

Mr. LESLIE: I wanted to counter the note of pessimism that seems to have animated this debate. The only pessimistic note we are justified in striking at the moment is in relation to the Commonwealth proposal to nationalise banking. If we follow out the principles of freedom as in the past, under wise government, I foresee a great future ahead of this State, but we must cast aside the pessimistic outlook that would have us believe that the only way to achieve something worth while is by adopting restrictions, even to the extent of restricting working hours and so further curtailing the supplies of commodities of which the people are so urgently in need.

On motion by Mr. Hegney, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 11.22 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 27th August, 1947.

	PAGE
Question: Albany Harbour, as to tabling plans ....	409
Address-in-reply, ninth day ....	409

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

### QUESTION.

#### ALBANY HARBOUR.

##### *As to Tabling Plans.*

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Minister for Mines: Will he lay on the Table of the House a copy of the plans prepared by the Public Works Department for improvements to the Albany Harbour?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes. The existing plan is an outline design only and subject to amendment following receipt of Mr. Tydeman's report.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### *Ninth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. 'A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.33]: I desire to congratulate the Government on its attaining to the occupancy of the Treasury bench. We know that doctors frequently order their patients a change of climate; and it will be good for Western Australia to have a change of Government. In my opinion, it will prove beneficial to the State.

Hon. G. Fraser: The doctors often order a change to a temperate climate.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The previous Government, having enjoyed the fleshpots of office for 14 years, had become self-satisfied; any person who dared to criticise its administration was viewed with extreme disfavour and his action was regarded as rather offensive, particularly if the criticism was from a member of the Opposition. Personally, I feel that the offer of the present Opposition to give the new Government every help is not quite in keeping with the petulant and fault-finding attitude taken by the Opposition so far as this session has proceeded. Opposition members claim that the ex-Premier, Hon. F. J. S. Wise, performed miracles in obtaining from the Commonwealth Treasurer sufficient money to enable him to balance his Budget, and that the present Government should bow in humble acknowledgment to him for supplying an overflowing Treasury and for the work which the previous Government arranged so nicely and planned so far ahead.

I have no desire to detract or withhold from Mr. Wise any praise for what he and his predecessors, with the able assistance of Mr. Reid, the Under-Treasurer, and the Treasury officials, as well as previous Premiers, did to obtain satisfactory results for Western Australia when attending the various conferences of Premiers at Canberra. I am quite sure Hon. D. R. McLarty will prove their equal in his efforts to procure justice for this State. Mr. Wise was reported in the Press as having said that he intended to insist on the present Government carrying out the promises which he made to his electors. I would be greatly disappointed in the Government if, without just cause, it deliberately refused to carry out the commitments of the previous Government.

I cannot congratulate some of the members of the previous Government upon the attitude they have adopted so far. The

government of this State must go on and the late Ministers will find that, despite their efforts to belittle the present Cabinet, no man is indispensable. "The King is dead. Long live the King" has been the watchword of the British Empire and will no doubt continue to be so, to the disgust of the late Ministers who have had to retire rather ungraciously. I am sure the present Ministers will tackle the problems confronting them and will deliver the goods. I was astounded at the charge of fraud levelled against the Government and at the allegation that it had misled the electors by telling them deliberate untruths. On the introduction of uniform taxation as a war measure, the then State Premiers feared, and rightly so, that it might become permanent, and that if it did so it would prove to be prejudicial to the States. How well-founded were those fears as far as this State is concerned!

The Prime Minister of Australia has committed a grave and disgraceful breach of trust in calmly saying, "Now we have got uniform taxation, we intend to keep it, and I will hand you back what I feel disposed to give, no more and no less." This evidently shows that we are dealing with a man who has no respect for his word of honour or for the promise given by the late Prime Minister, John Curtin, when he requested the States to agree to uniform taxation for the duration of the war and 12 months thereafter. Dealing with the word "fraud," I looked up my dictionary and found that the definition is as follows:—

An act or course of deception deliberately practised with a view of gaining an unlawful or unfair advantage; deceit, deception and imposition.

I draw attention to the fact that at John Curtin's last Federal election, the whole of Australia was plastered with hoardings urging the people to "Vote for Honest John Curtin." The same thing appeared in practically every newspaper. Knowing him as I did, I have no doubt that, having made the promise that uniform taxation would be for the duration of the war and 12 months afterwards, he would not, if he were alive today, be a party to perpetrating such a gross fraud and deception, as has been carried out by his colleague, Mr. Chifley. The Western Australian branch of the Australian Labour Party assembles at Honest John Curtin's grave annually to testify to his honesty of purpose, to enshrine the memory

of his service, and to do honour to his memory as an honest man.

If it is right and proper for Mr. Wise and his colleagues to insist that Mr. McLarty shall fulfil promises made by him and his Party, how much more important is it that an organised effort should be made by every Labour member, both State and Federal, to insist that the Commonwealth Government honour its definite promise made to the States, namely, that 12 months after the war ceased, uniform taxation would end and the States would be restored to their pre-war status? I charge State members, and the Federal members representing Western Australia in the Commonwealth Parliament, with having sold the interests of Western Australia to Canberra, so far as uniform taxation is concerned. As far as I can gather, not one word of protest has been uttered and no organised effort made against the retention of this right by what might be termed the fraudulent actions of the Federal Treasurer in dishonouring his own and John Curtin's promise to restore their taxation powers to the States.

Western Australia has in Canberra four Labour representatives two of whom are Ministers. In both Houses of this State Parliament we have, I think 31 members representing Labour constituencies. If these men were earnest in their desire to protect the interests of Western Australia, they could have made an organised protest to Mr. Chifley, and he might have adopted a totally different attitude from his present one. It was hoped and intended that the Senate would be a protection to the small States. Some years ago, when I was in another place, I suggested that we should get the smaller States, namely, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, to come to an honourable understanding whereby they could make a united protest to protect their interests. But it seems to me that outside of what has been done by two Governments—those of South Australia and Western Australia—no effort has been made, and certainly there has been no concerted action taken, to protect the interests of the smaller States. Unfortunately, throughout the war party interests have been looked after instead of those of Australia as a whole.

I was surprised this morning to read in the Press that a Goldfields representative

said that the goldmining industry was in a very satisfactory position, and that he did not believe in an increase in the price of gold. We know that when Mr. Chifley was here a deputation waited upon him. He was certainly not as sympathetic with our main industry, that of gold production, as he appears to be with the miners of New South Wales and the waterside workers in the various parts of the Commonwealth. There has been an increase in the costs of the goldmining industry. I have here a statement which appeared in the Sydney "Bulletin" dealing with the deep level developments along the Kalgoorlie Golden Mile. It says—

Deep-level developments along the Kalgoorlie Golden Mile are good, especially in Great Boulder and North Kalgurli. Rising costs, owing mainly to more expensive supplies and increases in the basic wage, and paid holidays are the troublesome problem. Chairman of Boulder Perseverance (Dr. K. B. Edwards) recently told shareholders that costs rose last year by £32,000 sterling without the company getting any more for its main product—gold. Last year 1s. 7d. a week was added to the basic wage, making the minimum rate £6 7s. a week. Early in 1947 the rate was further increased by 6s. a week, and the number of paid holidays rose from 15 to 22.

The hon. member said that no request had been made by the Chamber of Mines for an increase in the price of gold. But the Premier of this State, Hon. D. R. McLarty, drew attention to the position at the Premiers' Conference. He said that last year the Commonwealth received a gross amount of £556,000 from the gold tax, and he did not know of any other Commonwealth tax where the incidence was so heavy on the taxpayers of a particular State. In replying to the debate, Mr. Chifley said that the gold tax was not very big; that refunds were made to small producers last year. He said that only £392,000 net was received from the producers in Western Australia. I think Mr. McLarty's action in endeavouring to have that tax removed or returned to Western Australia was very wise. I would have thought that the request to increase the price of gold, or at least to have the tax refunded to the State, would have received more sympathetic consideration in view of the fact that every Goldfields member is a direct representative of the Commonwealth Government. I would have thought that they would have endeavoured to get a little more consideration than apparently Mr. Chifley is prepared to give.

When we realise that the era of prosperity in this State began with the discovery of the Goldfields, there is no gain-saying the fact that that industry put Western Australia on the map and had much to do with the opening up and development of the outer areas. It provided profitable employment for thousands of people, and its development and increased production will go far in these days to aid in the financial troubles of the world. I am firmly convinced that the country that can produce gold will soon overcome the dollar shortage. A prosperous goldmining industry means a prosperous population.

Over £500,000 per year is extracted from the industry by the Commonwealth authorities in the shape of a gold tax, and I cannot understand why there has not been a more united effort on the part of representatives of Western Australia in the Commonwealth Parliament to secure a remission of that money. I am sure that if he received the £556,000 involved, if it were returned to the State by the Commonwealth, the Premier could spend every penny of it in providing amenities and improving working conditions for people on the Goldfields. Certainly some concerted action should be taken to obtain a more satisfactory reply from the Prime Minister than has been apparent so far. Opposition members in the Legislative Assembly claim to have left the financial position such that the new Government will find it easier to carry on. For my part I am afraid the present Government has inherited some very difficult problems for solution in the realm of finance.

I notice a reference in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech to the operations at Lake Chandler and the hope is indicated that the industry can be developed to supply potash and sodium sulphate on a fully competitive basis. So far production has not been altogether satisfactory and the assistance from the Commonwealth Government has not been forthcoming to the extent expected. The hope has been expressed that it will be available later on. I certainly hope that will be so. To date the Commonwealth Government has not been very helpful and, in fact, no assistance has been made available by way of a bonus or bounty to the State Government. As the undertaking was embarked upon as a war measure and Western Australia has ex-

pended a considerable sum of money on it, seeing that the Commonwealth has an overflowing Treasury the provision of financial assistance would be very helpful. I trust the Premier will be able to convince the Prime Minister that the Lake Chandler industry should receive financial help from the Commonwealth.

One of the most difficult problems inherited by the Government concerns the railway system. I congratulate Ministers upon their determination to tackle it. In fact, the problem confronting the Government is one that is apparent in other parts of the Commonwealth as well. The Labour Government held office for 14 years, and therefore must come in for serious criticism with regard to the state of the system. I look forward to the findings of the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Gibson, and his colleague from South Africa and trust that they will evolve some means whereby the people of this State will receive better service from the railways. I hope they will recommend, with respect to our main lines, the adoption of a system such as that prevailing in South Australia where heavy rails are being laid. Those who have travelled over the 80 or 90 lb. rails between Perth and Northam will realise the comfort experienced on a train journey over heavy rails.

For many years I have drawn attention to the deplorable fact that no provision has been made for a sinking fund in connection with the railways. How any Minister for Railways, Commissioner of Railways or, in fact, any Government can be expected to show a profit while the first sleeper laid and the first dogspike struck are still a charge against railway finances, is difficult to conceive. With its obsolete plant and derelict coaches and engines still on the scrap heap, the system would be greatly unfair to any Commissioner. Our railways were, in the main, constructed to supply the requirements of the country districts, and many of them were built regardless of access to the nearest port. The whole system grew up without any co-ordinating plan.

To be fair to the railway administration, a considerable portion of the capital now charged against the system, as it has been for years past, should be written off so that the whole of the people of Western Australia might bear their just proportion of the loss. Unless something of that sort

is decided upon, I shall not support any increase in fares or freights that may be proposed, bearing in mind that the expense in that direction would be a direct charge against those who are producing the true wealth of the State. The present Minister for Railways and the Government generally have been criticised by Opposition members for having appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the workings of our railways.

Judging by the evidence already submitted regarding the apparently appalling conditions, the whole of the layout of the Midland Junction Workshops makes it practically impossible for the men working there and for those in charge of the administration of the operations, to render full value for the money expended. Mr. Gibson, in his capacity as a Royal Commissioner, has not hesitated to draw the attention of the department—that is one thing I like about him, for he clearly appreciates that the blame is not all attributable to one side—to the deplorable state of the plant and the unsatisfactory conditions under which the men are expected to work.

For many years the appointment of three Commissioners of Railways has been a plank of the platform of the party to which I have the honour to belong. Of the three suggested Commissioners, one would represent the Government and one the employees. I can assure the House that during the course of my travels, I have found that many of the railway employees are just as keen to render efficient service to the State as are the departmental officials and certainly want to see the system operate successfully. If one of the Commissioners were a representative of the employees, I am sure that many practical suggestions would be put forward with consequent beneficial results on operations. The third Commissioner would be representative of business interests.

I was surprised to note in the Press that Mr. Davies, who represents the unions, said that the men generally objected to any costing system. The great bulk of those who are working today know the three R's. How is it possible for any business to be carried on without a proper costing system? Every private concern or Government department must know what the cost of the articles they handle really is. I congratulate the Minister for Railways on his endeavour to be fair

to all sections of the railways. I feel that the results of the inquiry by a Royal Commission will not only be beneficial to the State but will lead to better working conditions for the employees as well as the administrators.

With regard to education, I think the present Minister is quite sincere in his desire to provide better educational facilities for every child in this State. He has, however, inherited from his predecessor, Hon. J. T. Tonkin, the idea which emanated from Tasmania of having big central schools. I have rather grave doubts about the wisdom of closing our small country schools. They have given excellent results. In my view the one-teacher schools have given much better results than have many of the bigger schools with their large classes.

Hon. E. M. Davies: That is contrary to the views of quite a lot of other people.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I live in the country. In the past small schools have given excellent service and the children have got on well.

Hon. E. M. Davies: The standard of education is generally lower there.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I differ from the hon. member. The education has not been of a low standard. According to the returns that have been submitted, a greater percentage of children attending these small schools have obtained scholarships than has been the case with the larger schools. I know the point is a debatable one. The central schools may be all right for older children, but not for the younger ones. In the district in which I live, buses are employed to take the children to school. Many of the scholars have to walk one or two miles to the place where they meet the bus. They then go straight to school. True, they have a play in the morning and an interval at midday. At half-past three, however, the bus is waiting outside the school and the children are rushed home again. There is considerable doubt as to the wisdom of conveying children to the larger schools. No doubt a saving is effected so far as the department is concerned, and it is also true that the Government has not been in a position to enlarge the present schools owing to the shortage of manpower and materials. I assure members that country people are complaining about the large classes.

In my view the smaller schools have given us certain advantages in years gone by. Whilst money may have been saved to the Education Department by the adoption of the new system, the Government has been affected in another direction. It has to pay for the hire of the buses. Moreover, the continued use of these heavy vehicles on light roads has increased the cost of maintenance, and many of the road boards are asking for financial assistance to enable them to keep the roads in decent order. If the central school system it to be a success, sooner or later the Government will have to build hostels to provide proper accommodation for the children. It would cost a considerable amount of money to erect such buildings. One of the complaints in the country is as to the absence of buildings of that kind associated with High Schools.

At Albany the Country Women's Association and the Methodist Church have combined to run a hostel for the school children but the building is unable to take all of them. At present there is no control over the children. That applies also to Bunbury and Northam. When the children are brought in to school they are not kept under control as they are in a properly organised secondary school. I am not criticising the ex-Minister for Education or the present Minister on this question, but am merely voicing my opinion that small schools should not be closed in the country.

I congratulate the Government on its intention to appoint a Public Works Committee. That is something which is long overdue. The previous Government, which held office for 14 years, did not believe in such a committee because it wanted absolute control. Parliament should have an opportunity to express its views through such a committee and thus act as a check upon Government expenditure. For example, I would say that the Government has inherited a serious problem in the Royal Perth Hospital. Why the present site was chosen is a puzzle to me. I do not think anyone could have selected a more unsuitable site. I suggest to members that they should read the case put up by Dr. Hislop last session. They will find it all set out in "Hansard." It really shows that an appalling blunder was made.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Smoky hollow!

Hon. G. W. Miles: Sleepy hollow!

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am not an expert on electricity, but I feel that if a Public Works Committee had been established it would have investigated the proposal to erect a power station at South Fremantle. Such an inquiry would be worth while. The reason why I have grave doubts about the South Fremantle proposition is that for all time coal will have to be conveyed from Collie to the power station. It was stated by the late Government and the Electricity Commission that it is proposed to transmit electricity from Collie to Katanning, Narrogin and on to Albany. Had the committee been in existence, it could have obtained expert opinion such as we are now getting on the railways, and thus have avoided the transport of coal from Collie to Fremantle for all time.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The question of vulnerability at Fremantle in time of war is worth considering.

Hon. F. E. Gibson: What is a distance of 200 miles in these days?

Hon. C. G. Latham: The power station could be hit by a cruiser.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am only voicing my own views. It is too late to have an investigation now because the work has been started and, as is the case of the Royal Perth Hospital, the country is committed to the proposition. A charge of fraud has been made against the Government. When Mr. Ryan retired from the Fremantle Harbour Trust, the late Government appointed another man to represent the consumers on that body. I suppose at least one-third of cargo that leaves Fremantle, in the form of wheat and wool, emanates from the primary producing section of the people of the State. Years ago the producers did have a representative on the Fremantle Harbour Trust, but now there are two Labour representatives there and not one from the producers. We know who was appointed to the vacancy on the Licensing Bench. When the late Government charges the present one with fraud, it should bear in mind its own actions. I do not say anything against Mr. Ryan. He is an estimable gentleman and no doubt will do his duty. There is an old saying that comparisons are odious.

We could refer to the appointments made by the late Government from panels put up by their Trades Hall organisations. I know that, as a Country Party, we appealed year after year to the late Government to give us one representative on the Fremantle Harbour Trust. We always failed. Our representations had no effect. I do not approve of the policy of spoils to the victor but I think that, in a matter like appointments to the Fremantle Harbour Trust, there should be at least one representative of the primary producers chosen, because he ought to be of some assistance. I have pleasure in supporting the motion, which was so ably moved by Mr. Logan. I congratulate him. He is a young member and I think that perhaps quite a number of the people think it is time there were more young members in Parliament. I feel sure that those that are here will render as good service in the future as has been given by those who are looking to the time when they may have to retire.

I regret that we have lost our old friend Mr. Drew. For many years he was a member of this House and was held in the highest esteem by everyone. I do not wish you any harm, Sir. I know you are filling the office of Deputy President very well. Nevertheless I hope that Mr. Seddon will soon be sufficiently restored to health to resume the duties of his office.

**HON. C. F. BAXTER** (East) [5.17]: I join with other members in congratulating you, Sir, on your elevation to the position of Deputy President. You have had the experience necessary to fit you for the office and have filled it with dignity. I also congratulate Mr. Parker on his elevation to the Ministry and to the leadership of the Council; and Mr. Wood, his lieutenant, on his appointment to the position of Honorary Minister. I extend congratulations to the new members on the able speeches they have delivered. Their utterances augur well for the future and suggest that they will play an important part in the work of this Chamber. Mr. Latham, of course, is an experienced hand and once again is a colleague of mine.

The hon. member formerly represented York in another place and York is a portion of the East Province. We worked unitedly when he was a member of the Legislative Assembly, and I know our sympathetic co-

operation will continue now that he is closer to me in being a fellow-representative of the East Province. His speech last night indicated very clearly to me how much our views synchronise, for two-thirds of the matters with which he dealt I had proposed to cover myself. I do not now intend to traverse the same ground as that covered by Mr. Latham; but there are certain things in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech to which I wish to refer. I commend the Government for the proposals contained in that Speech. If they come to fruition, the State will benefit considerably. I say, "If they come to fruition" because, after all, it is a matter of finance and in that connection we must bow to the Commonwealth Government which, I hope, will be more sympathetic in the future than it has been in the past.

One reference in the Speech stands out very clearly and boldly, and that is the Government's intention to fight the Commonwealth for restoration of Western Australia's rights. The Premier, Hon. D. R. McLarty, has already made a start in that direction. I feel that the apathy displayed in the past by some people towards this matter and the acquiescence by the previous Government in everything the Commonwealth proposed to do, was bad for this State. Crumbs were thrown to the State Government, it is true, but that was not the same as giving the State its rights. For a long period of years the Labour Government here was ever ready to concede the Federal authorities everything they wanted and to throw away the power it had. This is not the first time I have said that in this House.

Hon. G. Fraser: If you say that often enough, you will believe it!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We have only to consider the Wheat Stabilisation Bill that was brought down last session. No body of men knew better than the Wise Government that that was not a sound proposition and that it was no good for any part of Australia—not even for those parts that are not growing wheat. Yet the Government was prepared to submit that legislation to this Parliament word for word as it came from Canberra. That is only one illustration. I do not want to conduct postmortems, beyond making that reference. I do, however, wish to deal with serious matters that are engaging attention not only in this State but throughout Australia. Never before in the

history of our continent has there been such a golden opportunity for success. The way is open if we would only take advantage of it. But are we doing that? First of all we have bolstered up a system that has increased the cost of living beyond all reason. One way we have done that is by encouraging wage-earners to seek more and more benefits and do less work for every concession obtained. That is only one way. While the exports we have had to depend on in the past have come from primary production only, there never was an opportunity like the present for us to exploit our secondary industries, to put them on a footing where they can export some of their products.

It is no use talking about fostering secondary industries in Australia for 7,000,000 people. To what magnitude could they grow? We need to put our secondary industries in a position to compete with the outside world, but we are not going to achieve that while present conditions prevail. Let us take the labour position as it exists today and ask ourselves what will be the future of industry under such conditions. Further advantages are being sought in the Arbitration Court. The present awards provide for 10 paid public holidays per annum, a fortnight's leave on full pay, and six days' sick pay. Do not misconstrue that as some people are prepared to do! Do not imagine that this sick pay is only to be paid if men are ill. They will see that they are sick for the whole period. So there are 28 working days in the year when full payment is made for no services whatever.

Is the workman any better off when he has been loafing and been paid for it? Can the country stand that and foster secondary industries? We know that it cannot! But even that crushing burden is not enough. The men demand more. I want to take to task the people that foster that sort of thing. First of all we have the paid men of the industrial organisations—union secretaries and organisers and their staff. Naturally they are out to make something worth while of themselves in the eyes of their members by getting more and more advantages for them. They cannot see the evil day coming. Then Labour representatives in Parliament are ever ready to increase the advantages that are killing industry.

Hon. E. M. Davies: A lot of men have been killed in industry, too.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, and in other ways outside of industry. Members have read their papers recently and have seen the reports concerning an application for a 40-hour week and a five-day week. This is how it works out. The men want three weeks' sick pay, 11 public holidays and another three weeks' annual leave. There are 365 days in the year. If we add Saturdays and Sundays to the periods I have already mentioned we find that the actual working days will amount to only 203. If this award is granted—I hope it will not be, but it is being sought—it will mean that employees will be expected to work only 203 days in the year. And look at the paid holidays they expect as well!

I wonder when the people fostering the claim for these advantages will realise where all this is leading to! No country, especially a young country like Australia, can live up to such conditions in competition with other countries in the world. When are they going to realise that the advantages granted contribute to a certain extent towards the high cost of living? The man on the high basic wage today is in a much worse position than when he was receiving 8s. or 9s. a day; for the pound at that time was worth 20s. whereas now it is worth only about 6s. 4d. The men cannot have it both ways. Look at the young couples who want homes! How are they going to get them unless they tie themselves down all their lives to a rental system or spend two-thirds of their lifetime purchasing houses? Yet there is a desire deep in the heart of every man to have a home of his own.

Hon. E. M. Davies: That position is world-wide. Compare America and Canada with Australia.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They do not say to their bricklayers, who are capable of laying 900 bricks a day, "You cannot lay more than 400." That is not done anywhere else than here and it is the sort of thing that prevails in all those industries connected with building. That is an example of what is happening throughout our whole system. There are tremendous restrictions operating in secondary industries. First of all—and this is a very serious matter—there is the loss of manpower, through strikes and lock-outs, which could be avoided. Secondly, there is the decline in the out-

put per man per hour. This reaches far deeper than most people realise. In many cases a slackening up in the output per hour has been encouraged, and in a few moments I will give figures to illustrate how startling has been that decline in production.

Another serious factor that has crept in is the high rate of absenteeism now apparent in industry. When a man is absent from work not only is there the loss of his individual labour, but in many cases he forms part of a chain of operations, so that his absence has a considerable bearing on production. Absenteeism has increased dangerously, in spite of the increased payments for holidays and sick pay. As a basis of comparison of the severity of industrial disputes, as between different countries, I will take the loss of production per thousand persons employed in industry. I will not deal with primary industry, the Civil Service and so on, as the effect has not been so marked in those categories. We find that Australia holds the record over the last 17 years.

On a yearly average over that period Australia has lost 1,174 days per annum per thousand workers, New Zealand 186 days, Canada 247 days, South Africa 48 days, Great Britain 295 days and the U.S.A. 717 days. Surely that is a disgrace to a country such as this, when we know that the majority of the strikes could have been avoided. There is only one way of avoiding strikes and it is not the method, adopted by the Commonwealth Government, of giving way all the time, thus holding up industry and penalising practically the whole of the people. It should be made legally binding that no strike could take place unless a plebiscite had been taken, by secret ballot of all the workers concerned in the dispute, and heavy penalties for any breach should be provided.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I do not like the word "strike." I would prefer you to say that they are non-co-operative.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Let us keep to plain words, and the truth.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It is not always the workers' fault.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They try to cover it up by calling it a stop-work meeting or something else. Why do they not stand up to what they are doing like men, instead of



calling a strike something else? If union members knew their business, they would see that their officers enjoyed the same strike pay as they receive, instead of giving them, in some cases, at least double the amount.

I am anxious to see Australia in a better position than it is today. At present the cost of living is too high for the worker, even with his high rate of pay. Wages and costs are chasing each other like a dog chasing its tail, and the cost of living is going higher and higher. In the early days, when men received far lower wages, they were still better off, even though there was no sick pay, holiday pay and so on. I am not against the provision of sick pay and holiday pay, but a big emporium with many hundred employees has to pay out an enormous sum today to cover such items. Does the emporium pay that amount? No, it passes it on to the consumer of the goods. Every business must have a percentage of profit, which is based on the overhead, and directly costs increase they are passed on. It will be a happy day for the worker, above all people, when it is made compulsory for a secret ballot to be taken before agreement is reached to strike.

I will now deal with a matter that has seriously affected this State for a considerable time, and where the position is becoming worse than ever. I refer to the transport of goods to Western Australia from the Eastern States. We can leave Melbourne out of our calculations during the past six or eight weeks, as goods have been forward fairly freely from that port—about as freely as one could expect under prevailing conditions—but from Sydney, from whence comes a large proportion of the goods needed to carry on industry in this State, we have had practically no ships for over two months. The last vessel carrying goods for this State left Sydney on the 9th June—our invoices were dated the 12th June. Then we were allotted another vessel, which pulled into Sydney from Newcastle a few weeks ago and picked up a little over 800 tons of cargo there. Had that cargo all been the usual run of goods it would have helped considerably, but a lot of it consisted of housing material, steel, iron, and so on.

Of course, I do not object to housing material being loaded, because we need that badly enough, but the vessel then went to

Melbourne and filled up. From there it left for Esperance, Albany and Fremantle, where it will probably arrive some time next week. The Honorary Minister in another place did work hard while in the Eastern States and got a good many promises from the Shipping Control Board and merchants, and we also have over there liaison officers who have done good work and are doing their best. There are also in the Eastern States representatives of the State Housing Commission. All those officers have received assurances from the Shipping Control Board, and we would have received a fair amount of goods from Sydney had not the ships promised us been withdrawn and sent elsewhere. Now we are promised further ships, but I am wondering whether we can rely on them. A writer in the Press recently said that there was something like 10,000 tons of cargo for Western Australia in the sheds at Sydney. I think he understated the case, but at all events he could not tell us of the enormous quantity of goods held by manufacturers, instead of being sent to the sheds, owing to lack of space there.

One excuse given for the lack of shipping to Western Australia was that there was no room in the sheds at Fremantle. I went down there, and found them practically empty. I am surprised at the treatment we have received from the Shipping Control Board after the trouble and expense to which this State has gone in sending a Minister and other representatives to the Eastern States. We cannot conduct business on the present lines and it is to be hoped that the board will carry out its latest promise, and that the ships will arrive. The Melbourne cargo position is reasonable, but commerce in Western Australia is held up through lack of the goods lying at Sydney.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: You would speak more strongly if you were in an industry that had goods lying there.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am in the same case as Mr. Bolton, as I have had goods lying at Sydney since January. I can speak with feeling, as one of the sufferers. Some little time ago the Commonwealth Government announced that it intended to increase the number of members of the Commonwealth Parliament by 30, and recently it raised the salaries of members by another £500 per year. Not many men in that Parliament ever earned £500 a year, let alone

£1,500. Why does that Government want another 30 members? Of course they are making work. Not only the Commonwealth, but State Governments have reached out and have dabbled in things that Governments should not touch. Governments should carry on the affairs of the country and maintain law and order, leaving many of the fields, in which they are now competing, to private enterprise.

We cannot run Government concerns on the same basis as commercial ventures. I have had the experience of being in control of State trading concerns, and know what I am talking about. The ramifications of Government control are such that a State trading concern cannot be handled in the same way as one run by private enterprise. We cannot get the same results from employees in the Government service as can be obtained from those employed outside. Governments should jettison a great deal of the business in which they are engaged today, leaving it to private enterprise. Governments have taken on one thing after another, but have overlooked the fact that, in the hands of private industry, instead of being run at a loss such ventures would prove profitable. They are of no use in Government hands and produce nothing except the high cost of controlling and operating them.

The people of Australia are being exhorted to refrain from indulging in careless spending. Careless spending! And this from the Commonwealth Government—a Government that squanders money in every direction, a Government that has increased members' salaries by £500 a year and is talking of increasing the number of members, a Government whose Ministers are travelling not only throughout Australia but also all over the globe. Recently, four Federal Ministers were travelling abroad, and each was accompanied by a retinue of servants. What do the people of Australia gain from this? There are 19 Ministers in the Commonwealth Government, and they are constantly tripping here and there. It does not matter what the cost may be; the taxpayers will bear it. I feel sure the day will come when Australia will have to call a halt to such needless expenditure. The present rate cannot be continued for long. We also find Government officers, both State and Federal, travelling all over the country in motor-

cars on Saturday, Sunday and every day alike—at the expense of the taxpayers.

It is impossible to tax the people of Australia into prosperity. The reverse policy is the only one that can bring about prosperity. With the present heavy taxation, people cannot expand the industries of the country. What hope have they of doing so? No matter how good a proposition might be or what employment it would provide, how many men are there with sufficient money left after the Taxation Department has finished with them to invest in these enterprises? It is all very well to say that such men invest merely to make money, but the very fact of their investing their money creates industries and leads to increases in production and employment. The money taken from them by the Government in the form of taxation is worthless as regards being any aid in expanding our industries.

I maintain that there should be a reduction in the number of Ministers and members of Parliament, not only in the Federal sphere but also in every State of Australia. The country is over-burdened with Ministers and members of Parliament. Altogether there are 609 members of Parliament in Australia for 7,000,000 people, and of the total 81 are Ministers. The figures are—

	Ministers.
Commonwealth ... ..	19
New South Wales .. ..	15
Victoria .. ..	12
Queensland .. ..	10
Western Australia .. ..	10
Tasmania .. ..	9
South Australia .. ..	6

The Honorary Minister: Do not forget that two of our Ministers are honorary.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There are some Honorary Ministers in the total, about eight in all. It is remarkable to find a State like South Australia with only six Ministers, while that State industrially has made greater progress than any other part of Australia.

Hon. G. Fraser: They are over-worked.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The reason for their being over-worked is that Governments have assumed duties that they should never have undertaken. The province of a Government is to attend to the affairs of the country and maintain law and order, not to compete with private enterprise by establishing trading concerns.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Would you say that Western Australia has too many members in the Commonwealth Parliament?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, I say that the representation in the Commonwealth Parliament is very unequal. The position of some of the smaller States is really ridiculous. The hon. member knows as well as I do that, of the 74 members of the House of Representatives, 48 represent two States, and they are the tail that wags the dog whenever they so desire.

Hon. G. Fraser: Would you suggest more Ministers?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The hon. member could not have heard what I said a little while ago. I suggested fewer Ministers and fewer members.

Hon. G. Fraser: Yet you say they are over-worked.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, because they have engaged in enterprises which they should never have touched.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Which they had no business to touch.

The Honorary Minister: What would you suggest? Departmental heads?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: No, cut out the State trading.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Minister has reminded me of something I wish to stress. We have Ministers travelling round Australia and outside Australia, but Ministers come and go. As a rule, the heads of the Public Service continue in their positions, no matter what Party is in power, and these heads are the people who have the knowledge. For what purpose, then, should Ministers be travelling around so much. In some cases it is necessary, but quite a lot of the travelling done is unnecessary.

Hon. G. Fraser: Which one of the Ministers is doing unnecessary work?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Every one of them. Now I wish to deal with the position of the primary producers. The seasonal outlook so far is satisfactory, but we shall still want rain during the next four or five weeks. Although the price of primary products is high, the cost of everything required by the producer has more than doubled.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Trebled!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In some cases it has trebled. What will be the position in

the future when the prices of primary products fall to pre-war levels?

Hon. F. R. Welsh: Get the costs down.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Can the hon. member tell me how farmers will be able to get labour at less than £5 10s. or £6 a week, how they are going to get the price of harvesters and spare parts 40 per cent. below the ruling rate? The hon. member cannot tell me, and neither can anyone else. That is where the shoe pinches, and action of some sort must be taken. This is what is likely to happen in Western Australia. The farmer will seed the few acres that he can sow by his own labour, and nothing more, because he cannot afford to pay the ruling rates. If he did pay them, the crop would not be profitable. About four years ago, I made the statement that we would enjoy winning the war but would suffer the peace. Never were truer words spoken.

The latest move on the part of the Commonwealth to nationalise Australia's banking system will cut so deeply into the economic structure as to shake the financial position of Australia to its foundations. To me it is somewhat amusing to find various organisations telling the Prime Minister that the scheme put forward by him and Dr. Evatt is something wonderful. That sort of talk comes from persons who have had no experience whatever, who know nothing about the banking system. I am wondering whether Dr. Evatt, while in America, happened across the system adopted by President Peron of Argentina. I think he must have done so, because he is following precisely the same lines as have been adopted there.

Although Peron has been in control as a dictator for only a few years, he has far more powers than Hitler wielded. He now holds everything in that country in the hollow of his hands, and does as he likes. He controls Parliament, where he has a majority; he controls everything, and no-one dare say him nay. He did not take over the banks of the country, but made them subservient to the national banking system, and put in charge Miguel Miranda, a man the banks carried for years. He is the man who tells the commercial banks just what they may or may not do. They cannot make a loan unless it is approved by him. So great is the power taken by Peron that he can at any moment seize individual

deposits lying in any bank in the Argentine. How far removed from that shall we be if the trading banks in Australia are nationalised?

Peron does not stop at that; he controls all education, as well as the economic structure, both internal and external. All exporting is done by his Government. I have only to mention two items to show the extent to which this dictator can go, and that is the direction in which we are heading. He pays 75 cents per bushel for wheat, and while he certainly provides cheap wheat for his people in order to placate them, he exports the balance at a price of 2 dollars 81 cents. He is the only buyer and the only seller. He gives the cattle people 75 dollars per head for their cattle, and sells them for 185 dollars.

Hon. F. R. Welsh: Good business!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What about our wheat business? Are not we in almost a similar position? Farmers are receiving 4s. per bushel for their wheat, which amount is being paid to them by a generous Labour Government. Our farmers are entitled to every penny of the export value of the wheat they grow.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: And they would spend it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The money would be spent in Australia and would still be here. Is it not better for our farmers to be in a sound position financially than on the verge of bankruptcy, with no hope of reducing their debts, replacing worn-out machinery or building up their land with superphosphate?

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The idea was to ensure the farmers a fair price in the future as well.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Let me apply the same reasoning to an industry in which the hon. member is interested, namely, gold-mining. If the Commonwealth took £5 per ounce of gold as a reserve to be used in the event of the price falling at some future time, what would he say? It does not matter about the people who are exporting commodities to maintain credits abroad to meet our requirements. It does not matter one iota about them; we ought not to study them. In Argentina, when two newspapers had the temerity to criticise Peron's administration, he promptly seized

all the newsprint of one of the newspapers, and stationed police at every corner of the city to prosecute all the vans of the other paper travelling at a speed greater than nine miles per hour, so, of course, the company could not deliver its paper. These newspapers had to bow the knee.

Hon. W. R. Hall: That is better than bending the elbow!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Are we to travel along the same road as we started on? No person can justify the nationalisation of banking. What will be the position? When the Commonwealth Bank operates solely in every Australian State, will the value of the personal equation be taken into consideration? It has a tremendous value today, even when a person is not possessed of great assets. The bank knows the man it is dealing with. Banks have assisted clients merely on the personal equation; the banks know their men. Will the Commonwealth Bank do that? Certainly not! The Commonwealth Bank holds a large sum of money. The present Commonwealth loan is not going well, and those that follow will probably go badly. The Commonwealth Government is exploring every source to secure further loans and when money is not forthcoming for them, will probably say, "So much of your deposit in the bank has to go into the loan." The day might even come when the Commonwealth will turn round and say, "We want your money for the country. You will have to live on £5 a week."

Hon. E. M. Davies: You have a wonderful imagination.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If I said the Liberal Government would nationalise the banks the hon. member would say I had a wonderful imagination. Argentina has the right to do so.

Hon. E. M. Davies: No. I would not.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: My word! The hon. member would.

Hon. G. Fraser: Nationalisation of banking has always been our policy.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In the same way as the other planks in the policy of the Labour Party! This time, however, Mr. Chifley, pushed on by Dr. Evatt, is going the dizzy limit. No wonder Mr. Thomson referred to the late Mr. Curtin, who was honourable and kept his word. Mr. Chifley's

word does not seem to be worth anything at all. He has no consideration for Australia. I support the motion.

**HON. L. B. BOLTON** (Metropolitan) [6.4]: I desire to congratulate you, Sir, upon the position you are holding; but, like previous speakers, I sincerely hope the President will be back at an early date to carry on his duties. He has the sympathy of every member of this Chamber; we sincerely hope that he will return fully restored to health. I also desire to congratulate the Government of the day on having secured control of the Treasury bench. The Minister for Mines and the Assistant Minister are to be congratulated on their elevation to the Ministry. The interest and energy that both have displayed to date augur a good future for Western Australia. I move about the State a great deal and am satisfied that today a feeling of confidence prevails in the community that has been lacking for a number of years. Probably some of my friends in the House will not agree with me, but I think I am right in saying that the people feel that for a term at least we have men handling the affairs of the State in whom they can repose confidence. The recent elections proved that, and I am certain the members of the Government will give an excellent account of themselves.

**Hon. G. Fraser**: The people decided to give them a chance to honour the many promises they made.

**Hon. L. B. BOLTON**: That is a good interjection. Give them a chance! Leave it at that for a moment. I cannot say that the members of the previous Government have so far given them a chance, because all we have heard from them so far is criticism and, to my mind, quite unfair criticism of the way in which the new Government attained power and of the way in which it is carrying out its work. Mr. Fraser suggested that the new Government be given a chance. As I said, that is the last thing the Opposition in another place is doing so far. If the world loves one person more than another it is a good sport and a good loser. Some of the ex-Ministers have proved to be neither good sports nor good losers.

**Hon. G. Fraser**: I think all of them have proved that they are.

**Hon. L. B. BOLTON**: To my mind, the proof is very poor. However, to get back to

my subject. I desire to extend a welcome to the new members of the Chamber. There is quite a number of them and those who have delivered their maiden speeches have impressed me as being men who will give excellent service to the State. I desire particularly to congratulate Mr. Logan on his maiden speech. Mr. Fraser may remember that when I was speaking to the Address-in-reply last session, I suggested that that would be the last occasion on which he would have the opportunity of moving its adoption for quite a long period.

**Hon. W. R. Hall**: You must have heard something!

**Hon. L. B. BOLTON**: I evidently knew something. I looked up my remarks in "Hansard." Mr. Kitson, the Leader of the House at the time, said I was generous to make such a suggestion. The change has been brought about and I think most of us, with all due respect to Mr. Fraser, are very pleased with it. I am not one of those who are constantly contending that the previous Government did nothing for the State. I desire to give it credit for some very good work which it accomplished. So far as our industries are concerned, the previous Government did all in its power to expand them, but not in the direction that I and others would have liked. However, it certainly did some good work, but it left undone quite a lot and permitted drift in many directions. I am looking forward to the present Government overtaking and rectifying that position.

**Hon. E. M. Heenan**: The people are, too.

**Hon. L. B. BOLTON**: Yes. I assure my friend on my left that the people will not look in vain, if the new Government is given the opportunity. After all, seasons have a big effect on the progress of the State. I think it was Mr. Gray who suggested that the present Government took office at a time and under conditions better than any previous Government did.

**Hon. G. W. Miles**: He said the present Government had a bed of roses.

**Hon. L. B. BOLTON**: I think he mentioned a bed of roses.

**Hon. E. H. Gray**: I did not.

**Hon. L. B. BOLTON**: I apologise. I was going to suggest that had the previous Government left a bed of roses it certainly left the thorns. In straightening out many mat-

ters requiring attention, the present Government will find many thorns. It is pleasing to me to note that the Government is doing all it can to help the industries of the State. I give particular credit for that to the Minister for Industries. Hon. A. F. Watts is just as enthusiastic and whole-hearted in carrying out his work as was his predecessor, Hon. A. R. G. Hawke. The progress of industries depends mainly on two factors and I propose to touch briefly on them. Probably the more important is power. The unsatisfactory position of industrial power has been stressed time and time again in this Chamber, and not only here but in other places. Last session, particularly during the discussion on the Electricity Bill, it was pointed out that unless some greater efforts were made to improve the power position, it would be almost useless to endeavour to increase the number of our industries and to expand those in existence. In a speech I made, I stressed the importance of speeding up the completion of the South Fremantle Power Station.

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

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Prior to tea I was discussing the question of electric power—or the lack of it. The Government must make every endeavour to assist in supplying sufficient power for our industries. If no order has already been placed, either by the late Government or the present Administration, for additional plant at South Fremantle, in order to see us over, not the next five years, but the next ten or twenty years, one should be forwarded without delay. The position we are in today is due to nothing more or less than the short-sighted policy of the late Government. I say that emphatically, and I sincerely hope that the present Government will, if it has not already taken the step I have indicated, do so without delay.

Hon. G. Fraser: You do not think that six years of war had anything to do with the shortage of machinery, do you?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: This extra plant should have been ordered long before then. I question whether it was ordered six years

ago. I feel certain that it was not. The war was one reason why the order should have been placed. It must have been realised that after the war, when things settled down again, this State would endeavour to carry on many of the new industries established during the war.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: South Australia got a complete new electrical generating plant during the war.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is so. South Australia, of all the States, was the one which most studied the industrial outlook, and I venture to say that today South Australia is in a better position, industrially, than is any other State.

Hon. G. Fraser: Because it took an undue advantage of the war.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: It did not at all. South Australia had five men of the right party in power, and the right people behind the guns. They went out after business and secured it to the benefit of their State.

Hon. G. Fraser: The trouble was that she did not have her men behind the guns. She left that part to the other States.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: The hon. member is quite wrong there. Due to the efforts of Mr. Playford and his Government, South Australia stands in a better industrial position than does any other State in the Commonwealth. It has some of the finest industries in Australia and they are being further developed and encouraged. The South Australian Government made land available to those industries. It did not attempt to drive them away. When I was in Sydney recently I had the pleasure of meeting Lord Nuffield. This meeting took place at a test match at Sydney, and Mr. Miles can bear me out in this because he, too, was present. We discussed business, naturally, both being in the same line. I am, of course, in a very small way but even the mouse helps the lion.

Lord Nuffield said, "I have a racecourse in New South Wales but that is all I have, so far as my industry is concerned. I do not know what I am going to do with it, other than this, that I am not going to build on it. If I start a factory, as I probably shall do in Australia, it is more than likely that I shall go to South Australia." I said, "What is wrong with the West?" He naturally smiled and said, "I am afraid

that distribution costs would be too high." Of course, one never dreamt that such a firm could start in this State, but that shows the position of New South Wales compared with that of South Australia. There is more contentment, generally, in industry in South Australia than in any other State. Perhaps I should not say "any other State" because Western Australia is far ahead of either Victoria or New South Wales.

Hon. G. Fraser: Due to wise leadership.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Let us hope that the wise leadership we are getting now will continue the good work. It was wise leadership that put South Australia on the map and in the position it is in today.

Hon. G. Bennetts: South Australia is more central to the other States.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: It has more life, and its people know their job. They are not ruled by unions. The Premier was a wise man and he had a go-ahead Cabinet of experienced business men. Many firms in this State, knowing the position facing them, have purchased emergency power plants. I honestly believe that there is a possibility at any time of a further breakdown at the East Perth power house. I hope that will not happen, not only for the sake of industry, but of the State generally.

Hon. A. Thomson: The Minister for Works has warned us of that, too.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, and the State Electricity Commission has been in very close contact with a special committee of the manufacturers, and this committee is keeping in close contact with the position. We have been advised that such a thing is likely to happen, and we are to be prepared as far as possible. That is all right for some industries and firms, but it is impossible for others. It would be much too costly for many industries to instal emergency plants because of the peculiar machinery they have. However, I hope we will not have the position thrust on us that we experienced last year.

It will be admitted that our secondary industries are making some progress. As I said earlier, I want to give credit to the late Government for its endeavours. While Mr. Hawke was Minister for Industrial Development he was certainly sincere in his endeavours to advance our position, but

we are not progressing as we should. Primary and secondary industries go together, and while this State holds a very fine position with its primary industries, the same does not obtain with regard to secondary industries. We produce more primary products than we can consume and, as a result, we have to find other markets for them. We want to bring our secondary industries to somewhere near the same level. I have every confidence that the present Government is wide awake to this fact.

This brings me to the point that it is very hard to understand, in view of the difficulties and the higher costs that industry has to face in this State, the reason for the appointment by this Government of a Royal Commission to consider additional workers' compensation benefits. I understand that I am not permitted to discuss fully the terms of reference of this Commission. Were I allowed to do so I would speak very strongly on the matter. For the last 12 years this Chamber has, to a certain extent, had to defend the employers against many requests made by the Labour Government for additional benefits. We are told that any additional benefits which may be granted will not be at the expense of either the employer or the employee. That is difficult to understand.

It certainly means additional taxation and a general increase in costs to industry. I say that industry in this State cannot stand additional costs. I want to quote, briefly, the latest figures dealing with workers, compensation premiums in this and the Eastern States—particularly the two States from where we get most of our competition. This investigation covering accidents happening at or away from the worker's employment was made only recently and the results show it is obvious that this extension of workers' cover would considerably increase the number and cost of claims. It is quite obvious that that must be so. In the initial announcement by the Government with respect to the proposed Royal Commission, it was stated that the cost to the employers would be reduced. I fail to appreciate how that would be possible.

The benefits under the legislation in this State do not vary very much from those provided in the Acts operating in other States, but nevertheless the figures I have

at my disposal show that the cost per head of population in Western Australia is very high. Here it amounts to 18s. 4d. per head of the population. In Victoria the cost is 8s. 4d. and in South Australia, 8s. 1d. Those are the two States from which we must expect our greatest competition and the disadvantages disclosed there are obvious—a difference of 10s. in one instance and 10s. 3d. in the other. In New South Wales the cost is the highest in Australia, but there they cover the employee when journeying to and from his work. That is an additional benefit that is mentioned in the references drawn up for the Royal Commission here. The cost in New South Wales is 19s. 4d. per head of the population. In Queensland it is 15s. 5d. and in Tasmania it is 8s. 4d., the same as that applying in Victoria.

From these figures it will be seen that Western Australia is at a distinct disadvantage in respect of present-day cost of workers' compensation. To burden industry further with legislation providing additional benefits for the workers, particularly in the directions that have been suggested, would, in my opinion, be quite wrong. The Commonwealth Government in its social service legislation provides sick pay for a worker the moment he is unable to continue his usual avocation and enables him immediately to receive those payments from the Federal authority. That is all in addition to the figures quoted by Mr. Baxter this afternoon.

The employers have to grant each of their workers six days' sick leave per year, which is availed by employees, whether they be sick or not, to an extent of about 99 per cent. of those to whom it applies. I have no objection to that; it is the law, and we have to obey it. Mr. Baxter gave a very clear exposition of the position as he sees it, and I congratulate him on his speech, particularly in regard to his references to industrial matters. It seems to me that the terms of reference of the Royal Commission savour of nothing more than an attempt at nationalisation. That is what it is. I believe it will end in the nationalisation of insurance. If the Commonwealth Government's banking policy should be carried through, the next thing we can expect is that that Government will tackle insurance.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is to be hoped that it does.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I hope so, too.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I hope it does not. The present position is perfectly satisfactory and the benefits enjoyed by the workers are equal, if not superior, to those available in any other State of the Commonwealth. During the past year the number of factories in Western Australia increased by a total of 349. The employment figures show an increase from 29,146 to 30,562, which is, as one would expect, an all-time record. Wages and salaries paid increased by approximately £270,000 and now amount to £7,883,814, which was the amount paid by the industries of this State for the 12 months. The output figures from the factories increased to a total of £34,022,839. While those figures are the highest on record, they do not show the proportional increase of the war years.

I admit it is very difficult to compare the figures I have quoted with those of previous years, because costs generally and prices, too, have risen so high and the value of the has fallen to such an extent that it is almost impossible to say definitely whether our output has increased proportionately or otherwise. I am inclined to think that the position is otherwise, because I think most employers will agree with me that we hardly receive the value for wages paid today that we did some years ago. I do not think there is the slightest doubt that. In my own industry and in the building and other trades, a limit is set not upon the capacity to work but by some board or authority—of course, it is always from the workers' side—that fixes the volume of work that a man is allowed to do in a given time.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You have no proof of that.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I have lots of proof of it.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is quite easy to say that.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Mention has been made from time to time in this House of the number of bricks that a man can lay.

Hon. G. Fraser: That has been denied.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: What applies to brick-laying applies equally in other industries.

Hon. G. Fraser: That has been denied by the unions.



Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am sorry that I cannot accept their denial.

Hon. G. Fraser: They should know what their instructions were.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I know that costs have risen very much higher than would be accounted for merely by the increased wages. Working conditions generally have been much better in Western Australia both during and since the war. The workers enjoy more amenities than ever before, and I believe—I think even Mr. Fraser will not deny it—that today employers give much more consideration to the comfort of their workers than ever before. I give the unions credit for much in that connection. They have seen to it that it should be so. The wise employer knows that it is in his own interests to provide his workers with every comfort and assistance possible in order to get the best out of them. Today we hear quite a lot about output. We are told that Australia's output should be increased, and so on. I think it was Mr. Bennetts who said he did not agree with that.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I did not say that.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I was mistaken. I remember now the statement was made in another place and I think it was Mr. Leslie who said in the Legislative Assembly last night that he did not agree that output should be increased. I disagree with that attitude. I think we can, and should, increase our output in almost every direction.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Hear, hear!

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: To ask at the same time for a reduction of the working week to one of 40 hours would, in my opinion, bring about a position that would make such an achievement impossible.

Hon. A. Thomson: It must have that effect.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: As an employer of labour, I think I am justified in stating my own experience, and from that standpoint I am certain in my own mind that output must be decreased by working 40 hours instead of 44 hours a week.

The Honorary Minister: They say that they work faster during the 40 hours.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That may be so in some instances, but, to my mind, the percentage of fast workers would be very small.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Would not the mechanisation of industry compensate for that?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Is not industry mechanised as much as possible now?

Hon. E. M. Davies: It will be mechanised still further as a result of wartime experience.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Probably industry today is taking advantage of the experience gained during the war period. Many factories have improved their plant by means of mechanisation and in every other way possible. All that, however, means additional costs for operating purposes, but the results are certainly of benefit not only to the employers but to the State generally. Personally, I will never be convinced that as much work can be turned out in a week of 40 hours as in a week of 44 hours.

Hon. G. Fraser: The same argument was advanced when the proposal was to reduce the working week from 48 to 44 hours.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: And if the hon. member and his friends get a 40-hour week, they will want a 36-hour week.

Hon. A. Thomson: They are asking for that already.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: If they get a 36-hour week, they will want a 30-hour week. There is no question about that. Little as I know Mr. Fraser, I do not think he would be satisfied, even if he were a farmer.

Hon. G. Fraser: I am quite easily satisfied.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The output of many factories is governed by the capacity of the plant, and if that plant works four hours less the output must be reduced.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is so. Another question I desire to touch upon before concluding refers to transport, which is one of the greatest problems of the times and one that is becoming more serious every day. I think the evidence given by Mr. Ellis, the Commissioner of Railways, before the Royal Commission inquiring into operations at the Midland Junction Workshops, although staggering was not surprising. For years we have known of the deplorable condition of our railways and the enormous losses incurred. Only last week I had quite a long conversation regarding railway matters with the Secretary for

Railways in South Australia. There they are in almost as bad a plight as we are. Probably their rollingstock is not in such bad condition but financially they are right up against it. They have to provide for an interest bill of over £1,000,000 per annum before they start on working costs. What the outcome of it will be, is very difficult to see. At present it appears that the two most vital considerations in connection with the railways are the deliveries of super and the handling of our harvest. If we have rain at an early date—and I think we shall—Western Australia will probably enjoy one of the best harvests it has ever had, which means that next year a much greater area will be sown than is under crop this season.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And it will be wanted, too.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is so. We should see that everything possible is done to ensure a big crop and to bring a large area under cultivation; and Mr. Gray and his colleagues will have no excuse whatever these days in not furthering such an objective on the score that farm-hands are paid a mere pittance.

The Honorary Minister: There are not many there.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: What few are there are paid good wages. I doubt whether any farmer has a good farm hand on his property to whom he is paying less than £5 5s. a week, and tucker.

Hon. L. Craig: The award rate is £5 12s. 6d.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes. I know that the worker himself would see that the farmer paid the award rate.

Hon. L. Craig: And a 40-hour week.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, in most instances there is a 40-hour week. As a matter of fact, I think that if the hours worked from the 1st January to the 31st December were added up, they would be found to total less than 40.

The Honorary Minister: That is quite true.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Sometimes people fail to take into account that on wet days farmers can do practically nothing; yet farm hands are paid the same rate for the whole period. It is also the practice

probably on every farm of any size for workers to have every Saturday afternoon or the whole of every other Saturday free. My hands get every other Saturday as a holiday, which gives them a chance to go to the nearest town if they so desire. However, I am wandering a little from the subject; but if my friends will interject I feel that when I have an answer, I should give it. I was speaking of the handling of super, that and the handling of the harvest are the two difficulties facing us so far as transport is concerned. The harvest could wait, but the super cannot. It must be delivered on time, otherwise we cannot sow our crops; and unless we sow our crops we cannot reap them.

I have a suggestion to make—and I might say that I put it to the Minister just before the House met today: I suggest that in order to overcome the difficulty, and to enable farmers to secure super in ample time, the road transport restrictions be entirely removed on all legitimate farmers' vehicles—that is, trucks—in order that they can cart their own super, commencing from the 1st October next. Super will be ready for delivery on that date. There are many farmers who have only one conveyance. They come to town once or twice a month and have to return empty. If the restrictions were removed—and I ask for their removal only on legitimate farmers' vehicles—then every time a man came to the city from the 1st October, he could take back two, three or four tons—or if his truck could carry it, five tons—of super. That would relieve the position very much. I suggest that arrangements could be made with the super companies.

As a matter of fact, the super companies are not at all favourable to this idea; they say it interferes with the loading of their railway wagons. But arrangements could be made for those motor trucks to be loaded at a given time each day, so that there would be no interference with the steady flow of loading on to the railway trucks. I am convinced that great benefit would accrue if this concession were made immediately. To do what was done last year would be useless. It is no good waiting until the position is acute and then throwing the whole thing open and having big ten-ton trucks carting super and cutting the roads to pieces. But I am convinced that suffi-

cient super could be moved to many districts under the conditions I have suggested.

The Honorary Minister: The farmer can do that now with his own truck. There is no restriction.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not think so.

The Honorary Minister: Definitely! He cannot employ another truck, but he can use his own.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I was not aware that the farmer could do that today with his own truck. I suggest that the Minister make sure.

The Honorary Minister: I am sure.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I suggest that the Honorary Minister make sure and advise the House in his reply. I shall be glad if he will do that. Unfortunately, those of us who are farmers know that during the war we had poor quality super compared with what we obtained before the war. Now that we are receiving rock from Ocean Island and Nauru, the quality is almost back to that of olden times; and I can assure the House that farmers would be perfectly safe in taking delivery of super as early as October and holding it till they are ready to top-dress or sow any time during the next season. Many of us have had bitter experience of taking delivery of super early. Already there is an agitation for farmers to receive super before Christmas.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Did you say the quality is better than it used to be?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I can assure my friend, who is a user of super, that it is vastly superior to anything we have had for the last four or five years and is almost, if not entirely, equal to the pre-war super.

Hon. L. Craig: What percentage of phosphates does it contain?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: The percentage is 22, and—Mr. Craig can correct me if I am wrong—the best we have ever had was 23.

Hon. L. Craig: That is so.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That means to say that this super can be held and there is no fear of its deteriorating, or of its lumping or rotting the bags so that it is impossible to handle the product after it has been in the shed for a week or two. I can

assure farmers that what I am saying is correct; I may have a little inside knowledge.

Hon. G. Fraser: Does that apply to all companies or just one?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Every company. I did not mention any particular company. I am not suggesting to members that any one particular company is concerned. Every company will be in the same position.

The Honorary Minister: It is a combination of super companies, is it not?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Not that I know. They have super in different buildings miles away from one another.

Hon. G. Fraser: I thought perhaps you might only have knowledge of one company.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I trust the Honorary Minister will take this matter up, and if the restrictions are not already removed, I hope sincerely that they will be lifted in time to permit large quantities of super to be transported at an early date.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The majority of farmers do not know.

The Honorary Minister: That is the trouble.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is one of the reasons I mentioned it in this House. I am sure that members will make the information available at every opportunity, and it may be possible to give some publicity to the fact. I do not know that many farmers would read "Hansard" in preference to their local paper or the daily newspaper.

The Honorary Minister: Provided a farmer brings primary produce down—a bag of oats or a sheep or something—he can take super back.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Those are the principal matters on which I wished to address the House. I omitted, when I began, to express regret at the passing of Mr. Drew. He was a member when I entered the House 16 or 17 years ago; and I found him just as everybody else found him—one of nature's gentlemen. He gave great service to the State—I will not say to his party, because he was hardly a party man. But he gave great service to Western Australia and was an ornament not only of the Lab-

our movement but of every movement with which he was connected. I support the motion.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 27th August, 1947.

	PAGE
Questions: Pioneer Bus Service, as to increase of fares	428
Harbours: (a) as to scheme for Bunbury development, etc.	428
(b) as to proposals for Albany development	428
Railways: (a) as to refrigerator vans for butter	429
(b) as to loop lines to serve butter factories	429
T.B. examinations, as to basic wage for bread-winner patients	429
Wheat, as to capacity and cost of bulk facilities, Fremantle	430
Forrest River Mission, as to tabling report on health of natives	430
Motor Traffic, as to accidents and prosecutions	430
Milk, as to treatment licenses for current year	430
North-West, as to arrangements for securing medical officers	431
Jetties, Swan River, as to control of children	431
Address-in-reply, tenth day, conclusion	431
Point of order	468
Bills: Child Welfare, 1R.	468
Road Districts Act Amendment, 1R.	468
Rural Relief Fund Act Amendment, 1R.	468
Crown Suits, 1R.	468
Constitution Acts Amendment (No. 1), 1R.	468
Constitution Acts Amendment (Re-election of Ministers), 1R.	468
Fatal Accidents, 1R.	468
Public Trustee Act Amendment, 1R.	468
Public Service Act Amendment, 1R.	468
Industries Assistance Act Amendment (Continuance), 1R.	468
Closer Settlement Act Amendment, 1R.	468

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### PIONEER BUS SERVICE

##### *As to Increase of Fares.*

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

(1) Is it a fact that sanction has been given to the Pioneer Bus Service, operating between Perth and Bassendean, to increase the fares chargeable on that route?

(2) Upon what grounds was the sanction to increase fares on this particular route granted, and does he concur in such increase?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) To assist in restoring the financial stability of the company which has deteriorated over the past years mainly through operating at fares lower than those on comparable routes. As this is an essential in the rehabilitation of the service generally the increases approved by the Transport Board were made with my concurrence.

### HARBOURS.

#### *(a) As to Scheme for Bunbury Development, Etc.*

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

In view of the decision by the previous Cabinet on the 7th October, 1946, in regard to a major scheme for Bunbury Harbour development and associate works:

(1) Does he intend to fully carry out this plan?

(2) What financial provision has been made in this year's estimates for this work?

(3) Has the plan been submitted to Col. Tydeman, as promised by the previous Minister for Works and later by himself?

(4) If so, how much of Col. Tydeman's report is he prepared to make available for perusal?

(5) Will he arrange for an inspection and report from Col. Tydeman on the desirability of re-opening "Boat Channel," the effect of closure being covered in P.W.D. Plan dated the 30th June, 1898, prepared by Mr. W. E. Wood, and also by subsequent events?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Subject to Mr. Tydeman's review, yes.

(2) £80,000 provided on draft Loan Estimates. This will cover preliminary work at Roelands Quarry, provision of equipment, etc.

(3) Yes.

(4) Mr. Tydeman will commence his review of the Bunbury Harbour Improvements scheme shortly.

(5) Yes.

#### *(b) As to Proposals for Albany Development.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (on notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Do the proposals put forward by the Director of Works to the Wise Government