

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 28th July, 1948.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOSPITALS.

As to Salaries, Patients, Building Improvements, etc.

Mr. REYNOLDS asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What weekly salary is received by the manager or secretary of the Perth, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, Wooroloo, Children's Hospitals, and the Hospital for the Insane, respectively?

(2) What weekly salary is received by medical superintendents and R.M.O.'s at each of these hospitals?

(3) Will he table a draft copy showing the terms and conditions of appointment of medical superintendents and R.M.O.'s at each of these hospitals?

(4) Will he ascertain the salary of superintendents of hospitals having a daily bed average of 130 to 150, and 150 to 200 patients in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia?

(5) What number of out-patients are treated yearly at the Perth, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie and Children's Hospitals?

(6) What are the respective detailed duties of the medical superintendent at Perth, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie and Children's Hospitals?

(7) How many R.M.O.'s are there at the Perth, Kalgoorlie, Fremantle and Children's Hospitals?

(8) What is the daily bed average at the Perth, Fremantle, and Kalgoorlie, and Children's Hospitals?

(9) What is the anticipated amount to be expended on improvements, etc., at Pinjarra, Dwellingup and Yarroop?

(10) When are building operations to be commenced at each of these centres?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Annual Salaries—Gross—Manager, Royal Perth, £1,152; secretary, Royal Perth, £699; manager, Children's, £904; managing secretary, Fremantle, £723; managing secretary, Hospital for the Insane, £751; secretary, Wooroloo Sanatorium, £619; secretary, Kalgoorlie, £600.

(2) Annual Salaries—Medical Staff—Perth: Medical superintendent, £1,250; assistant medical superintendent, £600, plus B. and L.; two registrars, £475, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months; one registrar, £525, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months; one registrar, £577, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months; 11 junior resident M.O.'s, £260, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months; one junior resident M.O., £312, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months; four junior resident M.O.'s, £350, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months. Children's: One medical superintendent, £1,075, plus free quarters, fuel, light, water, gas, laundry; one senior R.M.O., 2nd year, £500, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months; one senior R.M.O., 1st year, £452, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months; one junior R.M.O., 2nd year, £350, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months; three junior R.M.O.'s, 3rd year, £450, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months; one junior R.M.O., 3rd year, £502, plus B. and L. plus £25 bonus after 12 months. Fremantle: One medical superintendent, £800; one registrar, £400, plus keep plus £25 bonus after 12 months; two junior R.M.O.'s, £260, plus keep and £25 bonus after 12 months; vacant—deputy medical superintendent,

£400, plus keep; one junior R.M.O. Hospital for Insane: inspector general, £1,568; medical superintendent, Claremont, £1,282; medical superintendent, Heathcote, £1,087; assistant medical officer, class 1, £1,035; assistant medical officer, class 2, £905; assistant medical officer, class 2, £905. Wooroloo Sanatorium: One medical superintendent, £1,087; one assistant medical superintendent, £944; one senior R.M.O., £905; one junior R.M.O., £450, plus £25 bonus after 12 months' service; vacant—one senior R.M.O. Kalgoorlie: One R.M.O., part time, £383 per annum, right of private practice.

(3) No.

(4) No.

(5) Outpatient Attendances — Perth, 138,303; Fremantle, 28,732; Children's, 67,206; Kalgoorlie, 1,059.

(6) Ordinary duties of R.M.O. full time; in Kalgoorlie part time.

(7) R.M.O.'s—Perth, 22; Children's, 8; Fremantle, 4; hospitals for insane, 7; Wooroloo, 4; Kalgoorlie, 1 (part time).

(8) Bed averages, year ended 30/6/48—Perth, 405.0; Fremantle, 168.1; Children's, 189.6; Kalgoorlie, 159.5.

(9) Anticipated Expenditure—Pinjarra, £16,200; Dwellingup, £8,605; Yarloop, £12,040.

(10) Pinjarra, started; Dwellingup, details still under consideration; Yarloop, shortly.

GOLDMINING.

(a) *As to Subsidising Production.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) Does he know that the Canadian Government is making emergency payments to its goldmining industry?

(2) Has he taken any steps in order to find out on what basis this bonus is being made available to Canadian gold producers?

(3) If inquiries have been made, what was the result?

(4) Is he aware that the Government of Southern Rhodesia proposes subsidising all gold produced in the colony by paying an extra 27s. 6d. per fine ounce, as an additional payment to low grade mines already in receipt of the full subsidy of £2 per fine ounce?

(5) Will he explain how Canada and Southern Rhodesia are in a position to pay their respective goldmining industries a subsidy while the Western Australian State Government denies the industry in this State similar assistance?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Matter discussed fully with Prime Minister.

(4) Yes.

(5) The State Government has made vigorous approaches to the Commonwealth Government, which by its own laws is the sole market for gold in Australia, to either increase the price of gold, permit producers to sell on the open world market, or subsidise producers.

The Commonwealth Government has emphatically refused to increase the price, or open the market.

It is still giving consideration to the matter of subsidising individual marginal producers, and the State Government is now awaiting its decision, and it is the Commonwealth Government and not the State Government that denies the industry the similar assistance.

(b) *As to Assistance to Low-Grade Mines*

Mr. TRIAT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

Will he please advise the House what reply he has had to the request passed by this House for ways and means to be found to work low grade gold ores in Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

Negotiations are still proceeding with the Prime Minister and great pressure has been brought to bear to get assistance to enable low grade mines to open up and others to continue, also to avoid the necessity of mining only the high grade ore.

CHARCOAL-IRON AND WOOD DISTILLATION INDUSTRY.

As to Production.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) What are the main reasons for the delay in completing the wood distillation

section of the Wundowie charcoal iron industry?

(2) When is that section likely to be completed and in full production?

(3) What is the present daily rate of charcoal iron production at Wundowie?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Coppersmiths employed on the manufacture of distillery equipment were transferred to work on equipment for the Royal Perth Hospital and the wood distillation section has been delayed to the extent of the time taken to complete the coppersmithing required by the hospital.

(2) At the end of this year.

(3) Twenty tons—seven days a week.

WOOROLOO SANATORIUM PATIENTS.

As to Free Railway Passes to Near Relatives.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Railways:

Is he yet in a position to reply to my request regarding the question of making free railway passes available to near relatives of patients in the Wooroloo Sanatorium, to enable those relatives to travel periodically to and from the sanatorium?

The MINISTER replied:

The matter is still under consideration.

RAILWAYS.

As to "Cyclone" Spark Arrester.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is it considered that the "Cyclone" spark arrester has proved satisfactory?

(2) Is it the intention (as previously announced) to have all coal-burning locomotives equipped with this device before the coming harvest?

(3) Has the Loco. Drivers' Union complained that this spark arrester retards the steaming qualities of the engines to such an extent that it prevents the punctual running of trains, and that the cinders thrown from the smoke-box are seriously affecting the eyes of the enginemmen?

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2) and (3) Owing to statements that were made to me recently when I attended a meeting of the Northam branch of the Locomotive Engine Drivers' Union,

serious doubt has been thrown on the efficiency of the "Cyclone" spark arrester. In some cases it does not interfere with the steaming qualities of the locomotive and it deals effectively with the sparks, while in other cases neither of these results are obtainable.

As soon as this matter was brought under my notice, arrangements were made to have a test conducted on engines selected by the drivers, and this is being carried out at Northam to-day.

Every opportunity is being afforded the Locomotive Drivers' Union to bring any matters they desire before those conducting the test.

Should, unfortunately, it be proved that the complaints of the Locomotive Drivers' Union are correct, and that any doubt is thrown on the effectiveness of the spark arresters, then all those already fitted to engines will be tested, with a view to having any defects remedied at the earliest possible moment.

ASSOCIATED YOUTH COMMITTEE.

As to Attempted Exclusion of Eureka League.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware of the move recently made and further attempts to be made to exclude the Eureka Youth League from the Associated Youth Committee of the National Fitness Council?

(2) Does he concur with these attempts?

(3) If so, is it the intention that membership of the Committee should be governed by political considerations?

(4) If not, what steps does he contemplate in order to prevent such a possibility?

(5) In any event, is it his intention to take action to prevent the expulsion of the Eureka Youth League?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) I have been informed of the move recently made to exclude the Eureka Youth League from the Associated Youth Committee of the National Fitness Council.

(2) Under the Constitution of the A.Y.C., the concurrence of the Minister is not required. I would refer the hon. member to rule D (3) of the constitution of the A.Y.C., as shown in Appendix "D" of the report

of the National Fitness Council recently supplied to every hon. member of this House. The A.Y.C. is a co-ordinating body of all voluntary organisations concerned with youth training in the State, and the groups associated cover practically every facet of political and religious thought, having been built up over the past eight years on clear understandings (a) that the objective is to form a medium through which the Governments of the State and Commonwealth can assist voluntary organisations in the development of youth work on the lines of the British Government's service to youth; and (b) that the voluntary groups in no way come under the domination of the Government. It will be seen from Appendix "D" mentioned above that the constitution of the A.Y.C. makes the inclusion and exclusion of members subject to the decision of the other members of the Association. Any constitutional move made by one of the voluntary organisations to remove or admit any group does not require the approval or disapproval of the Minister. A two-thirds majority is required to expel a member group, as shown in rule D (3) and I am informed that at a recently duly constituted meeting this was not secured.

(3) No, but I am further informed that the basis of the arguments used in favour of the motion for expulsion of the E.Y.L. was that of incompatibility on two grounds, namely, belief in God and loyalty to the Crown and British Commonwealth, and that although nine groups voted against the motion for expulsion, none of the groups supported the E.Y.L.'s platform or policy.

(4) None, in view of the position disclosed in the answers to questions (2) and (3).

(5) No, for the reasons given in answer to question (2).

FRUIT CASES.

As to Breakages During Shipment.

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the deplorable condition of great numbers of Western Australian hardwood fruit cases on their arrival in the United Kingdom?

(2) That arising out of two shipments of fruit to the United Kingdom in April this year, no less than 6,000 karri and jar-

rah cases split to such an extent under ordinary handling as to necessitate special cooeping, and that it is feared the total breakages will approximate 10 per cent.?

(3) That as a result of this and other breakages the reputation Western Australian hardwood cases enjoyed before the war is fast disappearing, and unless action is taken immediately, will seriously react on the reputation of Western Australian fruit?

(4) Will he cause an inquiry to be held into the quality of timber now being used for fruit cases, including also the thickness of top boards and the quality of nails used?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) to (4) A report has been received from London by the Department of Commerce and Agriculture that breakages have occurred. As a result of this, double wiring of jarrah boxes for the United Kingdom has been adopted.

The problem of fruit cases to-day is not directly one of quality so much as one of quantity. They are in short supply because of lack of manpower in the timber industry.

Top board thickness is sufficient, but some trouble has been experienced through faulty sawing in some new mills.

The quality of the nails is satisfactory, but insufficient cement-coated nails, which do not draw so easily, have been available. Also, owing to a general shortage of nails, shorter nails than the correct length had to be used. Inquiries are being made for additional supplies.

LOTTERIES COMMISSION.

As to Grants to Red Cross Society.

Mr. YATES asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

(1) Has the Lotteries Commission in Western Australia made grants to the Red Cross Society?

(2) If so, on how many occasions, and what was the total amount granted?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) Yes, to the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service.

(2) 1936, £50; 1939, £350; 1948, £1,400.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Second Day.*

Debate resumed from the 22nd July.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [4.45]: Mr. Speaker, I will not make any comment of the kind that has often been expressed by Opposition members to Governments in regard to the Lieut.-Governor's Speech containing very few reasons why Parliament should be called together; because, knowing from my own experience the origin of the Speeches which His Excellency is pleased to deliver to us and the summons which the Usher of the Black Rod conveys to us to proceed to hear the Speech, I think that every Governor's Speech is a subject of great interest and merits considerable study. Sometimes the Speeches are very disappointing so far as members' anticipations are concerned, and sometimes they show the urge of a Government to put the best side to London in order to prepare for what might eventuate during the session. But I think that is a wrong attitude to adopt. I have always thought that a Governor's Speech does contain something worthy of the closest scrutiny. On this occasion it is my intention to confine my remarks, however brief or however long they may be, to three or four matters dealt with in the Speech and to matters relevant thereto. The three or four subjects I have in mind deal with food production and the British Food Mission, sundry references to land development, soil surveys and the like, and housing construction, particularly the effective building rate.

As to food production and the British Food Mission, I desire to approach this subject from the point of view of nutritional standards which have been the study of all nations for very many years. So far as Australia is concerned, the subject was first stressed by our representative—then Mr. Bruce—at the League of Nations Conference in 1935. Mr. Bruce emphasised very strongly the need for international action to be taken to improve the wellbeing of all nations by a study of nutritional standards. From that stage, the matter was taken up by a body associated with the Health Departments of the State and of the Commonwealth. Later on, particularly under the stress of wartime rationing, the National Nutritional Council operated in

Australia. In my view, that Council did an excellent job and rendered great service to the Australian community by examining all types of citizens in all walks of life in order to ascertain what exactly were the elements in which Australians were sub-standard nutritionally.

The council made a report, which I would recommend all members to study. It states in clear language what are the deficiencies generally to be acknowledged in Australian citizens so far as food is concerned. It also gives one an opportunity to measure what chance there is of expanding Australia's agriculture in order to meet Australia's nutritional requirements. Their evidence showed that to provide 2½ pints of milk per week to every citizen accessible to supplies; to supply the necessary citrus fruits, of which Australians eat far too little, and to supply the necessary berry fruits which contain vitamins vital to complete health, would require about 10,000 man units in the case of dairy farming for milk, and 1,000 farmers in the case of both citrus and berry fruits.

That is an interesting comment made by authoritative people and shows that Australians, after all, are a remarkably well fed people, and that so far as a perfect nutritional balance is concerned it would not appreciably increase land occupation and successful settlement if they reached maximum proportions in the food they consume. A very interesting development to that point of view was raised at the conference at Hot Springs, which was an international conference on food and agriculture, held during the war years, in 1943. The report of the Hot Springs conference, although to some extent idealistic, is one which all nations promised to study. They also promised to endeavour to put the recommendations into effect. The original recommendations are interesting and in 1943 it was hoped they would be realised. They are contained in the report as follows:—

This conference, meeting in the midst of the greatest war ever waged, and in full confidence of victory, has considered the world problems of food and agriculture and declares its belief that the goal of freedom from want of food, suitable and adequate for the health and strength of all peoples, can be achieved.

2. The first task is to complete the winning of the war and to deliver millions of people from tyranny and from hunger. During the

period of critical shortage in the aftermath of war, freedom from hunger can be achieved only by urgent and concerted efforts to economise consumption, to increase supplies and distribute them to the best advantage.

2. Thereafter we must equally concert our efforts to win and maintain freedom from fear and freedom from want. The one cannot be achieved without the other.

3. There has never been enough food for the health of all people. This is justified neither by ignorance nor by the harshness of Nature. Production of food must be greatly expanded; we now have knowledge of the means by which this can be done. It requires imagination and firm will on the part of each Government and people to make use of that knowledge.

The conference concluded its recommendations by saying—

5. The primary responsibility lies with each nation for seeing that its own people have the food needed for life and health; steps to this end are for national determination. But each nation can fully achieve its goal only if all work together.

Those expressed opinions, if possible of international achievement, would constitute one of the most desirable objects ever sought by civilised man. They would bring about a condition of things, internationally, embodying not only a freedom from fear and freedom from want, but freedom from war. The nations which have dealt with the considerations of the Hot Springs conference really believe, I think, that although the recommendations are very unlikely of achievement, we could go a long way towards that end if goodwill and determination for international good feeling were engendered, and nations thereby brought closer together with a common purpose. And, too, there is a very important angle, as far as undeveloped countries are concerned, from an agricultural production point of view. If such an achievement were possible internationally, the Australian export position would substantially be bettered and, in the case of many commodities, become firmer and sounder.

It is, I think, important to appreciate just what was the position of Australian exports for many years pre-war. Even during the days of our maximum exports to Great Britain and the Continent, thousands of people were still suffering from malnutrition in countries where we found ready markets for much of our produce. The figures of the exports of Australian production to England give us some food for

thought insofar as they show how dependent we are on oversea markets for our major primary production. In the case of such a commodity as wheat—about 25 per cent. is consumed internally—we have, because of the magnitude of production, a very high export ratio and a very large income. But then when we come to potatoes and many other such commodities, which are perishables, we find we have almost 100 per cent. consumption within Australia. Only 26 per cent. of our Australian production of dried fruits is consumed in Australia.

All these things act as pointers in showing which crops are dependent on variable export market prices and which are the soundest upon which to base our rural economy. Great Britain enters into that field perhaps more than any other country, as will be shown by the following figures. Of our total export of certain commodities in the years 1936 to 1939—the three years prior to war breaking out—Great Britain took 50 per cent. of our exported wheat; 94 per cent. of our exported butter; 96 per cent. of our exported cheese; 94 per cent. of our exported sugar; 95 per cent. of our exported wine; 60 per cent. of our exported raisins; 83 per cent. of our exported currants; 98 per cent. of our exported pork; 91 per cent. of our exported beef and 99 per cent. of our exported eggs. These figures are very expressive in showing the dependence of Australia on the United Kingdom as a market for our surplus commodities for export. They show that in the move now being made by the British authorities, not only through their food mission, but in the stimulation of trade between the Dominions and the Mother country, there are opportunities not only for the immediate market, but to plan for long range security in many agricultural lines.

Members will have noticed some very interesting comments by Mr. Casey after his recent visit to Queensland. He stated that the potential for development in that State was very great and that agriculture there offered scope for large developmental plans. He mentions that since the coal-fields and areas adjoining, which are potential agricultural settlements are situated as they are in regard to harbours and ports Queensland appears to offer an opportunity second to none not only for the expansion of Australian agriculture but for the ex-

pansion of Empire interests. Whether Mr. Casey is right or wrong—and I know Queensland fairly well—I know that there are also opportunities in other parts of Australia. It is perhaps not necessary for me to say that for a few years it was my privilege to assist with others in taking stock of the Australian agricultural position and I had an opportunity of seeing all the areas in Australia, Tasmania included, which were considered by the Governments of those States to be the best areas in Australia for rural development. Therefore Sir Henry Turner's remarks made just prior to his departure from Australia should prove very informative to all of those who are interested, not only in the British food mission, but in the possible development of food production in this State.

Sir Henry Turner has been severely criticised by some people but to me it appeared mainly because he expressed points of view from which these people differed. The background of Sir Henry Turner gives him authority to speak not only for Britain, but also on the food supply nationally and internationally. This man is 61 years of age and is English born. Most of his life has been spent in New Zealand and he was associated with the meat trade in that country. In the first world war he held the position of Deputy Director of the Ministry of Food and after the first world war he was attached to the British section of the Peace Conference. He was manager in New Zealand of the Refrigerated Foods Company and has spent the major part of his life in the handling of foods, the importing of foods, in the production of canned foods, and in his attention to overseas markets. Some statements were made by Sir Henry Turner prior to his departure from Australia which were very complimentary to Western Australia. He said—

The places with the most possibilities in Australia are the Northern Territory and the southern part of Western Australia. I can imagine no more fruitful field into which a young man could go to make his fortune than South-Western Australia.

He said the latter area particularly had dramatic possibilities of which he had never dreamed before he came to Australia. He and the Food Mission were relying on that area, following the assurance of the Western Australian Government officials, to be

a vital factor in increasing meat production for Britain in the near future. However, Sir Henry Turner said that so far as Britain is concerned he could not recommend that settlers be sent to this area, at least for some years. Talks with Western Australian Government officials had convinced him that Western Australia would have its hands full for many years in placing its own soldier settlers in that area.

If Australia can speed up her meat production, he continued, Australia would be more important to Britain as a meat exporting country than the Argentine. Sir Henry was giving his last Press interview before leaving Australia after a three months' tour during which period he covered 25,000 miles. He stated that he left Australia with the conviction that Australian meat production could be doubled in five years' time. That would mean that the British housewife could buy twopence worth more of meat per week for each member of her household in 1953. He finished his statement by saying that the best prospect for increased meat production lay in the districts already partly developed and that Britain would assure a market and pay a fair price, which is a big incentive. I do not know how many Western Australians read that article.

The Minister for Works: I think most of them did.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I hope so because, while not at all necessarily impressed by the words he used as to the dramatic possibilities, I point out that this man has had an opportunity of seeing in a world sense those portions of the countries of the world—especially within the British Commonwealth—where opportunities for expansion lie. Therefore no matter how many people differ from his point of view that the expansion prospects are in the areas now partly developed, I for one believe that he is on the soundest ground possible in making that statement for reasons which I will later analyse. It is obvious that Sir Henry Turner was not at all impressed by areas which are awaiting development.

Mr. Leslie: How many did he see in this State?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Sir Henry Turner visited most of the lands in this State which were typical of all of it. He had opportunities for seeing the sandplain country,

the light land country and areas which were partly developed, as well as areas which are almost wholly developed. I am sure that it is sound commonsense to anticipate in this or any other State that land which is partly developed, especially where it is adjacent to amenities and where the Government has provided not only railways and roads, but facilities in townships, should be developed to the maximum, and this would be less risky and much less worrying to both settler and the Government. It is obvious from his remarks and obvious from the reaction of English people to efforts to induce them to leave England, that the old experience of getting migrants from England to pioneer our agricultural areas is not to be expected and is unlikely to be realised.

Although farming migrants may be ideal in the view of some people for supplying settlers, we must remember that Australia's pre-war migration policy did not succeed in placing more than 14 per cent. of the migrants satisfactorily on the land. We also have to remember that from an analysis of the balance of the productive capacity of farms and farmers it is unlikely, in any influx of migrants from any country, that rural areas will retain more than about 15 per cent. That is a figure for which volumes of evidence can be produced to prove as approximately correct in taking the over-all population percentages which become rural and urban from whatever their source and from whatever their country.

The Premier: Do you not think that the new methods of land clearing and development would be a greater incentive for people to settle on the land?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, that is a possibility, but we must remember that in all methods used to increase production from given areas in so far as income capacity is concerned it is possible for wheat farmers—as some numbers in this Chamber have done—to grow enough wheat in one year to feed not only the people on their own farms, and those they employ, but thousands of other people. The same thing obtains in all avenues of farming life and the percentage likely to remain rural if we are attempting to base a migration policy on land development will, I think in a sound way perhaps, be built up to 20 per cent., but experience shows that it is unlikely to exceed

that figure. The earlier lure for the pioneering of land has gone, and I think so far as Australians and Britishers are concerned there are not very many people aspiring to be "Dads" and "Daves."

Mr. Leslie: There is no need. That has disappeared.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There are not very many people who think that Steele Rudd's days are still with us. No-one is anxious to emulate them and I do not consider they should be expected to do so as I think the necessity has gone. Although it is very interesting reading, I know the Chamber would not like me to give a story of "Dad" and "Dave" or "Mum" or any such characters.

Mr. Leslie: The Speaker would not allow you to do so.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Speaker would not prevent me as it is relevant to the Lieut.-Governor's Speech.

Mr. Marshall: Is it as obsolete as the Lieut.-Governor's Speech?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I do not intend to inflict it on this Chamber, but I do say that we should not expect potential farmers in these days to emulate "Dad" and "Dave." Therefore I come to the point that for two reasons, to speed up existing production for emergency post-war needs, and to aim towards better land use in partly settled areas, we must see that pressure is exerted better to use the land where the Crown has provided the services. I consider that any member who holds a view contrary to that is not acting in the best interests of Western Australia.

Would anyone dare say that the land between Perth and Augusta—Perth being the apex and Albany the other base of the triangle—is in its partly developed state, likely by a process of evolution to contain the population which this State of ours desires, deserves, and should demand? In my view, that part of Western Australia is one of the most important areas in Australia and perhaps in the temperate climates of the world for building up white settlements. Anyone can see that where there are large holdings and the incomes therefrom are going to one or two families, whether it be in grazing, which is highly profitable, or whether it be in any other sphere, there should be limitations.

Mr. Mann: Hear, hear! I agree with that.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I will show later in my speech, and prove conclusively that the South West Land Division of Western Australia is one of the best areas in the world awaiting white settlement—the South-West Land Division, extending from Geraldton and very much east, as well as the South-West. We have to bear in mind, before I leave the migrant aspect, that migrants are attracted from their home country because of better conditions offering to them. Insofar as working conditions are concerned, it may be that conditions in England today are such that it would require special attractions from countries overseas to get artisans and tradesmen away from their own country. They are well paid, their conditions have improved out of all knowledge, and we must not expect, I think, a flow of immigrants, because of claimants, to come to Australia unless such flow is stimulated strongly by all Governments concerned. The alternatives to our land settlement in Western Australia are not very many. In Crown land the best was given away decades ago. Many people have remarked how early settlers showed great judgment in selecting the areas which, even in the light of scientific knowledge of which they had no advice, still turned out to be the best settled lands. These areas, particularly in the South-West, are amongst the most valuable in the State today and are worth many pounds per acre. I know of one member of Parliament who paid £40 per acre for land to add to his property.

The Premier: In the irrigation area?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, but that land was ceded from the Crown and was alienated at about 15s. per acre. This State, to promote settlement, gave away its heritage insofar as getting any remuneration from conditional purchase areas was concerned. It gave away its heritage very cheaply to promote development. It is true that we have about 10,000,000 acres of good quality light land still undeveloped. Those are not my figures; they are from the officers of the Agricultural Department. I have noted the land survey which came from a joint report that I think was made available by the Minister for Lands, in which Mr. Shive was concerned with one of his officers. I think his estimate was that there is still 10,000,000 acres of good quality light land awaiting exploration in Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: It is only a matter of replacing many elements missing from it.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, but I am speaking of land in safe rainfall areas which is very much outside of that zone. Then there is the only other alternative: The heavily timbered Crown and privately owned land which is so costly to develop and for which heavy machinery is necessary in these days if we are to go on the basis of economic development to have that land prepared for farming. In the Speech of His Excellency there is a paragraph which reads—

Soil surveys have been completed of approximately 1,500,000 acres in the heavier rainfall localities and provided equipment can be obtained these areas will be developed as rapidly as possible. Preparatory steps have been taken to implement a scheme for development in the Altany Zone.

I take it that that area—the Minister for Lands will know—would refer to the work between the Blackwood area to the Stirlings, which was started on a very big plan between two departments, Lands and Agriculture, and in the latter days of the war, the C.S.I.R. That provided for development in the field of all the soil surveys necessary. I think that would be the 1,500,000 acres referred to. The initial surveys there started in the Manjimup area and went through all of that country south of Bridgetown; right through Frankland River, Cranbrook, and finishing up at the Stirling region.

The Minister for Lands: And that included Rocky Gully.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes. I remember having arranged the first exchange of officers with Sir David Rivett and Dr. Richardson to have that work commenced at Manjimup, and I am very interested to notice that the Government appears to recognise the soundness of soil surveys before settlement. I am therefore hoping that this mention in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech really means that the Government is convinced that under the conditions existing in regard to land remaining under the Crown soil surveys are a very important and vital part in the preparation for land settlement.

The Minister for Works: We are acting on those convictions.

The Minister for Lands: That is definite. I have just minuted a file to the Premier, showing where we are carrying on with further soil surveys.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am very glad to hear that because I think it is the kind of work that is going to save a lot of trouble, especially where agricultural elements and deficiencies are concerned. The difficulties of using Crown land are shown by a recent Press statement made by the Minister for Lands. In "The Sunday Times" of last Sunday it was mentioned in a Press statement from the hon. gentleman that 285 properties had been purchased for War Service Land Settlement, at a cost of £1,875,000, and after that £1,875,000 is spent in buying back from private owners partly developed land, another £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 must be spent to prepare those areas for soldier settlement under the scheme. This clearly shows just how difficult it is for the Crown in these days to use land which is still left awaiting selection to promote either ordinary or soldier settlement.

One would hardly think it was necessary in a State of the dimensions of this one and as young as this one, to promote successful soldier settlement in the first year or so after the inauguration of a scheme for soldier settlement when it was commencing so largely to repurchase from private people land for such settlement. The fact that the State of Western Australia has so little good or suitable Crown land must be, with some exceptions, truly the picture I endeavoured to draw in regard to partially developed land, and the responsibilities, in my view, of landholders to the community.

The Minister for Works: That would quicken production.

Hon F. J. S. WISE: I am not at this stage intending in any way to criticise aspects of land settlement in Western Australia, whether they are answering or measuring up to pre-election boasts of achievement or not. I simply desire to say that in that short Press statement is the picture of the difficulties—even though they were not firmly recognised—associated with intense attempts to promote settlement in Western Australia. The Minister for Lands mentioned in this article that 1,279 applicants had been approved and were awaiting farms in spite of the land which is sup-

posed to be available in Western Australia and suitable for farming. I believe there is all the land available in Western Australia suitable for farming if the Government still scrutinises very closely what I endeavored to draw attention to by introducing legislation twice for the amendment of the Closer Settlement Act which I think is the responsibility of Governments and which I would at any time wholeheartedly support if this Government introduces such a measure.

Mr. Leslie: I think the land is still there without the necessity for it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: No one seems to be able to find it.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I will be quite satisfied in my belief that the Lands Department, will be ready to welcome with open arms any member or citizen with a proposal of Crown land or privately owned land which is attractive from a subdivisational angle on an economic basis. I think that the policy which has been developed in the Lands Dept., not only in the time of this Government but during the time of its predecessors, is the only way to approach successfully the occupation of our lands by rural development. We all want to see some results. We all want to see promises translated into achievements. In this connection, the Government is in the position of having to make good its promises, and so far as we are concerned—this being a national matter—we will not in any way do anything to hinder them in an attempt to achieve the results which we ourselves had planned for.

The next point in the Speech I wish to mention is that of the visit of the Premier to the North-West. The Premier recently discovered the North-West. Numbers of people do that annually, of course. As a matter of fact, some people that I know, and know quite well, have been qualified as voters for the North Province for half a lifetime without having seen it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Who are you looking at?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am looking straight ahead. It is always of interest to me to assist people, whether they are concerned from the point of view of the welfare of the community or for personal or political reasons, to discover the North and to know it, even if that had been their obligation and responsibility for many years and had been recognised by them.

But that position obtains. I am always interested when people go to the North under pleasant circumstances and find it a matter of pride in having discovered this large area in Western Australia.

The Premier: You are not at all resentful, are you?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Not a scrap. I am anxious to help as I have said. The honourable gentleman must not take that personally, because I was anxious to help him, as he knows. The prospect of population in the North is a subject that has been explored for a very long time.

Mr. Leslie: Do you suggest that the Premier has not explored it?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I was twitted by the Premier in a moment of pique last night when he said that in 1933 I was a mere boy.

The Premier: Did I say that?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: You did. It is recorded in my speech as an interjection, as a matter of fact.

The Premier: That was to the Chairman of Committees.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Well, the report does not read that way.

The Minister for Railways: There is no doubt about it.

The Minister for Housing: Why not accept the compliment?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Were it a soft impeachment or a compliment, I would turn the other cheek because, in 1930, I was an unsuccessful candidate for the North Province, and I had to be 30 years of age in order to contest the election. Before that, I was defeated by 27 votes, an experience I clearly recall. Many years before 1933—I do not wish to be diverted from my theme, though perhaps it is my fault—the Government of this State, in an attempt to foster population in the North, appointed a Tropical Agricultural Adviser. That appointment was first made in 1923. This officer had the very unenviable task of breaking down theories about agricultural possibilities of the great North-West which then, too, was frequently and regularly discovered by visitors.

Land development through the medium of cotton settlements, the production of peanuts and the importation of thousands of

grasses and shrubs from other semi-arid countries of the world, occupied that officer for a year or two. I know that he assembled the first cotton planting machine ever used on this side of the continent, drove it out and put in the first cotton at the Derby settlement. The officer, in reporting, said that that land would not grow cotton successfully, but was told by a superior officer that £10,000 had been voted for the experiment and would be spent on the settlement. It was spent and no cotton was produced.

I recall, also, that hundredweights of peanut seed were brought from Queensland to test the possibility of peanut-growing in that region. I clearly remember the attempt that officer made to stimulate interest in peanuts in a popular way, though they were usually associated with the Zoo or the pictures. It is important to state that America has 150,000 farmers growing peanuts alone. It is the crop that gives a higher monetary return per acre in all the southern States of America. In five of the States, the yield is 750,000 tons a year. France, pre-war, expressed 40 million gallons of peanut oil from imported nuts.

The Minister for Housing: The yield is 70 or 80 per cent. of oil, is it not?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes; some varieties yield as high as 84 per cent. but some only 50 or 60 per cent. I recall clearly the attempts that were made on the various mission stations, which were the areas used for the trials and of the peanuts being transported by lugger from Port George IV Mission to Derby for shipment to Perth. That was in 1923-24, and it was not until 1926 that attempts were made to grow peanuts in the Northern Territory, so that we in this State, through that officer, pioneered the industry, whatever became of it, in Northern Australia. In those days the officer was an energetic enthusiastic man.

The Minister for Works: What is he like today?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Let the Minister look for himself. Having been that officer 25 years ago, I can say that attempts have been made from that day to this to develop prospects of agriculture in one of the largest areas of semi-arid undeveloped country in the world. One of the most important things attempted was to introduce plants from semi-arid countries in the

hope of finding even one or two that would stand up to our conditions. I am leading up to the point that, so far as I know, there is not today any agricultural adviser in the North-West.

The Premier: I hope there soon will be one.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: So do I. That territory is very different from the rest of the State. It is not a tropical country in the sense that we understand the term. It is a land of low rainfall and of atmospheric aridity, not a land of humidity. It is an area where all sorts of natural disabilities have to be overcome in order to grow anything because of the dryness of the air right down to the very edge of the coastal water. In that region some industries have shown themselves to be possible, and I would hope that the Government could select a man of the highest possible qualifications, a man not afraid of work or of rebuffs, a man capable of promoting every aspect of agriculture, even though the prospect may not be very good.

The Premier: Do you think that one man could cover the whole of that huge area, or would you favour a separate appointment for the Kimberleys?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Kimberleys form a territory very different from the middle North, the Murchison and the Gascoyne. The Kimberleys is an area with a rainfall five or six times greater than that of the lower North where bananas are being grown successfully under irrigation. The Kimberleys offer prospects for growing peanuts and attracting British capital and British interests, but I think that one officer, because of the smallness of the areas under production, could give his attention to the Kimberleys for a few months and the rest of his time to areas where production is already an accomplished fact. There should be no difficulty in obtaining the services of a practical man trained particularly in a knowledge of soils and climatology. Ample proof exists of the valuable results which research in tropical agriculture has given to Australia.

I commend to the perusal of the Premier and the Minister for Lands the many works by sound writers on the soils and prospects of agricultural possibilities of tropical Australia. I would refer them more particularly to the works of Pres-

cott and Skewes. Prescott has made contributions during his period of service with the C.S.I.R. in regard to tropical Australia, but I am afraid they are far too infrequently read. I have all of his publications, and I assure members that they leave little to the imagination of anybody who studies them.

The research work issued by the Waite Institute over the name of Prescott entitled, "The Climate of Tropical Australia in Relation to Possible Agricultural Occupation," is one that I assume has been read by officers of the Department of Agriculture in this State, but if not, it should be read by them, and it should be read also by those people who are promoting public works in the North-West if such public works have any association with agricultural development. Prescott, in his analyses of the possibilities, shows what similar countries do with their territory. He quotes Nigeria as approximating most closely to our North-West.

Mr. Mann: The first thing is to have a Minister for the North-West.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Premier is Minister for the North-West, but whether he gives full time to the North-West is another matter. This valuable report contains in great detail comparisons not only of rainfall and variations of climate but also of conditions in all the countries of the world that are comparable. If the Premier can find time to read these reports, I shall be pleased to lend them to him because they would give him a lead on the link that public works must form if irrigation is contemplated and if agriculture is to be successful.

I suggest, too, something I had in mind before relinquishing the office of Premier, and that was to send to Nigeria one or two of our best officers likely to participate in any agricultural development in the North, and I would suggest sending the Director of Works with them. Such a trip would not take long, and I would be pleased to supply a possible itinerary covering things they ought to see in that country. Although labour conditions in Nigeria are dissimilar from ours, certainly a comparison could be made geographically which might give to the North the stimulus it badly needs if agriculture in that part of the State is possible.

All of this has much to do with the subject of food production. I remember mention being made by the Minister for Education of the activities in Nigeria of a British company, which was to spend £6,000,000 in the production of oil nuts. The Minister made that statement during the course of the election campaign. Records of what the English company is doing are in the possession of the Department of Agriculture, and those records show not only the prospects in Nigeria, but also details of the oil shortages throughout the world and particularly in the British Empire, and with whale oil included, it is very unlikely that the demand for vegetable and animal oils will be satisfied for very many years. It may be possible to interest England if this State follows the line of thought I have suggested, the plans which I had in course of preparation, and to study what is being done in that other country to see if what is being done there can be applied to our State. There are many other areas of some importance about which people at times wax eloquent, such as Millstream, which is above the fertile plains of the Roebourne district, very low in rainfall. Millstream is a continuously flowing stream from an underground lake, which disappears into the Fortescue River.

Mr. Mann: Sufficient for irrigation?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is very good. It has been measured. I was associated with those inquiries.

Mr. Mann: What is the analysis so far as salt is concerned?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There are only eight grains of salt per gallon. It is wonderful water. The reticulation to the lower plains and the use of the lower plains is something that has been discussed through the years with Directors of Agriculture to see whether it is worth while to establish a small area to test certain crops to prove the economic value. I would stress that for the information of the Premier. I hope he is always actuated by the economic prospects of any undertaking, even if he is goaded by some of his officers towards aspects other than economic. We must make certain that there will be no failures, whether it is our own money or British money that is involved.

Before I analyse the prospects of the South-West corner of this State, I would like to, what may be called, ride a hobby horse—that is possible on the Address-in-reply—and relate what may be found in unoccupied Australia. Some members know that a hobby of mine is the geography of the world, but particularly of Australia. Its records of exploration and the recorded facts of geography and our explorations tell the story just as truly today as 160 years ago. One hundred and sixty years ago Captain Phillip landed at Botany Bay, and that site was chosen on the advice of Sir Joseph Banks, who had accompanied Captain Cook, in 1770. As I intend to traverse, in the course of the next few moments, all the empty parts of Australia, I will skip over the wonderful contribution to the knowledge of this continent which was given to us over 100 years ago by such men as Blaxland, the first to cross the Blue Mountains, Hume and Oxley, Cunningham, Mitchell and Sturt, and all those who made possible the successful occupation of the eastern side of Australia, and I will turn to those who were on the scene from 1837 to 1897.

It was during those 60 years that most of Western Australia was examined by the explorer. In the December issue of the Western Australian Historical Society's annual publication of a few years ago—I think it was 1940—will be found a review of the early explorations of Western Australia. That review commenced with the work of Sir George Grey, who was the first to traverse the inhospitable coast northwards towards Shark Bay. Members will recall how he had to be rescued by Roe, who was our first Surveyor General and could be called, I think, the father of Western Australian exploration. Roe did very much in the southern and eastern parts of the State in penetrating the then unknown areas and making them possible of settlement. The year 1841 was the year of the wonderful exploit of Eyre, who came from Fowler's Bay to Albany. The complete story will be found in the book "Waterless Horizons." His exploit was really an historic and heroic walk.

If members have read that book, they will realise what confronted this man, who had no knowledge of what lay before him. He elected, even when a whaling vessel rescued him, simply to rest and then con-

tinue his journey on foot. From March, 1841, to July, 1841, that epic and heroic trek took place. He found there was no stream emptying itself into the Great Australian Bight. The men I will mention in this survey, one historian has described as men who found nothing. They were men who went into the most difficult areas but were relegated into the background by one historian as men who found nothing, because they did not follow the pleasant ways that many explorers preceding them had been fortunate enough to pursue.

The departure of the Gregorys in 1855 in a little boat appropriately named the "Tom Tough" from Brisbane to the Victoria River, and the work of those brothers in Western Australia are exploits worth considerable study. The member for Kimberley knows, as I know, of the bottle tree on the bank of the Baines River which is branded "12th June, 1856—Gregory's Camp." That is on one of Durack's properties. Those brothers penetrated as far as the spot known as Godfrey's Tank at the head of the present Canning Stock Route. With botanists, they did a remarkable work 90 years ago in locating attractive country in the northern part of Western Australia. One of the brothers named peaks in the Hamersley Ranges and did considerable exploration in the Gascoyne, and to those men a considerable debt is owed by the Western Australian community.

From 1859 to 1862, the stage of exploration and discovery was held almost entirely by Stuart, the man who, after a lot of endeavour and privation, was the first to cross the continent from south to north. In 1862, he traversed a line—one of the greatest achievements in exploration—from south to north, very close to where the overland telegraph line was built in 1872, ten years afterwards. Those men kept records of their travels, most of them having much survey knowledge, which are still accurately preserved and give us a clear indication of the country traversed. It is interesting to observe that in 1872 there were still 1,000 miles of country unknown between the extreme edge of the eastern line of settlement in Western Australia to the overland telegraph line.

Giles, who was one of our greatest explorers, but the least known, and whose grave is in the Coolgardie cemetery, died

as a public servant, a junior officer in the Registrar's office in Kalgoorlie. From 1873 to 1875 he explored some of the most unattractive country in this continent. In his book "Australia Twice Traversed" will be found the story of Gibson's Desert, where he sent his mate forward 60 miles from their camp in an attempt to get water to save their lives. The mate went on horseback while Giles walked. Gibson perished but Giles got through on foot. If members want a clear description of the country north of the transcontinental line, I suggest that they read "Australia Twice Traversed."

It was about that time—1873—that Sir Thomas Elder financed Warburton—afterwards Sir Egerton Warburton—to traverse the country from the overland telegraph line westwards from a spot north of Alice Springs. He left the overland line with 17 camels, and in his book "Across Australia" there is a story of suffering nobly borne which has very few parallels. He started with 17 camels and seven of them were eaten for food. A week before Christmas, in 1873, they ate a camel's foot which he described as a great delicacy. It was the only food they had that day. He finished his trek above the Oakover River, a tributary at the head of the De Grey. Several of his men never recovered, and his own health was shattered because of that terrible experience of bowling deserts and sandhills, clearly described in the book of a later explorer I will mention in a moment.

One of the bravest men, as well as one of the greatest explorers, was without doubt, Forrest. In the diaries of Forrest will be found day by day descriptions of his journeys, and at times, for 10 to 15 days at a stretch, the predominant word in the account is "water": Searching for water; riding ahead in the hope of locating water or scattered storms! At a point where Giles was forced to turn back a year before, providentially a storm occurred, and Forrest got through to the overland telegraph line. We are foolish if we do not recognise what this arid desert country is, and what its prospects are. I come now to Carnegie.

The Premier: In "Spinifex and Sand"?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, it is a book which will give any person doubting what



is in that country a clear description of the areas Carnegie traversed in 1897. He set out from Coolgardie to cross the lines of all those I have previously mentioned—Giles, Warburton and Forrest—at right angles, knowing there was no prospect of water unless it was found by accident, and knowing that he had to face privation. I will quote one paragraph from his book, describing the sand ridges. It is as follows:—

The southern part from latitude 22° 40' to latitude 20° 45' presents nothing to the eye but ridge upon ridge of sand, running with the regularity of the drills in a ploughed field—a vast, howling wilderness of high, spinifex clad ridges of red sand, so close together that in a day's march we crossed from 60 to 80 ridges, so steep that often the camels had to crest them on their knees, and so barren and destitute of vegetation that one marvels how even camels could pick up a living. Their average vertical height from trough to crest was 50 to 60 feet. Sometimes they would be a quarter of a mile apart, sometimes ridge succeeded ridge like the waves of the sea. On October the 3rd, for instance, we were crossing them at the rate of 10 in 40 minutes. Words can give no conception of the ghastly desolation and hopeless dreariness of the scene.

He was travelling on the line which will be found in many maps in the Lands Department of this State. They show the exact track of Carnegie on his journey from south to north. A clear picture of his nature will be found in his book—which I have mentioned—and when he had opportunity, after getting to Hall's Creek, losing two of his mates while getting there, of travelling by horse to Derby and thence by boat to Fremantle, he thought that too feeble a thing to do. He struck 100 miles inland and made for Coolgardie again, and of course he succeeded in getting through. These are factual illustrations of what is outside the settled areas of this State.

There are many other records to which I could refer, but I will confine myself to the position in this State. In my view those people were benefactors of mankind, who gave us knowledge that civilisation should appreciate. They proved that our future population prospects must be based on geography and climatology, and proved that about 45 per cent. of Australia is arid—that Australia, in fact, has the second largest area of arid land in the world. There was a time when many people who were not game to face the facts would have said that my remarks were heresy, and that it

was a terrible thing to decry this continent. I am not doing that, but am facing undeniable facts in order to reach my next point and show how great are our riches and how limitless our opportunities. The men I have mentioned proved that the pastoralists were unlikely to penetrate that area and events have shown that pastoralists have not successfully occupied the land east of the Oakover, reached by Warburton, who traversed it 75 years ago. A small property named Barramine, owned last by the Heppingstone Bros. is on the outer fringe, at the head of the Oakover River.

For 60 or 70 years the boundaries of the desert have been occupied by pastoralists, and it has not been inaccessibility that has kept them from going further inland. The men I have mentioned proved the limits of water, of artesian basins, of rainfall and climate. Subsequent events have furnished further proof in that direction. I will shortly mention something about education, from the kindergarten to the University, which I think is very important in relation to this subject. Events have proved that 7,000,000 people occupy the coastal fringe in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the South-West of this continent. That part of this State is one of the best areas in the world for white settlement. In this 25 per cent. of Australia we still are maintaining our standards and ways of life. I think that in that area tens of millions of people will be able to dwell when the lands are fully developed. That is the basis upon which we, as Australians, should endeavour to develop our country.

I return to Sir Henry Turner, and agree that the southern part of Western Australia is an area of dramatic possibility in the future development of Australian primary production. This Government, the Commonwealth Government, or both, should encourage Great Britain to send her best agricultural experts, including successful British farmers, to measure the possibilities of this State in the light of the long range prospects of development and production, and the need for settlement, spending British money on machinery in preparation and in the interests of the colonisation of this part of the Commonwealth. In my view it could be expanded tremendously, simply by better land use. I have illustrated that the prospects now do not, in

the main, lie in the direction of developing land that has not been alienated from the Crown. This land has a definite and distinct limit, and officers of more than one department have measured it. They know its potential and therefore, if we are to contemplate expanding production or population, we must look to those assets many of which were given by the Crown to fortunate people who are now large landholders.

I come now to education from the kindergarten to the University. A matter which I discussed with the Minister's predecessor—it will be found in the records—is the necessity for a study and knowledge of civics and of responsibility to the community and the State. While civics give a better understanding of our responsibilities to our country and neighbours, geography is a subject a study of which should be intensified, in all its branches and directions, better to understand what Aristotle meant when he said, "To deal in the best way possible with existing conditions." That is the problem facing Western Australia today. I will now deal with the concluding paragraph in the latest work on Australia by Griffith Taylor who, in my view, is the greatest geographer in the world. It deals with what he has to say about the aims of civilisation. He mentions that the conditions of matriculation in Australian schools are such that children spend one-fifth of their time studying languages, and that only a small percentage of them will use that knowledge at the University or in later life. He goes on to say—

The aim of civilisation, as I see it, is not to prepare for a better world beyond this earth, but to prepare a better world on this earth. Our immediate objective should be a world at peace. This can only be attained by studying world problems, especially those involving other nations and regions. This is the special province of the modern geographer, especially if he gives considerable attention to the new department of cultural geography. What should be the training of the educated man today? If we omit for the moment the specialised knowledge he needs for his profession, then we might do worse than adopt Aristotle's idea, "To deal in the best way possible with existing conditions." Three subjects would seem to be vital in such a scheme of education. First biology, which deals with the evolution of man as an animal; secondly history, which deals largely with the growth of his ideals and institutions; thirdly geography, which deals with his present ever-

varying environment. A knowledge of evolution in the broadest sense should be the aim of education. Modern geography is precisely the best discipline to teach man that he is conditioned by his environment; that he himself is changing, however slightly, and is part of the mechanism of evolution; and that he can only understand his own place in the scheme of things if he has a real knowledge of the relation of man to his environment.

That will suggest to the Minister for Education the necessity for promoting, from the kindergarten to the University, a knowledge of two important things—civics and geography—for the equipment of man for his life.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 till 7.30 p.m.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I now proceed to my last comments on matters referred to in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. On page 5 we find these words—

While local supplies of building materials have shown considerable improvement in many directions and it has been possible to eliminate some controls, the building industry continues to be subject to the limitations of manpower and certain classes of materials.

A further paragraph states—

The effective building rate at the end of May last was 2,712 houses per annum. Increase of this rate will, for the time being, be chiefly dependent on the expansion of the State's force of building tradesmen.

Before going into any comments on the subject of housing, I desire to say how disappointed I was, firstly, at any suggestion of the necessity for a Royal Commission to inquire into the activities of the Housing Commission and, secondly, in connection with the report and the findings. My only comment on this is that, in my view, the report was a most unjudicial document and I hope it will soon be entirely forgotten, because it is quite useless, in my opinion, from any point of view. I hope, therefore, it will not again be found necessary to raise in this Chamber the subject-matter within the document constituting the report of the Royal Commission or the considerations which prompted the appointment of the Royal Commission. I think no good purpose would be served in or out of this Chamber by pursuing the matter.

In further reference to the paragraphs I have read from His Excellency's Speech, I take it that, firstly, they convey that there

has been considerable improvement in the supply of materials; secondly, that there has been a high level of construction, and, thirdly, that there is a shortage of tradesmen and of locally produced materials. The paragraphs also suggest that there have been certain difficulties. In tracing back the factors operating in connection with the housing situation, particularly those that obtained during the difficult period of the war and that immediately following upon the cessation of hostilities, there is a story that I believe is very creditable to the Government in office at that time. I think that when I have finished this analysis, even the Minister for Housing will agree that that is the position.

Prior to the Government that I led going out of office, I took the opportunity to secure a report from the chairman of the Housing Commission regarding its activities up to that time. This is the report, dated March, 1947, that I received—

In connection with the house-building programme being undertaken or controlled by the State Housing Commission, I wish to submit the following report for your information.

As you know, all house building was suspended at the request of the Commonwealth Government early in 1942 and was not resumed until the end of 1944. During that period of nearly three years only essential building was undertaken and that was done under a system of permit issues by the Commonwealth Government. In August, 1945, the Commonwealth intimated to the States that they had determined to relinquish the control of permit issues and leave that matter to the States. Between the end of 1944 and August, 1945, houses were built either under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement or under permits issued by the Commonwealth Government under the National Security Regulations.

When building ceased in 1942, most of the tradesmen who had hitherto been engaged in this industry were taken up in war work of the same type or transferred to other industries so that when building recommenced at the end of 1944 a fresh start had to be made and the necessary labour force and supply of materials properly organised.

Very great difficulties were experienced in the initial stages due to the lack of skilled labour and the scarcity of material and though repeated requests were made to the Commonwealth Government for the release of men who were then in the Army and who were skilled in the building trade, the response was almost negative. It was not until some time after the war ceased that anything approaching a reasonable supply of labour was forthcoming.

Despite these almost insuperable difficulties, very good progress has been made under the

Commonwealth-State rental housing scheme. I should here state that very few houses were erected until about the middle of 1945 though the scheme started late in 1944.

Further in the report Mr. Reid states—

In regard to the issue of permits for private building, it may be stated that prior to the outbreak of war this State, on an average, built about 2,000 houses a year.

Then the report goes on to give particulars regarding the permits granted for each year from 1944 to the end of 1946 and for the first two months of 1947. I might mention at this point that from an absolutely standing start, with no men, no building tradesmen trained as such, no architects, no draughtsmen and no materials except such as could be released by the Army to meet civilian requirements, these figures must be considered. As I have indicated, no buildings of any sort were then being undertaken for civilian purposes. The figures are as follows:—

1944—668 permits for houses were granted.

1945—1,109 permits for houses were granted.

1946—1,815 permits for houses were granted.

January and February of 1947—350 permits for houses were granted.

The report continues—

These permits are in addition to the number of houses built under the State Housing Agreement, and it will be seen that the rate of building was, at the end of 1946, in excess of the pre-war rate, and that with the houses under construction and not completed under the rental scheme, plus the rate of permits being issued for private building, the rate of building in 1947 should be very much in excess of the pre-war rate.

Another problem which confronted the State Housing Commission when it recommenced its operations was the provision of suitable areas of land, and in this connection very good work has been done. When the building programme recommenced at the end of 1944, the then Workers' Homes Board held land sufficient for 1,045 houses. Since then, land has been purchased sufficient to accommodate a further 3,187 houses, and in addition, steps are being taken to acquire by compulsory resumption a further 1,850. After deducting areas utilised for houses already erected and being erected, the board has now in hand 4,974 blocks of land available for housing.

That figure coincides with the details given by the Minister for Housing recently when he said—

Since the State Housing Commission and its predecessor, the Workers' Homes Board, entered on an expanded housing programme to meet war arrears, 5,000 blocks have been acquired and for most of them services have been provided.

Repeating the statement made by Mr. Reid, 4,974 blocks had been made available for housing in our time. To continue the report:

The board is also negotiating for the purchase of several other very large areas so that it can be claimed with confidence that it has sufficient land to meet the programme for many years ahead.

The State Housing Commission is responsible also for the issuing of permits for buildings required for industrial purposes and in this connection it works in close collaboration with the Director of Industrial Development who is the representative in Western Australia for the Commonwealth Secondary Industries Commission. The Director of Industrial Development reviews the requirements for industry and makes recommendations to the State Housing Commission. Arising out of this collaboration several large industries have been enabled to obtain the necessary extensions to their factories.

The report gives details of the various industrial buildings for which authority was given, some of them extending to single buildings costing upwards of £75,000. Thus, side by side with the stimulation from no construction at all, with no men and no materials available, I submit that this report, which is signed by Mr. A. J. Reid, not only gives the true story but, I think the Minister for Housing will agree, tells one of considerable achievement. That was within a year of the cessation of hostilities. The building rate was anticipated to be in the year 1947 much in excess of the pre-war rate. All fair-minded persons will agree that the truthfully-stated case of the chairman of the Housing Commission shows, in spite of what might have been thought or imagined, there had been an accomplishment in Western Australia which no other State of the Commonwealth had achieved in connection with building operations after the cessation of hostilities. The following are figures supplied in 1947 by the Commonwealth Director of Works and Housing. They show the costs per square for three-bedroom brick houses constructed under the Commonwealth-State Housing Scheme, and are as follows:—

New South Wales—£130.

Victoria—£122.

Queensland—£120.

South Australia—£90.

Western Australia—£87.

So that up to that time, for the last recorded figures available in February, 1947, without question, without any shadow of doubt, building costs in Western Australia

were the lowest of any State of Australia. That was supported by the Premier when he visited Melbourne in June of last year. He then said that Western Australia had the lowest building costs in Australia and that this was due mainly to two things; the Government had stricter control over the issue of building permits and the release of materials than had any other State. The Premier himself was therefore, in June of last year, able with pride to say, when visiting another State, that Western Australia enjoyed the lowest building costs of any State of Australia. The difficulties are acknowledged now by the Minister for Housing—for I take it that those are his expressions in the Speech of His Excellency. I now turn to quote some lying statements made in March, 1947, which were supported by the Hon. the Premier.

The Premier: Steady! I think you might be a little more careful in your choice of language.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I will be very careful in my choice of language. Those statements were supported by the Ministers and authorised by the secretary of the Liberal Party. There was no subject more wilfully misrepresented than housing during the last election campaign, no subject more wilfully or vigorously misrepresented by the Hon. the Premier and those associated with him. In an advertisement appearing in "The West Australian" of the 11th March, 1947, these words are to be found—

Labour's Great Housing Muddle.

For want of houses people are living in garages or old Army tents. Married couples, sometimes with families, are living in one room. Several families are living in one small house. Are the people to blame? No. The spineless and planless Labour Government are to blame. Some builders are only now receiving orders lodged in October and November last year. In the meantime the weak Labour Government side-steps the issue, shirks its responsibilities, and the people go without.

Another gem from the collection of lying statements and misrepresentations on the housing issue appeared in "The West Australian" of March last year. In large black type appear the words "Labour's Housing Racket." Choice of words, the hon. the Premier suggests! The meaning of racket, according to Webster's dictionary, is, "a fraudulent scheme." But he was pleased to

have such a secretary of his party to be responsible for such advertisements. "Labour's Housing Racket"!

Mr. Fox: I hope the member for Wagin will sleep on that.

Mr. Reynolds: He has no conscience.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The advertisement continues—

Here's a brilliant example of how the Labour Government's control and price-fixing have penalised home seekers.

What a gem! In "The West Australian" of the 25th April, 1948, the same Mr. Palmer, over his signature, said—

Western Australia's rents are the lowest in Australia, but that is under State control. Canberra has never controlled Western Australia's rents. For the past nine years Western Australia's rents have been State controlled and are the lowest in Australia.

For the miserable purpose of again putting in a fraudulent statement in the campaign on the referendum! We have the absolute audacity on the part of this man, who stated that the rents in Western Australia were the lowest in Australia. But in March, 1947, he said—

Here's a brilliant example of how the Labour Government's control and price-fixing have penalised home-seekers.

It is a brazen effrontery, if nothing else, and to think that such things should be allowed to slip by without public protest is amazing. This advertisement continues—

How prices rise with Wise.

That might be euphonious; it might even be a personal attack on me, for at that time I had been in charge for 15 months of the department under which housing comes. But this advertisement shows that the average five-roomed timber house, for which the rent in 1939 was 16s., had a rental in 1946 of 30s. 6d., and my name was attached to that. It further states that the increase in cost was 98 per cent. and that the cost is still rising. This is what the advertisement says and it is the part I am about to analyse—

The above figures were given in evidence by officers of the Workers' Homes Board before the Arbitration Court on the 10th February, 1947.

I went to the trouble, Mr. Speaker, to get the notes of evidence that were given by the officers of the Workers' Homes Board, and I say that not only is this advertisement, sponsored by Mr. Palmer and supported by

the Premier as an election advertisement, a malicious lie, but it is known, and was known to be, a lie by the gentleman who authorised it.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Liberal Party has been in the gutter for many months.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Having obtained the notes of evidence, I say that the two figures quoted by Mr. Palmer in that advertisement are certainly in the evidence, but they do not relate to the same things.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is what I call fraud.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Mr. Palmer knew that the sworn evidence did not show an increase of 98 per cent. at all. It showed that an increase in building costs of 40 per cent. was mainly due to wages increases in actual materials production. The evidence further showed that contractors were contracting under abnormal conditions owing to the war, because galvanised iron, water pipes, hardware, glassware, plywood, seasoned timber, and more especially materials for which we were entirely dependent on the Eastern States, were not only in short supply but barely in supply at all. The evidence given by the architect—which cannot be contradicted; this is a copy of the evidence from the report itself—was that it would be impossible to make a fair comparison between 1939 and 1946. Those words are in the evidence. I repeat, the brazen effrontery of the man, with his lying and malicious statements, sponsored by the Premier and those associated with him! He knew that was a lie at the time he prepared the advertisement.

Mr. Marshall: And the Premier agreed with it. That is the trouble. I would like to hear the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping on the morals of this party.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There was little in competition between the builders of 1946, because of the materials supply position. There were few working contractors then compared with 1939; a large percentage of apprentices and workmen had for years been away from their various trades. In addition, the first houses were iron-roofed; the latter tiled. The evidence says—

The same type of timber house is not being built at present as in 1939. We are now building a much better type of house.

But the people concerned used the figures in the evidence. "A housing racket," Mr. Speaker! Never before in the history of politics in Australia has there been an advertisement so maliciously, so wilfully, so fraudulently given to the public as this one.

The Premier: Oh, I can tell you about some fraudulent advertisements. If you want comparisons I will give you some.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am very proud to have aroused the Premier from his lethargy, indeed, very glad. If there is to be any judge of what are fraudulent advertisements, I will leave it to the hon. gentleman to make the comparison. I say that this advertisement—brutal though it was—not only was sponsored by the hon. gentleman opposite and those associated with him, but that he was pleased with it. He is proud of it. The hon. the Premier said last night, "This man is a rattling good man."

The Premier: He has got you on the run.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I will tell you something about him in a minute. If the hon. the Premier feels proud of his association with a person who will stoop, in the face of facts, to subscribe his name to such wilful, malicious representation as that, I think it is time he took stock of himself.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: After all, Palmer is only a paid servant. It is the Premier and the Minister for Housing who are fundamentally to blame.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I think it is the capacity of this man for misrepresentation that makes him so popular with members opposite. This is the man who said in May, and said for the Liberal Party, that rents were lowest in Western Australia of all the States. The Speech says, in the paragraph from which I quoted earlier, that the effective building rate at the end of May was 2,712 houses per annum. The effective building rate is the mean of completions and commencements.

The Minister for Housing: Those were the last figures available at the time the Speech was made.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The only equivalent of the effective building rate is the measure of the level for any prescribed period.

The Minister for Housing: I have them here.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: And the Minister for Housing selected for illustration in the Governor's Speech the month of May.

The Minister for Housing: They were the last figures.

Mr. Styants: What was wrong with the figures for June?

The Minister for Housing: The figures were not out.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I have gone to the trouble of obtaining from the office of the statistician all the figures for completed periods and they clearly show that the best figure the hon. gentleman could have selected was the figure for the month of May. That is the best figure he has had for this year.

The Minister for Housing: There was September last year.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I will deal with September in a moment. The Minister will take no credit for that one. The June quarterly figure—and the quarterly figures are the only ones that will give a true indication of the position—is 2,522. That is the statistician's figure for the June quarter, but that did not appear in the Speech.

The Minister of Housing: It was not known.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: In the Speech, late in July, was the figure for May.

The Minister of Housing: These later figures were received by me two days ago.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If we analyse the effective building rate prior to this Government's taking office, and since, we will find that despite lying advertisements and wilful misrepresentation as to what the public might expect, the public must now be very sadly disillusioned.

The Minister for Housing: Very far from it!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The public must be very sadly disillusioned, because I have gone to the trouble of drawing a graph showing exactly and fully all the story of building commencements and completions and the effective building rate from March of 1946 to March of 1948; and I say to the Minister that the public must be sadly disillusioned, bearing in mind the specious promises made that the present Government was going to revolutionise the housing position and was going to issue permits to build where only

two persons were to be housed. That was in one Policy speech. A matter of fact the building rate after the effect of the organisation of our Government ceased, has dropped considerably.

The Minister for Housing: The building rate has dropped on account of the 40-hour week.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Never mind the cause.

The Premier: They don't take that into consideration.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: What did the Premier take into consideration?

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! One voice at a time, please.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If I may have an opportunity to make this speech—

The Minister for Housing: Sorry!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE:—I would say that the Premier, himself, in his Policy speech said, "It is no use saying there was a war and there was a depression." Now he wants to get in behind the flimsy excuse that costs are rising.

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: He said then that there was no use in saying there was a war and a depression, but now he wants to get in right behind any flimsy pretext he can raise. I repeat that after the influence of the Labour Government's organisation, made from a standing start, had ceased, there was a decline. The picture is clearly shown in this graph which I have in my hand. The peak was reached in the September quarter of 1947. It decreased slightly to the December quarter but went sharply down once the effect of the new Government's stimulus was experienced.

The Minister for Housing: You must be fair!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I will be fair. I will use only the statistician's figures and no figment of my imagination.

The Minister for Housing: No, Mr. Lemmon's.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Minister can use Mr. Lemmon's or Mr. Orange's if he likes. I care not. I will use the figures of the State Statistician of Western Aus-

tralia. I repeat that the peak was reached in September, 1947. By December, 1947, not one house was completed which had been the subject of contract let by the new Government. So we can in all fairness say that after the December quarter 1947 up till when the graph shows a continuing rate of progress of which we were very proud, there was such a marked decline that if it had gone much further the lines would have fallen off the bottom of the graph! The figure for the September quarter of 1947 was at the effective building rate of 2,836 homes. Will the Minister check that from his figures?

The Minister for Housing: It has risen 30 per cent., in spite of the 40-hour week.

The Premier: Not a bad figure!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Government can only show, from the commencement of the first recorded house finished from their efforts, a drop in the building rate in this State.

The Minister for Housing: No.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I produce this graph as proof.

The Minister for Housing: I produce these figures. There is a 30 per cent. rise.

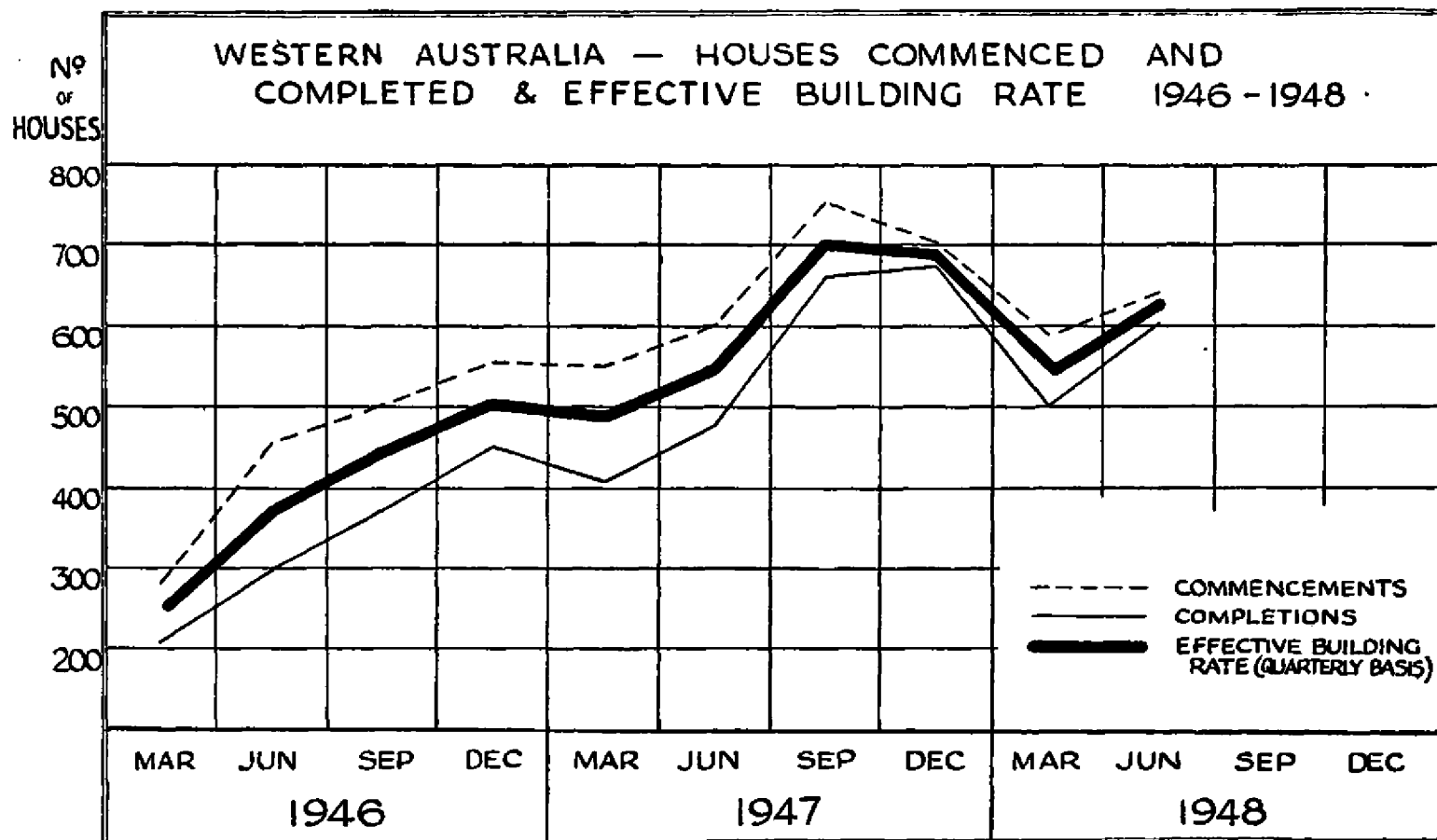
Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I produce this graph and I say to the Minister that he can analyse it and that he can take it to the statistician and can in no way show that it is in the minutest particular inaccurate.

The Minister for Housing: So long as it shows my 30 per cent. rise, it is all right.

Mr. Marshall: Who drew that one up? Mr. Palmer?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I have a document in my hand from the statistician which shows that for the September 1947 quarter in respect of houses started by the Labour Government the peak was reached in building operations in this State's history when the figure was 2,836 homes per annum. At the December quarter it was still at 2,744; and the Minister should be ashamed of himself when he contemplates his own words and those of his colleagues and remembers what was promised to the people who, according to this advertisement, were living with mothers-in-law and in garages and in camps.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And they are still living there.



Graph referred to on page 113.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Minister should be ashamed when he remembers what was deliberately promised to these people. It was promised that permits would be issued to people who could prove hardship even if only two persons were involved.

The Minister for Housing: And they were getting five per cent. and we increased it to 35 per cent.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If the Minister will accept the figures of the statistician which I am using and which are an exact copy—

The Minister for Housing: I have them.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE:—of those he has, he will know that the figures I am using cannot be denied and that for the September 1947 quarter the housing rate was 2,836 per annum.

The Minister for Housing: Perfectly correct.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: And for the June quarter, 1948, it was 2,522.

The Minister for Housing: It is 30 per cent. above the rate of 12 months before. In spite of the 40-hour week there was a 30 per cent. improvement.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Minister cannot brush the matter aside by talking of war causes, shortage of materials, etc. We have a Housing Minister now!

The Minister for Housing: He is the best Housing Minister the State has ever had!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The hon. gentleman speaks for himself. I have the gravest doubt, in spite of the Minister's pretence at improvement, that the effective building rate for any quarter of the year 1948 will reach that of the quarter ended September, 1947.

The Minister for Housing: We will have a look and see.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: We will know by December. We will know if there is much pretence about that 30 per cent. increase.

The Minister for Housing: It is 30 per cent. up to now. It will be 60 per cent. by the end of the year.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I repeat, I doubt very much whether the figure for any quarter of 1948, when this wonderful Minister for Housing will have had full sway and influence—he is not even Attorney

General now; there is a vacant chair—will have reached the figure of 2,836 homes. The Government promised, in regard to housing, practically the millenium. Not only were these people to cease living with grandmas and mothers-in-law—

The Minister for Housing: They largely have, too.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There is still a number of three and four unit families unsatisfied, with no home at all.

The Minister for Housing: We agree with that.

Mr. Grayden interjected.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I would like the member for Swan to appreciate this, that I am stating facts only. I am not saying to the Minister that he should do this or that. He claimed that he could do things which not only have been impossible of achievement but have shown how false were the statements made and how little he and the other members of his party regarded the position before they assumed authority. We were told, "Prices rise with Wise." Let me show how they have risen with McLarty and McDonald.

Mr. Marshall: Two Scotsmen, too!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: In the article I have shown to be a lying statement, from the evidence before the Arbitration Court, there was a conclusion drawn that I was responsible for a tremendous increase in the cost of building in Western Australia. I refer the Minister for Housing to the fact that the meanest type of home—and I do not say that in any disparaging way—the humblest type built by the Housing Commission, has increased in cost in 12 months, from the 1st July, 1947, to the 30th June, 1948, from £1,086 to £1,342. That is the type of home that was let at a few shillings rent, pre-war. It has risen by 30 per cent. on the pre-war cost.

Mr. Wild: That is about the cheapest in Australia.

The Minister for Housing: The trouble is—

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There is no chance of the Minister making excuses. There were no troubles when he assumed office; it was simply the responsibility of those on this side of the House; there were no problems! But whatever excuses he may make

or whatever reasons he may bring forward, the fact is that the price has risen in the case of the humble type of home—I think about 7½ to 8 squares—by £256 in 12 months.

The Premier: This applies throughout Australia.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It did not apply before; it applied to Western Australia! The Premier, pre-election, said, "Unless we can sweep away this Labour Government we will finish in a morass from which it will be difficult to extricate ourselves."

The Premier: That is true enough.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Unfortunately, the Government is finding itself not only in such a morass on this subject, but open to public criticism for wilful misrepresentation, and, because the public believed the members of the party at that time, we find the housing position today is such that the same people they spoke of are still without homes; they are living in the same garages. Costs are rising to such an extent that the people who could and would have willingly built, have spent their substance waiting for the opportunity. Many of them have spent the money they saved as a deposit to commence building operations, and find today that building costs are entirely out of their reach. That is the true position.

The Minister for Housing: And progress has been made in spite of it all.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: We have reached this peculiar position where those who have not the opportunity of providing better accommodation for themselves and families, or the wherewithal to do so, will go without, whereas those who have the wherewithal and the money, but not the need, will be able to build privately. They will be able, not under the builders' base figure arrangement or the Commonwealth State Housing Scheme, but under the private contracting arrangement, to build to the detriment of those most in need. We will find that the Commonwealth-State rental scheme will have many more applications from those who normally could afford to build.

The Minister for Housing: They can buy their rental homes now.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Those who have the wherewithal may do so, but there are

many thousands who cannot buy. There are many who realise it is not a good investment to buy. They appreciate that if they build today there must of necessity be such a shrinkage in values that they will lose at least one-third of their investment before the lapse of many years.

The Minister for Housing: I doubt that.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There is no doubt about that.

The Premier: Who are you blaming for that?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: So we still have three and four unit families unsatisfied while the Government pretends that we are making substantial progress. I say, in my only note of criticism in the lengthy speech I have delivered this evening, that the housing position in this State is no credit, but a great and lasting disgrace to the present Government!

The Minister for Housing: It is a great achievement by the present Government.

MR. ACKLAND (Irwin-Moore) [8.19]: When speaking to the Address-in-reply, there is such a range of subjects to discuss that one experiences some difficulty in finding just what is most appropriate to the occasion. It seems desirable to view at least some of our past legislation in retrospect, and before touching on other matters I will deal with factors affecting primary producers, as nearly all the residents in my electorate depend for their livelihood on primary production. The present Minister for Agriculture is giving a great deal of satisfaction throughout the agricultural areas.

The Premier: Hear, hear, everywhere!

Mr. ACKLAND: During the last session of Parliament I drew some criticism by saying that he was the only Minister for Agriculture we had had for many years who had a rural background. There was no need for anyone to feel hurt at that. I know that the two previous Ministers for Agriculture had had some rural experience, and that one of them had been tropical adviser to the Department of Agriculture, but for anyone to have a rural background it is necessary that he should, by his own efforts and labour, have won from the soil a livelihood for himself and his family. The present Minister is a man with that background, and it is necessary to have such a man in order to have a

well-balanced Department of Agriculture. If we have an ex-civil servant as Minister it stands to reason that the department must of necessity—without reflecting on any gentleman—be somewhat lopsided.

I come now to the manner in which the Minister has tackled the problem of bovine T.B. in the metropolitan area, and the fact that there has been criticism of his action in some quarters. We must remember that nearly 3,000 cattle have had to be destroyed in the metropolitan area owing to T.B. Every one of those beasts was a potential menace to the health of the people of that area. I would ask the Minister to go further and bring down legislation by means of which all the cattle in Western Australia—with the possible exception of those in the Kimberleys—would be brought under a scheme similar to that to which I have referred. Provision could be made in that legislation to find the number of veterinary officers necessary to attend to all the dairy cattle in this State.

In one herd dealt with there were 79 per cent. of reactors, in close proximity to Perth. The average among cattle for milking purposes in dairy herds in the metropolitan area was 43 per cent. There is a more pleasant picture, when we go beyond the limits of the very close grazing. Outside the metropolitan area the incidence of T.B. in herds ranged from four to 16 per cent.; an average of about nine per cent. If the good work done so far is not continued, in order that pure milk and butter fat may be available from T.B. free herds, a great deal of the expense already incurred will have been wasted.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Was that nine per cent. of the whole of the dairy herds?

Mr. ACKLAND: Forty-three per cent. in the metropolitan area and nine per cent. in the herds beyond that area, but of course that has only touched on the fringe of the cattle outside the metropolitan area.

I wish now to deal with the necessity for the establishment of more experimental stations, particularly in the light land areas. The Minister has taken the right step in arranging for small experimental stations and plots to be conducted by individual farmers. Under present conditions, with shortages of properly trained staff, machinery, wire-netting and all the necessities for the establishment of large experimental

stations, that move has been entirely justified, but it can be taken only as a temporary expedient. In order to do the job properly, we must have men trained and fitted for that class of work. Although the farmer who undertakes this labour is to be given every credit for what he does, that system must be considered only as a temporary measure.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned that there were 10,000,000 acres of land still waiting development—nearly all of it light land—in the good rainfall areas. That figure coincides with the information I have prepared for this evening. To the west of the Midland Railway line there are at least 2,000,000 acres of such country, and the Minister has established four or five of these small plots in that area. I have his assurance that he intends to earmark there sufficient land for the establishment of an experimental station. There is an abundant rainfall in that part of the country. The land is low in soil fertility but it would be foolish to say that any country in Western Australia is too poor—given the right treatment—to produce either good fodder or cereal crops.

At the experimental station at Wongan Hills we had experience of what can be done with light land. Prior to the establishment of that farm very little of the poorer class of land in the medium rainfall area was used for the growing of cereals, but that station has now passed to the second stage. First it proved that the land could grow good cereal crops, and today it is coming into its own. With the introduction of legumes into that country I believe the time will come when it will be considered more productive than some of the heavier country in similar rainfall areas. What can be done there I believe can be done in the poorer soils with the very much heavier rainfall, although it may not be done so easily. The experimental station of which I am speaking has an average rainfall of about 15 inches. I do hope that the Minister will give some consideration to the belt of light land in the Esperance area. This is an area I have not seen but, from information given me, it appears to be a much better type of soil than the majority of land on the coastal fringe of Western Australia, and it is well worthy of experimentation.

During last session there was a great deal of discussion, some of it heated, with

reference to bulk-handling for, within a very few weeks of the Government taking office, they decided to hand over to the farmers' own co-operative company the installations at Fremantle. Figures which I presented to this House from time to time were criticised, but today I am in a position to give the figures for a full season's wheat-handling, a season in which more than 13,000,000 bushels of wheat have been handled through the Fremantle terminals. These figures fully justify the Government's action. Prior to the Government's taking over control at Fremantle, the average rate of loading of all ships handled up to that date was 302.4 tons per hour. Since then, 40 ships have been loaded and the average has been stepped up to 407.1 tons per hour for all ships that have been handled, and the secret of the great improvement lies in the fact that this was done under single instead of dual control.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Who did the work?

Mr. ACKLAND: The work was done by the stevedores and the wharf labourers at Fremantle. It was done with the same machinery, with some alterations which were found to be necessary.

Mr. Fox: Then it is not the same machinery.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am better informed than the member for South Fremantle on this subject, because I am in very close contact with it, although I do not represent the port of Fremantle. The rate of loading has been stepped up by 35 per cent. but it is unlikely that that rate can be increased until such time as bigger trimmers are available. The trimmers at present being used have a maximum capacity of 300 tons per hour, and some of the ships loaded required the use of the trimmers for as much as 70 per cent. of their cargoes. The action taken by the Government on that occasion has been justified and it has in some measure been able to keep down the ever-increasing cost of handling wheat in this State.

From wheat-handling I should like to turn to wheat-marketing. This is probably the most controversial subject in Australia today. It is nearly as controversial as free medicine.

Mr. Reynolds: You had your tail feathers plucked!

Mr. ACKLAND: We have had placed before us an international wheat agreement, and it is not dead, by any means, because the Commonwealth Government has great hopes that within another 12 months it will be able to carry on with this scheme whereby it can nationalise the wheat industry in this country without the support of the growers and without the co-operation of the Government of Western Australia. It is not the first time that the Commonwealth Government has tried to foist on the growers of Australia an international wheat agreement. In 1933, 23 nations started to negotiate for such an agreement, but the negotiations fell through because Argentina had such a bumper harvest that she was forced to break her obligations to the other nations owing to shortage of bags and storage space. In 1942, five nations, including Great Britain, Canada, the United States of America, Argentina and Australia entered into another agreement and, despite the efforts of the Department of Commerce, prices skyrocketed at such a tremendous rate that the position got out of control.

Mr. Reynolds: What are they doing now?

Mr. ACKLAND: Now we have this last international wheat agreement which was signed by 36 nations, who could not in the majority of cases be relied upon in any way. Some of these nations were under the dominance of Russia, and some of them were absolutely bankrupt.

Mr. Wild: Who were they?

Mr. ACKLAND: They were Australia, Afghanistan, Belgium, Brazil, China, Columbia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, French Union and Saar, Greece, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Venezuela. Some of those nations are completely under the dominance of Russia and there are some who were absolutely, and will always be, bankrupt. Of those 36 nations, 33 were buyer nations, and only three seller nations. Under that agreement, we find that the 33 nations have entered into, or did enter into, no obligation whatever to accept the wheat to be sold by the three seller nations. On the other hand, the three seller nations had

entered into an agreement that they were compelled to deliver their quota of the 500,000,000 bushels to those countries, if it was required. As I have already pointed out, there was no obligation upon the other nations to take this wheat. Of the three seller nations, two were in the dollar area and one—Australia—was in the sterling area.

Mr. Reynolds: What difference does that make?

Mr. ACKLAND: It makes this difference: That America in the dollar area was quite unable to sell her wheat at the same price at that which was being sold by Australia on the sterling area.

Mr. Reynolds: You are not putting that over me!

Mr. ACKLAND: We find that America was selling her wheat at 14s. 6d. per bushel. We found that in this country we were able to sell every bushel of wheat we had to sell at something over £1. Under this agreement—

Mr. Reynolds: The day of reckoning will come.

Mr. ACKLAND: —we found that Canada was the biggest seller and she was able to sell 230,000,000 bushels, and her average in the last 16 years has been 225,000,000 bushels. We found that Australia had to sell 85,000,000 bushels, and her average for that period was 80,000,000 bushels. On the other hand, we find that America, who has increased her production until it is nearly 1,200,000,000 bushels, had to sell 185,000,000 bushels.

Mr. Reynolds: I have seen the day when we could not sell. We had to give it away at the world's own prices.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ACKLAND: The American price at that time was 14s. 6d., and the price that Australia was getting was over £1.

Mr. Reynolds: It is all very well flying kites; you had better come down to Mother Earth.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Premier: What about making your speech later?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not interject so often; he is abusing the privilege.

Mr. Reynolds: I am sorry, Sir.

Mr. ACKLAND: I was mentioning that America, for some years, has been producing a crop of nearly 1,200,000,000 bushels. She requires 700,000,000 bushels to feed her people within the United States, and for that she has been receiving 16s. 6d. per bushel. On the other hand, we have Australia who has used internally a crop of 60,000,000 bushels for which she was to receive 6s. 3d. per bushel.

Mr. Reynolds: America was selling wheat to India for 12s. a bushel when we were getting 17s. 6d., and you know it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member can make his speech later.

Mr. Reynolds: With pleasure!

Mr. ACKLAND: I was saying that the United States of America used 700,000,000 bushels of wheat for home consumption at 16s. 6d. per bushel, but Australia used 60,000,000 bushels at 6s. 3d. America would have to sell a very small percentage of her wheat at a loss of 2s. at 14s. 6d. a bushel, whereas Australia would have to sell a good deal of her wheat at a loss of 6s. per bushel under this scheme. But that is not the damning point of it all. For every bushel of wheat Australia had for sale under this scheme, we find that the United States of America had 300,000,000 bushels, free of all encumbrances as to agreements, which she could sell in the open market. Then we have the Argentine in South America who is outside this agreement altogether, and who was under no obligation and able to sell the whole of her 115,000,000 bushels of wheat at 30s. 3d. per bushel.

The most damning point of this is that whereas the three selling nations were under an obligation to sell the wheat at a very depreciated price—in the case of Australia 6s. below what she was getting for it—the other countries of the world are under no obligation to buy the wheat if they do not require it. I should like to mention that Australia had an exportable crop of 140,000,000 bushels last year. She had sold 80,000,000 bushels to Great Britain at 17s.; 25,000,000 bushels to India at 18s. 6d., and 40,000,000 bushels to the rest of the world at something over 20s., the average for the whole lot being 18s. 6d. On the 1st August she would have been compulsorily compelled under this agreement to reduce that price to the cost to India, that is, to 12s.

5d. per bushel; 6s. 1d. below the price which she was getting for it. Yet at the same time we find that there was no obligation whatever on India, and to express her appreciation of what Australia had done in this case she immediately increased her jute prices to this country from 28s. 4d. per dozen to something over 30s.

It was a case of this country about to be tied hand and foot. She was going to be compelled to reduce the price to 12s. 5d. for India and to 12s. for Great Britain or all European countries, but there was no obligation whatever on the rest of the world to meet her in any way whatever by any reduction in the price of goods purchased by Australia. It was not fixed on the cost of production because from the first year to the fifth there was to be a sliding scale of 10 cents reduction each year until the wheat in this country was being sold at its equivalent basis of 6s. 6d. a bushel. The 6s. 6d. a bushel was to be at lake head ports U.S.A. and not Australian ports. The price was to be at American lake head ports, at freight rates which are some pence per bushel below that at Australian ports. It was also sold at No. 1 Manitoba quality which is from 4d. to 5½d. per bushel on a higher standard of prices on the world's market than this country's wheat. So that by 1952 we would have found that the minimum price received by this country was to be down to 6s. 6d. per bushel at lakes head ports which works out somewhere around 4s. 6d. to 4s. 8d. at the ports in Australia. When you take the ever rising costs of wheat-handling, it stands to reason that at the end of that period it would be considerably below the cost of production in this country. I hope most sincerely that the agreement will never be revived. I say that the Commonwealth brought it in only as a means of socialising the industry. This is the only way in which the Commonwealth could socialise the industry without the assistance of the growers or the States of the Commonwealth. Let us hope that we have heard the last of the International Wheat Agreement.

In the meantime we have before us a wheat stabilisation plan which has been presented to the Ministers for Agriculture of the various States. This plan is in no material respect any different from the plans that had been presented to us previously. There are

four main factors that are vital to the wheat industry of Western Australia. To begin with there is no provision made for the cost of production. We had an inquiry by the Commonwealth at the request of the Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation and, on the 1st December, 1947, an interim report was presented which showed the cost of growing wheat to be 6s. per bushel at growers' sidings.

Mr. Reynolds: I shall put some questions to you tomorrow.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Ah! A new Minister!

Mr. ACKLAND: To this must be added the cost of handling the wheat. I have before me particulars of the costs that have been incurred by the growers of Australia during the last few years as presented by the Australian Wheat Board. Those costs varied as follows:—

1939-40	..	..	8.786d.
1940-41	..	..	9.819d.
1941-42	..	..	10.261d.
1942-43	..	..	11.174d.
1943-44	..	..	12.2d.
1944-45	..	..	11.5d.
1945-46	..	..	10.179d.
1946-47	..	..	8.99d.

The 8.99d., however, is by no means a fair cost for the whole of Australia. In that year very little wheat was handled in New South Wales. It was a year in which practically all the wheat was taken delivery of at the sidings where it was in store. The great bulk of it was used by the stock breeders in New South Wales and Victoria. This year the 40-hour week has been instituted, and that is already showing its effects on our costs. In New South Wales there was a rise in wheat freights of 40 per cent., representing 2d. per bushel. In Victoria there was a rise of 15 per cent., representing ½d. per bushel. Here in Western Australia where wheat was hauled over the Midland Railway, we had an increase of 1.5d., or 33¼ per cent., on the wheat carried over that line. Therefore I say that 6s. per bushel at sidings as at the 1st December, 1947, in no way compares with what the Commonwealth Government is asking the growers to accept under this agreement, namely, 6s. 3d. per bushel at ports for the 1948-49 crop.

If members read the agreement carefully, they will find that it is to come into operation at the end of this year. The figure is to be 6s. 3d. per bushel at that time. Yet there

has been an increase of at least 4d. per bushel since the figure of 8.99d. which I quoted. Had the Commonwealth wished to be just in this matter, it would have offered the growers an amount of 6s. 9d. per bushel at ports as at that date, 1st December, 1947, and tied to an index cost system. I cannot understand why the Commonwealth is not prepared to do so.

Of all the foodstuffs, wheat is the cheapest commodity in the world today. We in Australia use less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per head of the population per year. At 6s. 3d. per bushel, that would represent about 28s. per year. When we consider that only a proportion of the wheat is used for human consumption—only 73 per cent. is extracted from the wheat for flour—the wheat that the householder uses for bread and breakfast foods, etc., represents a cost of 21s. a year, or approximately 5d. per week. Had growers been given an increase of 6d. to bring the price up to the cost of production for that year, it would have represented well under 6d. per head of the population. The Commonwealth asserts that it must keep down the cost of living, but this is about the smallest item in the cost of living and we find that in every other avenue of expenditure on commodities taken into account in the cost of living, it has no hesitation whatever in constantly allowing those costs to be increased.

In the first instance the proposed agreement is objectionable to the growers because it does not provide for the cost of production. In the second instance, the Commonwealth is insisting that all stock-breeders in this country should receive wheat at this figure, which is below the cost of production. In the last 18 years, there has been only one year in which the breeders of stock have paid the cost of production for the wheat they used. I have the figures for which wheat has been sold to them over that period, as follows:—

1930-31	..	..	..	1s. 11d.
1931-32	..	..	..	2s. 9d.
1932-33	..	..	..	2s. 5d.
1933-34	..	..	..	2s. 2½d.
1934-35	..	..	..	2s. 5d.
1935-36	..	..	..	3s. 2½d.

In 1936-37, the only year in which the wheatgrowers received their cost of production, it was 5s. In 1937-38 it was 3s. 6d.

per bushel, still below the cost of production. Now we come to the war years—

1938-39, average, 1s. 10d.

From Sept. 1939 to April 1942—2s. 11d.

From May 1942 to Nov. 1945—2s. 11½d.

From Dec. 1945 to Dec. 1946—4s. 6d.

From Jan. 1947 to Jan. 18, 1948—4s. 6½d.

During the whole of that period, with the exception of one year, the growers received for their wheat less than the cost of its production. I have previously mentioned in this House that the wheatgrowers in Western Australia are under an obligation to the people of the State. For the seasons 1930-31 to 1941 the growers received £21,202,144 by way of direct subsidies. From the flour tax, from 1938 to 1943, they received £1,500,000, making a total of £25,702,144. But the growers did not receive all of that money. We find that, in one hit alone, the Commonwealth Government robbed the flour tax collections of £843,000, which it gave as a special grant to the dairy farmers in New South Wales and Victoria. We find that for the 13 years the growers did receive £24,859,144. I would particularly like the member for Forrest to listen to what the growers contributed in the next seven years.

Mr. Reynolds: I am fully aware of it.

Mr. ACKLAND: From the No. 5 Pool, the quantity of wheat used in Australia was 66,726,000 bushels. That was sold at 1¾d. per bushel below the overseas price, representing £486,833. From the No. 6 Pool the quantity used in Australia was 72,926,000 bushels. That was sold at a loss of 6d., representing £1,823,150. The Nos. 7 and 8 Pools were sold as one pool. The quantity of wheat from these combined pools sold in Australia was 127,971,000 bushels. This was sold at 3s. 2d. per bushel below overseas value, representing £20,262,075. From the No. 9 Pool, 60,832,000 bushels were sold at a loss of 5s. 10d. per bushel, representing £17,742,666. From the No. 10 Pool, 59,527,000 bushels were sold at a loss of 10s. 1d. per bushel, representing £29,857,862. The No. 11 Pool is not yet complete, so we will take an estimate of 60,000,000 bushels as the quantity to be used in Australia. It will, if anything, be in excess of that quantity. It has been sold at 12s. 3d. per bushel below the overseas value, representing £36,750,000; or a grand total of £106,922,586. That is what the wheatgrowers of Australia have contributed to the people of Australia;

but Western Australia alone in those seven years has contributed in all £20,980,202, which is an average of nearly £3,000,000 per annum over the seven years. But the State of Western Australia had a drawback. Some of its wheat was sold not only for flour, but for stock feed. Over the seven years, its value was £7,655,340. The direct loss to all the people of this country, not only the wheatgrowers, was £13,324,862, or for the whole period of seven years the loss has been £1,903,552 per annum. It has been suggested that these figures are wrong. They are not my figures, but have been compiled by the Commonwealth Statistician and from evidence which was presented on oath to the Royal Commission on Wheat Marketing. All the figures can be verified from official sources. They speak for themselves.

Although the wheatgrowers of Australia have more than honoured their obligations for past favours, they are still prepared to adhere to the principle that in times of high prices, the people of this country should not be asked to pay an excessive price. Nevertheless, they should be asked to pay the cost of production, plus a reasonable living allowance. We are not suggesting for one moment that the people should have paid £1 a bushel for wheat, but we do say they should have paid the cost of production. With reference to stock feed, we are under no obligation to sell stock feeders cheap wheat. I willingly admit that the stock industry must be maintained in Western Australia, but it is not the responsibility of one section only to maintain it.

I do not know the ins and outs of the poultry or the dairying industry, but I should like to quote figures relating to the pig industry over the war period. At the beginning of the war, heavy bacon pigs were worth from 75s. to 80s. each. By 1944-45 their value had risen from 120s. to 130s. By the end of December, 1947, the value of the same class of pig rose from 160s. to 180s. Under those circumstances there is no reason whatever why those people should not pay the value of this product which they use for fattening; or at least, if it is necessary for the economy of this country that they should receive some concession, it is the responsibility of the country. We have had no stabilisation scheme submitted to us. There has never been anything that was stabilised about it.

I do know that the very first instructions that the Commerce Department received when the first stabilisation scheme was put up were that they were to see that they devised a scheme that would not run the Treasurer into any danger of having to contribute to it. The best of these schemes have been equalisation schemes, and the great majority have been nothing but devices by way of securing the wheat and nationalising the industry in Australia. If the Government does succeed in doing that, it will be but a very small step indeed to the nationalisation of every other industry in this country.

I have spoken more particularly on the financial aspect of this matter. The third objection to it is the most vital of the lot. Under this new scheme the Minister for Commerce has not relinquished any power that he holds. He has retained to himself the right to sell the product of the people at any price he chooses; and the principle of private ownership, I think, is the most vital one involved—far more vital than the pounds, shillings and pence. We must resist by every means possible the attempt of the Commonwealth Government to put this scheme into effect. But the farmers of Western Australia are going to be given an opportunity to decide for themselves what will be done with the product they grow, and I commend the Minister for Agriculture for the action he and Cabinet have taken in this regard. The people will be given an opportunity to decide whether they want this scheme just presented to them by the Commonwealth Government or a scheme which is being put up by the State; and I hope that they will be given an opportunity to see for themselves just what each implies.

I would far rather have a Commonwealth scheme than a State scheme provided it was equal and fair. But the scheme submitted by Mr. Pollard is one which, in the first instance, does not provide for the cost of production; and which, in the second instance, makes one section of the community responsible for subsidising another section; and thirdly is one whereby the Minister retains to himself the right to sell the product of the individual where and how he likes. There are people who say that a State scheme cannot work satisfactorily. The facts disprove that very much. We have only to compare similar schemes on an Australia-wide basis and on a State-wide basis to find out just how much it would be

of benefit to Western Australia to have its own State scheme. If we take the Australia-wide wheat crop of 140,000,000 bushels, with 60,000,000 bushels used internally, and take the Western Australian wheat crop of 31,000,000 bushels of saleable wheat with a home consumption of 4,500,000 bushels, which in the first instance allows 80,000,000 bushels to be sold overseas on an Australia-wide basis and 26,500,000 bushels on a Western Australian basis, we find this: That if such a scheme had operated with the average price of 18s. 6d. a bushel, which was the price at which our wheat was sold overseas, it would have resulted in a State pool receiving a benefit of 2s. 6.205d.

If we had come down to the price for which wheat was to be sold under this Commonwealth or international wheat agreement, of 12s. a bushel, we find that the State would still have had a benefit of 1s. 3.589d. If we come down still further—as the wheat must come down under the international agreement—to 9s., we would still have a benefit to Western Australia of 7.585d. And if we come right down to 4s. 2d.—and I have taken that because I think that is what it would be if the International Wheat Agreement did come into operation—and we received the minimum price at the end of the five years period, we would show a loss of 5.746d. But by reason of the fact that we are so much nearer to all the markets Australia supplies we find that we have a better freightage overseas of 4½d. per bushel. So wheat has to go as low as 4s. 2d. a bushel in Western Australia before a Western Australian pool would lose more than 1¼d. per bushel.

There are people who say the wheat market is going to drop very suddenly. Members of the Commerce Department have been saying that since 1941 but during the intervening period wheat has risen from 4s. to 21s. 6d. They are still saying it. I am willing to admit the price of wheat has dropped, but it has been a man-made drop. The price has decreased recently to 17s. That has been brought about intentionally by the Governments and not by the statistical position. We find that in the Argentine they have sold every bushel they possessed at 30s. 3d.

When we talk about gluts of wheat I would like to refer members to three men who are noted for their knowledge of the

wheat industry and statistics. They are Sir John Boyd Orr, a man who took such a prominent part in feeding the world; the Commonwealth Government's own adviser, Mr. Bulcock; and, in Western Australia, a man who is acknowledged as being a most knowledgeable man on wheat statistics—Mr. Harry Braine. All of them, in different ways, have come to the same conclusion. I would like to read what Sir John Boyd Orr has to say. The following extract is from "Elder's Weekly" of the 15th July, 1948—

Sir John Boyd Orr, retired Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of United Nations, gave an ominous warning to the world when he spoke at London University recently. There is no new land to be brought under cultivation, he said, fertility is being lost rapidly through erosion, the world population is rising rapidly and, unless the nations turn their attention from preparation for war to a world-wide drive for maximum food production, famine will bring our civilisation down in ruins.

I do not intend to weary the House with the statistical position over the last 50 years, but it proves this fact: That although the wheat areas of the world have increased somewhat during that period, they have in no way kept in line with the continually expanding population. I understand that the world's population is expanding at the rate of 20 millions and more a year. Although we have had wars throughout the world, there are 200,000,000 more people living in it today than in 1939. I am willing to agree that they are not all wheat-eaters, but it must be borne in mind that because Japan over-ran so many of the rice-fields of the world, there are many millions of people eating bread today who did not previously do so, who will not be anxious to cease being consumers of bread. That makes the normal wheat position very safe indeed from any fear of over-production. I have here another quotation I would like to read from "Wheat Notes," No. 171. It is as follows:—

Recent sales news included the important official announcement that Argentina has sold the last of her 1947-48 exportable wheat surplus. As the Australian surplus also has been sold we can note that the surplus of the greatest combined crop, save one, that the Southern Hemisphere exporting countries have ever grown has been completely sold before the next crop is well out of the ground—indeed, before some of it is seeded. The Argentine wheat was sold at prices considerably in excess of those asked for Australian wheat yet was sold quickly. This is indicative of the keen world demand for wheat.

I am firmly convinced that there is no reason why the people of Western Australia should fear a local wheat marketing scheme. For very many years to come it must be profitable to the people of this country, and I think they would be extremely well advised to have such a scheme rather than let the Commonwealth Government socialise our wheat industry.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I think it is quite right they should be allowed to decide that.

Mr. ACKLAND: And they will be. A lot of play is made of the fact that the Commonwealth Government has guaranteed 6s. 3d. per bushel. There is not the slightest fear of that Government being called upon to honour the agreement, or having to pay until 1952 that price for the wheat exported from Western Australia. It is very pleasing to know that the Government has decided to conduct a referendum and allow the people themselves to decide what they shall do with their own product. The following is one of the objects appearing in the constitution of the industrial organisation of the primary producers of Western Australia:—

To oppose all attempts to undermine the vital principle that the produce of the land belongs in its entirety to the producer, subject only to the payment of his just debts.

Those people who say that the wheat belongs to the Commonwealth want to ask themselves if the things they produce with their own hands or the commodities in the big departmental stores in Hay-street belong to the people of Australia or those who handle them. Exactly the same thing applies to the man who works with his hands in any walk of life. We must be particularly careful to keep to ourselves the ownership and right of property. I think it was in 1215 that the people of Britain decided that they were not going to be controlled by the Government or the State, but rather that the State should be the servant and not the master of the people.

There are two or three other matters, such as railways and native settlements, on which I wish to speak, but they will have to be left to some other time. I would, however, like to make a brief reference to education. We have had a tremendous amount of criticism during the last two days of what has happened during the past year. Well, in my electorate, education was in a state of absolute chaos on the 1st April last year.

Consolidated schools have been established. Their establishment, in itself, was a very good move, but the whole scheme was started without any preparation for the accommodation of the children. There were, in my district, instances of parents building a very temporary shed so that the eight or nine children at a siding could receive some education.

All at once, bus services poured into the place and the children were taken to a draughty hall. In two other instances, every available building which could be used as school accommodation was taken over in two townships. We found in each instance the school spread over the whole town. The teachers at the schools would be more than a quarter of a mile apart. But although there remains very much to be done, I must express appreciation to the Minister for Education for the fact that he has attended to the most pressing circumstances in that district. We have in some instances had schools moved that had been left vacant. In two other cases, new buildings have been erected which have somewhat relieved the position and made it possible for the children to be taught under something like reasonable conditions. I do not want the Minister for Education to run away with the idea that all that is needed in that electorate has been done. But I do say that he is dealing with these matters in priority of urgency. The result has been very gratifying.

I must ask the indulgence of this House to bring up still one other matter. I listened with the greatest attention last week to the Speech by the Lieut.-Governor when I hoped to hear some reference to the Government's intentions to deal with Communism in this State. I do believe that it is the Government's intention to do something, and that action will be taken. I am, however, somewhat restive because of the ever-growing incidence of Communism throughout Australia. We have instances of it in many places. I quite realise the difficulties of a State Government. This is really the responsibility of the Commonwealth Parliament, but we know full well that that body is not very likely to take any action. It has used these people too much in the past. I admit the Commonwealth Parliament is worried now because the Communists are getting somewhat out of hand. But that Parliament's past performances have been such

that we can only assume that we are not likely to receive any relief from it. Though we cannot ban Communists or expel them from the shores of Western Australia, we have a State civil service which is under the authority of this Government. It must be known to all members of the community that we have Communism in many places in our civil service. We know that we have it in the Midland Junction Workshops, on the wharves at Fremantle and in many other places.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about the University?

Mr. ACKLAND: The best way to combat Communism is to deal with it through our educational system. It may surprise members to know that I have tried for months to get detailed information on the activities of these people. It is startling when one realises that the small percentage of Communists in Australia—I have read that there are only 16,000 of them—in a population of 7,500,000 or 8,000,000 have such influence. Why is it that people who are well aware of Communist influences are afraid to open their mouths? They will tell us about it in confidence, but as soon as we ask permission to use the information they become afraid of what might happen to them. When 16,000 people can bring about a fear complex in nearly 8,000,000 people it is time that we, as a Government, were up and doing. I have been told that in the metropolitan area there are classes of boys in the schools who know more about Joe Stalin and Russia than they do about the British Empire.

In my own electorate there were two teachers who refused to co-operate with me in picking prize winners for citizenship prizes, because they said it was not democratic. I understand that most of the teachers in my electorate received a circular letter asking them not to co-operate in choosing children to receive such prizes. That sounds ridiculous, but it is a fact. I am told that there is one teacher in a country district who has refused to allow the National Anthem to be sung in his school, and who would not allow the Union Jack to be flown on appropriate occasions. So sure am I of the hold of Communism on our educational system that I ask the Minister to lay on the Table of this House a report by the C.I.B. on Communism in the

educational system of this State—Communism right from the University, as the Leader of the Opposition said, down to the kindergarten.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Has such an investigation been made?

Mr. ACKLAND: I am asking that that report be laid on the Table of the House.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But has an investigation of that kind been made?

Mr. ACKLAND: My information is that it has been made, but, if not, it can be made. I want such a report to be laid on the Table, and I believe it will be a great surprise to many people, and an embarrassment, as well. I do not think Communism is the greatest danger in Australia today. The Leader of the Opposition gave a most interesting lecture this afternoon on what had been done by the explorers of this State, and said that we would not like to go back to the days of "Dad and Dave." We would not, but this country would be better if we went back to the spirit of such people. Today, in all sections of the community, there is growing a psychology to give as little as possible and demand as much as possible.

The Leader of the Opposition had much to say about increasing costs. The 40-hour week would not be so bad if men would work for 40 hours a week, but no matter whether he is a coalminer, a transport worker, a distributor of goods, a manufacturer or a professional man, no-one today is giving fair value for what he receives. Everyone demands more and more, and expects to give less and less. While that attitude persists Australia will be a fine field for Communism and for what the Communists are trying to do, which is to bring about disruption in all sections of our daily life. This Parliament is lagging behind the rest of the community. We find that Labour unions, the R.S.L., municipalities and all kinds of public bodies and people are now taking a stand against Communism. I will read an extract from a letter received by a member of this House from the secretary of a country road board. It states—

"That this board most emphatically supports the resolution passed by the Midland Junction Municipality calling on State and Federal Governments to take immediate action to suppress the criminal conspiracy of the Communists in this country to destroy by violence the Australian way of life."

Whilst ordinary political issues are outside the scope of local government, when the safety of the Realm is endangered, as it undoubtedly is, by the disruptive measures of Communism on behalf of Russian Imperialism, it is the concern of every individual and organisation in the Commonwealth.

The same grim ruthless violence exhibited by Communist activities in Europe and Asia is becoming apparent in this country, and when the ordinary decent folk of Australia are repeatedly denied coal for lighting and heating, and essential commodities are held up by foreign imported agitators, it is evident that something more sinister than political philosophy is involved.

When 16,000 people can cause such a fear complex in nearly 8,000,000 people that it is impossible to find anyone to give definite information about the Communists, it is time that this State Government was up and doing. I believe members on the other side of the House are just as interested as is anyone on the Government side, and I think such a step would receive support from all members, irrespective of party. I ask the Premier to do something in this matter, and again I ask the Minister for Education, for the information of members, to lay on the Table of the House the report I have asked for.

On motion by Mr. Needham, debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees appointed by that House.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £3,800,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 29th July, 1948.

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

QUESTION.

ROYAL COMMISSIONS.

As to Government's Appointments, Cost, etc.

Hon. G. FRASER (for Hon. G. Bennetts) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many Royal Commissions have been authorised by the present Government since it obtained power on the 1st April, 1947?

(2) What has been the total cost to the taxpayers of those Royal Commissions and the separate cost of each?

(3) On what specific business did each Commission investigate?

(4) Has the Government acted on the findings of those Royal Commissions? If not, why not?

(5) What was the total number of days on which each Royal Commission took evidence?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Six.

(2) (a) Railway Administration and Midland Junction Workshops, including Coal and "S" and "DD" locomotives, £6,420 15s. 10d.; (b) Workers' Compensation, £1,021 12s. 6d.; (c) Milk, £120 8s. 2d.; (d) Housing, £578 2s. 8d.; (e) Betting, £1,624 5s. 2d.; (f) Municipal Boundaries (incomplete); Total, £9,765 4s. 4d.

(3) Terms of reference published in the "Government Gazettes of:—(a) 4th July, 1947, and 5th September, 1947; (b) 25th July, 1947; (c) 7th November, 1947; (d) 7th November, 1947; (e) 19th March, 1948; (f) 12th December, 1947, and 21st May, 1948.

(4) In some cases action is already being taken. In others it is under consideration.