Commonwealth departments have been very courteous. The difficulty arises through their not having authority to issue tyres in certain circumstances, and I believe this is

due to those in authority not understanding the conditions that exist. The time has come when the State Government might make representations to the appropriate Commonwealth Minister with a view to getting a liberalisation of the system of issuing permits for tyres and tubes to residents of the North.

I wish to deal briefly with the question of taxation, which was raised by the member for York. I do not intend to go into details, but I consider the time has arrived when a greater measure of relief from taxation should be granted to the people of the North-West. When in Melbourne last year I took up with the Prime Minister the question of remitting taxation to people residing north of the 26th parallel, not only to those in receipt of district allowances, but also to all people earning incomes there, irrespective of their occupations, so long as they were residents of the North. Recently the sum of £40 has been fixed as an allowable deduction for people living north of the 26th parallel. The Commonwealth Government, however, might well consider amending the Act by providing for the total exemption from taxation of people north of the 26th parallel. This provision, to a certain extent, operates in the Northern Territory. The law provides that till the year ended the 30th June, 1947, people of the Northern Territory who earn their incomes directly from primary industries, mining, or fisheries, shall be exempted from the payment of income tax. Provided they are residents of the Northern Territory, no other qualification, so far as I am aware, is required. I advocate that not only wage-earners who may or may not receive district allowances, but also all people employed north of the 26th parallel who, although they derive many advantages from living in that part of the State, are subject to the same high prices and disabilities, should receive exemption. The State Government might well approach the Commonwealth with a view to obtaining this concession.

I must refer specially to the pastoral industry. Pastoralists are not a body of men who care to indulge in squealing, but the time has arrived when something positive must be done if the existing difficulties are to be allayed. We know the history of the pastoral industry from the time of John MacArthur. There was a period in this

State when men who engaged in pastoral pursuits made fairly good fortunes from their flocks, but when development went hand-in-hand with an increase of the flocks, many pastoralists got into the hands of institutions like Dalgety & Co., Ltd., and Goldsbrough, Mort & Co., Ltd. and owing to a series of droughts and other factors, foreclosures have been made in the district which I represent. A huge area has been abandoned—five holdings, mostly on the Port Hedland to Roy Hill road; the total area of the leases abandoned being approximately 1,300,000 acres. A returned soldier who settled in the district just after the last war told me in Port Hedland recently that he intends to abandon his holding before he is forced off. He told me that the abandonment of the other properties has led to an increase in the number of wild dogs, which will in the course of a year or two eat out his flock.

A station which a few years ago shored 17,000 sheep is now shearing only 8,000; another station which four years ago shored 27,000 sheep is now shearing 7,000 sheep. Another station owner who recently shored 7,000 sheep is now shearing only 3,400. That is the position, and unless something is done to remedy it I am sorry to say still more pastoralists will be vacating their properties. There has been no criticism of the Government about the present position. On the contrary, I have not met one pastoralist in the whole of the Pilbara district who has offered any real criticism of the Government. The pastoralists realise that since 1940 until the present time the Government has remitted £500,000 in rents of leases and, in collaboration with the financial institutions I have mentioned and other protected creditors, an additional sum of about £400,000 has been written off. I do not know whether the holdings that have been abandoned will be taken up by other people or whether the present owners will return to them, but I do know that windmills are being dismantled and homesteads taken down. That is a very bad sign. I know the Government has the matter under consideration and I shall not go into details now. I believe the Premier will shortly make some announcement on the position.

I pass from pastoral matters to post-war land settlement, as there is a very definite relationship between the two. Personally, I

am not going to attempt to stampede either the Commonwealth or the State Government into settling men on the land, because on reflection it will be recalled that after the last war numbers of returned soldiers were victims of land sharks who unloaded their properties on to them. We know only too well what the result was in many cases. It would be far better to consider the position in all its aspects and to make sure, before a man is placed on the land, that he has a reasonable chance from the start of making a success of his venture, given reasonable seasons. A man who has no knowledge of farming should be put through a course of training and be given a liberal allowance while he is training. If a man has some knowledge of farming which he gained prior to his enlistment, he should be given a refresher course so that he might become a competent farmer. However, no matter what is done, I would be hesitant about trying to stampede any Government into placing large numbers of men on the land who in a little while would march off it. We have the experience gained after the last war. Both Commonwealth and State Governments, no matter of what political colour, should be seized with the responsibility of ensuring that ex-service men placed on the land will not suffer as they did on the previous occasion.

Mr. Seward: They are suffering today, do not worry!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It has been said by some men just recently that if we want a new order we will have to change human nature. The argument is now advanced that we must maintain the status quo. When I was a young man, I asked a friend what that expression meant. He replied, "It means that we are in as big a mess as ever we were." We do not want the status quo. We do not want after this war to return to what existed in 1939. We shall have much advice about getting back to the pre-war

order, and the people of Britain recently were advised by prominent men in England to vote for the old ticket, but they thought otherwise. They had learnt their lesson, apparently as a result of their experience after the last war.

The result of the recent British election indicates clearly that the people of the Old Country are looking for some social change and are determined to have it. I know that countless ages ago the Creator made a model human heart and that there has been no new model since. With all our frailties and shortcomings, however, we must realise that if we return to the old order of things we shall not be playing the game, nor shall we give the measure of justice and consideration to our returning soldiers to which they are fully entitled. It has been said that even with full employment there will be regimentation. Let us cast our minds back to the period from 1930 to 1939. During that period there was not full employment for hundreds of thousands of men in Australia. They had only part-time employment, from one to four or five days a week.

Leave to Continue.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne): I move—

That the member for Pilbara be given leave to continue his speech at the next sitting of the House.

Motion put and passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: I announce that this is the last occasion on which I will accept this motion as it is distinctly contrary to the Standing Orders. The first occasion on which the precedent was established was when an hon. member died within the precincts of the House. The next occasion was when an hon. member collapsed, and there have since been two other occasions.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.