

What is needed is a better publicity campaign in the Eastern States and farther afield. We need to develop a proper tourist consciousness, and we should reorganise the whole of our activities in that direction. We should select capable men, with tact and ability, who know our State sufficiently to be able to give the people outside of it proper advice. Those men should be readily accessible to tourists, not only giving advice concerning the holiday attractions of the State, but making them fully aware of the resources of Western Australia and the potential industrial development it offers. I believe we have arrived at the stage, both nationally and as a State, when co-operation should be the keynote. Co-operation must animate this Parliament right through until perfection is attained in regard to the social and economic structure for which men and women have been willing to sacrifice their lives, looking to us to see that those sacrifices would not have been made in vain.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 28th August, 1945.

	PAGE
Assent to Bill	355
Questions: Health, as to Cottesloe rubbish tip	355
Fremantle Harbour Trust—(a) as to revenue collected	355
(b) as to tabling annual report	356
Address-in-reply, twelfth day, conclusion	356
Papers: Housing, as to negotiations, costs, etc.	377
Adjournment, special	379

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill (No. 1) £2,700,000.

QUESTIONS.

HEALTH.

As to Cottesloe Rubbish Tip.

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

1, Has the rubbish tip at Cottesloe been inspected by officers of the Department of Health?

2, If so, (a) when was the inspection made; (b) what action has been, or is intended to be, taken by the Commissioner of Health?

3, Will the Minister lay on the Table the file in connection with the complaints about this rubbish tip?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, The new site for the Cottesloe rubbish tip was approved by the Commissioner of Public Health in June, 1944. An area of low-lying land is being filled in. It has been inspected by officers of the Department of Public Health.

2, (a) On the 18th January, 1945, and on the 24th August, 1945; (b) on the last inspection sand coverage was found to be deficient. The council has been requested to employ a man to flatten all tins, rake down the tipping face and see that all glass is kept at the bottom of the tip. The sand coverage is to be increased to 9 inches and is to be applied immediately after tipping.

3, It is understood that complaints have been made to the council but none has been received by the Department of Public Health. However, departmental papers will be tabled if desired.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST.

(a) As to Revenue Collected.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Chief Secretary: What amounts were collected by the Fremantle Harbour Trust for the year ended the 30th June, 1944, for—

- (a) wharfage;
- (b) handling charges;
- (c) crane hire;
- (d) harbour improvement rate;
- (e) surtax?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(a) and (d) as from the 1st July, 1942, wharfage and surtax, harbour improvement rate and surtax were made a composite charge and the amounts collected under these headings for the year ended the 30th June, 1944, were £215,417, but the relationship between the two charges does not permit of assessment of surtax.

(b) £185,792, made up of handling on general cargo and bagged-wheat £160,545, and charges collected for the handling of bulk wheat, as sub-contractor for Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd., £25,247.

(c) £26,020.

(e) Surtaxes—other—included in revenue accounts but assessed as—Pilotage £4,578, tonnage rates £10,520, storage £1,085; total, £16,183.

(b) *As to Tabling Annual Report.*

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

As Section 64 of Fremantle Harbour Trust Act provides that:

The Commissioners shall, once at least in every year furnish a true copy of the accounts audited and copies of such accounts together with the Auditor General's report thereon shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

and as the last report tabled was for the year ended the 30th June, 1939, will the Government request the Fremantle Harbour Trust to comply with the Act and see that the 1944-45 report be placed before Parliament?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The Fremantle Harbour Trust reports for the financial years following the 30th June, 1939, with the exception of that for the 30th June, 1945, which is not yet available, have been compiled and have been submitted to me, but on account of censorship restrictions they have not been laid on the Table of the House. It is hoped that these restrictions will be lifted very shortly when the reports will be placed before Parliament.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Twelfth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the 23rd August.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [4.40]: I had not intended speaking on the Address-in-reply but seeing that the debate has extended till today, I shall contribute a few remarks because there are one or two matters respecting which I desire to express opinions. With others I join in the regret stressed that ill-health necessitated the ex-premier, Hon. J. C. Willecock, resigning his position and I congratulate his successor, Hon. F. J. S. Wise, upon his election to the leadership of the Parliamentary Labour Party and with it, his elevation to the Premiership of Western Australia. I am sure the new Premier will have a very difficult time, particularly during the next few years, and I trust mem-

bers will do their utmost to assist in every way possible the further development of this great State.

We meet today under very different circumstances from those that have obtained during the past four or five years and I am sure we have a great deal to be thankful for inasmuch as our territory was not actually invaded by the enemy. In my opinion few people realise the close call Australia had, and particularly Western Australia. At one stage the Defence Department was so concerned that representatives of some local governing authorities were called together in Perth to discuss ways and means of evacuating residents from certain coastal areas. The authorities would not have taken that step had it not been that they were extremely concerned about the position and that the apparent need for that step was great. We pulled through and, as I mentioned, we have much to be thankful for.

One aspect that appealed to me very much was that during that particularly anxious period there was a strenuous effort to help on the part of the United States of America. The Armed Services of that country were rushed to Australia in their thousands and the appearance of the Americans in uniform in their midst gave the people of Western Australia feelings of considerable relief. All fair minded individuals will appreciate that very fine gesture. It is not advisable to delve too much into the past but nevertheless I am sorry to say that we in Australia did not altogether act similarly towards the Americans during the early stages of the war. However, we got through and did our job. Now we must be prepared to adjust matters for the future. I hope the difficult problems that face the Government will be adequately dealt with and that Parliament will do the fair thing and assist Ministers in that direction.

The question of housing has been freely discussed over a long period and I have been rather bewildered to understand why the powers-that-be have not taken some effective steps to release certain labour in order to carry out the manufacture of materials and thus prepare the way for house construction upon the cessation of hostilities. The fact is that today we are

hardly any further ahead than we were two years ago. Within the last few days, the State Brick Works at Byford were able to work to half capacity only, all for the need of a dozen experienced operatives. While some labour was made available the type supplied was of no practical use to the brick works. Had the undertaking been supplied with a dozen experienced men the brick works could have been kept going to the full capacity. Had that been done a lot of our present troubles would disappear. The position was so unsatisfactory that local authorities could not even get sufficient bricks in order to construct public latrines. Members will agree that the supply was indeed very short when such work in the interests of public health could not be carried out because the few bricks necessary could not be supplied.

Our trouble to a great extent has been centred in the people in authority who did not understand their work. I do not know if any member could say just who was to blame for the position, or who was responsible for the manpower arrangements. I do not know if any member can say that responsibility rested with any officer in the King-street establishment, whether it was taken by the head of the department or whether the responsibility was that of the Commonwealth Minister in charge of the department. It seems to me that everyone desired to pass the buck on to someone else and for my part I do not know just who had the necessary authority to release men and thereby do the right thing. The same complaint applies in other directions as well, but I mentioned the Byford instance because I went to the trouble of visiting the brick works and I know that what I have said is perfectly true. If the difficulty in connection with such a small matter could not be adjusted, it is not surprising to find that large industrial concerns have had similar experiences.

While restrictions have been removed on the building of homes up to a cost of £1,200, the fact remains that while it is possible to build a home without a permit, it cannot be done because materials are not available. Thus we are but slightly further ahead in solving the problem. With regard to future transport arrangements in Western Australia, when this House agreed to the State Transport Co-ordination Act it was under-

stood that the transport facilities under the control of the Government—railways, tramways, trolley-buses and so on—would provide improved services and that the people in the country districts would have better facilities than in the past. It was on that understanding that some members supported the legislation. Yet today we find the position is not a bit better. I can see no indication that conditions will improve. The State Transport Co-ordination Act had the effect of driving motor vehicles off the road and putting country residents to great inconvenience. The legislation was necessary in order to protect the railways, but it was never intended that the Government would carry on in the same old groove and not improve the service.

I feel that unless something is done to provide better and faster transport, particularly for passengers, the people will not be willing in the post-war period to go into the country areas and establish their homes there. If the Government cannot improve the position and augment the present service considerably, it would be only fair to allow private enterprise to step in and to permit road transport to undertake the work. To act like a dog in the manger is useless. We cannot expect people to take up their residence in the country areas unless they can enjoy reasonable transport facilities. A road board delegate to whom I was speaking the other day, said that he lived about 200 miles away from Perth and it took him three days to reach his home. That is out of all reason. If any member of this House desired to travel along the Upper Blackwood railway he would find the journey would take 24 hours whereas to get to the same point by road would mean a trip of only six hours.

The people in the Kojonup district agitated until they got a bus service, which has proved to be a great boon. There are many other such centres, however, without a bus service, and the people residing there must travel by train. Furthermore, their produce must be sent forward by goods train instead of by truck. I know the railway position is a problem, but at the same time we have to develop the country and we shall not do it with our present services. I would like to say that during the war period the members of the Road Board Association, numbering about 120, did a very good job. They co-operated excellently with the Federal

authorities and carried out much work on their behalf. Their efforts for the War Damage Commission which they undertook throughout the country areas has saved the Commonwealth Government many thousands of pounds. In addition, the members formed themselves into fuel, rubber and other committees. In fact, they did everything asked of them, except to assist the Meat Rationing Commission. That Commission desired road board members to check the slaughtering carried on throughout country areas, but the work proved to be of such magnitude that they could not undertake it. They were also requested to do the local work of the Social Service Department. This task was to have commenced on the 1st July last. It would have been sufficient to warrant the employment of a full-time secretary, and the road board members felt they could not undertake it. Apart from not complying with those two requests, the members of the local authorities during the war period did everything that was asked of them by the Federal authorities, and that must have been a very great help indeed.

Recently we have had some abnormal floods in various parts of the State and these have caused much damage. I doubt whether it is generally known how much damage and loss have been sustained. I know some farmers have lost many cattle and sheep and have had to vacate their farms. It seems to me to be a pity that such persons cannot be assisted; as far as I know, no provision has been made to give them any aid. Help in some cases would be most valuable. In my own district extensive damage has been caused not only to the properties of farmers, but also to works under the control of local authorities. The cost to repair the damage and make good the loss will amount to many thousands of pounds. I feel it would be a good thing if the Government could afford some help to persons who have suffered so severely. In the Pinjarra district many stock have been drowned; they have drifted down the river and are now on the beaches in Peel Inlet where they can still be seen. In order successfully to develop a State, water and electricity supplies are essential. We have ample water supplies in the South-West, but we sadly need a cheap and abundant supply of electricity.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: We have water everywhere now.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: We need the supply of power to increase production and make that part of the State more attractive. Personally, I do not know much about electricity, nor do I propose to question the advice of experts; but it does seem strange to me that it should be necessary to erect three major power stations to generate the required electricity for the success both of our primary production and the scheme itself. The matter is most important. Possibly the only alternative to the plan which has been adopted, whereby a costly power station will be erected at South Fremantle, would be to build a supply line from the proposed power station at Collie, or wherever it may be situated in the South-West district. To my mind the question resolves itself to the point as to whether a supply line would be more costly than the power station at South Fremantle. I understand that that station will cost about £360,000, and, in addition, there will be the running and administrative costs. I have thought myself it would be cheaper to run a supply line from the station at Collie than to build a third station.

We have always been told that it is cheaper to rail coal from Collie to Perth, despite the high rate, than to transmit electricity by cable from Collie. That does not accord with the views of the planners of the successful Victorian scheme. A heavy supply line has been erected from Yallourn to Richmond, a suburb of Melbourne, and the distance between those points is about the same as that between Fremantle and Collie. The Victorian scheme has proved to be a great success. That being so, why should we not be able to make a success of a similar scheme in this State? At a road board conference two years ago, the Director of Works made a very fine speech in which he outlined various Government works which it was proposed should be put in hand after the war, and he sought the co-operation of the local authorities. Among the works he mentioned was the Eastern Districts water scheme, involving a cost of about £9,000,000. No reference, however, was made to the South-West power scheme, for which the residents had been agitating over so many years. Some of the delegates were rather disappointed that there was no move to do anything with respect to the South-West scheme after the war.

About 12 months later an announcement appeared in "The West Australian" to the effect that it had been decided to erect the major power station at South Fremantle. A long explanation was given, and the article finished with a statement to the effect that the scheme would not in any way interfere with the South-West proposal. I do not know, Mr. President, but it seems to me very hard to understand that, because the charges for electricity are largely governed by the current which can be sold. We in the South-West always had in mind that if a major station were built in the South-West, we would be able to sell a considerable quantity of current to the metropolitan area and thereby increase our turnover and reduce costs generally. We have now lost all hope of being able to sell current to the metropolitan area and so it naturally follows that we shall have to pay more per unit for electricity than would have been necessary had we been selling it in bulk to the metropolitan area. In other words, no farmer would erect two windmills in order to water one horse. I am only expressing my own views, as I think it is my duty to do. Very little has been said about this matter; indeed, some people in the South-West appear to favour the Fremantle scheme. I have nothing to say against it myself. I am only speaking from the point of view of the State; I am not personally affected. I do not require very much more current. It is the duty of the Government and of Parliament to see that when they do things, they are done in the best interests of the State. We know that electricity is of the utmost importance if we are to develop this State and compete with other parts of the world. We must get down to business lines in order that we may compete with other places.

Although the cost of electricity in Victoria compared with the charges in New South Wales does not reveal much difference, nevertheless, the cost is slightly less in Victoria and business circles use that as an argument when it comes to a question of quoting for different manufactures. In an announcement made in the Press at the time the South-West scheme was being spoken of, it was said that the committee concerned had recommended that the prices to be charged for current would be equal to, or slightly better than, existing prices in the South-

West today. In the South-West today we are paying from 10d. to 1s. per unit. When we asked for the scheme we did not intend that those prices should prevail, or that we should be called upon to pay anything like 10d. or 1s. per unit. We have schemes of our own, and if we have to pay as high a rate as that we might as well remain as we are. The report to which I am referring went on to say that not only would those charges be levied, but that they would be found to be comparable with the rates charged in Victoria. I cannot agree with that statement and will quote some of the Victorian rates to strengthen my argument.

At one time people in Werribee, about an hour's run from Melbourne, were paying a high rate for current. The Victorian Electricity Commission took over that area on the 10th April, 1924, at a time when the charge in Werribee was 10.10d. per unit. In 1941-42 the rate had come down to 1.84d., less than 2d. I cannot say how long a time elapsed before the rate began to be reduced from 10d. per unit. I can only quote figures prior to and after the acquisition period. In the case of the Ballarat branch, certain areas were taken over, and the following table will show with what result:—

	Cost per unit prior to acquisition. 1939-40 d.	Cost per unit after acquisition 1941-42 d.
Ballan	17.45	5.35
Dalesford ..	6.61	1.91
Hepburn Springs	8.87	4.70
Wallace	16.36	1.15

I have quoted a few of the more recent instances of what followed the taking over of areas by the Victorian Electricity Commission. It will be seen that as soon as they were taken over the charges were reduced by more than half. I know that we cannot expect such a big reduction in the South-West because there is a small population to cater for and people are scattered. At the same time, we do not want to pay anything like the present rates. It seems to me that if the whole scheme involving the coastal districts had been served by two major power stations instead of three, the possibilities are we would have received current at cheaper rates in the South-West than is now proposed, as well as in the metropolitan area. I do not see why that could not have been arranged, or why the met-

ropolitan area could not have been brought into the South-West scheme. It was a golden opportunity for the establishment of the South-West scheme, because we know that a certain quantity of current could have been sold in the metropolitan area which would have been a considerable help to the scheme as a whole. My only concern is to ascertain what is best in the interests of the South-West and of the whole State.

I wish to say a word or two about the half-caste problem, on which question there have been lengthy debates in the Chamber. The Government has tackled the matter on one or two occasions. We all realise that the situation is very complex and difficult, but I am sure we are a long way from achieving all that is desired. I have no sound suggestion to offer just now, except to say that steps ought to be taken to improve the present position. It seems to me the Native Affairs Department has not all the control it should have. I know of two small half-caste children in the country who were attending school. Some of the parents complained about the children being sick and suffering from some disease. Because of the complaints the children were sent up for medical examination. They were found to be suffering from gonorrhoea in the eyes. One child was in a particularly bad state. The children were sent to Perth, treated, cured, and returned to their homes. There were also two adult patients suffering from a similar disease. They had been treated, but I understand they were not given a clean bill of health and were not classed as cured. They returned to the district where the children had been living, and when the authorities tried to get in touch with them they "went bush" and could not be found. Eventually it turned out that they had left the district.

I interviewed officers of the department who explained to me the difficulty they experienced in getting hold of these natives because of the extent to which they travelled around. They might get a warrant to arrest a native in Subiaco, but by the time an official went out to serve it the native would be in Claremont and the warrant would be of no use. Apparently it is only possible to get out a warrant that will hold good for a particular district. It does seem absurd that, when a warrant is issued for the arrest of a native, he cannot

be apprehended because he has moved to another town, and the warrant has no effect there. In a matter of that kind the department would be greatly assisted if the necessary authority were issued to it to enforce the warrant wherever necessary. Other matters should also be looked into. I hope some steps will be taken to deal with the question.

We have had trouble with idle natives in the South-West. It is not right that able-bodied men should be allowed to prowl about doing no work but making nuisances of themselves to other people. There is apparently no control over them, or there was none during the war. I tried to find out through the Manpower Department whether these people could not be sent north on some constructional job. I thought they might be given work by the Army so that they could be kept away from the South-West. Objections were, however, raised and it was not found possible to send them north for various reasons. At any rate, there was no control over them in the South-West. They went to work when they pleased, and stayed away when it suited them.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Many white people do the same thing.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Very likely! In small country towns these people often hang around the hotels until a late hour at night and make nuisances of themselves. There is no way in which to control them. They should not be allowed to make nuisances of themselves to the townsfolk when they have no legitimate excuse for being where they are. Their principal object in hanging round is to get liquor. They are particularly troublesome to womenfolk and children. The local authorities should be given power to keep these people in camp reserves or at all events in the camp after a certain hour. They should not be allowed in the streets at night-time. The whole business bristles with difficulties. I am not saying what action should be taken, but I do think that unless the question is settled quickly the position will very soon become worse.

Hon. G. B. Wood: The police already do a lot to keep those people out of the streets.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: But they have no legal authority to do it.

Hon. G. B. Wood: They do it, just the same.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: They have spoken to me about it, and I understand they have no right to do what they do. Some policemen are called upon to work at all hours of the night in order to keep these people under observation. That is not fair. We should frame a law to deal with these matters. I support the motion.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.14]: I associate myself with the remarks of those members who have expressed regret at the retirement from the Premiership of the State of Hon. J. C. Willcock. That hon. gentleman has played a very important part in the recent history of Western Australia. There can be no doubt that, during the many years when he held office, and particularly during the war years, a tremendous strain was placed upon him, but, notwithstanding that, at all times he gave of his very best in the interests of the State. I feel sure that all of us extend to him our best wishes for the future, and we hope that his retirement from office will mean that there will be such an improvement in his health that he will be spared for many years longer to assist Parliament in the affairs of Western Australia. As one who was very closely associated with him for many years, I know that he never spared himself, and I, for one, appreciate the very wide knowledge of affairs that he was able to bring to bear on the particular problems associated with Western Australia.

I feel, too, that I should on this occasion make reference to the great loss that the Commonwealth suffered in the passing of our late Prime Minister, John Curtin. That was another case of a Western Australian—by adoption—who was called to high office in the service of the Commonwealth, one who did not spare himself in the slightest, one who faced the problems of the day with a courage which I think was admired by all sections of the community, and one who, I claim, did pay the penalty of his patriotic outlook and his desire to do the utmost possible for his country. I think the name of John Curtin will go down in history and that he will be acclaimed as one of the best Prime Ministers Australia ever had. There can be no doubt that he can be given the credit for having galvanised

this nation into an effort, the like of which we have never seen before, which will compare more than favourably with the war efforts of most other countries. It was a national tragedy that John Curtin should have been called away before victory was achieved. It is regrettable that he was not spared to see that the fruition of those great efforts which he put forward during the worst crisis that this country has ever been called upon to go through.

I think also, that I should refer to the great loss the United States of America suffered when their President, Mr. Roosevelt, was not permitted to see the victorious result of the magnificent war effort of that country. We, in Australia, should be very grateful to the United States for the fact that a man of the calibre of President Roosevelt occupied that office at the time when we so urgently required the assistance, not only of our own Old Country, but of the English-speaking countries throughout the world. I desire to pay my tribute to the wonderful effort which the late President Roosevelt put forward in the interests of the Allied cause. I think it was the work for which President Roosevelt and the late John Curtin were responsible, together with the wonderful leadership exhibited by Mr. Churchill, that made it possible for the Allies eventually to be victorious over their enemies.

Might I refer for a few moments to the fact that the war has ended? It was with profound relief and gratitude that the people of Western Australia, in common with those of their Allies, received the news that the last of their enemies, Japan, had agreed to unconditional surrender. This arrogant and covetous nation whose treachery gained her early and easy triumphs, has tasted the bitterness of complete defeat but a few short months later than did her erstwhile powerful partner, Germany. The post-war period, which has arrived much earlier than was anticipated, brings with it great responsibilities, such as participation in the administration and occupation of enemy countries; the re-establishment on a peacetime basis of our own economy; the rehabilitation of our returning men and women from the Services, and the rendering of assistance to countries less fortunate than our own. It is to be hoped that victors and vanquished will profit from the lessons of this war, and that never again will civilisation be engulfed in

such a conflict which could only result in the complete ruin and annihilation of the world as we know it.

We of Western Australia can be proud of our contribution towards victory. Our achievements are written in the figures of enlistments, of production, of the millions of money that have been provided for war loans and war funds, and in the enthusiasm with which civilians rallied to the V.D.C., A.R.P., and kindred organisations. We have been fortunate in this country; the shadow of invasion drew near, but such a tragedy was prevented by the magnificent efforts of our Allies and our own fighting men. Now our thoughts are with those who are awaiting release from prison camps throughout Asia, and we sincerely hope that the care they will receive in their homeland will make up for the bitter years that they have experienced.

Now to deal with the matters referred to by members in speaking to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. As is usual members have taken the opportunity to discuss a variety of subjects. Many of the matters referred to, however, have no direct State application but come within the province of some Commonwealth authority. In the course of my remarks I may find it necessary to refer to certain activities engaged in by the Commonwealth where they affect the State, but I propose to reply mainly to those issues which, in my opinion, are the important ones.

One of the greatest problems confronting the Government is that of housing and members have given a great deal of attention to it during the debate. The problem, however, is not peculiar to this State alone, there being evidence that all the States in the Commonwealth have similar difficulties and that State Governments, with the co-operation of the Commonwealth Government, are dealing with the matter as a first priority in post-war planning. Any suggestion that the shortage of houses in this State is the result of this Government's policy, and that much more could have been done in the last few years, I utterly repudiate. War circumstances have certainly accentuated our difficulties and I suggest there is no need for me to elaborate on them. The fact remains, however, that shortages existed before the war and that our embarrassments in this regard have

been added to since 1939, not only by war requirements but by new marriages, population shifts and the return of Service personnel, etc., and that only a vast Commonwealth-wide building programme on a scale never before attempted, can help in relieving and ultimately remedying the situation.

I agree with Mr. Dimmitt that the matter should not be treated as a political issue but as a national problem. That is being done and that is why the Government has diverted some of the skilled tradesmen employed by the Public Works Department to house construction. The Government is confident that it can make a substantial contribution to the housing problem in this manner and, judging by the experience of Victoria, it should be in a position to keep the costs within striking distance of the private contractor—including all reasonable administrative costs. The assertion that Mr. Dimmitt made in regard to the cost of control, when he dealt with a statement made in this regard by a member of the Legislative Assembly in New South Wales, is not relevant and tends only to cloud the issue. He has taken a paragraph out of sequence and stated that the cost of administration works out at £143 per house. No such inference can be drawn.

The building control regulations, of which the hon. member complains, were a form of rationing of building materials, made necessary by the fact that all our energies and almost all our material had to be diverted for the purposes of war. The control was set up by the Commonwealth and was most necessary, and it is illogical to suggest that the few houses built at that time should have to bear the cost quoted by the hon. member. If we knew the total amount of building undertaken throughout the Commonwealth in any one of those difficult years, we would probably find the cost of building control was quite a small part of the total programme. In any event it is beside the point. Material was in short supply; the Services wanted all they could get and the Commonwealth had no option but to see that they got it. The events of the past few days have indicated that the Government is desirous of removing controls at the earliest possible date.

The hon. member went to some length to point out how private contract work in South Australia had resulted in the erec-

tion of a large percentage of the programme. He omitted to say that a big building team in that State was maintained more or less intact during the war and that houses were being constructed throughout that time. In this State, however, building teams were dispersed—some direct into the Services and many on Defence work—so that when the Commonwealth call for houses came in 1944 we had to start from scratch with what labour and materials were available. The Government recognises the part which the private contractor can play in the housing programme and appreciates his efforts to date. All the war housing cottages to date have been constructed by private contractors for the Workers' Homes Board and the Government feels that it is its duty to swing into the building field tradesmen in its employ who are anxious and willing to contribute their share to alleviate the housing problem. Only by these means and with everybody's shoulder to the wheel can we hope to relieve the difficult situation which confronts us.

Of the work being put into the houses at present being built by the Workers' Homes Board, Mr. Thomson was somewhat critical. He said that in pre-war days, had jerry-builders constructed houses similar to those now being erected by the board, they would have been accused of erecting slum buildings.

Hon. A. Thomson: I did not say that. I said that if they constructed buildings like that, they would be accused of jerry-building.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think my statement is correct. That was a highly exaggerated assertion as, even in the existing difficult position, the Workers' Homes Board has nothing to be ashamed of regarding the type and quality of the house it erects, and the locality in which it is erected.

Hon. W. R. Hall: I think it has.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The board certainly does not place itself in the same category as the so-called jerry-builders referred to by Mr. Thomson. Members have referred to the fact that costs are high. That is true. The increase upon pre-war prices is approximately 30 to 35 per cent., and is due not only to the higher basic wage, but also to the fact that most of

the best and experienced men are in the Services, resulting in a falling off in production in the factories and on the site. Another contributing factor is that shortage of materials caused unforeseen hold-ups, which have to be provided for. In any event, contracts are let by competitive tendering, and this should ensure that the best available price is obtained.

With regard to the comment about 3 inch walls, it is a fact that the board has specified bricks on edge internally, but as these are bonded in cement, it makes as strong a job as the more conventional method and has the advantage of saving a considerable number of bricks and time in laying them. That is a consideration these days when both bricks and labour are hard to get, and it is a practice which has been adopted for many years in the Eastern States.

Hon. A. Thomson: It has only been introduced lately in workers' homes here.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is admitted, and I have given the reason why it has been introduced. The board has advised me that this method does not materially affect the strength of the building.

Hon. A. Thomson: Builders think otherwise.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Heenan and Mr. Seddon said that there appeared to be a lack of appreciation of the needs of the Goldfields in housing requirements. Those members can be assured that the Government has not overlooked the Goldfields. Even whilst they were speaking, an officer of the Workers' Homes Board was in Kalgoorlie and Boulder making a survey of the position, and his report will shortly be available for the board's consideration. In the past also the position of the Goldfields has not been overlooked. The board's existing securities in Kalgoorlie and Boulder total 68 houses, and considerable land is held in each place. There has been a ready response from the district when applications were called for the tenancy of houses to be erected under the Commonwealth War Housing Scheme, and consideration will be specially given to requirements in this connection.

Hon. W. R. Hall: I would say that is an easy way out for the Workers' Homes Board.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The board is not looking for an easy way out; it is looking for an opportunity to improve the existing position as rapidly as possible. I suggest that the board has given every indication that it is not likely to neglect the requirements of the Goldfields.

Hon. H. Seddon: Is the board interested in districts outside Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I believe it is. Information has been obtained of requirements elsewhere than at Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

Hon. H. Seddon: If that is so, there has been a considerable improvement in the outlook of the board.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Dealing with the question of metropolitan transport, Mr. Bolton referred to the fact that a committee of three, comprising the Commissioner of Railways (Mr. J. A. Ellis), the Under Treasurer (Mr. A. J. Reid) and the chairman of the W.A. Transport Board (Mr. R. L. Millen), has been appointed by the Government to investigate transport matters in the metropolitan area, not "to inquire and report regarding the taking over of all city and suburban services", to use the words of the hon. member, but to report to the Government on the advisability of setting up an authority for the co-ordinated control and management of metropolitan passenger transport. The hon. member suggested that representatives of private omnibus operators should have been included in the committee. The matter is entirely one of a domestic nature for the Government. It has merely appointed three of its officers to make inquiries regarding the passenger transport position generally and to report on what action is advisable to achieve co-ordination and economy.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We know what is behind it, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It would be unreasonable to suggest that, if the management of any business concern desired advice from a committee of its employees, it should be required to take into its confidence or accept the recommendations of members of another firm with whom it might be associated in business. In the same way I cannot agree that a matter, which for the time being is purely a domes-

tic affair of the Government, should be referred to non-Government representatives. If, after the presentation of the committee's report, the Government should decide to introduce any new plans which would materially affect existing services, then it would be only reasonable that those concerned should be given an opportunity of expressing their views, and that will be done.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That will be too late.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The present forms of control are exercised according to the statutes in force, and any variation of the controls would need to be authorised by new legislation. Consequently, before any new laws were passed, those affected would have ample opportunity to discuss the proposals. I hope I have succeeded in easing the hon. member's mind regarding this very important matter.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I am afraid you have not.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As usual the important question of education has been dealt with during the debate, but, generally speaking, members, except in a few instances, appear to concede that the Government is doing what it can, having regard to the existing difficult circumstances. Mr. Wood made reference to area schools. He said it seemed to him that the Government had no plans in any of the districts where he thought such plans would be desirable and necessary. The inference is far from being correct, as very careful consideration has been, and is still being, given to this important matter. Unlike Tasmania, where such schools are established, Western Australia comprises vast areas totally unsuitable—climatically, geographically and agriculturally—for these schools. In fact, a very small portion of the State weighs up to the necessary requirements.

Considerable investigation has already taken place in the choice and inspection of areas, availability of sites, soil testing, child population, etc. It is not intended to approve, haphazardly, of requests for the establishment of area schools in districts claiming ideal conditions unless and until such claims can be justified by something more than parochial interest and enthusiasm. Mr. Wood complained of the school bus services for the Manmanning and York

areas. The facts are that the Manmanning school was closed at the end of last year because the anticipated enrolment for 1945 was only five. Inquiry as to the possibility of establishing a school bus service at Cadoux revealed that, at most, 10 children in the Manmanning district could be picked up for transport to Cadoux which, together with the fact that the roads were untrafficable for school bus transport, rendered the proposal impracticable.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Who is at fault about the roads?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In June last the question was revived, as the number of children had risen to 15, and the District Inspector was instructed to undertake a further survey of the position. Having discussed the matter with the parents and examined the situation generally, he recommended that the service be established, and inquiry was made as to the hiring of the local hall at Cadoux, the accommodation at the school being inadequate to house the additional pupils. The inspector's report was received on the 7th August and on the 14th August inquiry was made from the Wongan Hills Road Board as to the availability of the Cadoux Hall. A reply is awaited.

Regarding the York position, the service referred to is that from Greenhills to York, involving the closure of the Greenhills school and the conveyance of 35 children from the Greenhills and Mount Hardy districts to York. Though the hall in York is not yet ready to take the school's overflow, the hold-up is occasioned also by the fact that the bus contractor experienced difficulty in securing a suitable vehicle. The service will be inaugurated as soon as these two obstacles have been overcome. Meanwhile, however, the children are continuing their education at the Greenhills school, which will not be closed until the service commences. In regard to this question of consolidation of schools—and members have heard me speak on this subject on previous occasions—the department has made very strenuous endeavours in a large number of districts to bring that about. In my opinion, in view of the great disabilities suffered as a result of the war, the department has done quite a creditable job in that respect.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That policy is to be continued, and members are aware that the present Minister for Education has already announced he is hopeful that in the near future it will be possible for more to be done in that direction and that certain districts will be provided with area schools such as members have been discussing. Other matters have been raised, mostly relating to building proposals, etc.; but, generally speaking, the Government is unable to implement proposals for country schools, and for schools in the metropolitan area as well mainly because of the position in regard to labour and materials. Cases can be cited of tenders for school additions and renovations having been called without response. In a recent instance, at Denmark, though a tender had been accepted for school additions, the contractor decided to forgo the job, at the loss of his deposit, in order to undertake other work, which I assume was more beneficial to him financially. I mention those points to indicate some of the difficulties with which the Education Department is faced in its efforts to provide additional accommodation, particularly in the country.

Referring to the remarks made by Mr. Gibson on the training of teachers—namely, that he understood that one year's monitorship and one year in the Training College were regarded as sufficient to equip a teacher with all the knowledge necessary for him to set out as a teacher—I point out that such is not the case. Evidently he misunderstands the facts regarding the Government's policy of training teachers. One year's monitorship and one year's course of training in the Teachers' College are not now considered sufficient to equip a teacher fully for his profession. As a consequence, approval was given by the Government early this year for the extension of the Teachers' College course from one to two years. However, as the 1945 students had entered the service of the department prior to this decision, all students were allowed the option of training for either one or two years, and 60 per cent. of them elected to train for two years. From 1946 onwards, no such option will be allowed, and all students will be required to spend two years in the Teachers' College before qualifying for appointment as teachers.

I think I would be right in saying that the only note of discord heard during the debate was that sounded by Mr. E. H. H. Hall, when he made reference to a reply given by me to a query he raised in 1943, relating to the question of enlistments by school teachers in the employ of the Education Department. I consider the terms of his reference to be totally uncalled for; and to say that I gave a facetious or sarcastic reply and that such reply was very ill-timed and ill-placed, is utterly false and misleading. In any event, I am not in the habit of speaking in the strain indicated by the hon. member. However, I have carefully perused "Hansard" for the subject referred to by Mr. Hall. It will be found on pages 367 and 368 of the 1943 debates; and members, if they care to refer to those pages, can decide for themselves whether there is any justification for the hon. member's remarks.

Dealing with the question of enlistments by school teachers, the average number of male teachers employed by the Education Department approximates 1,000; and of the 549 male teachers who enlisted, 104 were monitors who entered the service of the department since 1939. From the Services 155 have already been discharged, of whom 11 had been wounded; and 24 are known to have been killed. It is suggested that the Government has reason to be proud of its contribution to the national cause and of the calibre and qualifications of its male teachers, many of whom, because of their scholarship in science and mathematics, were urgently commissioned by the authorities for service and were instrumental in training so successfully this State's fine contribution to the R.A.A.F. In exercising its discretion in avoiding too great an interruption of educational activities, the department pressed successfully for the retention of the following classes of teachers—

- (a) Teachers in technical schools.
- (b) Head masters and teachers of science and mathematics in secondary schools.
- (c) Head teachers of all schools of Classes 1A, 1, 2, 3, 4.
- (d) Manual training instructors.
- (e) Teachers and instructors at the Narrogin School of Agriculture.
- (f) All teachers 35 years of age and over.

It was considered that, with those safeguards, no serious dislocation or interruption of the work of the schools would occur, as the department had excellent material amongst its female teaching staff on which to draw. The experience over the last three years has shown this anticipation to be well founded as, apart from the disinclination or inability of certain female relief teachers to accept appointments to schools in country districts through family responsibilities or accommodation difficulties, schools have been kept open and the teaching load maintained at pre-war levels. Nevertheless, the Education Department has left no stone unturned by continuous application to the Manpower Directorate to secure the release of such teachers as have been classified medically unfit for active service or have, of their own volition, applied for release because of the non-combatant nature of their military duties.

The analogy made by Mr. E. H. H. Hall between teachers and policemen appears pointless except as a criticism of the Armed Forces administration and organisation. It does, too, discount the value of the hon. member's opinion that teachers should have been placed in the same category as policemen, since it would have been optional for teachers also to have resigned for enlistment. It is suggested that the hon. member's statement as to the right of the Director of Education to grant permission to teachers would have been unwarranted if made at the time, or when Australia was facing what was generally considered imminent invasion. The record of those teachers who did enlist is, as I have remarked in this House previously, a very fine one indeed; and quite a large proportion of those young men, who were fitted not only educationally but also physically to play their part in the various Services, have won the highest decorations. When the list is compiled, I think it will prove to be a great tribute to the younger members of the male teaching staff of the Western Australian Education Department.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: No-one denies that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I turn now to North-West matters, and in particular to the pastoral industry. Mr. Baxter dealt at length with the problems arising in this connection. Mr. Roche, Mr. Cornish and

other members also referred to the industry and to other matters relating to the North. Mr. Baxter, however, was in some respects particularly critical of what he termed "Government inaction." Indeed, he went so far as to say that the Government had done little or nothing in the matter, which is not in accordance with the facts. He further stated that newspaper reports indicated that a stage had been reached when station properties are being abandoned. This statement is misleading. Actually there are about 450 stations in the pastoral areas south of the Kimberleys, comprising a total area of about 148,000,000 acres, and in only seven cases—equal to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total number of stations in that part of the State—which have been dealt with by a debt adjustment committee has action been taken by the secured creditors to close the accounts; in four of these the lessees have voluntarily given the mortgagee possession.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you not think that is a very serious position? You are belittling it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the other three, attempts are being made to obtain other financial accommodation. The three main stock and woolbroking firms, and two banks were parties to the agreement under which the voluntary debt adjustment scheme is operated by a committee of three, one of whom is a representative of the pastoralists. All station owners have the right to apply for assistance under the scheme, and 66 of these owners have obtained additional relief to the extent of £327,272 from the secured creditors. The success of the voluntary debt adjustment scheme is proved by the fact that notwithstanding the worst depression in history, a drought of more than double the severity of any before experienced, the most severe cyclone in this century, and nearly six years of war, with its great threat of invasion of the North-West, the abandonment of stations, except in a very small number of cases, has been avoided. I do not for one moment want to minimise the seriousness of the fact that even in that number of cases it has been necessary for the lessees to leave their properties.

The impression that might be gained from Mr. Baxter's remarks that a general abandonment of stations has commenced is, as I have already stated, misleading. In regard

to the statement by Mr. Baxter that the Government has done little or nothing to relieve the position; that one looks in vain for evidence of any real effort on the part of the Government to apply remedial measures, let us examine the facts. The rent remitted by the Government since 1935 amounts to £562,991. When the relief given by the financial institutions, not as a result of the committee's work, and that given under the scheme is added to the amount of rent remission, the total relief given to pastoralists during the past 10 years exceeds £1,000,000. Certain freight concessions have also been granted. The figures for the first four years of the voluntary scheme tell a remarkable story of assistance. They are—

Number of stations in respect of which assistance was given ..	66
Amount written off by secured creditors	£ 386,932
Relief granted under Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act	36,813
Rent on leases remitted	94,051
Government contribution of interest	49,237
Total relief for 66 stations ..	567,033
Rent relief for other stations ..	468,940
Total relief under the above headings	1,035,973

In addition, one of the Associated Banks, not in the scheme, and other private creditors have made substantial reductions in favour of lessees. How can it be said, therefore, that the Government has done little or nothing in connection with the matter? One interesting feature of the 34 cases in respect of which relief was granted for 1944 is that the total sheep population for the properties concerned increased from 116,559 in 1941 to 165,141 in 1944. That is an increase of almost 50,000 sheep on those particular properties.

Dealing with the Royal Commissioner's report of 1940, Mr. Baxter said that a close study of the report disclosed that a number of negative conclusions were reached and certain recommendations were made, etc., and that none of the matters represented any real contribution to the solution of the industry's immediate problems, and that it was safe to assume that certain of the recommendations had been snugly relegated to

pigeon holes. Here again the hon. member is badly astray. Pastoralists do not hold his view.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They recognise that they have been very greatly assisted since the Royal Commissioner's report was submitted to the Government, not only under the debt adjustment scheme, but also by the extension of the period of granting rent relief in certain cases for a period of two years after the end of the drought. The 1942 year was very good in regard to rainfall, but a great many pastoralists continued to get substantial relief from rent. Then again, it is safe to say that greater difficulty would have been experienced in obtaining the secured creditors' agreement to the voluntary debt adjustment scheme if the Royal Commissioner had not made his investigations and submitted his report. In fact the efforts in this direction might not have met with any success.

The system of reappraisalment recommended by the Commission has been adopted, and it should ensure that rents of stations are not excessive and are fixed in the light of all relevant evidence. It must be remembered, too, that the Royal Commission dealt with the financial and economic position of the industry in 1940, not in 1945. During the intervening period our northern areas became seriously menaced by invasion. All other matters became subsidiary to defence considerations. Reappraisalment field work could not be carried out, nor could many of the other recommendations be put fully into operation. So far as taxation is concerned, the State Government has endeavoured to get the relief from income tax recommended by the Commission, and also additional relief, but the Commonwealth Government has not yet been able to see its way clear to grant the necessary concession. Mr. Baxter raised certain queries in regard to the rent charges for the use of the rabbit proof fence. This is covered by Section 79 of the Vermin Act, which provides that—

The owner shall become liable to pay an annual sum equal to interest at the prescribed rate on the value to such owner of the fence so made use of.

This clause implies that rent shall be charged only where an owner attaches his fence to and makes use of the rabbit proof fence. Where the rabbit proof fence passes

through a pastoral lease without use of this fence being made by the owner, then rent is not charged. Also where only a portion of the fence may be used, consideration is given to this, and each case is treated on its merits. Furthermore, where the fence cuts diagonally through a lease or property, which may mean that a greater length than the direct route may be charged, the department is prepared to give such claims special consideration.

The policy of the department is that, whilst requiring rent to be paid for the fence wherever it is in use by pastoralists, consideration will be given to any claims which pastoralists may consider warrant a review. It should be recognised also that the rent is based upon the interest only on the cost of construction many years ago when costs were cheap, and that the cost of maintenance of the fence has been, and is, borne by the Government. Finally, I would say that there is evidence that the Government is not unmindful of the needs of the North-West in that it has established the North-West Development Committee, which has been set up to investigate and report on all aspects of North-West requirements in connection with customs, tariffs, freight concessions, regeneration and soil conservation, improvement of stock, shipping matters, markets and marketing, labour, education and medical facilities, mail and telephone services, housing, vermin, aerial and road transport, oil, petrol and water supplies and matters relating to fencing and stock routes, etc. It is a very comprehensive list. A report is being prepared by the committee, and no doubt it will be made available as early as possible.

Members have dealt with the question of the quality of superphosphate, and, in this regard, Mr. Wood mentioned that phosphatic rock supplies were not up to standard and quoted Mr. Hamersley as saying that it was not worth buying. The hon. member also asked what the Government was doing to remedy the position, and desired to know if any representations had been made in regard to opening up the Nauru deposits again. It is evident from Mr. Wood's comments that he has not read announcements from time to time during the last three years dealing with the supply of phosphatic rock to Australia, and the

difficulties attendant upon this effort. The super supply position became acute following the destruction of the loading facilities on Nauru Island in December, 1940, and the Japanese entry into the war in December, 1941. The supplies which have been available to this State since 1939-40 to 1944-45 are shown hereunder:—

1939-40	264,690 tons
1940-41	245,807 tons
1941-42	177,200 tons
(rationing commented 1st January, 1942.)		
1942-43	120,000 tons
1943-44	121,000 tons
1944-45	193,958 tons

For 1945-46 it is estimated that 266,000 tons will be available for Western Australia; that is to say, approximately the pre-war tonnage.

Hon. G. B. Wood: It was the quality to which I referred.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will deal with that too. The Premier, when he was Minister for Agriculture, continually stressed the importance of superphosphate to Western Australia. Similar submissions have been made by all States except Queensland where this fertiliser is not so essential for production. Supplies of phosphatic rock to Australia are determined by the British Phosphate Commission which allocates supplies of phosphatic rock from deposits in British possessions amongst the British Dominions. Claims for Australia are examined by this Commission in conjunction with other claims, particularly those of South Africa and New Zealand. Early in 1942 the Premier, at the Agricultural Council meeting, pressed that representations should be made to the United Nations Food Board to secure an increased allocation of phosphatic rock for Australia, without which, he said, it would be impossible to maintain or increase deliveries of foodstuffs to Great Britain and to the Forces in the South-West Pacific area.

A personal submission was made by the late Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin, to the Prime Minister of Great Britain, as the deliveries of increased quantities of phosphatic rock depended almost entirely upon an increased allocation of shipping. These submissions were supported by the representatives of the British Food Mission in Canberra. The question of the re-taking

and occupation of Nauru Island was submitted to the Allied Military Authorities, but the reasons why this island was not re-occupied were obviously not made public at the time. The fact remains, however, that increasing quantities of phosphatic rock have been made available during the last two years, although this meant transporting rock from the other side of the world, even from Florida. There is no doubt that Nauru Island will now be put in shape again as quickly as possible but, because of the extensive installations required owing to the difficulty of approaching the island with large ships, it is thought that at least twelve months and probably two years will elapse before adequate supplies of rock can be obtained from this source.

I also draw attention to a report from Auckland that appeared in "The West Australian" this morning, and which confirms the statement I have just made. Owing to the grade of rock available in recent years, it has been necessary to reduce the quality of the superphosphate down to 17 per cent. phosphoric acid compared with 22 per cent. in pre-war days, when the high quality Nauru rock was available.

It is nonsense to say that the present quality of superphosphate is "not worth buying." The phosphoric acid in superphosphate is in the same available form as in the pre-war product, but the present fertiliser contains 17 per cent. instead of 22 per cent. previously. It is comforting to report that the quantity of superphosphate that will be available for the 1945-46 season is rather more than was available during pre-war years, and it is anticipated that farmers will purchase this eagerly.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: During the debate reference was made to soldier settlement. Members complained that the Government has not been active enough in this regard, and Mr. Loton said that Western Australia was lagging behind South Australia in its preparations. Mr. Roche expressed his dissatisfaction with the progress made, and other members expressed themselves in a similar strain. These statements, however, appear to have been made without regard to the facts, and this particularly applies to the remarks made by Mr. Loton. Both South Australia and Western Australia

lia are parties to the same agreement with the Commonwealth for War Service Land Settlement, and finality in regard to certain matters of administration and procedure arising out of that agreement, has not yet been reached. It is expected, however, that the Premiers' Conference now being held will decide the outstanding questions. It will then be necessary for legislation to be introduced in and enacted by both the Commonwealth and State Parliaments to implement the agreement.

In Western Australia the State Government has taken the responsibility of carrying out preliminary work in anticipation of the introduction of the War Service Land Settlement Scheme, and considerable progress has been made. Classifications and valuation information are available for 1,201 private rural holdings, comprising an area of 2,849,925 acres, and these have been listed and marked on plans for consideration in connection with any re-purchase or resumption proposals. About 600 partly improved reverted Rural Bank holdings are to be reconditioned and improved. Steady progress has been made in the work, but manpower and equipment problems have been very difficult. Now that hostilities have ceased, a great acceleration in the rate of progress of this work should be possible.

The Land Purchase Board has commenced the consideration of purchase of properties in anticipation of the War Service Land Settlement Scheme. Classifications are available for practically all Crown land in the areas in Western Australia suitable for farming, and about 500 farming units, subject to removal of marketable timber, have been defined on plans. A classification committee has been appointed, and has commenced the classification of 420 members of the Armed Forces and ex-Servicemen, who have completed and returned their printed application forms and questionnaires. Arrangements have been made for complete co-operation and co-ordination of the work of all Commonwealth and State departments in connection with war service land settlement.

The staff of the Department of Lands and Surveys is being increased and additional accommodation provided for war service land settlement purposes, in order that no unavoidable delay shall occur when the scheme is established by the passing of the

necessary Acts by the Commonwealth and State Parliaments. Members can be assured, therefore, that everything possible is being done to finalise all proposals in connection with soldier settlement as early as practicable, but, as I have already mentioned, it will be necessary to bring down State legislation to implement the agreement with the Commonwealth Government.

With regard to the railways, a number of members dealt with different aspects of the administration of that public utility. A comparison was made by Mr. Seddon between capital costs and tractive efforts of engines placed in traffic as early as 1902 and those of the present day. Firstly, he referred to engines over 40 years old, and stated that this factor must necessarily interfere with their earning power. This is not disputed, but it can hardly be agreed to take 1902 capital costs as a reasonable basis for comparing cost per lb. tractive power. Mr. Seddon quoted the "E" class with an average capital cost of £4,463. At that time the basic wage was approximately £1 19s. per week. The "P" class is the present-day equivalent of the "E" class and the average cost of that engine placed on traffic between 1924 and 1939—with a basic wage of £3 10s. 7d. to £4—was £9,028.

To build a "P" class engine today is estimated to cost approximately £12,000, so that on a strictly comparable basis the capital cost of the "E" class should be stated as £12,000—not £4,463. Using this figure, the cost per lb. of tractive power would be 13.9s. as against the 5.18s. quoted by Mr. Seddon for the "E" class and 10.4s. for the "A.S.G."—the Australian Standard Garratt engine. On the basis of operating costs, which, as I have stated, is the all-important figure, the comparison is more pronounced in favour of the "A.S.G." The average cost per 100 miles of operating the classes of engine mentioned, taken over a period of 3 months, is as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
"E"	15	8	7
"F"	13	11	2
"MSA"	15	18	5
"P"	18	18	10
"S"	13	18	0
"A.S.G."	15	17	2

Taking the "E" class again as the example, the ratio of operating cost per 100 miles is as 110 to 214 in favour of the "A.S.G.", or approximately 95 per cent. That is to say, the "A.S.G." engine gives 95 per cent. more

haulage effort than the "E" class engine. The foregoing will indicate the fallacy of endeavouring to compare modern locomotive costs and tractive effort with engines built many years ago. Incidentally, it may be of interest to say that, although the actual cost of the "A.S.G." engines built in Western Australia was £18,000, the purchase price from the Commonwealth was considerably below that figure.

Regarding the Laverton train service, referred to by Mr. E. H. H. Hall and Mr. Seddon, the time-table was reduced to one train per fortnight as the traffic is insufficient to warrant more frequent running and, particularly with the present manpower and coal shortages, a more frequent service could not be justified. Indeed, the fortnightly service has been more than sufficient to handle the volume of business offering. Any additional service would have to be provided through from Kalgoorlie, and as the intervening district is adequately catered for by the existing service to Leonora and Laverton, any such extra train would traverse a considerable mileage for no additional return. The question of operating a rail car service to Laverton on the off week is at present under consideration, but the difficulty is to obtain a suitable unit for the work. Another consideration is the light running from Kalgoorlie, which must of necessity be the starting point. Members can be assured that the Railway Department has every sympathy with people in the outback districts, but there is no economic justification for running additional trains when all the traffic offering can be more than adequately catered for by the existing service. This is more so especially at present when manpower, rolling stock and fuel are urgently required on other parts of the system.

Reference has also been made to fires caused by engines. Mr. Baxter stated that thousands of acres of stock food and many miles of fencing had been destroyed by fires, mainly caused by sparks from railway engines. While it is acknowledged that some fires are caused by sparks from locomotives, there are many other causes of fires quite dissociated from the railways. For example, I would mention gas producers on cars travelling on country roads—and the railways are blamed for many of these fires.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Oh, no!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the position.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You cannot get away with that.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They have put it over you there.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have personal knowledge of such an instance, so members cannot say the railway authorities have put that forward as an excuse. The Railway Department takes every precaution possible to prevent the starting of fires by sparks from locomotives. All engines, including the Australian Standard Garratt, are fitted with an efficient type of spark arrester. The perfect spark arrester has not yet been invented, but the department fits its engines with the best available, and while the device does not entirely prevent the emission of sparks, it reduces the possibility of fire to a considerable extent.

Hon. H. Seddon: The quality of the coal is the principal factor, is it not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think it has something to do with this unfortunate state of affairs. However, the Railway Department informs me that spark arresters are examined at locomotive depots before commencement and after completion of each trip and any defects are rectified immediately. No locomotive is permitted to run with a defective spark arrester. Enginemen are instructed to use every care in the working of engines and the careful management of firing operations in order to minimise the emission of sparks.

Hon. G. B. Wood: It is said that the drivers open up the spark-arresters. They are not locked against that sort of thing.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know whether they are or not, but I would be much surprised to learn that what the hon. member says is right. I think that locomotive drivers have just as much regard for the avoidance of damage by fire, whether created by sparks from the engine or by any other means, as has anybody else who is accustomed to the country. I should imagine, too, that if it were known that any particular enginedriver or fireman acted in that way, means would be found of punishing him for his action. In addition to the fitting of spark arresters on engines, the department goes to considerable expense in carrying out fire-prevention work. Firebreaks are cut on

ploughed land along the boundaries of railway reserves and railway sidewidths are burnt off regularly. Train crews are instructed to render every assistance in subduing fires noticed adjacent to the railway, and permanent way gangs are continually on the lookout for fires.

The Government's policy is to use, as far as possible, 100 per cent. of Collie coal. The sparking nature of this coal is well known and the precautions I have mentioned are accordingly taken to minimise the danger of fire. It frequently happens, however, that landowners whose properties adjoin the railway reserve do not take any precautions to prevent the spread of fires to their land. In numerous instances no firebreaks are cut on the private properties, and when strong winds carry sparks on to such properties and fires are started, there is nothing to stop the progress of the out-breaks. Railway gangs co-operate with owners of land adjoining the railway in burning off up to firebreaks on the private land whenever possible.

A further precaution usually taken during the summer months is the burning of New South Wales coal in certain agricultural districts. Owing to short supplies of Collie coal in the last few years, however, and the impracticability of obtaining reserves of New South Wales coal, any such coal obtained has had to be used where it is most needed when it is received, and it has not been possible to allot it to any particular areas. The prevention of fires is a matter of major concern, as obviously the State cannot afford the economic loss occasioned by such damage. There will be no easement of the efforts made to minimise losses from this cause.

In the course of his speech, Mr. Wood criticised the railways by saying that the department did a very bad job in the carriage of super this year. It is apparent that the hon. member has looked at the question from one angle only and has had no regard to the various factors which influenced the carriage of this essential requirement during the past season.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I think I qualified my remarks a little on that matter.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I suggest that what I have said is the gist of the hon. member's remarks. He may be interested to know, first, that the quantity of

superphosphate carried for the season December-June last was 171,612 tons compared with a total of 104,916 tons in the previous season, so that, apart from other considerations, 67,000 tons more were hauled by rail during the past season.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Have you got the peak figures?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will give the hon. member the figures. At the beginning of the season, estimates of the quantities of superphosphate likely to be available for transport were obtained from the superphosphate companies, and the monthly estimates and actual quantities carried month by month were as follows:—

	Companies' estimate of super available.		Carried by rail.	
	Tons.		Trucks.	Tons.
December, 1944	12,200		1,074	14,331
January, 1945	26,500		1,955	17,808
February, 1945	38,000		2,864	25,898
March, 1945	43,000		3,758	34,212
April, 1945	39,000		3,782	32,723
May, 1945	15,700		3,746	32,611
June, 1945	5,100		1,806	14,029
	170,500		171,612

In January there were very serious hold-ups of trucks at Fremantle, due to heavy shipping and slow releases of trucks, as a result of the adoption of the new roster system, which had a very disastrous effect on the truck supply for superphosphate. Further, manpower shortage prevented the maintenance of a full service and the running of special trains. During February and March, staff holidays were stopped in an endeavour to meet the position, but other factors militated against fulfilment of all orders. At this time the water position was acute throughout the system, particularly in the Great Southern district and water haulage, subsequently reaching to over 2,000,000 gallons per week and for distances of over 100 miles, for both departmental and private purposes, utilised a considerable proportion of the available engines and manpower. Many farmers were supplied with water by rail.

In addition, military orders, which had No. 1 priority, were also heavy. In March the Commissioner directed that superphosphate be given No. 1 priority until the middle of May. Industrial trouble on the wharves in April, however, had a hampering effect on truck supply. Furthermore, on account of shortage of manpower, the superphosphate companies were unable on occa-

sions to load all the wagons supplied, resulting in a further hold-up in the despatch of orders. Despite these disabilities, the bulk of the superphosphate was in the country by the end of May, and the whole of the requirements were out by the end of June.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Too late then, unfortunately.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: But that was on account of the rain. The hon. member cannot blame the Railway Department for that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I sometimes think that in these matters we are apt to be too critical, and not to view the over-all picture. I think I am correct in saying that the Railway Department during this year has been faced with difficulties and disabilities such as we have not experienced before. Notwithstanding all those disabilities, however, the figures I have quoted show that the Railway Department carried not only 60,000 tons more superphosphate this season than it did the previous season, but that in the months in which those quantities were carried the department met the requirements of the situation to a very great extent. Had it not been for the unusually wet weather which was experienced in more districts than one, the Railway Department would not have been criticised in this way. The statement made by Mr. Wood that hundreds of trucks were returning empty by road appears to be an exaggeration.

Hon. G. B. Wood: No.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As far as is known, the only road trucks running to the metropolitan area were those bringing in a limited quantity of chaff.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I repeat, there were hundreds of them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am told that those trucks could not have carried superphosphate at the railway charge.

Hon. G. B. Wood: We would not ask them to do so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Nor is it likely that the trucks would be returning to the areas where the superphosphate was required.

Hon. G. B. Wood: That is nonsense.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The statement may be wrong to the extent that the hon. member knows of one farmer who

could have been supplied with some superphosphate if one truck had been used for the purpose. If this is so, to criticise the Railway Department in such a wholesale way on that account seems to me to be unfair.

Hon. G. B. Wood: There was lack of co-ordination.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As regards delays in transit of super, some delay occurred in transit to the Great Southern district due to an accumulation of traffic at depots from York to Wagin which it was impossible to shift owing to all power available being engaged on water cartage. On this account it was necessary to arrange for the super works to stop loading on occasions for that line and concentrate on other localities. With reference to truck supplies for crude oil, the hold-up of trucks at the wharf also affected this traffic. In addition, oil companies were loading large quantities of oil for shipment to the Air Force at North-West ports, and this had preference over local supplies for rail trucks. Large numbers of trucks were put into the oil companies' sidings, but once there the loading was in the hands of the companies and the preference given to oil for shipment caused some hold-up of orders for the country. Everything possible was done to supply trucks for crude oil consistent with the demands of other urgent traffic.

When dealing with the Railway Department, Mr. E. H. H. Hall referred to Dr. Herman's finding that 1½ tons of Collie coal equalled only one ton of Newcastle coal and to his having arrived at a figure of £52,229 as being the approximate additional cost to the railways through using Collie coal. The estimate was for the year ended the 30th June, 1932, and was based on Collie coal at 16s. 2d. per ton at pit's mouth, as compared with New South Wales coal at 30s. 2d. per ton in ship's slings at Fremantle, Albany and Bunbury, and 34s. at Geraldton, plus wharf charges and handling on the imported coal at from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 4d. per ton and haulage in each case at 1.04d. per ton per mile. Conditions have changed a good deal since 1932. Collie coal has advanced from 16s. 2d. to 21s. 8d. per ton but New South Wales coal is now costing about 52s. to land. Wharfage and handling charges have also increased. Then the 1½ to 1 ratio is now a very doubtful factor.

Improvements in locomotive design over the years have done much to offset the relative inferiority of the native product, and whilst there is still some advantage, on a ton for ton basis, in the imported fuel, only a very biased critic would contend that the $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 ratio is applicable to present-day conditions—and particularly with the very poor quality of New South Wales coal which the railways have been obliged to use in the past few years. The Commissioner of Railways, I think, is to be commended on his adherence to the policy of using, as nearly as possible, 100 per cent. of native fuel, and the State and the railways would have been in a bad way over the war years if they had been entirely dependent on outside supplies of coal, which might well have been the case had financial considerations only directed the policy. As to the Midland Railway Company, it may interest the members to know that before the war the company was a regular user of Collie coal during the winter months, and the only reason it has not used more of it through the war years is that Collie coal has not been available. The company has been able to get its requirements from New South Wales because those requirements have been comparatively small. It would have been a very different matter trying to obtain the 500,000 tons which the Government railways and power station consume annually, and, judging by the difficulties that have been experienced with the fractional portion of their requirements that has had to be imported, the task would have been impossible.

Regarding the new Garratt engines, these were originally intended for the narrow gauge lines of Queensland, Tasmania and the Commonwealth railways, and the question was discussed with the Melbourne officials of the Australian Federated Union of Enginemen. One member made the complaint that the Government, or the department, had not consulted the Locomotive Engine Drivers' Union regarding this matter.

Hon. H. Seddon: That statement was made in the Press by the secretary of the Engine Drivers' Union.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The shifting of the centre of gravity in the war zone enabled this State to procure a number of these heavy locomotives, which can be run on any line, and without which the department could not possibly have coped with the

enormous tonnage of traffic it has handled. Alterations have been made to these engines, as requested by the loco. men, consistent with the availability of manpower and materials, and the department is always willing to consider practical suggestions for all new stock to be built. All suggestions made, however, are not practical, and the economics of railway working cannot be ignored.

With regard to the infection of railway coaches by vermin, which was mentioned by Mr. W. R. Hall, that matter receives close attention, but it will be appreciated that whatever precautions are taken, the presence of even one passenger of careless habits is sufficient to infect a whole coach and nullify the department's efforts. All sleeping coaches are fumigated every three months, and other coaches periodically, being double-charged under the hydrocyanic process, a mixture of sulphuric acid, cyanide and water.

Hon. W. R. Hall: When did the department start doing that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Should it come to the department's notice, or be reported, that a coach is infected, it is immediately withdrawn from traffic and fumigated specially. In regard to rugs, there is no virtue in discarding a rug just because it is old, provided it is in good condition, and Mr. Hall may be assured that all rugs are regularly steam-laundered. It is the practice, also, for all coaches to be cleaned prior to long country journeys, and in many cases the condition of the lavatories can be attributed to the habits of the users en route. In addition, of course, some pedestal pans have become discoloured with age and may give the appearance of being unclean, although such is not the case. It seems to me that there is room for the education of certain sections of the travelling public in this regard.

Hon. W. R. Hall: It is also up to us to see that the Railway Department's employees do their job.

Hon. H. Tuckey: There have been other complaints besides this.

Hon. W. R. Hall: There have been a lot more.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Gibson mentioned the possibility of a new railway bridge at Fremantle, and associated his refer-

ence with the question of future harbour development. The present road bridge was built in 1937 on the understanding that the railway bridge would meet the needs of traffic for the next 10 to 15 years. The position has not altered so far as the railways are concerned, and present maintenance costs of the railway bridge lie between £2,000 and £3,000 per annum. Apart from the requirements of harbour expansion, I am informed the new railway bridge will be necessary either when it becomes uneconomical to maintain the present bridge on the existing site, or the extension of broad gauge proposals requires its construction over the river. In any case it is contemplated that the new railway bridge should be placed upstream from the existing road bridge, and any one of the two considerations mentioned earlier, or the necessity for harbour expansion, may dictate the time for the construction of the new railway bridge. It is likely that the harbour development may be the deciding factor and in this connection the Government's immediate and early post-war programme is as follows:—

	Estimated cost. £
Victoria Quay: Extension and jetty construction	60,000
North Quay: Extension east	12,000
North Quay: Extension west	60,000
Bellmouth dredging	15,000
Sheet piling rear of berths 1, 2, and 3	55,000

Some of this proposed work will be commenced during the current financial year, the necessary financial provision having been made in this year's Loan Estimates. These remarks apply particularly to the proposed extensions to the North Quay. Another important project planned for Fremantle is the establishment of a bulk wheat terminal. Work in connection with this project is already in hand and will be extended as quickly as war conditions permit. The total estimated cost is £350,000. All the proposed undertakings in connection with the Fremantle Harbour have been developed to fit in with a long-range plan for the development of the port.

Referring now to health matters, Dr. Hislop and Mr. Dimmitt raised the question of milk supplies, the handling of meat and bread, and other matters associated with the health of the community. So far as

milk supplies are concerned, it was mentioned by those hon. members that these were not beyond question, that the method of handling milk and the quality of the commodity called for some action to be taken, and they urged that an immediate inquiry into the whole matter should be authorised. As to the quality of the milk available to the public, a departmental committee, comprised of officers of the Health and Agricultural Departments and the Metropolitan Milk Board, was appointed this year to examine the position, and its report will shortly be in the hands of the Minister. Though occasional cases of milk-borne diseases have occurred, I have been informed by the Acting Commissioner of Public Health that the situation does not merit any panic. In other words, whilst we have some instances of diseases of that kind, the trouble is not such that we should feel that a serious state of affairs exists.

One of the difficulties associated with the metropolitan milk supply is that certain milk vendors supplying milk to the metropolitan area also supply milk to towns and districts outside that area, and they are able to acquire milk for this purpose from dairies which are not licensed by the Metropolitan Milk Board. It is difficult to detect the improper practice of selling in the metropolis milk purchased from outside that area. Regarding the price of milk, this is determined by the Metropolitan Milk Board and also by the Price Fixing Commissioner, and the milk industry appears to be well satisfied with the prices so fixed.

In the course of his remarks Dr. Hislop stated that half-castes were sleeping in certain premises adjacent to dairy buildings. I do not think Dr. Hislop desired to suggest that this kind of thing was occurring in many places. I think he referred to some particular case which had come under his notice. It is not known precisely to which dairy he refers, but aborigines were living at one dairy for a short period, but this occurred without the prior knowledge of the board; in fact, the natives had left the premises before the board was aware of what had occurred. However, with the inquiries that are now being made into the question of milk supplies, and the submission of legislation this year to amend the Metropolitan Milk Act, many of the matters which have been raised by members will be brought under more effective control.

Respecting the handling of meat, men delivering carcasses to shops are required to wear a special cap and a blue overall coat, and prosecutions have been undertaken where breaches of the regulation have been observed. Already there are in operation several specially closed meat vans in which carcasses are hung during transit, and as soon as modifications to the loading ramps at the abattoirs are completed, all meat will be conveyed in vans of this type. Mention was also made regarding the delivery of bread. Such deliveries are not hygienically ideal, but baking hours are such that bread is usually loaded into delivery vans while still warm. The wrapping of warm bread would render the loaf soggy because steam could not then readily escape. I am advised that when materials become more easily available, the use of cotton gloves may be introduced.

Concerning the appointment of a new Commissioner of Public Health, I am advised that Dr. Cook has been chosen for this position, but it is not possible for his release to be obtained from the Army. Urgent representations have been made to the Army authorities in this regard, but so far without result.

My remarks must of necessity include some reply to those members who raised questions about the mining industry. Messrs. Heenan, Seddon, W. R. Hall and Williams expressed a keen desire for the early rehabilitation of the industry. The Government is in complete agreement with them. This matter has of recent months been fully discussed by the State Government with various sections of the industry, and as a result a representative deputation met the Prime Minister during his recent visit to Perth. The position of the industry was explained in detail and he was requested that it now be given a fairly high priority to enable it to obtain men and machinery with which to undertake the necessary development and work required preparatory to resuming normal pre-war operations once demobilisation takes place. The deputation was very sympathetically received, and the Prime Minister advised that he would give immediate consideration to the matter. He stated that the co-operation which had been extended by the State Government and the industry itself to the Commonwealth Government's war requirements as they affected the industry was well remembered and would

be taken into account. He also agreed to give attention to the possibility of the return of machinery which had been commandeered by the Commonwealth Government from the mines during the war.

Reference was made by Mr. E. H. H. Hall to proposals for the development of coal deposits at Eradu and Irwin River. Investigation of the coal measures at these places has been in progress for some time. An interesting series of samples was taken from a tunnel 180 feet in length, driven on a 6ft. seam on the Irwin River. The coal, however, is of a quality not acceptable to the Railway Department and, I am informed, is not of great interest at present. Operations on the Eradu deposit have been held up owing to a large inflow of water being struck in the shaft put down. The amount of money allotted for sampling the deposit was exhausted and the work suspended while the investigation of the Irwin River deposit was carried out. It was then decided to test the Eradu seam at an outcrop about three miles northward from the shaft at the siding, but this work proved the coal in that vicinity to be worthless. After mature consideration it has been decided to attempt to seal off the flow of water in the shaft by cement grouting and complete the shaft to obtain the samples required. Should the coal, on analysis and test, prove to be of sufficient value, a thorough geological survey of the area will be undertaken.

In dealing with mining matters Mr. Cornish referred to the position at Wiluna. The State Government was first advised by the Wiluna Gold Mines, Ltd., of the company's intention to cease activity towards the middle of 1943 because operations were being conducted at a loss. The State Government and the company then took the matter up with the Commonwealth Government, pointing out that any closure would result in the loss of a large quantity of arsenic and that such arsenic was in considerable demand in Australia particularly for the war effort. As a result the company has been subsidised to the extent of £123,000 to enable the balance of the arsenic, approximating 3,900 tons, to be raised. The State Government is supplying £30,750 and the Commonwealth the balance. This assistance will enable the company to carry on until October next, when all the ore of any value will have been dealt with and the mine will close down. The company then proposes to treat its

dump, which will take from five to seven years and will employ possibly 100 men. It is to be regretted that through exhaustion of ore, this great mine has to close down, but it is hoped that it will be possible for the men to be re-absorbed in the industry.

I have replied to the more important questions raised by members during this debate. Of course I could not touch upon every point that was mentioned, but if there is any matter that a member has raised and on which he desires further information, I shall, following my usual procedure, be only too pleased to supply whatever details are available.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved: That the Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

PAPERS—HOUSING.

As to Negotiations, Costs, etc.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [8.25]: I move—

That there be laid upon the Table of the House—

- (a) The papers relative to the negotiations between the State and Commonwealth Governments in regard to housing in this State.
- (b) A report of the State Department concerned giving specific details of the progress made in respect of the authorised schemes, full details of the costs of the houses comprised in each scheme, and how the plans for Western Australia compare with those for other States.
- (c) All papers relative to proposals that have been submitted for houses to be erected partly or wholly of pre-fabricated materials of various kinds, and relative to the efforts that have been made to reduce building costs in this State and to obtain essential materials.

Some considerable time has elapsed since I gave notice of this motion. Meanwhile there has been much controversy in the Press and many members of Parliament have expressed themselves at length on the subject. To advance many of the arguments I had intended to offer would be repetition. Members who have dealt with the matter have shown that they also are of the opinion that more information is needed, not information in the way of carping

criticism, but information that would place us, as members, in a position to be of some assistance in dealing with this vital issue. It is extraordinary to find from the announcement by the Chief Secretary this evening that housing is to be placed in the position of No. 1 priority. It is a pity that something in that direction was not done some time ago. The housing position has been acute since the years before the war, and it is rather late in the day now to start formulating a scheme. Arrangements should have been put in hand long ago. It seems to me that the atomic bomb, that dreadful instrument of war used against Japan, not only brought about the end of the war before the Government expected it, but also caused a shock to the Government in that it was quite unprepared.

The housing position in the City of Perth is degrading. Numbers of families are herded together in one house—we cannot call it living—under most awful conditions, the building and attachments being intended to accommodate only one family. Some of the houses in use were condemned while many others should have been condemned, and it is easy to understand the unhealthiness and degradation arising from such conditions. Stables, garages and all sorts of buildings have been pressed into use for people to reside in. While manpower and materials might not have been available, it was competent for the Commonwealth and State Governments to have had plans prepared and ready to put into operation instead of delaying as they have done. In fact, I doubt whether the plans are ready yet.

Several meetings and conferences have been held recently. From these and from the Press controversy, there is much for public men to learn, and that is why I am moving for the tabling of these papers. What I regard as a great drawback is the attitude of the Commonwealth Government. That attitude shows clearly a trend towards day labour. Surely we in this State above all States are in a position to know what day labour means. We cannot expect a man on a weekly wage to turn out the same amount of work as will a man on piece-work. After all there is truth in the old adage, "It is the hope of reward that sweetens labour." The hope of reward certainly makes a man look alive; otherwise men merely put in time on the job.

Day labour has been tried here and has been proved unsuccessful. We learn that in Queensland contractors have built houses for £200 less than the cost when built by the Government under day labour. In Sydney costs were so excessive that the Prime Minister has arranged for an inquiry to be held. There the houses were being built by day labour. We cannot expect the Government to carry on any industry such as housing on the same basis as private enterprise can do it. Government control does not lend itself to economy. There may be efficiency but there is no economy; an enormous cost is involved. Take, for instance, the over-riding departments of the Commonwealth Government. Consider the useless services that are rendered by those departments in regard to house building. It all amounts merely to a matter of granting permission to do this and that; but as a result, every home is loaded by £143, and that load is placed on the working man's shoulders.

The Chief Secretary: What makes you repeat that statement?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I have figures to substantiate it. The department cost £800,000, for 500,000 odd houses. The figures are available and can easily be worked out. If the Chief Secretary works them out, he will find that the £143 to which I referred is correct. I imagine that Mr. Dimmitt had the same figures.

The Chief Secretary: You are only quoting something that was said in another House of Parliament.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am quoting what was reported and what has never been disputed. If it had been open to dispute, there would have been a contradiction. Outside of that, we know that the day-labour system is bad for the State and for the people who have to pay for the consequences. I hope wiser counsels will prevail and prevent its introduction. It will be very necessary for us to have information before us in order that we may see where things are tending. Take materials. I know there are many people who have had permits to build, but what are they worth? They are not worth tuppence, because the materials are not available. Unfortunately, the position is that the Government has first priority over materials; and my information is that the Government is exercising that

priority. Members can understand the position of a merchant who is supplying these materials. If the Government wants them, what can he say? He is looking to the future; it is human nature to do so. He is looking for Government trade in the days to come; and, for the sake of his well-being, he will naturally supply the Government first. I am informed that that is what is being done. The Government has the first right and is accepting that right and taking all the materials that are available, at the expense of the poor unfortunate man who has had permission to go on with building but cannot do so. I know of people who have been held up, month after month, and are likely to be held up in the future simply because they cannot obtain materials.

Compare the system of private enterprise with that of day-labour. In the first place, the overheads of Government departments must be high, whereas those of private enterprise are very low. A private contractor has the matter all in his own hands; he has not a huge department or a big staff. That points very clearly to the fact that the whole cost is a vastly different proposition when viewed from the standpoint of the Government and of private enterprise, respectively. Furthermore, better efficiency is secured when there is personal supervision, which does not obtain in Government departments. Is it necessary that we, as representatives of the people, should know exactly what has transpired between the Governments? Certainly it is! Another point is that in all references to future building that I have seen, there has been a harping on the one material for house construction, namely, burnt brick; but that is not the only material from which presentable houses can be constructed. Good service has been rendered by pre-fabricated materials and sand-cement bricks.

In connection with the invasion of Normandy, a long jetty was constructed of pre-fabricated materials, and it enabled the landing of the invasion army and the necessities of war to be successfully carried out. Surely that shows the value of the materials used, and the benefit their utilisation would be in house building! Other parts of the world are using pre-fabricated material; why cannot such a course be adopted here instead of our being dependent entirely on the brick-burner? Not nearly as many qualifications are required for the erection of a pre-fabricated house. I have seen criticisms

of sand-cement bricks; but if a building constructed with them is surrounded by a verandah—which is very necessary in our climate—I contend there is no better material that could be used and no more comfortable home could be erected. The use of sand-cement bricks, which are hollow, leads to the coolest possible home, which is a great advantage in our excessively hot summer days.

Hon. C. R. Cornish: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Another point is that we do not need skilled tradesmen to make them, and a tremendous quantity can be made in a day. Moreover, they can be laid very quickly. But is the Government using that material, or does it intend to do so? We want to know these things, not for the sake of criticism but in order that we may be helpful. The scarcity of homes is shocking. A house was advertised the other day, and a friend of mine got out of bed at six o'clock and applied for it. He said there were between 140 and 150 people there already, and he was there at ten minutes past six. That shows how acute the position is. But without illustrations of that kind, we know how serious the problem is; we know how people have been herded in hovels in which insanitary conditions must prevail. What is facing us is this: Our men are coming home; that is to say, those are coming home that the Commonwealth Government is not keeping in the Army, for apparently the intention of the Government is to keep as many men and women in the Services as long as it can because it is not ready to do the things it has been promising to do for years.

For the last three years the Commonwealth Government has been promising to provide work for these people. I ask: Where is that work? Nothing is ready. Houses have been promised, but not one home was built in 1944. Where are the homes for these people who will be returning from the war? Let it not be forgotten that many of our young men were married but had no homes of their own. Their wives stayed with relatives. But the men are coming back and expect to have homes to which to take their wives. There are none; they are homeless. Only in the last few weeks has any preparation been made though there has been a lot of talk and Press articles, which have meant nothing.

It is up to every one of us to put his shoulder to the wheel and see what he can do to assist in the matter; and we can assist only if we know the position. I hope, therefore, that the House will agree to the motion so that we shall be able to look through the papers and, thus fortified, set out to assist in whatever way we can, if there is any way possible.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 11th September.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.40 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 28th August, 1945.

	PAGE
Murchison electorate, return of member after appointment as Minister	379
Greenough electorate, report of Panel of Inquiry	380
Resolution: The War, message from Minister for the Navy	380
Questions: Pig industry—(a) as to prices payable by Britain	380
(b) as to losses during railway transport	381
Perth Hospital, as to manpower and materials for completing	381
Pardelup prison escapees, as to Mt. Barker lock-up and stricter control	381
Assent to Bill	382
Address-in-reply, twelfth day	382

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

MURCHISON ELECTORATE.

Return of Member After Appointment as Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy (Ministerial by-election) in the Murchison electorate showing that William Mortimer Marshall has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear in the hon. member.

Hon. W. M. Marshall took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.