

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 7th April, 1954.

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

[The Deputy President took the Chair.]

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Government Provision for Evictees.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON asked the Chief Secretary:

As the Premier has announced that Parliament has been called together for the purpose of considering legislation relating to rents and tenancies, and in view of the fact that rent controls are inevitably associated with housing shortages, will the Minister please furnish the House with the following information:—

(1) What steps, if any, has the Government taken to provide accommodation, emergency or otherwise, for possible evictees?

(2) How many emergency type houses has the State Housing Commission provided for this purpose?

(3) How many such houses are now building or planned in the Government's housing programme?

(4) If no such houses have been provided for, or if the programme has been restricted will the Government please give the reason?

(5) How many private dwellings have been completed during the period from the 1st July, 1953, to the 31st March, 1954?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The Government has increased its house-building programme to the utmost to provide additional permanent homes for those in need. Although the previous Government arranged for the erection of 237 small cottages for purchase by evictees and 150 small temporary rental flats, owing to the great dissatisfaction expressed by the occupants of this type of emergency accommodation, it is not the intention of the present Government to proceed with the erection of emergency housing.

Latest figures available show that 2,075 private dwellings were erected for the six months ended the 31st December, 1953. During the same period the commission completed 1,856.

(b) As to Proposed Flats, Subiaco and Maniana.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many tenants is it estimated will be provided for in the proposed flats at—

(a) Subiaco;

(b) Maniana?

(2) What is the scale of rentals it is proposed to charge tenants occupying the flats referred to in my previous question?

(3) How soon is it anticipated that these flats will be ready for occupation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Subiaco—242.

Maniana—320.

(2) Rentals will be assessed on the economic basis laid down in the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement Act.

(3) It is anticipated that the entire project will be completed within 18 to 24 months after acceptance of tender.

(c) As to Number of Homes and Rent Legislation.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many dwelling houses were there in Western Australia on—

(a) the 31st December, 1939;

(b) the 31st March, 1954;

(c) how many are there under construction now?

(2) How many self-contained flats were there in Western Australia on—

- (a) the 31st December, 1939;
- (b) the 31st March, 1954;
- (c) how many are there under construction now?

(3) How many rental houses are there in Western Australia under the control of the State Housing Commission?

(4) How many Commonwealth-State rental homes are now under construction?

(5) What percentage of houses built prior to 1939 is affected by the present rents and tenancies legislation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) (a) No 1939 figures available. Census 30/6/1933—97,308 houses. Census 30/6/1947—113,410 houses.

(b) Latest figures available 31/12/1953—146,721 houses.

(c) Latest figures available 31/12/1953—5,645 houses.

(2) (a) No 1939 figures available. Census 30/6/1933—3,133 flats and tenements. Census 30/6/1947—4,021 flats.

(b) Latest figures available 31/12/1953—4,919 flats.

(c) Latest figures available 31/12/1953—156 flats.

(Figures in (a) for 1933 census includes tenements as well as self-contained flats.)

(3) 7,206 homes.

(4) Commonwealth-State rental homes contracts let and houses under construction—1,455.

(5) Not known.

POLIOMYELITIS.

(a) *As to Cases Reported and Proven.*

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER asked the Chief Secretary:

The number of cases of poliomyelitis, in age groups—

- (a) reported;
- (b) proven—
 - (i) paralytic;
 - (ii) non-paralytic;
- (c) deaths,

for the metropolitan area and country respectively, for the months of January, February, and March, 1954?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

In view of the seriousness of the matter to which this question relates, I have prepared a rather long reply. I will give certain features of that reply and the hon. member will be supplied with a copy of it. I will lay my copy on the Table of the House for the information of members.

During the first major epidemic in 1948, 311 cases were notified. The great majority of these were associated with paralysis, and there were 25 deaths.

The present epidemic since the 1st January has so far resulted in 331 notified cases, but only 124, or a little more than one-third, have been associated with paralysis. Reports suggest that the nature of this paralysis, on the whole, has been mild, and there have been only three deaths since the 1st October, 1953.

A great many more non-paralytic cases have therefore been notified this time, and the total number of notifications is not a true reflection of the damage which will result from this epidemic.

Perhaps a better idea of the position will be obtained by the following figures. Those for 1948 are based on a special post-polio survey carried out by the Health Department some time ago. Those for 1954 are, of course, provisional and have been estimated in the light of information so far available:—

	1949	1954
Total Notifications	311	300 plus
Paralytic	90%	33-40%
Non-paralytic	10%	60-66%

End Result (% of total notifications.)

Deaths	8%	1%
Severely handicapped	9%	2-3%
Moderately handicapped	17%	5-6%
Not handicapped i.e. recovered without any paralysis at all or with trivial weaknesses only	66%	about 90%

The obvious conclusion, therefore, is that the epidemic is not as serious as that of 1948, and not as serious as the initial flood of notifications suggested.

It was impossible to make this assessment in the initial stage of the epidemic. At least a month is required to form a reasonable opinion concerning the severity of an epidemic such as this; and a reassuring Press statement in this connection was released by the commissioner on the 18th March, or five weeks after the commencement of the epidemic was announced.

The following detailed statistics have been compiled for the information of members:—

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.
POLIOMYELITIS 1954 (PROVEN CASES).
January (Week ending 29th).

Age Group.	Notifications.			Paralytic.			Non-Paralytic.			Not Specified.			Deaths.		
	M.	C.	Total.	M.	C.	Total.	M.	C.	Total.	M.	C.	Total.	M.	C.	Total.
0-4	4	1	3	2	1	3	2		2						
5-9	4		4				4		4						
10-14	1		1				1		1						
15-19															
20-24	2		2	2		2									
25-29	1		1	1		1									
30-34	1		1	1		1									
35-39															
40-44		1	1		1	1									
45-49															
50+															
All Ages	13	2	15	6	2	8	7		7						

February (Week ending 26th).

0-4	16	3	19	10	3	13	6		6				1		1
5-9	10	1	11	3	1	4	7		7						
10-14	8	2	10	2	1	3	5		5	1	1	2			
15-19	11	2	13	3	1	4	4	1	5	4		4	1		1
20-24	4		4	1		1	2		2	1		1			
25-29	2	2	4		2	2	1		1	1		1			
30-34	10		10	6		6	4		4						
35-39	1		1	1		1									
40-44	3	1	4	3	1	4									
45-49	2		2				2		2						
50+															
All Ages	67	11	78	29	9	38	31	1	32	7	1	8	2		2

March (Week ending 2nd April).

0-4	24	16	40	10	10	20	12	3	15	2	3	5			
5-9	23	12	35	9	4	13	13	6	19	2	1	3			
10-14	23	1	24	5		5	11		11	7	1	8			
15-19	16	3	19	6	2	8	5	1	6	4	1	5			
20-24	13	12	25	2	7	9	10	3	13	1	2	3			
25-29	17	10	27	2	4	6	11	5	16	4	1	5			
30-34	14	7	21	2	3	5	10	4	14	2		2			
35-39	6	5	11		3	3	3	2	5	3		3			
40-44	6	3	9	2	3	5	3		3	1		1			
45-49	3		3	2		2	1		1						
50+	3	2	5		2	2	3		3						
All Ages	148	71	219	40	38	78	82	24	106	26	9	35			

M.—Metropolitan Area.

C.—Country Areas.

CASES NOTIFIED AS POLIOMYELITIS AND
SUBSEQUENTLY AMENDED TO
"NOT POLIOMYELITIS."

	Metropolitan.	Country.	Total.
January—			
5-9	1		1
Total	1		1
February—			
10-14	2		2
20-24	1		1
Total	3		3
March—			
0-4	4		4
5-9	3	1	4
10-14	1		1
15-19	1		1
20-24	2		2
25-29	3		3
Total	14	1	15

(b) As to Use of Dalkeith Hot Pool.

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Has he seen the Press report concerning the Government's intention to make the hot pool at Dalkeith available to poliomyelitis cases?

(2) Will he inform the House as to what progress has been made in the work necessary in order that urgent cases can avail themselves of this vital adjunct to their cure and rehabilitation?

(3) How long will it take to complete this work?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) and (3) the proposal to convert the Dalkeith pool as a temporary expedient was abandoned because of transport and other difficulties.

Temporary requirements for poliomyelitis cases are being met at the Infectious Diseases Hospital, Subiaco, by the Hubbard bath which was installed during the first epidemic, and by a galvanised iron "squatter's" tank, 10 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep, filled with water heated by steam. This tank was provided several weeks ago and will serve as a "stop-gap" measure until such time as the permanent therapeutic hot pool in the grounds of the Infectious Diseases Hospital, Subiaco, is completed. The Government has made £12,000 available for the construction of this pool, work on which will commence within one week. It should be ready for use in three or four months.

This pool is being constructed alongside the after-care centre where physiotherapy and other treatment is at present given to post-polio cases. All treatment facilities will therefore be concentrated at the one site.

Most of the patients needing the pool will be drawn from the after-care wards of the Subiaco hospital and from the Golden Age Centre in Leederville, so that transport will provide no problem.

Finally, as accommodation requirements for infectious diseases continue to diminish, it would be feasible to develop the Subiaco institution as an orthopaedic hospital for the treatment of persons physically handicapped by conditions such as arthritis, hemiplegia, accidents and the like, and the hot pool will be extremely useful for all these conditions.

PRICES BRANCH.

As to Return of Confidential Information.

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What has happened to the confidential information, such as balance sheets, given by firms to the Prices Commissioner during the currency of price-fixing now this department has closed down?

(2) Will he assure the House that this confidential information will be returned to the firms who supplied it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) and (2) The financial and cost figures and other data obtained by the prices control authorities during the currency of the prices control legislation were obtained under the provisions of that legislation and are therefore the property of the Crown.

Arrangements have been made for those records which are to be retained to be stored in locked and sealed cupboards at the Public Library.

The State Archivist will hold the keys and the classified index of the records and will be responsible for their safe custody.

Access to the records at any time will be granted only on production of a written authorisation from the Under Secretary for Law.

HOSPITALS.

(a) *As to Regional Building, Albany.*

Hon. J. McL. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) As a firm decision has now been made to build the Albany regional hospital at Spencer Park, can he inform the House—

(a) whether any preliminary work has been carried out by the Architectural Division of the Public Works Department, to ascertain levels and other details necessary for the preparation of plans and specifications?

(b) what is the estimated cost of this hospital; and

(c) when is it anticipated that tenders will be called for this work?

(2) Because of the total inadequacy of the existing hospital at Albany, will the Government make every effort to expedite the erection of the new regional hospital?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) (a) The decision referred to was taken only two weeks ago. The position of the hospital within the 250 acres of Spencer Park is now being determined. After this has been done, levels will be taken. Preliminary data is already in the Principal Architect's hands.

(b) An estimate cannot be prepared until plans have been completed.

(c) An estimate cannot yet be made.

(2) Yes.

(b) *As to Location of other Regional Buildings.*

Hon. J. McL. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) At what centres, other than Albany, is it proposed to erect regional hospitals?

(2) Have sites been selected; and, if so, where are they located?

(3) Is work on the preparation of plans for these hospitals now in progress?

(4) If this work is not now proceeding, can he indicate when it is expected that it will be put in hand?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Regional status does not imply a new hospital. Whether a new hospital will be built depends upon the nature of the existing buildings and their capacity for development. Approved regional centres are Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, Northam, Merredin, Kalgoorlie, Collie, Manjimup and Katanning.

- (2) Albany—Spencer Park.
 Bunbury—Carey Park.
 Geraldton—Reserve 23010.

In all other places existing sites will be used.

(3) Sketches are well advanced for Bunbury and Geraldton. A new commencement will soon be made for Albany.

- (4) Answered by No. 3.

BETTING.

As to Prosecution of S.P. Bookmakers, Geraldton.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

Why are the Geraldton starting-price bookmakers being charged and fined for obstructing the traffic, as a result of their betting operations, more than starting-price bookmakers in other areas outside the metropolitan area?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

It is not acknowledged that Geraldton is singled out for attention. To draw comparisons between one town and another is not possible as the incidence of starting-price betting may be greater in one town than another.

CHILD WELFARE.

As to Tabling Report on Department.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP asked the Chief Secretary:

Will he lay on the Table of the House the report on child welfare by Mr. Hicks?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Not at this stage. However, no objection will be raised to the hon. member having an opportunity to peruse the report.

CHAIRMEN (DEPUTY) OF COMMITTEES.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That in accordance with Standing Order No. 31a, Hon. E. M. Davies, Hon. Sir Charles Latham, and Hon. C. H. Simpson be elected to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the current session.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the Chief Secretary, sessional committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders.—Hon. Sir Charles Latham, Hon. L. Craig and Hon. E. M. Davies.

Library.—Hon. L. A. Logan and Hon. F. R. H. Lavery.

House.—Hon. E. M. Heenan, Hon. H. Hearn, Hon. W. R. Hall, and Hon. A. L. Loton.

Printing.—Hon. N. E. Baxter and Hon. G. Bennetts.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment Bill to pass through all its stages at any one sitting; and the aforesaid Bill to be dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [4.57]: Since the House met last year a very great and important event has occurred in the State, in common with the rest of Australia. I refer, of course, to the visit of Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. There is no doubt that this is one of the outstanding events that has happened in Australia, and it will be remembered for a very long time to come. I had hoped that the benefit would fall on the children of the State particularly, but unfortunately this was marred by what is known as the poliomyelitis incidence.

I regret very much the publicity that was given to that matter. I hope that, in future, when important statements are to be made which will affect the welfare of this State and its people, they will be made by a Minister of the Crown or someone responsible to Parliament for those statements. Evidently—and I am just guessing—the public statements that were made from day to day were made by the Commissioner of Public Health, and apparently he has very little idea of public feeling on such matters. When one peruses the statements that were made in the Eastern States Press one would think that we were suffering from some form of black plague. In one case I saw a statement to this effect, "A Victim Every Three Hours of the Day". When one looks at a heading such as that, one comes to the conclusion that the epidemic must be dreadful.

The Minister for the North-West: Headlines!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. I am satisfied in my own mind that the condition of affairs was exaggerated. I have had experience of doctors and know that they do a good deal of guessing. Probably they tried on this occasion to be ultra careful because, if one had a pain in the arm or the neck, it could be nothing but polio! I can mention a case

that occurred some years ago, because I was the patient, and a doctor was going to operate upon me for peritonitis when I was actually suffering from pneumonia. Had I not regained consciousness when he came to see me, I would have been operated on; but I told him that I had had pneumonia before, and that the attack was similar to the previous one. I believe that my statement to the doctor resulted in saving my life. When one has had an experience of that sort, one realises that doctors do a lot of guessing.

The position in this instance was greatly exaggerated. If one considers the districts whence the patients have come, there is a clear indication that the doctors were obsessed with this idea of polio. Let me refer to the experience at Bruce Rock. The doctor there—I suppose it was the health officer—said the children at that town should not go to York on the occasion of the Queen's visit. Unfortunately, the local residents acceded to his request, but the doctor himself went to York and mingled with the people there because I saw him. The result of his statement was that none of the healthy youngsters from Bruce Rock went to York.

There was an incident in Queensland where cases of polio prevailed just as much as in this State. The Minister for Public Health there told the people of Maryborough that the children were not to go to a certain place to see the Queen, but the parents defied him and took their children along, which is what we in this State should have done. I am satisfied that no ill-effects would have followed the moving about of the children on this occasion. I wonder what must have been the thoughts of the staff who accompanied Her Majesty. Would they have considered that we were a shockingly frightened people, or that we were suffering from a very dreadful scourge? The Queen was not even permitted to shake hands with the Premier of the State.

I cannot quite understand what happened at the last conference held in Adelaide. After reading the Adelaide newspapers, it seemed as if a strong argument had developed between the representatives of the Commonwealth and State Governments, because, according to the report, the Queen herself expressed the wish that the visit should take place as originally arranged, so she at any rate was not afraid. Evidently somebody else then stepped in—I think it was the Commissioner of Public Health—but for what reason I do not know. Whether he wished to be ultra careful or whether he really considered this was a very bad form of polio, I cannot say. Eventually the Prime Minister had to be sent over to Adelaide to settle the argument.

Hon. G. Bennetts: He was sent for.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Practically so, because no satisfactory arrangement could be reached. I do not know whether that actually occurred, but that was the effect of the announcement in the newspapers. At that stage, in my opinion, it was not a matter for the Commissioner of Health or the director of the tour to decide; it was the responsibility of the Premier of this State. Judging by statements he has made, he held somewhat similar views to those I have expressed—namely, that the reports of the conditions prevailing here were exaggerated and unjustified—and he could have assured those concerned that the people of Western Australia are far healthier than those in any other State of the Commonwealth.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Did not he advise the Prime Minister of that?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know. I regret greatly that such a condition of affairs should have occurred in this State when nothing of the sort happened in any other State. We received a very bad deal, not so much from the point of view of the adults as from that of the children. One had only to go along the streets of Perth or visit York or Northam to appreciate what the Queen's visit meant to the children. Yet many of them were deprived of that experience—quite unnecessarily, in my opinion. I wanted to get those views off my chest.

Now I wish to say a few words about this session of Parliament. I cannot understand why the Government wanted a special session, because there is no justification for it. If the Premier desired that the rents and tenancies legislation should be further considered, there was no need to prorogue Parliament. Section 44 of the Interpretation Act states—

Any Act may be altered, amended or repealed in the session of Parliament in which it was passed.

This is duplicated in our Standing Order No. 178 which reads—

A Bill may amend or repeal an Act of the same session.

Of course there is a difference between an Act and a Bill, but we know that with the laxity that occurs in this Chamber—if I may be permitted to cast such a reflection—an amendment may be altered after securing the leave of the House to have the measure recommitted. Once a Bill is recommitted, we are at liberty to make what alterations we desire.

I have raised this point because yesterday I felt that, in asking His Excellency the Governor to come here to open another session for the purpose of amending one piece of legislation and our having to go through all the formality of a Speech from the throne, as it were, we seemed to cast ridicule on the position he occupies. I hope that nothing of the sort will occur

again. It has been very poor publicity indeed. After the visit of Her Majesty the Queen, we should have a full appreciation of what the Crown means to us; and the Governor of this State is, of course, the representative of Her Majesty. Yet he was asked to come here and open Parliament in circumstances that were not justified.

The Minister for the North-West: How else could we have dealt with the Act?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There have been occasions when we have had more than one period in a session and the Government could have arranged on this occasion for a continuation of last year's session. I do not think that Ministers could have read the Interpretation Act. I am satisfied that if the Crown Law officers had been asked to read it, they would have interpreted it as I have done. There is nothing ambiguous in the language that any Act may be altered, amended or repealed in the session of Parliament in which it was passed.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You were in disagreement with the doctors a little while ago, and now you are disagreeing with the officers of the Crown Law Department.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am only a layman, but I have had a good many years' experience of trying to interpret the law and of helping to make it. If Mr. Heenan cares to give his interpretation of the provision I have quoted, I shall respect it.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: I respect the opinion of the higher officers of the Crown Law Department.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The provision is a simple one, presenting no difficulties whatever. An Act may be altered, amended or repealed in the session in which it was passed. That section was not inserted in the Interpretation Act for nothing. Once a Bill became an Act, it could be repealed or amended. Some of the legislation submitted to us nowadays requires a Philadelphia lawyer to understand it, but the language of that section is plain and simple, and I should like Mr. Heenan to give a little thought to it. I think he should be interested to give us some information based on the opinion of a qualified legal man such as he is. It was quite unnecessary to hold a special session. His Excellency came here and was asked to deliver a very short speech. He told us that the Government required us to consider a certain Bill. This could have been done without involving all the formality of bringing His Excellency here.

I do not propose to anticipate the Bill that we are expecting to receive from another place, but I am wondering why the session has been called. Not very long ago, Parliament gave attention to legislation then before us dealing with rents and

tenancies. Much time was devoted to consideration of the measure, and a conference was held which was attended by members from this Chamber and from another place who devoted many hours to reaching an agreement. That agreement was adopted by both Chambers.

The agreement having been adopted, one would have thought that the Government would at least have given some consideration to its effects; but without waiting to see whether it would be effective or not, the Government took fright, probably as a result of some hysteria in the minds of Ministers, and the fear that something formidable would happen after the 30th April and that thousands of people would be thrown out of their homes into the streets. If that was what they feared, it was utter stupidity. If a person went out of a house, the place would remain and would be available for another tenant.

Hon. G. Bennetts: At an increased rent.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I point out to the hon. member that there is a provision in the Act that will continue till the 31st December next. Some members would be well advised to study the Act as it appears on the statute book. Members should study the Act, because it does not expire on the 30th April; only certain portions of it do. The Act continues until the 31st December, and there is provision for inspectors, as well as the court, to investigate rent charges. So I think the Government's action is very unfair to members of this House. After all, members sat and studied the measure for a lengthy period to come to some arrangement, and at least we should give the Act, as it was amended last year, a trial to see if it will be effective.

I have not been a member of this House for many years, but during that time I have heard of all the dreadful things that would happen if controls were lifted. My first experience of it was when it was suggested that we could lift the control over liquid fuel. I was a member of the board and I knew, because of the information that reached us, that there was plenty of petrol available in this State and in other parts of Australia. I can remember when the Bill, under which we were to take over control from the Federal authorities, was introduced here. The Commonwealth, because of a referendum, no longer had power to control liquid fuel, and consequently the control was handed over to the States. I was one of the lone voices that said, "Let us lift control."

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The board rationed it rigidly when you were a member.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: We were bound to do that; it was laid down that we had to control petrol rigidly. I think members of Parliament were treated reasonably

well, and I think I can claim to have had something to do with that. I did not hear one of my fellow members complain about it.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: I thought it was pretty rigid.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Even the hon. member was fairly well treated in that regard. As a matter of fact, during an election campaign members had difficulty in knowing what to do with all the petrol they were able to obtain. Western Australians fared reasonably well, and there were few complaints in this State. When it was suggested that rationing should be lifted, people said that all the big men would be able to obtain petrol while the man who used only four gallons a month would not be able to buy it. But what happened? It was all forgotten the day after rationing was lifted, and there was plenty of petrol available everywhere. Not long ago we heard the same thing about the lifting of price-controls. People said that all prices would go up the next day, but that has not happened. In Sydney the people are asking for price-control to be abolished because prices are considerably below those fixed by the price-fixing authorities in that State.

Hon. A. R. Jones: And they are to be allowed to sell petrol in Sydney at any time of the day or night.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I was going to deal with that next. Last session this Government said, "Look! We must close these people down at six o'clock." Yet a good Labour Government, which has just got rid of Mr. Evatt from the portfolio of Minister for Education said, "Let the garages sell petrol 24 hours a day if they want to." There must be something out of tune in the Labour Party in Australia when a Labour Government in Western Australia wants to restrict hours and a Labour Government in New South Wales wants to do the opposite. Luckily, members of this Chamber were able to help the Labour Party out of the difficulties into which it had fallen unconsciously. There is nothing to compel our garages to remain open for 24 hours a day, but if the proprietors want to do a little extra business they are permitted to open for longer hours. That state of affairs exists in other parts of Australia. Not long ago in South Australia shopping hours for certain commodities were extended to 8 p.m.; but in this State a person cannot buy a pound of butter after hours, and if a man is unfortunate enough to travel from the country on a hot day he cannot buy a bit of bread or butter if he arrives in the city after half-past five at night.

The Minister for the North-West: A person needs to be wealthy to be able to buy a pound of chops at any time.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know about that. At one time if a person had his breakfast at 8 o'clock in the morning he could go out and buy his meat just before breakfast time; but that is not possible these days.

Hon. L. C. Diver: The Minister for the North-West tells us that he can get half a sheep for 13s. 6d.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am against any restrictions, and I shall watch carefully the Bill which is to be introduced to amend the rents and tenancies legislation, because the amendment passed last year has not yet been given a trial. I can remember falling out with the Chief Secretary because I said that we were being asked to agree to a piece of legislation that I, personally, did not understand owing to the amendments that had been agreed to at the conference. Perhaps I was the only member who did not understand it; I must have been, because I did not get any support with my protest. Apparently the Government did not understand the amendments either; otherwise it would have said, "No, we will have a fresh session of Parliament and we will bring down a fresh Bill." I am of the opinion that this Bill has been introduced not because the Government desires it, but because some powerful body outside of Parliament—a body more powerful than the executive members of this Parliament—

The Minister for the North-West: The Farmers' Union.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It could be.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I want to read a small paragraph that appeared in this morning's issue of "The West Australian." It is headed, "Unions Warn Upper House on Rents Issue." That is intimidation; but, fortunately for us, Parliament is protected by what is known as the Parliamentary Privileges Act. On occasions I think that Act could be used, because these days it is becoming a dead letter. But when a body of men threaten a House of Parliament—I do not care whether the Government in power is good or bad, or whether it is a Labour Government, a Country Party Government or a Liberal Government—it is about time they were told that they have no right to intimidate members in that fashion. Such people should voice their complaints, or make their remarks through the member for their district. The article reads—

About 1,000 members of five unions at Fremantle yesterday warned the Legislative Council of possible industrial action on the rents issue. They resolved that they would seriously consider industrial action if any hardship were caused to their members by

the Legislative Council refusing to accept proposals from the Legislative Assembly on the Rents and Tenancies Act. Called by the Maritime Unions Committee, the meeting had been adjourned on Monday to avoid delay of the pick-up.

That article seems to indicate that those people are the parents of this piece of legislation that will eventually come before us, because they seem to know all about it. They know more about it than I do, anyhow.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That might not be so hard.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: What do they mean by "industrial action"? Are they going to starve us? I have seen some of these meetings.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They would starve their wives and children by that action.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I have not always been a bloated aristocrat. At one time I was a union member, and I can recall some of the actions taken by the powerful organisers when they came along to tell union members what they had to do. By gosh, if a person opened his mouth and opposed what those people wanted to do he was quickly told to shut up! Fortunately, the people who act like that are in the minority and the majority of workers are as sound as any member in this House. It is a pity that "The West Australian" publishes this sort of stuff, because it does not do the unions any good, and it certainly does not do us any good either. After all, the people have an opportunity, every three years, of electing members to another place; and every six years there is an opportunity to elect the representatives of this Chamber.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The people?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Every two years people who come within the franchise have an opportunity to express their views when certain members are seeking election to the Legislative Council. We must all abide by the laws of this State, and the sooner people like those who called this meeting are told by the Government of this State that it is accepting its own responsibilities—subject, of course, to the will of Parliament—the better it will be. I have helped, and I know other members of this House have helped in every way to pass legislation that will benefit the workers of this State, and that legislation has benefited them.

I can remember the time when the employers were just as bad as some of our employees are today. In times gone by, some employers, because there had been a strike, refused to pay the men wages that they had earned prior to going on strike; but the position is being reversed today. This country has gone far since that time and gradually, by a process of

evolution, we have improved our conditions; and I venture to say that there are no workers in the world today who are better off than their counterparts in Australia.

These men in Fremantle are getting a bad name through the methods they are adopting in their efforts to give effect to their desires and by stopping work whenever it suits them. That sort of thing does not hurt the public; such actions help to increase prices, but the men concerned are affected more than anybody else. I would like to see these people adopt a more reasonable outlook; if they did, I am sure there would be little cause for regret.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Do you not think their representatives in Parliament could help them?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think those members are frightened of them.

Hon. A. R. Jones: I think they might be, too.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Only a little while ago one of those members tried to stop some action being taken, and Trades Hall soon made him change his mind.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: That is not a very nice remark to make against Mr. Lavery.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: He is not the man concerned; he is the silent member—the thoughtful member. I do not want to speak any further on that aspect, but I want to compliment the Fremantle people on the wonderful send-off they gave to the Royal couple when they left Fremantle. Many compliments have come from the Eastern States. I would like to congratulate the choir from the Princess May School for their contribution. Their farewell songs touched the hearts of most people and were the final touches to a wonderful occasion for Australia.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: They were very good.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think we could let those girls know what a wonderful job they did and how grateful we are to them. I have to support the motion moved by Mr. Heenan; but, of course, he cannot tell me anything about the Interpretation Act until the rents Bill is before the House. However, when he does speak I would like him to give serious consideration to the legal aspect and particularly Section 44 of the Interpretation Act.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.30]: Western Australia has been favoured in the last ten days by a great event in the shape of a visit from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh. No other function in the history of Australia has bound the Commonwealth closer to the throne than has this visit of

the Queen and the Duke. Wherever I have seen the children who have witnessed the Royal Visit, I have been impressed by the effect it has had on their outlook generally. If it has done nothing else, it has made every one of us realise that there is a humanity behind the Throne, and that it is an English woman and an English man who are at the head of our destiny. This wonderful visit will live long in our memory. Fortunately not only the adult public but also numbers of our children were privileged to see their Queen.

I trust that it will be possible for Her Majesty to visit Australia at a future date, and that she will do so, and that on that occasion there will be no need for the extensive formality which is necessary when a Queen makes her first visit to one of her Dominions. But now, having been established in Australia, she has the right legally to visit here; and if a home is prepared for her and for the Royal family in this country, then we will be privileged to see our Queen on more frequent occasions. I do hope there will be less formal gatherings; that the Queen will be able to see more of the work of the citizens of the State, and that she will be free to visit those parts of it which she may desire to see at her will.

There can be no doubt that a tremendous amount of work was placed on the organisers of the tour and, in addition to the honours that Her Majesty has been pleased to confer on the officials concerned, I think the people of the State generally would desire to say, "Thank you". All of us owe a debt of gratitude to men like Mr. Doig who carried such a heavy responsibility. I realise only too well what the changes necessitated by the epidemic must have meant; but in spite of that, the calmness and the politeness of everybody concerned with this visit was really something to be admired. Even at the very last moment, when I had occasion to visit the office, I was greeted in the most cheerful manner.

The police deserve a special vote of thanks, because I do not know of anyone who had a harder task in the field, as it were, and who extended more courtesy than they did. The Press here must be congratulated not only on the coverage it gave to the Royal visit, but also on the photographs in the daily papers. I do not think that anywhere in Australia were the photographs of the Royal couple so wonderfully done as they were in this State. It is possible that the Press photographers, because of the smaller crowds, were able to get closer to Her Majesty, but I must say that the photographs were better than those I saw in the papers from the Eastern States.

Those people who were privileged to attend the Royal ball given by the Perth City Council spent a few hours among surroundings they will never see again. It

was like a night in dreamland or fairyland, and the thought and preparation that went into that ball, show that we have in our Perth City Council, men with the necessary vision to carry out their mission. Our thanks go to all concerned. To the Lord Mayor I would say "Thank you" for having opened the grounds to the public on the two succeeding nights, so that about 40,000 to 50,000 people could see the setting in which the ball was held. Our thanks must also go to Mr. Prescott for co-operating and allowing the University to be opened at night. I think the sum which the public contributed to the Coronation Gift Fund was somewhere in the neighbourhood of £1,300—a very handsome gesture.

Once more we witnessed in this House, after a very short absence from Parliament, the laying on the Table of a large number of regulations. As I listened to their being tabled I wondered how in the name of fortune any one of us could keep in touch with the law as promulgated by these regulations. I have mentioned on many occasions in this House the matter of a standing committee on subordinate legislation, and the Chief Secretary was good enough to say that in the intervening period between sessions he and his Government would give thought to the matter. I trust he has been able to consider the position, and I hope that when the normal session is held this year he will be in a position to put before us plans for the formation of that committee. I am sure it is the wish of every member of Parliament that those regulations should be looked at by members, and that members of both Houses should be au fait with the law as it stands and as it affects the citizens of this State.

In regard to the question of putting before us amendments on a major Act without printing the full Act the Chief Secretary has forwarded me a letter received from the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman. In order that members in this Chamber may know the decision, I will read the letter, unless the Chief Secretary tells me he has forwarded a similar one to all members in this House. If that has not been done, I think it might be wise for this to appear in "Hansard", and for members to know that considerable thought has been given to the request made, to the end that instead of our receiving a Bill with a number of amendments, which would make us search through numbers of old Acts, one showing exactly how the proposed amendments affect the Act will be brought down. The matter has received a good deal of consideration and the following is the letter sent to the Minister for Justice by the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman:—

The difficulty of relating proposed amendments to a principal Act which has already been extensively amended, but which has not been reprinted with

the amendments incorporated, is one which the officers of this Department have constantly in mind. With a view to endeavouring to minimise the difficulty three volumes of Acts have been reprinted with amendments incorporated since 1950. Prior to that one volume was published in 1939 and another in 1942. A sixth volume is nearing completion and will contain fourteen Acts reprinted with amendments incorporated.

Apart from the above, seven Acts are in course of preparation for re-printing at the moment, making a grand total of some seventy different Acts, many of which are extremely long, comprising a grand total of some 6,000 pages. Considerable time and care are involved in preparing the initial draft for reprint of an Act incorporating amendments, in the actual reprinting of the draft and checking of the proof by the printing staff, and in the rechecking of the proof by the Crown Law staff. It will be appreciated that to the extent of the staff available in this Department and the Government Printing Office, Acts are being reprinted with their amendments incorporated as rapidly as possible.

Where directions are received for further amending an Act which has already been extensively amended but has not been reprinted with those amendments incorporated and it is apparent that difficulty will be experienced in comprehending the proposed amendments, every effort is made within the time available to have the Act to be amended reprinted with its amendments incorporated in order to minimise the difficulty, but where this is not possible, care is taken to indicate by marginal notes the passage which will be affected by the proposed amendment.

That does show that the difficulties which confront us in regard to putting together amendments of large Acts that have been frequently amended, are well before the minds of the Crown Law Department and the Minister in charge.

I would like to refer to another letter which was sent to Senator Seward from Sir Earle Page. Members will recall that during the early days of last session I referred to the difficulties that confronted the pharmacist and the doctor today in prescribing drugs under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Act, under what is known generally by the public as the "free list." I mentioned then that unless a doctor, when writing a prescription, attached to it the name of the firm making the drug that he required to be dispensed, the pharmacist would be responsible to the Commonwealth Government to supply the drug that was cheapest on the list—that is, if the doctor only left the drug with its name

alone and with no name of a firm attached. Also, if he maintained his standard in his own pharmacy and supplied from one of the recognised houses at a greater cost, he would be losing on that prescription because he would not receive any recompense for the drug from the recognised standard house but would be paid only for the lowest-priced drug. I suggested that this tended to lower the standard of pharmaceutical business and of treatment of the public generally.

It would appear that some form of standardisation of drugs is necessary so that the public can be assured that drugs which they receive on the free list are of a standard quality. A letter on the subject has been sent by Sir Earle Page and I think it would be worth reading the relevant passages to the House. They are as follows:—

The matter to which you refer has received a good deal of attention by my department and steps have now been taken, under legislation recently assented to by Parliament, to provide additional power, in order to prevent approved chemists from supplying as a benefit any brand of a drug which has been tested and found to be substandard. In other words, the chemist will be allowed to supply only those brands listed as benefits.

However, for obvious purposes, it is not proposed to allow the chemist, where no brand is indicated, to supply the most expensive brand available.

That seems to be placing the responsibility on the wrong shoulders.

Hon. L. Craig: Not if they nominated only the makers of first-class drugs.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That is what I have requested. It is now possible for almost every drug-manufacturing firm to have its products put on the free list. There are many firms concerning whose products we do not know whether they are standard or not. Before I mentioned this matter here, it was brought to my notice that it had been circulated or whispered amongst chemists that one drug of a particular firm was substandard. I have since heard today, that what is happening is that inspectors are taking samples every now and again—possibly from chemists' shops, possibly from the suppliers—and those drugs are being tested. But the position is that if a chemist has already bought a drug in good faith because it appears as one which is permissible of circulation under the free list, and he is then told it is substandard and he cannot sell it, he becomes the loser.

Hon. L. Craig: Would that not apply to tea or sugar, and things of that kind?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It is certainly not the method that should be adopted with regard to drugs that are very costly. I still feel that the Commonwealth Govern-

ment should take more active steps at the centre, and should call for some actual qualifications on the part of manufacturers who desire their names and goods to be placed on the free list. I think central action would be very much better than peripheral action, which will involve a chemist in loss. I want the House to realise that the supplying of drugs is not a cheap business, but a costly one. Only the other day, I read that Abbott's Laboratories, one of the recognised world firms, spent in the neighbourhood of £7,000,000 before discovering the only antibiotic it put on the market. Then there was one firm which marketed an antibiotic that was found subsequently to have some deleterious action, and that firm was nearly involved in business difficulties because of the sudden complete cessation of the use of that drug by the medical profession overnight. It is that sort of thing which makes it so costly to discover and market these new drugs that benefit the public and which must be carried out by those big firms which are alone capable of producing these tremendous and new advances in the treatment of illness.

These matters cannot be treated lightly, especially when health, and possibly life, are at stake, which is not the case with the consumption of sugar and tea, and things of that kind. More positive action should be taken by the Commonwealth Government centrally in regard to the standard of drugs allowed under the Act, and I hope it will consider the introduction of more stringent precautions with a view to ensuring that only those drugs that are known to be up to standard are placed on the free list.

Hon. L. Craig: Could not the manufacturers have the drugs tested by the Government Analyst and passed before they are put on the market? Would that not be reasonable to expect?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes, but let it be done centrally rather than out of the chemists' shops.

Hon. L. Craig: They should not be sold until they have been passed.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Let them have whatever they like in the way of precautions and standards to be complied with; but I think the onus should be on the suppliers, and the central Government, rather than that chemists should be allowed to purchase drugs and then find themselves prevented from selling them because they are not up to standard. Action should be taken long before that stage is reached.

I would like to say one or two things about the present poliomyelitis epidemic because there seems to be a lot of misunderstanding about it, even in this House. I am sorry Sir Charles Latham is not here at the moment, because he said a number of things to which I would like to reply. First of all, let me say that I would be

very much opposed to the use of the hot pool at Dalkeith for the treatment of infantile paralysis or poliomyelitis cases, because the whole trend of the use of the Infectious Diseases Branch of the Royal Perth Hospital is changing. Let me give members an idea of what I mean.

Dr. McLorinan who was over here recently with the National Research Council Subsection on Poliomyelitis, qualified at the same time as I. He went to the Infectious Diseases Hospital, which was then nothing but a hospital for infectious diseases. Today it has become a hospital for chronic disease, housing—as the Chief Secretary pointed out—all sorts of disabled persons—those recovering from road accidents who have had limbs broken; people who have lost the power of their limbs as a result of a stroke; those having difficulties with joints because of arthritis. Such people are occupying beds at the Infectious Diseases Hospital not only here but at "Fairfield," from which Dr. McLorinan came. The same trend is in evidence all over the world.

If, therefore, we are going to spend money on a pool, let us put it where it will be of the greatest use to the greatest number of people. This poliomyelitis epidemic will subside. No new cases were notified today, and it is possible that, within a very short time and with the advent of cooler weather, we will find, as happened on the last occasion, that the epidemic will subside. We have not had more than a few odd cases of poliomyelitis in this State for the last six years. Before that, we had only odd cases over a period of about ten years. So it will be seen that any expenditure incurred should be on the establishment of a pool that will be in constant use and not used sporadically or during epidemics.

The action taken by the Government to build a pool at the Infectious Diseases Hospital is the result of the advice of a committee of probably the most highly trained men in this State who deal with poliomyelitis as a disease. I think that everyone will realise, after what I have said, that the correct place to spend money and to establish such a pool is at the Infectious Diseases Hospital, and the correct type of pool is one that will be suitable both for the chronic cases I have mentioned and the epidemic cases as they occur.

It was interesting to hear the comments of Sir Charles on the medical profession. The medical student is taught that one of the greatest catches in the field of diagnosis is to distinguish between appendicitis and pneumonia. Probably it would not have done Sir Charles any harm if his appendix had been removed.

Hon. L. Craig: Sir Charles referred to peritonitis.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It is the same thing. I want to refer to the cases that Sir Charles said were diagnosed as poliomyelitis when they were only bits of pains in the neck. That is not strictly true, because all members of the profession today know quite well the early signs of poliomyelitis. They also know that in an epidemic the virus can be recovered from patients who have very minor symptoms. There are possibly three stages one might outline—one might even make it four—in the onset of poliomyelitis. In some instances, the symptoms are very much akin to mild influenza, with malaise and muscular aching, and the condition does not progress further. But work over the world has shown that in an epidemic many such cases prove to be poliomyelitis, because if a lumbar puncture is made and the fluid round the spine and brain is examined, there will be found an increased number of cells, in keeping with the diagnosis of poliomyelitis, and also the virus may be grown from the bowel content, from the excreta of patients so affected.

The next type is one that sets in with irritation of the outside covering of the nervous system of the brain and spinal cord, and there is headache, stiffness of neck, and stiffness of limbs; and those cases can quite easily progress to paralysis unless they are very carefully attended to. It is much better to make the mistake of treating a non-poliomyelitis case as poliomyelitis than to be foolish enough to discard the diagnosis, only to find later that the individual was suffering from some form of paralysis.

I realise that in this matter Dr. Henzell has been attacked. If I had been in his position, I might have done exactly the same as he did. At the very first meeting of the committee that the Minister called to advise on poliomyelitis, the first item on the agenda was to reach a decision on the question: Is this an epidemic? At that first meeting figures were placed before us, and, on world authority, we regarded an epidemic as being under way. That advisory committee is one of considerable authority. It first met in this State in 1937, when Dr. Atkinson was Commissioner of Public Health, and it consisted of those medical men who were concerned with the treatment of poliomyelitis. It met again in 1948 under Dr. Cook, and was called together again quite early in this epidemic. Much of the advice on which Dr. Henzell acted was from the Poliomyelitis Advisory Committee.

I want members to postulate for one moment what would have happened if we had been forced to tell the public that we were not just getting a small number of cases per day but that they had been coming in over a period of eight weeks and there were 40 cases in hospital and 120 reported. What would have been the public's

reaction? It would rightly have been one of castigating both the commissioner and the committee for not having taken them into their confidence; and I would say quite frankly that if there had not been a Royal visit, the actions of the commissioner and the committee would have been regarded as perfectly justified. They were the same actions in regard to notifying the public of what was happening as those taken in 1948. One difference was this: Since 1948 various ideas have been formed as to how this disease is distributed. New knowledge has come to light about those minor cases which I have reported this afternoon. Those cases which look like influenza and generalised muscular aching, such as stiff neck, back and so on, are cases of poliomyelitis. The only difference is that they have been reported by the profession to the commissioner. We could, had we liked—and possibly it might have been wiser to do so—have separated the paralytic from the non-paralytic cases; but it is always possible that the non-paralytic case of today is the paralytic case of tomorrow.

The second difference is that we are now in receipt of more knowledge as to how this epidemic is spread. Admittedly there are two classes of thought, one believing that it is spread like most other infections by droplets from the nose and mouth, and by explosion from sneezing, coughing, etc. There are others, however, who consider it is transmitted as is typhoid, namely, from contact with the patient and from the excreta of the patient. In typhoid, one is particularly careful of one's hands. Nurses must wash their hands as they move from patient to patient and ward to ward.

So we can see that, in order to protect the public, the two classes of thought had to go into action—the one in which it was felt that airborne infection was the cause, and the one in which it was felt that the typhoid-like spread was possible. These two actions had to be taken if we were to keep faith in an endeavour to break down the epidemic. What has been the result is what we want to look at, and the result has been that we have had large crowds in the city with no great increase in the number of cases. I have not here a chart of the position, but it looks as if there has been a diminution in the last 10 days; whereas, in the previous epidemic of 1948, following the crowds at the Royal Show, there was a sharp rise in the number of cases. It therefore looks as if the precautions suggested to the public and taken by them have proved effective. I do not really mind whether they have been effective or not; all I am glad to see is that the number of cases has not increased, but has tended to diminish.

Not only must one take into account the view of the Public Health Department in this matter, but also the fact that every person in this community is terri-

fied of poliomyelitis. If there are 100 mild cases and one severe one, you or I, Mr. Deputy President, might be the unlucky one to be stricken with the severe case; and nothing can be more terrible than to be a severe case of poliomyelitis. Therefore, no matter what we do, it is essential that we take every precaution to see that the smallest possible number of our citizens are affected during an epidemic.

We must also take into account this fact: that sometimes newspaper headings tend to cause alarm—probably not because of any willingness on the part of the Press. This is so when we see a heading to the effect that in our city another case has died from polio. On the same page of the paper there might be a news item stating that four young men in the community were killed on motorcycles over the week-end, and we should appreciate the relativity of these things.

I am going to make the suggestion that the whole of the epidemic regulations in the Health Act—or the portions of the Health Act relating to epidemics—be overhauled. I do not believe that we are equipped as a department, or as a body of people, to handle an epidemic; and I believe that, in an epidemic, wide powers should be given to recognised persons to control it. I think the public would have very much more faith in such a committee if it were known that it consisted of experienced people, highly skilled and trained in their work, and that they were at the back of any decision that was made in regard to public behaviour or restrictions. I also say that something of the same nature would give much greater facility for the treatment of patients.

I am not at all certain that the power granted should not go even so far as to give the organisation control over beds in hospitals in order to provide such beds as might be necessary during an epidemic. I am not supposing that we are going to get an epidemic of poliomyelitis so severe that we might have to take some of our general beds; but if an epidemic as serious as the 1918 influenza epidemic occurred, we would want full control of all the hospital beds—private and otherwise—in the State. I believe that if the power were given to the Minister to declare an epidemic and to appoint a committee of recognised persons, with the right to appoint a director, we would find that this method of controlling an epidemic would allay the concern in the public mind. The statements made would be considered statements of the committee, which would consist of men of experience; and even now there are men of experience of epidemics in this State.

I feel that if this suggestion were adopted, the whole position, in general, would be different. Let me give one reason why. The whole of the medical system in public hospitals in Western Australia

is on an honorary basis. Individual doctors give a certain number of hours per week or per day to the care of these infectious cases; but if an individual member of the profession is suddenly confronted with a large number of cases, it might possibly be necessary to appoint these men to do full-time work for the people. All these powers should be given to a committee to administer.

I do not believe the Health Department is sufficiently staffed to have placed upon it the burden of looking after an epidemic and giving sole advice to governments in regard to such things as the Royal visit which occurred towards the end of an epidemic. There should be a committee of citizens, most of whom would be medical men, to assist in the control of any epidemic that might occur from time to time. I have not got any specific terms to lay before the House as to how such a committee would function, but I am quite certain that it would function with the greatest satisfaction.

One final point in this regard is that apparently Dr. Hensell has been criticised for making a statement in the early stages, in which he said he regarded this as a major epidemic, and that it might worsen over the next couple of months. Possibly the word "major" might have been modified, but I believe that is the term which is more or less generally used by epidemiologists when the cases reach a certain number, or a certain figure per head of population. From our experience of previous epidemics, I think his latter statement, that it might worsen, was a correct one to make; because when an epidemic first starts, one has no idea of what the ultimate type of the epidemic will be—whether it will be mild or severe.

If I remember rightly, the first of the virus that was isolated in the material sent over to Dr. Miles was the Lansing variety, which is one that does not as a rule cause an epidemic; but I believe the position now is that practically all of the cases that are being sent over are of the Brunnhilde variety which is one that nearly always causes an epidemic. So, at the start, we were not at all certain of the type this would be. If it had been a virulent Brunnhilde infection the position could have got considerably worse. This all points to the fact that sooner or later we must increase the medical facilities in this State.

We now have a population of 600,000-odd people, and South Australia has only a little over 700,000-odd people, yet it is to South Australia that we have to look for advice in regard to our epidemics; and it is to the South Australian laboratories and to Dr. Miles that we have to send material for the culture of viruses. The sooner we, as a people, realise that we have to face the expense of a medical school if we really want to benefit the health of our

community, the better. It is something that is urgent, and I do not think we can continue for long asking other States to carry our burdens.

As a people, we are increasing rapidly in numbers, and we should now face the burdens that the population imposes; and one of the most urgent burdens for us to carry is that of a medical school. It will be expensive, if it is to be effective, but to lose all idea of medical progress and of establishing our own medical school might in the end be a much more costly business than any infection. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 7th April, 1954.

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

STATE SAW MILLS—APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL MANAGER.

As to Tabling of Papers.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Yesterday the member for Dale asked that papers relating to the appointment of the new general manager of the State Sawmills be laid upon the Table of the House and I replied that I was prepared to accede to that request. However, I trust that members will appreciate that there is a report to me on the applicants by the Public Service Commissioner and that report is marked "confidential." I very much question whether such should be made public.

However, if the hon. member persists that I honour the undertaking I have given in answer to a question without notice, I am prepared to lay all the papers upon the Table of the House with this exception, that the actual applications have been removed by me because seven of them were from persons outside Government employment and accordingly it could have been most embarrassing for them in their relationship with their present employers.

I might add that I am quite prepared to permit the member for Dale to peruse all the papers, including the applications, any time at his convenience. If the hon. member still requires the Public Service Commissioner's file and my own personal papers, I am prepared to lay them on the Table of the House with the qualification I have outlined.