

in those parts than is at present being provided by the existing railways. A more economical and better service could be provided by road as against running a train once a week or a fortnight, and goodness knows what the cost of operating such a line is.

There are lines of that sort on which the speeds have already been reduced to about 15 miles an hour, and it is only a matter of time before the commission will have to close some lines completely for safety reasons. Otherwise, we shall be faced with the problem of incurring considerable expenditure for putting those lines in order. It is a question whether we would be wise to maintain what may be termed two separate transport systems operating in the one area in which the traffic is not sufficient to maintain either one economically. Much better would it be to concentrate on the one system and ensure that the best possible use was made of it.

An examination of this sort might lead to a reduction in the mileage of lines to be maintained and to a considerable reduction in the wages bill paid by the Government. I believe it would make for a much more efficient and economical operation of such trains as were operating. I know there is objection to the closing of certain sections of lines and there are political difficulties in the way of doing so. Should those difficulties continue to stand in the way, or should we allow the lines to reach such a stage where they have to be closed, and then deal with the crisis? It would be much better to remove the whole question from the sphere of party politics and endeavour to evolve a policy whereby the existing uneconomic railway lines that do not hold out hope for improvement in future should be replaced by an efficient road service, bearing in mind the obligation of providing a satisfactory transport service in those areas.

I think it more than ever necessary that we should make this decision now because considerable funds have been expended on railway rehabilitation, particularly on rollingstock and locomotives. There are extensive tracks still requiring rehabilitation, and so it is necessary to determine what our policy shall be when considering the rehabilitation programme. I know that this is not the appropriate time to move in that direction, but I suggest that possibly this is a case in which a select committee could provide very useful guidance for the future. Unfortunately, recommendations made as a result of expert investigations, if not politically acceptable, have a habit of being shelved. I think the member for Fremantle can bear out that statement.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are telling me!

Mr. HEARMAN: We have had expert investigations relating to the Fremantle harbour, the needed extensions and future requirements, but there always seem to be

obstacles in the way of expert investigations. I think it was in 1929 that recommendations were made regarding the Fremantle bridges, etc., and now 25 years later we are still having committees investigating these matters. I think we might as well face up to the position and see whether a select committee could not formulate some specific recommendations on policy that would be a guide for future Governments.

Many people may not agree with this idea, but if anyone has an alternative suggestion to make, I shall be glad to consider it. At the appropriate time, I intend to submit a notice of motion along the lines I have indicated, and meanwhile I should like members to consider the suggestion so that the matter may be dealt with fairly quickly. If a select committee were appointed, it could get straight to work provided the matter were kept reasonably clear from party politics.

On motion by Mr. Brady, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.19 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 29th June, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

As to Cost.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON asked the Chief Secretary:

What was the total expenditure for maintaining the Legislative Council in the financial years ended the 30th June, 1951, 1952 and 1953, including cost of printing, salaries, parliamentary allowances, and any other expenses associated with running this Chamber?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Item.	Expenditure.	1950-51.	1951-52.	1952-53.
		£	£	£
1	President and Chairman of Committees	2,858	3,137	2,963
2	Allowance to members	31,508	35,367	38,019
3	Railway passes	4,783	5,861	5,910
4	Postage to members	592	886	914
5	Printing	3,630	4,971	6,216
6	Reporting staff	4,788	5,274	5,691
7	Library	157	157	157
8	Salaries for staff, etc.	8,914	10,635	10,098
9	Miscellaneous	1,056	1,461	4,806
	Totals	58,316	67,769	74,774

Note.—Items 6 to 9 inclusive are the pro rata parliamentary costs on the basis—Legislative Council, $\frac{2}{3}$; and Legislative Assembly, $\frac{1}{3}$.

Hon. H. K. Watson: That is about 2s. 6d. per annum per head of the population.

RESO TRIP.

As to Norseman and Esperance Tour.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Chief Secretary:

Will the Government give consideration to the running of a Reso trip to Norseman and Esperance, during this year, to enable members to inspect the possibilities of the Esperance land and the Norseman pyrites supplies?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:
Yes.

HOUSING.

As to Condemnation Orders.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

Has he received revised replies to the answers he gave to questions I asked on the 23rd June concerning condemnation orders on houses? I requested this information from him personally.

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:
No.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £16,500,000.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: As members know, it is the practice every year to pass a Supply Bill to enable the services of the State to be financed until such time as the Estimates can be prepared, introduced and considered by members. The amount asked for this year exceeds the sum sought in the first Supply Bill last year by £500,000. The additional sum is required for the

Consolidated Revenue Fund to meet certain increased costs which are expected during the financial year. The sum of £16,500,000 is made up as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue	11,000,000
General Loan Fund	4,000,000
Advance to Treasurer	1,500,000

The Estimates, when introduced later in the year, will give full information to members regarding the expenditure. I think it is worthy of note that, as far as I can gather, this is the first occasion that the Supply Bill has been introduced before the money has been spent. Usually, of course, as members know, the Supply Bill is introduced late in August or early in September.

Hon. H. Hearn: This is because you are making us work overtime.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Usually the money asked for has been spent, but on this occasion we are obtaining the authority of Parliament beforehand. I might add that if any member wishes to speak to this measure and he is not ready to do so today, I will have no objection to an adjournment until tomorrow. I want to get the measure passed as quickly as possible, but I would have no objection to a short adjournment such as that. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 23rd June.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [4.46]: Mr. President, you have been elected by the members of this Chamber to the high office of President of the Legislative Council, and I congratulate you upon your elevation to that important position. You succeed Sir Harold Seddon, and I am sure both you, Sir, and other members of this Chamber, will admit that that gentleman served this State long and faithfully, both while he occupied the position of President and as a private member of this Chamber.

During the elections, on the 8th May, three members of the party I support were defeated at the polls. While I congratulate the new members who have been elected to this Chamber, I wish to place on record my personal regret at the defeat of those three old members. I am sure that Labour members, too, regret the defeat of those gentlemen. I refer to Mr. Parker, Mr. Cunningham, and Sir Harold Seddon. Owing to his mature years, Mr. Welsh decided not to stand for re-election. Mr. Parker was my colleague in the Suburban Province, and I am sure every

member of this House became accustomed to his good humour and cheerful disposition. I am personally sorry that he was defeated.

The Speech delivered by His Excellency was, as usual, prepared by the Government. It presented to us a picture which portrayed a bright and prosperous future for the State. I cannot help thinking what a contrast His Excellency's Speech, delivered on the 17th June, 1954, was to the advertisements subscribed to by the Labour Party in connection with the Federal election held on the 29th May. You will remember, Mr. President, that those advertisements told us of the dire things for which the present Commonwealth Government had been responsible, and of the dire happenings that would take place in the event of the Menzies-Fadden Government being returned to the Treasury bench.

You will also remember, Sir, that when you sat as a member in your own right in this House the debate on the amendments introduced by the McLarty-Watts Government to the Arbitration Act brought remarks from Opposition members, particularly in another place, to the effect that if the Bill were passed and became an Act, the responsibility would lie on the heads of those who voted for the Bill, and that dire consequences would result in the trade unions generally. From that date to the present—and I am sure the Minister for the North-West will agree with me—this State, apart from one minor piece of industrial unrest at Carnarvon, has had no industrial unrest at all. I might add that the industrial unrest at Carnarvon was not, to my way of thinking, handled very well by the Minister for the North-West.

The Minister for the North-West: Really!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is my opinion, and I am entitled to it.

The Minister for the North-West: Did you not want it settled?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I did.

The Minister for the North-West: I do not think you did.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister knows I did. I wanted it settled so much that the Minister was not permitted to answer a question by his senior Minister who hopped in and answered it for him. I repeat that to my knowledge that piece of industrial unrest is the only industrial unrest there has been since the date of the amendments to the Arbitration Act. In spite of the dire threats of consequences, and those things for which the previous Government is supposed to be responsible, we are pleased to read in the Governor's Speech these four words, "harmonious industrial relationships prevail." I think members will agree that is good evidence of the fact that the amendments

brought down to the Arbitration Act did not have the dire consequences that were foretold.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Employer and employee relationship in this State has always been good.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As is a member's right in this House, I asked questions in connection with the inaugural journey of the new diesel engine on the Perth-Kalgoorlie line. Those questions were answered for me by the Chief Secretary with, I think, satisfaction; but I would like the House to know that in my own opinion, anyway, they were not answered quite correctly. The first question I asked was—

When were these diesel engines ordered?

The answer was: "In November, 1950." The next question I asked was—

Who was invited to make the journey and what was the cost involved?

The answer was—

Members of the Government and Opposition members comprising— and certain people's names were then mentioned.

I think the invitation was extended to more people than members of the Government. I believe private members supporting the Government were also invited to make the journey, and I would like to register a protest against that sort of thing. I feel that when a journey of that description is being made, the very least the Government could do is to extend an invitation to all members of Parliament. As it happened, I could not have gone, but I nevertheless would have liked the opportunity of thanking the Government for its invitation and saying I regretted I could not go. I also asked—

Is such cost to be debited—

(a) to the Premier's Department; or

(b) to the Railway Department?

In reply to that question the Government immediately jumped to its own defence. I repeat I am not critical of the journey having been made, and the fact that it was conducted just prior to the election for the Legislative Council may or may not have been coincidental. But I do not think there was any necessity for the Government to jump to its own defence as it did in giving its answer. The Government said—

Had the inaugural special with guests not run to Kalgoorlie, it would still have been necessary to conduct a trial trip with a full complement of coaches over the Perth-Kalgoorlie section.

I am not denying that; nor am I critical of the fact that the journey was made. The only criticism I make is that the Government did not extend invitations to all

members but limited those invitations to a few members of the Opposition, and its own supporters, and then gave the reply that members of the Government were invited. That is not quite accurate. Not only were members of the Government invited, but also the supporters of the Government.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The Lord Mayor of Perth was invited.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is all right.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: He is not a supporter of the Government.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No; and neither is Sir Ross McLarty. On the same day, I asked another question of the Chief Secretary in respect of housing. I asked that question when I had read in "The West Australian" of the 15th June, a statement purporting to have been made by the Minister for Housing, Hon. E. H. Graham. That statement reads as follows:—

Collie, Mon.—The Minister for Housing (Mr. Graham) predicted yesterday that within 18 months there would be scarcely any delay between the application and the supply of a home.

He was speaking at the annual conference of the Labour Party's South-West District Council.

The gap between the demand and supply of new houses was being rapidly narrowed, Mr. Graham said.

He said that more people would buy State Housing Commission homes if deposits were lower and repayments were over a long period.

The State Government would like to see more families buying these homes.

On the question of rents of S.H.C. homes, Mr. Graham said that because they cost more than £2,000 to build they could not be let cheaply.

Houses were built in pre-war years for about £800 and they were let at £1 per week.

It would not be economical to have such low rents for present-day houses.

On previous occasions I have read in the papers reports of statements made by the Minister for Housing and I have seen and heard him contradict those reports and say he was incorrectly quoted. In order to find out whether or not he had been correctly quoted in this instance, I asked the Chief Secretary a question to that effect. First of all I asked—

How many applications are in existence at the State Housing Commission at the present date—

(a) for Commonwealth-State rental homes.

(b) for war service homes?

The reply I got was that there were 10,494 applications for Commonwealth-State rental homes and that a recent survey indicated that a large percentage of the old applications registered with the commission are from persons whose housing problems may have been solved. Applications for war service homes at the 21st May, 1954, I was told, were 2,361. Finally the Chief Secretary said that the report of the statement made by the Minister for Housing at Collie was correct, and added—

The statement of the Minister for Housing was that the period between the lodging of applications and the allocation of houses was now being reduced owing to the building rate of the State Housing Commission having been increased to nearly twice what it was two years ago and that in about 18 months' time any waiting period should be comparatively short, but in his opinion there would always have to be some waiting period since no organisation such as the State Housing Commission could embark on a year's programme of 4,000 or so houses without there being applications first.

Then he reiterated his statement concerning rentals and the cost of houses. Surprising, as it may seem, there was a delegate at that meeting by the name of H. H. Harris. He was a delegate of the W.A.A.S. of R.E., and he did not agree with what the Minister said he had stated at the conference. What a surprising state of affairs. The Minister was asked a question, through the Chief Secretary, as to whether he made the statement and, in a roundabout way, he admitted that without any doubt he did so. Yet a gentleman by the name of Harris had this to say in "The West Australian" of the 22nd June—

As a delegate to the meeting of the South-West District Council of the A.L.P. held in Collie on June 13, I say emphatically that the Minister for Housing did not assert that within the next 18 months there would be scarcely any delay between application and supply of a home.

Where on earth are we when a question is asked—

The Chief Secretary: Who would be right—the Minister or someone sitting in the hall?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In view of the fact that the present Minister for Housing has said so many times that he has not been correctly reported, perhaps he was not correctly reported on this occasion. I do not know. But here is a person who quickly jumps to the Minister's defence, and says that he did not make the statement at all. Yet in this House, two or three days later, the Minister says, through the Chief Secretary, that he did make the statement.

The Chief Secretary: The statement was substantially correct.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Chief Secretary knows that it was correct.

The Chief Secretary: Not entirely.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Use the word "substantially" and it will satisfy me.

The Chief Secretary: It was substantially correct.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If the reports of statements by the Minister for Housing that "The West Australian" publishes in the future may be regarded as being substantially correct and are not contradicted by the Minister, I am sure we will all be happy.

The Chief Secretary: What are you leading up to?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Dealing with the reply that the Minister for Housing gave to the question about the number of homes built, I would say that he is not substantially correct when he says that the building rate has increased to nearly twice what it was two years ago. As a matter of fact, according to the Governor's Speech, the State Housing Commission built 3,218 homes in 1953, and 2,320 in 1952. So his statement is not quite accurate in that respect. If the commission had built twice as many as two years ago the figure should be 1,600 and not 2,300.

While I have no intention of foreshadowing any of the legislation which is to be brought down to amend the rents and tenancies Act, I would say that, taking into consideration that the Minister for Housing is one person upon whose information we should be able to rely, members will agree that we are left in a jumbled state of mind when we hear and read that the housing problem will be solved in 18 months, and yet are told that there is a need again to have rents and tenancies legislation brought before us.

The Chief Secretary: There is a gap to fill in that 18 months.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: There is not much left of that 18 months. Bearing in mind the election promise of the Government that everybody would have a home within three years, the Government will certainly have to look to its laurels in the next 18 months.

The Chief Secretary: We have done well in the first 18 months when we are able to say that in another 18 months the problem will be solved.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not think that, in proportion, the Government has done very well. But whatever has been done by the Housing Commission, the way was laid open for the present Government and credit is due to the officials of the commission who, irrespective of what

Government is in power, simply carry on with their home-building programme, as they have done in the past 18 months.

The Chief Secretary: A lot depends on the drive of the Minister, you know.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I agree; that is why I say that progress has not been maintained proportionately with what was done in 1952.

The Chief Secretary: We are a long way ahead.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No; you are not.

The Minister for the North-West: It cannot be done if there is obstruction.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I was very interested in the speech made by Mrs. Hutchison; but, as would be expected, I do not believe all that she told us. One comment the hon. member made—I may not have this quite accurate, but it is "substantially correct," as the Minister for Housing would say—was that this House is practically the most powerful Chamber in the British Commonwealth. When she used the word "practically" she must have been thinking about the State of Queensland, and of the fact that at the last Federal election that State returned 13 non-Labour members to five Labour members and that in the Senate election six non-Labour members were returned as against four Labour members.

The Chief Secretary: It shows that the figures for the House of Representatives are out of proportion when there are four to six in the Senate.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It shows that the seats have been gerrymandered.

The Chief Secretary: Thanks for substantiating my point!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: What does the Chief Secretary mean when he says they are out of proportion?

The Chief Secretary: Two-thirds in the Senate and not half in the House of Representatives.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: On what basis is the Senate elected? It is elected on a proportional representation basis, and the Minister knows that as well as I do. He also knows that the method of electing the Senate was perfected, if we like to use that word, by a Labour Government.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: A very good system, too.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have my doubts about that. But the fact remains that, whether it is a good system or not, the maximum number of non-Labour seats that any State can obtain out of 10 is six, and the minimum number that the other party can secure is four. The maximum out of 18 that any party can get is 18; but that State has 13 non-Labour members and five Labour members.

The Chief Secretary: It is due to what Sir Charles Latham mentioned—gerrymandering of seats.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If that is admitted, all right. Let us have a look at the position of the Legislative Assembly in Queensland. We find that out of 75 seats, the Labour Party—which has been in office for many years—holds 43.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It has been in office since 1933.

The Chief Secretary: It must be a good party.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It must be a bad system of electing representatives.

The Chief Secretary: Is it any worse than that in South Australia?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Let me tell the Chief Secretary something he already knows. The people of Queensland had a referendum, and decided by a big majority that they wanted to retain the Upper House. But the Labour Government of the day said, "No; we will not take any notice of what the people say. We will abolish the Upper House."

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Do you know any more like that?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is a true one.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: I have my doubts.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Let the hon. member find out.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is true.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If it is not true, I will apologise to the hon. member.

The Chief Secretary: For once, you are correct!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The result of the abolition of the Legislative Council in Queensland has been that for years and years a Labour Government has been voted into power, a position which favours the party in Federal elections, despite the large non-Labour representation in the two Houses which I have mentioned.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: There is the same set-up here in the Legislative Council, which favours the Liberal Party.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We hear a good deal about that. I can remember going to the declaration of the poll on the occasion I was elected to this House; and the candidate who opposed me then was Mrs. Hutchison. She said at that time that Labour candidates had no possibility of being elected to the Legislative Council as long as the franchise remained as it was. But she disproved her own theory, because she was recently elected to this House on exactly the same franchise as that on which, 12 months ago, she said it was not possible for her to be elected.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: She was brave to tackle it a second time on those words!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: During the time which elapsed between her statement and when she was elected, Mrs. Hutchison and her supporters were responsible for putting on the roll many thousands of people who were not previously enrolled.

When speaking the other day, Mr. Simpson mentioned the changed attitude of the Labour Party in New South Wales towards the Legislative Council. We know that it is part of the Labour Party's platform to abolish the Legislative Council; but it would appear, if the report of what occurred in New South Wales is correct—and, as Mr. Graham did not make the statement, it should be correct!—that when the Labour Party is in a minority, the abolition of the Council is a pretty good plank to have on the platform; but when numbers are as close as they are in the Council in Western Australia today, the story is different. For, in spite of the fact that the abolition of the Legislative Council is still on the platform of the Labour Party, the New South Wales branch of the party, by a majority of 107 votes, after a debate which had its entertaining features, defeated a motion for the abolition of the Council in that State. It would seem, therefore, that as the position of the parties changes, so does the attitude of the Labour Party towards the Legislative Council.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: You hope!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: After the recent Federal election, Dr. Evatt rushed to the Press, on the 31st May, and said the Menzies Government was going to govern with a minority. The report read as follows:—

The new Menzies-Fadden Government would be a minority government, the Leader of the Federal Opposition, Dr. Evatt, said tonight. Yesterday's poll showed that the Labour Party received 52.4 per cent. of the votes and the Liberal and Country League candidates 47.1 per cent. of the votes.

Dr. Evatt rushed to the Press, as reported in "The West Australian" of the 31st May, and it was not until some days afterwards that the real state of the Federal poll was known; yet the present Federal Government was returned with a majority of seven seats, the vote in Western Australia being 51.1 per cent. in favour of the non-Labour faction of politics.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: That does not apply all over Australia.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Do not forget those returned unopposed.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I could deal with that question also, if necessary. During the campaign in connection with the last biennial election for this House, the present Premier, Mr. Hawke, rushed to the Press—along exactly the same lines—and said that the Legislative Council was thwarting the wishes of the people and that he could not carry on.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Did not the results of the election prove that?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No. Mrs. Hutchison said she was elected to this House on the adult suffrage question. I say to her, with respect, that she was elected to this Chamber as the result of a very good campaign by the present Government and its tactics in calling Parliament together on the eve of the election and presenting to this House two Bills, neither of which the Government had any desire to see passed.

The Chief Secretary: That is why we are bringing the legislation down again.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If the Government thought it could get any benefit from doing so, it would continue to bring down that legislation.

The Minister for the North-West: Did not the people, by their attitude at the recent election, show that they wanted that legislation brought down again?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Let us see what the people did say at the recent State election.

The Minister for the North-West: Tell us what happened at the Council election.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Let us be honest about the last Legislative Council election.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What about leaving party politics alone and getting on with some of the future legislation of the State?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I suggest that it is the right of any member to speak in this House on whatever subjects he thinks fit. If the hon. member wishes to speak when I have finished, there is nothing to prevent him doing so. If any publicity is to be given to this sort of thing, I feel it is in the interest of the State for the public to know that some misleading statements about certain states of affairs, as published in the Press, are not entirely correct; and until someone tells the people that they are not correct, and until the Press will publish the facts, I suppose we will continue to have publicity which favours the Government and not the Opposition.

As I was saying, Mr. Hawke rushed to the Press and said he hoped that, in the forthcoming Legislative Council election, the people would go along and vote in order to register their protest against this House, because the Government was having its legislation thrown out by this Chamber. I do not intend to go into the pros and cons of the amendments moved to the rents and tenancies legislation, because every member of this House—and especially the Chief Secretary—knows what the position regarding that measure was.

The Chief Secretary: I told you, but you did not believe me.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Chief Secretary knows as well as we all do that if the Government had accepted Mr. Watson's amendment, which was designed to protect the tenants, we would have been a lot better off than we are today. He also knew, before going into conference, that the Government had no intention of accepting amendments. I say that, because I believe it to be true; and if the Chief Secretary contradicts me, we will not get anywhere. The present Government is not governing with a majority in the Legislative Assembly, but with a minority and I will prove that.

The Chief Secretary: You are speaking in the wrong House. The other place is the party House.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not know what gives the Chief Secretary the idea that we cannot express our views in this House.

The Chief Secretary: We do not go in for party politics here.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am not indulging in party politics but am telling the Chief Secretary something that he already knows. The Labour Party is the party which plays party politics—

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Chief Secretary knows that what I say is true.

The Minister for the North-West: We are not nearly as skilled at it as are the Liberals.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: There are 50 seats in the Legislative Assembly, and at the last election for that Chamber 22 seats were uncontested. A total of 28 seats were contested but the Fremantle, Guildford-Midland and Mt. Lawley candidates were opposed by communist candidates only, so I think everyone will agree that we need not count those three seats. We would not regard them as expressing the voice of the people, because the communist candidates could not get in against Labour candidates in those electorates. That narrows it down to 25 out of 50 seats which were really contested; and using the rule of Dr. Evatt, it can be said that the number of votes cast in the State was 1,059 in favour of non-Labour candidates. So do not tell us that the Government is governing with a majority.

The Minister for the North-West: Have you disregarded the seats for which there were communist candidates?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITHS: Why not?

The Minister for the North-West: Would you not count the Labour votes for those seats?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: How could I when there were no non-Labour candidates for them?

The Minister for the North-West: What are you talking about?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The communists were not Labour candidates—

Hon. G. Bennetts: Where would the preferential votes go to?

The Chief Secretary: The hon. member knows as well as I do that he can prove anything he likes with figures.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I would ask the Minister for the North-West this—

The Minister for the North-West: For Sir Charles Latham?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No; you are wrong.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister is misjudging me. I am not in the habit of having notes fed to me. Where would he class the communist votes in the contest for Mt. Lawley?

The Minister for the North-West: You would count the Liberal candidate's votes in your total?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I did not.

The Minister for the North-West: You are entitled to.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not want to do that.

The Chief Secretary: Then how can you get a figure for the State?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We cannot, any more than we can for Queensland—

The Chief Secretary: Or South Australia, when there were umpteen thousand more Labourites than Liberals and yet the figures were about two to one against.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The propaganda which the Labour Party is using is not accurate. How many people voted for the Chief Secretary at the recent election?

The Chief Secretary: I could not tell the hon. member.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Very few; and yet, with a small number of votes cast in his favour, against an Independent candidate, he was elected to this House for six years.

The Chief Secretary: I had practically an unopposed return.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is a matter of opinion, also. The last matter to which I wish to refer is the interesting information given by the Chief Secretary in answer to a question in the House this afternoon in relation to the cost of maintaining the Legislative Council. I heard Mr. Watson, who is pretty quick at figures, say that the cost of maintaining this Chamber is approximately 2s. 6d. per head of population per annum. May I say very sincerely that if that is the cost to the people of Western Australia of maintaining this House and saving the State from socialism, it is well worth while. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. W. D. Barker, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.27 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 29th June, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

WHEAT.

As to Sites for Additional Storage.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is it correct that the site at Fremantle desired by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. for additional wheat storage was refused because it was reserved for an oil company?

(2) If so, for what oil company was it reserved?