

to make some personal sacrifices. We must be honest and admit that this war was fought for the establishment of a new value in human conditions. Sitting on this side of the House, I say, despite the remarks of the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, that I do not accept second place to him or to any other member on that side of the House in the matter of sincerity to serve the interests of the community at large. I support the second reading of the Bill because I believe that I—with every other member of this House—have a duty to the population generally.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.2 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 13th September, 1944.*

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

### QUESTION—IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE.

*As to Collie Area Accounts.*

Hon. W. J. MANN (for Hon. L. Craig) asked the Chief Secretary:

Will the Minister lay on the Table of the House a detailed statement of income and expenditure for the year ended the 31st December, 1943, in connection with the Collie irrigation area, and a similar statement for drainage in the same area for the year ended the 30th June, 1944?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Statements for the financial years ended 30th June, 1943 and 1944, will be laid on the Table in the near future.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Thirteenth Day—Conclusion.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [4.35]: My first duty is to thank the electors of the Metropolitan Province for having again returned me as one of their representatives for a further term of six years. I congratulate the other members who have been returned. The House will agree with me when I say that Mr. Gibson and myself were very fortunate in being re-elected unopposed. Mr. Gibson has given many years' service to this State, and I was particularly pleased to see him returned without a contest. The other members have all been returned which, as has been previously mentioned, is something of a record. But after all, although we are on different sides of the House and although we are told that there are no party politics in the Legislative Council, I think there is a feeling of comradeship amongst us which makes us glad to see the other fellow back again. At any rate, that is how I feel. One thing the return of all members on this occasion should do is to convince those interested in the Legislative Council that the people still want this Council. There is no question about that. We would otherwise probably have had some candidates, other than the present representatives of the Government, claiming to be opposed to the Legislative Council and suggesting that when the opportune time arrived they would vote themselves out of existence. I very much doubt whether such a state of affairs will ever eventuate. To my mind this re-election of all members—most of them with good majorities—is proof that the country, at least, desires the continuance of the Legislative Council.

Before getting down to one or two points that I want to make in the course of my address, I desire to offer my congratulations to Dr. Hislop on his very able speech. He gave us some information that possibly only he could obtain. To many of us who have had experience in hospital matters it did not come as a surprise. We have to make allowances for the times, and can only hope that the matters brought before the House by the hon. member will be looked into by the Government. I would also like to commend Mr. Dimmitt for drawing attention to the lack of re-

sponsibility on the part of the Government in connection with the education of the blind, and of the deaf and dumb. With Mr. Dimmitt I think that it is the duty of the Government to take care of the education of the afflicted equally with the more fortunate. I hope that as a result of Mr. Dimmitt having brought this matter before the notice of the Government something will be done about it. I wish briefly to refer to the recent Commonwealth Powers Referendum. The vote throughout Australia, in my opinion, definitely proved that the people are not prepared to trust the Commonwealth Government solely to handle the big problems that will face us in the near future.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Not the present Government, particularly.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: No, any Commonwealth Government. To my mind, the rehabilitation of our returned men and of our industries requires the consideration of the best brains in the Commonwealth, and I would not only advocate the creation of a national Government but would go further and enlist outside help to tackle these problems. No one party should undertake this work. No member would argue that there are not as good brains in the Labour Party as in the National Party or the Country Party, but a combination of all in times like the present must redound to the ultimate benefit of the Commonwealth.

I need say very little about the war position. Members will agree with me when I assert that every day the outlook becomes brighter and the end seems nearer. We can only pray that nothing will intervene to prevent a speedy ending of hostilities and the return of our men to civil life. This should afford an opportunity for Western Australia to develop its industries further and seek new openings for our men. I pay a tribute to the Commonwealth Government on the manner in which it is dealing with one of the problems. I refer to the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. Many men had to go away in the prime of their youth; they had to leave what opportunities were offering and fight for King and country. Therefore it is only right that a scheme should be put in hand in order that those men might be given an opportunity to enter some profession or trade, and that the training for it should be undertaken by the Common-

wealth. A few evenings ago I had the pleasure of listening to an address by Major Alexander, of the Army Education Department, who has quite a lot to do with the scheme. I do not propose to occupy the time of the House by giving many points from the scheme, but I should like to say that the leaders in industry appreciate the fact that the Government has called to its aid or into conference employers as well as officials and Government representatives in control of the scheme.

Employers are looking forward to something worth-while emanating from the scheme for the returned men. Briefly the scheme applies to all service personnel who have been engaged overseas or in operational areas. It is designed to use all human material that can be availed of to economic and social advantage. It is intended to provide part-time training and full-time training, and both will apply to vocational and professional subjects. To all persons selected to participate in the scheme, the Commonwealth will give financial assistance without any application of the means test or stipulation as to repayment. Generally, the scheme is designed to provide for three years' training. Where an extended period is required, as in professional courses, additional financial assistance will be available by way of free-of-interest loans.

The scheme also provides that where a trainee reaches 40 per cent. efficiency, he may be drafted into employment, and in such a case he would receive full award rates and the employer would be reimbursed to the extent of the difference between his percentage efficiency and the amount paid him. Thus an employer engaging a man who was only 50 per cent. efficient would receive by way of subsidy from the Commonwealth Government a sum equivalent to 50 per cent. of the award rate paid, and the man would receive the full award wage. In Melbourne a conference is being held of the interested parties, and as one who had a little to do with the training of returned men from the 1914-18 war, and appreciated what it meant to the Commonwealth to get so many of those returned men back to their trades and professions, I am looking forward to this scheme being visited with some degree of success.

Reverting to the recent Commonwealth Referendum, just before the date of the poll

I visited all the States except Queensland and returned fully convinced that Queensland was almost certain to vote "No," as it did, and that New South Wales would vote "No," as it did. Many of my friends smiled when I told them of my impressions, but I felt convinced what the result would be. Victoria, I thought, would be fifty-fifty, and South Australia, I suggested, would almost certainly vote "Yes." But for Western Australia to have recorded the vote it did was more than amazing, for if any part of the Commonwealth has complained about the unfair treatment received at the hands of the Commonwealth, it is this State. In addressing this Chamber last session and pointing out what, to my mind, was the unfair treatment the State had received at the hands of the Commonwealth in the matter of the establishment and development of our industries, I stated that for every additional employee in the industrial sphere in Western Australia, there had been an increase of 18 in South Australia, 54 in Victoria, and 78 in New South Wales.

I repeat that it is amazing that this State should have voted as it did. Fewer secondary industries were established and a much smaller proportion of defence work was placed in this State. Our primary industries were hit much harder than were those of the other States. The goldmining industry has suffered. I am not complaining or suggesting that the manpower authorities were not right in the action they took, but practically half of the mines are closed and our output of gold has dropped by 50 per cent. As one who is connected with industrial affairs in this State, I studied the figures and, as I said, was amazed at the result. However, all I can suggest is that the people have spoken and that now we must leave it to the Commonwealth Government to forget all this and assist us to re-establish our peace-time industries as soon as the war ends. I hope that the Commonwealth Government, in its wisdom, will remember that this State at least was favourable to the Commonwealth's proposals and is therefore perhaps entitled to a little extra consideration. There is no doubt that after the war private enterprise will have to resume its normal activities to enable it to achieve the maximum employment capacity; because it is to the private industries that the bulk of the demobilised soldiers, as well

as other workers, must look for work and economic security.

Consequently I hope that both the Commonwealth Government and the State Government, instead of entering into competition with private enterprise and industry, will assist—financially if necessary—to re-establish our industries and help to get those who have left their ordinary vocations in order to do war work back into peace-time employment. The employment figures in this State are very promising. A gradual increase has taken place even over the last 12 months. I find that on the 30th June, 1943, the figures were approximately 23,300; there has been a steady increase since. The latest figures I was able to obtain were for April, 1944, and the number was 26,900. With other members, I hope this trend will be maintained. Certainly I feel no doubt whatever on that score, although the work in many establishments that have been undertaking the manufacture of munitions is naturally falling off. There has been some easing, and very little, if any, overtime is being worked today in such establishments. It is gratifying to note that the staffs being transferred from those industries are quickly absorbed in the peace-time industries in which the workers were previously employed.

A very great shortage of skilled labour still exists and possibly will exist for a year or two, because I visualise that this State is in for an era of prosperity, not only in our secondary industries but in our primary industries also, for the next three or four years at least. It will be such a prosperous era as we have never seen before. I am convinced that there will be a great demand in both industries for labour and still more labour. That is why I am more than pleased that the Commonwealth Government has undertaken, or is ready to undertake—I understand the scheme is almost ready, if not in operation—to train so many men for the industries requiring their services. The same thing applies to the rural industries, upon which I shall have a few remarks to make at a later stage. I again stress, because there has been so much said about Government competition, that the Commonwealth Government, particularly in view of the result of the Referendum vote in this State, should come to our assistance. I know that many people directly and in-

directly concerned in industry were exceedingly nervous as to what might happen if industries were nationalised or socialised, had the Commonwealth been given all the powers for which it asked.

The efficiency of most of the larger industries of the Commonwealth is due entirely to the initiative of private enterprise, and I am one who sincerely hopes that private enterprise will be given the opportunity to continue its peace-time operations. One other point we must not lose sight of, and that is the question of costs. Prices, as we all know, have soared higher and higher until today it does not matter what commodity we might desire to purchase, the seller almost feels insulted if asked for a price. He says, "There it is; if you want it, pay for it. Never mind about the price." This has reached such a stage that to my mind it cannot go on much longer. One thing that industry will have to watch closely is costs. There must be a national effort to reduce costs. The reduction of manufacturing costs can be left to our works managers, foremen and the workers themselves. Reduction in selling costs is a matter for the sales manager, salesmen and advertising men. Reduction of food costs is a matter for the farmer and the agriculturist; whether they will be able to reduce costs is a question. Undoubtedly, we shall have to raise the standard of living of at least the farm labourers, so whether costs can be reduced in the agricultural industry is problematical.

The other reduction I wish to refer to is reduction of taxation. That, of course, is a question for the Government. We are all expecting some reduction in taxation at an early date and when the war is ended and our costs are not as high as they are today, I sincerely hope the Commonwealth Government will seriously consider this question, because a reduction of costs will mean the raising of our standard of living, an increase in our exports and a mass of people securing employment. It is, however, a matter we must begin to think about immediately. The importance of private industry in the Commonwealth post-war industrial life cannot be overstressed, as secondary industries will become an even more important factor in the economic life of Australia than they have been in the past. I visualise for the next three or four years greater prosperity than has ever been experienced, not only in our

secondary but in our primary industries as well. Speaking of Commonwealth interference with business and the assistance this State may receive, I was pleased to note that there had been opened in this State quite recently, a second clothing factory. I commend the Government for having at last established in various parts of the Commonwealth—or assisted in that direction, because most of these industries are being conducted by private enterprises—various factories of this kind. Recently there have been opened in Victoria no less than 19 of these factories, 17 in New South Wales, and one each in Queensland and South Australia. I understand that these establishments will absorb an additional 4,000 workers, so that they are a step in the right direction.

What I take exception to and I hope we are going to see very little of it, is in regard to something I read in an Eastern State's journal a few days ago. That newspaper referred to the opening of a new factory as being a red-letter day in Australian industry. It was opened on the 8th July by the Minister for Munitions (Mr. Makin), and was a factory for the production of ball-bearings. To my mind that is very bad business. If the Commonwealth Government is going to develop many more industries of that nature in competition with private enterprise it will be a sorry outlook for Australia. I noticed that when speaking on the Address-in-reply on the question of industries, Mr. McDonald a few days ago expressed the hope that efforts would be made to establish in this State industries whose products were now imported. He said he would like to see the Interstate Commission revived to review the trade and commerce sections of the Commonwealth Constitution and their effect upon trade between the States, and suggested that to aid infant industries a tariff might also be imposed for this State. Whether or not that can be brought about time alone can say, but I am glad that our leaders are doing all they can to assist us in the development of our industries.

I wish now briefly to refer to our primary industries. I am sorry Mr. Roche is not present, because I regretted to hear his criticism of the work of the Rural Reconstruction Commission, particularly as I had read the two reports which have been submitted to the Minister by the Commission.

In my opinion that body has set out to do a very excellent job. So far as I can see the Commonwealth Government on this occasion is undertaking rural reconstruction on very sound lines.

Hon. J. Cornell: That remains to be seen.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That may be so, but it has a sound nucleus in the reports that have already been handed in.

Hon. G. W. Miles: If those reports are followed up.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: If they are carried out there is every prospect of more farmers being successful amongst our returned soldiers. I do not wish to pit my opinion against returned men who after the last war went on the land. Members, however, know that I have a little experience of farming and know a little about the other side of the story because I have for many years dealt with farming implements and understand some of the tragedies of putting any Dick, Tom or Harry on the land just because he happened to be a returned soldier. Large estates were purchased at fabulous prices, overloaded and over-capitalised, and men were put on them. They stayed there only until their credit was exhausted, and then they walked off. What that has meant to this State as well as by way of losses to the farming industry generally, can be said to run into colossal figures. I am worried when I hear, as I have heard during this session, farmers' representatives complain about the unfair treatment of producers through lack of help and support from the Government. It is about time we stopped that sort of thing.

I was sorry to hear Mr. Roche say that the Commission was entirely wrong in making finance and supervision of paramount importance in the settlement of returned men on the land. I entirely disagree with the hon. member. I think that for the man who goes on the land, whether he knows much or little about his operations, the first essential is finance and supervision is the next. Without finance there will be nothing to supervise, and without supervision and very much knowledge of farming operations the question of finance will not come into the matter for very long. I offer the opinion that if the conditions laid down in the reports of the Royal Commission are carried out, rural industries will receive an uplift, and not the setback that some members seem to

think. I personally was very pleased with the two reports that I read. The Commonwealth Government is very fortunate in having as Chairman of the Commission, the Minister for Lands, Hon. F. J. S. Wise. That hon. gentleman is doing an excellent job. He may not be as good a farmer as is Mr. Roche and as are other members but he has good sound business proposals which appear in these reports. I hope the Commonwealth Government will go ahead with the reports and that the success I anticipate will be met with. Primary producers today are in a better position than they have been for many years. I prophesy that, given reasonable seasons, they are in for a good time for the next ten years. This may be a rash prophecy, but I think that the farming industry throughout the Commonwealth will be in a sound position for the next decade.

Hon. J. Cornell: The biggest problem will be the replacement of machinery.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is something industry will have to look after. A great deal of replacement will be necessary. I do not know that that will be the biggest problem, for I think the main problem will be that of manpower. It is useless for us who employ labour in the farming industry to expect that men will come back and work under the same conditions that appertained previously. I can speak personally and can vouch for what I say. Some of the men employed on farms have for the last three or four years, if not longer, been earning £6, £7 or £8 a week in munition factories. They have been earning their money, too, and have not been getting it for nothing, for they have done an excellent job. After the war it will be futile to expect such men to return to farming even for half the earnings. That means that the standard of living for the farming industry will have to be lifted, as it should be, and it also means that the farmer must be paid a reasonable price for the commodity he produces.

Why the farming industry should have remained in the position it has been in ever since I had to do with it is beyond me. I admit that we have to compete in the world markets, but surely we should be able to put the industry on something like a sound footing, or at least a better footing than it has been on for years past. When the industry gets into trouble, as it does, it is always a question of running to

the Government. The Government must wipe off this or wipe off that. Private industry cannot do that sort of thing. If I am unfortunate enough in my business to make a loss it is no use my going to the Government and suggesting that it should arrange with the bank to wipe off 80 or 90 per cent. of my indebtedness. There must be an adjustment of conditions in the farming industry, and I hope the future will be as bright as I anticipate. An improvement in the manpower position may help somewhat in that direction.

Very much more womanpower has been utilised during the war period. The efforts of women in almost every direction have amazed many of us. I confess that as an employer and one who strongly opposed the employment of women in machinery factories where the work is heavy, I have been staggered at the services rendered by most of the women employed in my own factory. That state of affairs has probably applied in other directions, otherwise industry could not have continued to employ women. In fact, women have done a wonderful job during the war, and I hope that many of those who desire to remain in industry will assist in the manpower position generally. A few days ago I made it my business to interview the officers of a Government department concerning the financial position of the farming community. I was advised by one officer that in one group alone under his control, during the last 12 months more mortgages had been redeemed than had been the case in the previous five years. An instance was quoted to me of where a man's interest amounting to over £1,000 was capitalised and within 18 months the amount had been paid in full. In support of my contention I shall quote something that was said when the second reading of the Industries Assistance Act Continuance Bill was moved recently. The Minister for Lands, when dealing with the matter said—

With one or two amendments the Act since then—

He was referring to the original introduction of the legislation in 1915—

—had been introduced annually in Parliament. In 1934 the advances to farmers had so diminished that it appeared as if the Act's continuance would not be necessary. Fortunately, however, it was carried on. Last year the number of accounts operating was 672. This year the number was 412. For the year ended June 30, 1943, the amount advanced was

£56,430 and the amount collected exceeded £150,000. To June 30 this year, £24,000 was advanced, repayments exceeding £58,000. Total advances since the Act came into operation were £1,320,000. The uncollectable sum written off as bad debts for that period was £300,862. The amount in principal and interest still outstanding was £44,479.

To my mind that discloses a wonderful position. On the figures given there it seems to me that the amount outstanding will be repaid within the next two years.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What were you reading from?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: From a report which appeared in "The West Australian" of the 6th September last. The results disclosed are very gratifying indeed. Another point regarding primary industry to which I shall refer concerns the employment of aborigines. I read with interest—perhaps I should say with disgust—that in the Arbitration Court in New South Wales a few days ago the secretary of the A.C.T.U. complained very bitterly because in issuing an award dealing with shearers the court had not provided for equal pay for aborigines. I appreciate that the native question is a very big one and had I more time to go into the matter I would have liked to comment at some length on the situation. Those of us who are engaged in farming operations know that during the past two or three years we have had in many instances to rely to a large extent on the aborigines for labour about the properties. That form of labour is the only one available in many districts particularly along the Midland line.

From what I know and have seen farmers have certainly not exploited aboriginal labour. As much as £4 a week has been paid to aborigines who are useful on the farms. To suggest, however, that they should receive payment equal to that made available to white labour is absolutely ridiculous. While I admit it has been necessary to use aborigine labour in Western Australia there is one great difficulty. Up to the time when the natives were under the control of the military authorities they proved very useful. Control was exercised over them and they had to stay on the farm and on the job, not being permitted to leave without approval. Under those circumstances the natives proved useful. Now that those conditions have been relaxed and the natives can wander back to their settlements at will, the position is

very unsatisfactory. I would like to say quite a lot about it for I am very worried about the position. I notice that the Government has agreed to a religious body taking control of a number of natives in the Great Southern and I sincerely hope that the outcome will prove far more satisfactory than has been our experience with native settlements elsewhere in the State.

I desire next to refer briefly to a subject that has been prominently before the public during the last few days—the abolition or reform of the Legislative Council. At the outset I admit my views respecting reform may be entirely opposed by some members in certain directions. But I certainly do not desire a measure of reform along the lines the comments of some members of Parliament have suggested. I shall quote some remarks I made in my maiden speech in this Chamber over 12 years ago. As I say, some members will not agree with some of the views I then expressed but I still maintain that for the government and control of approximately 470,000 people, a Parliament with two branches of the Legislature comprising 80 members in all is far too much. In moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply in August, 1932, I said in the course of my remarks—

There are directions in which the Government can and should further reduce the public expenditure. I am a little disappointed to find that there is no suggestion of this in the Governor's Speech by way of reducing the number of members in both Houses of Parliament. I have advocated this reduction for many years and I am still of the opinion that two representatives, instead of three, for each province, making a total of 20 members in lieu of 30 for this Chamber, and a reduction from 50 members to 35 in the Legislative Assembly, would yet give the people ample representation in our legislative halls. Indeed, I would go even further and support the suspension of Parliament for a term of five or seven years, as I am convinced that better results would be obtained if a Commission of, say six members were appointed to control the affairs of State in the interest of the State, and the State only, and not of any political party.

Hon. J. Cornell: Who would appoint the Commission?

Hon. W. J. Mann: At any rate, Mr. Bolton was very young then.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I admit I was young in politics at the time. I continued—

It would, naturally be necessary for us to secure the very best brains available, men who have made a success of their own affairs and would be paid salaries in keeping with the

high and honourable positions of trust which they would hold. This step would also have the effect of removing our public utilities from political control or interference, thus giving the management a much freer hand in the conduct of those utilities. In return the State could demand and expect more efficient management.

Those were my views 12 years ago, and that is largely what I believe in today. If members were to analyse the figures, as I have, they will become convinced that some alteration in the present conditions is needed. I am certainly aware of the necessity of making alterations, but not along the lines suggested by my Labour friends who are very keen on abolishing the Legislative Council altogether. The reform I suggest is rather in the direction of a reduction in the number of members of both Houses. The Speech with which His Excellency opened Parliament this session indicated the intention of the Government to amend the franchise for this Chamber. Already the Government has moved in that direction and the legislation is before another place. For the time being I am not so much concerned about that—I shall have something to say when the legislation is before this Chamber—but I am certain in my own mind that there is no need for three representatives for each province in this Chamber.

In my opinion, two representatives for each province would be ample. That would reduce the membership of this House to twenty—quite sufficient, in my opinion, to review and check any hasty legislation that might be introduced in another place. Then again, the boundaries of the provinces and also the enrolments urgently need attention. At present we have the extraordinary anomaly of three representatives for a mere handful of 729 electors. While I admit that the North is deserving of quite a lot of consideration, even those figures should be reconsidered. A still greater anomaly exists in connection with the city and suburban representation. The province I have the honour to represent, in conjunction with Sir Hal Colebatch and Dr. Hislop, contains 5,692 electors, while the adjoining province, the Metropolitan-Suburban, has no fewer than 27,692 electors.

Hon. J. Cornell: Both enrolments could be stepped up more than 100 per cent. if the rolls were dealt with.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That may be so, but it appears to me that the only individual

who attempts to step up the enrolments is the man who seeks re-election to this Chamber. It is the member who seeks re-election that seems to do the work of the Electoral Department. In the South-East Province there are 7,033 electors, in the West Province, 8,859 electors, and in the South-West Province, 7,024 electors. To my mind, the position regarding those three provinces is satisfactory. In order to increase the number for the North Province, an adjustment could be made by including some part of the Central Province and adding part of the East Province, which has 9,357 electors, and has the next largest enrolment to that of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province, to the Central Province, which has 4,960 electors.

Any adjustment required could be made by adding some outer suburban voters to the rolls for the East Province and, to even up the city representation, an adjustment with the Metropolitan, Metropolitan-Suburban and West Provinces could take place. This would leave the two distant provinces, North and South, with many fewer voters than the other eight provinces. Perhaps there may be something in the suggestion of Mr. Miles, made in the excellent speech he delivered yesterday, that if we handed over the North of this State to the Commonwealth we could overcome that anomaly. With readjustment on those lines, and with two representatives for each province, this Chamber would continue the useful service it has always rendered, acting as a watchdog over all legislation. I would like here to say that in my opinion it was this Chamber's attitude, together with the firm stand taken by the Legislative Council of Tasmania, on the Referendum Powers Bill, that forced the Commonwealth Government to take the Referendum as it did. I claim for this Chamber that credit, which I am willing to share with Tasmania's Legislative Council.

Hon. J. Cornell: And South Australia also.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: South Australia might be included, but it was not so helpful as either Western Australia or Tasmania. In my opinion, reform is also urgently needed in the Legislative Assembly. I would reduce the numbers there to 35, making a total of 55 legislators, as against the present total of 80. As I said previously, the whole Parliamentary system re-

quires overhaul. Whether the overhauling should be done now or should wait until the war is over and our men have returned and settled down again, is a question to be decided. But reform is undoubtedly long overdue. I have not gone very carefully into the enrolments in the various Assembly electorates, but would point out that here again the northern seats are represented by four members, the voting strength being 2,843, or an average of 710 per seat. Three other seats have less than 3,000 voters, while 13 have under 4,000, eight under 5,000, and four under 6,000. Between this figure and under 10,000 there are 14 members, while the remaining seats have over 10,000 electors each. Of these seats Nedlands with 13,433 voters, Canning with 13,151, Mt. Hawthorn with 12,395 and Middle Swan with 10,351 head the list. Again I would remark that it might be wise to hand over the North in some direction; I will not mention which; I leave that to members to guess.

The figures I have quoted prove that some review of the whole Parliamentary position is long overdue. Perhaps they could be cited as making a good case for proportional representation. I have always been a firm supporter of proportional representation. I believe, and always have believed, that it is wrong for any section of the community to have the whole of the representation in its hands, or in the hands of one party. I hold that every section is entitled to somewhere near equal representation. In my opinion proportional representation on those lines would make for good government and good opposition. Certainly we could be sure of having good, sound opposition. Then, if the whole parliamentary system is to be investigated, what is wrong with giving elective ministries a trial? We would be sure, under it, of getting the best men for the positions; and if ever we wanted the best brains to control affairs in the Commonwealth and in the States, it is today! Undoubtedly we hear every day that we are sure to win the war but what is going to happen after the peace?

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member has forgotten "Referendum and Recall."

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Any Government in power is going to have a very worrying time for the next few months. If the Government of this State is sincere in its ex-



pressed desire for improvement in the Parliamentary position, or alterations in the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly, it can find the necessary power in the Electoral Districts Act, passed in 1923, Section 10 of which reads—

(1) The State may be wholly or partially re-divided into Electoral Districts by the Commissioners in manner hereinbefore provided whenever directed by the Governor by proclamation.

(2) Such proclamation shall be issued—

(a) On a resolution being passed by the Legislative Assembly in that behalf; or

(b) If in the report by the Chief Electoral Officer to the Minister to whom the administration of the Electoral Act, 1907, is for the time being committed, as to the state of the rolls made up for any triennial election it appears that the enrolment in not less than five Electoral Districts falls short of or exceeds by twenty per centum the quota as ascertained for such districts under this Act.

Under that section, if the Government is sincere, it has the power necessary for making reforms. I suggest that the position be looked into, and I would definitely favour a Select Committee to go into the whole subject. It could at the same time look into the question of the powers of the Legislative Council. At times there are complaints that the Legislative Council has too much power to veto legislation brought up from another place. That matter also could be looked into by the Select Committee. From some Press comments I have noticed that members of the Legislative Council will be expected to declare whether they are still in favour of the franchise as at present. That is particularly as regards the property qualification and plural voting. I want very definitely to say that I believe in the property qualification and plural voting, and that I intend to continue to believe in them, for the reason that I have yet to be convinced that any person practically without a stake in the country, a person who pays a paltry 7s. per week for the rent of a room or a cottage, is entitled to as much say or consideration in the affairs of the State as is a man who is prepared to devote his life to building up an industry, a farm, a business, or a professional practice. I am still strongly in favour of the property qualification and plural voting for the Legislative Council. I

have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

**HON. F. R. WELSH** (North): I was very glad indeed last night to hear Mr. Miles's remarks concerning the North-West. There are many problems confronting the North-West, and I think the biggest of those problems is the astonishing lack of knowledge of the potentialities of the North-West and of the conditions under which the people there live. We of the North appear to have drifted back to the position of 30 years ago. Indeed, conditions then were infinitely better than those prevailing at the present time. Of course we cannot expect too much while the war is on. I do not think any of the people in the North will disagree with that statement. If there is any man who knows that a war is on, it is the man outback. In His Excellency's Speech mention is made of strategic minerals produced in the North the continued production of which will materially help in the development of that part of the State. In passing let me say that these minerals were produced by private enterprise many years before the war, and that although the Government has taken some of them over and spent quite a considerable sum of money on surface equipment, and again although miners have been sent up, I doubt very much whether production has been increased to any extent. Those little points are forgotten because people do not realise them.

Goldmining is on a good footing, particularly in Marble Bar, and after the war, when manpower is available, there will be quite an increase in the production of gold there. A question I wish to take up is that of pastoral losses. At present pastoralists are going through a very trying time, as compared with the conditions of years ago. We are always up against seasons, and, of course, no Government can give us favourable seasons. At the present time, however, owing to dry times entailing huge stock losses which are reflected in the smaller clips coming forward, pastoralists are also troubled by the influx of dingoes and foxes. Owing to the shortage of labour and the impossible position regarding strychnine, it is beyond the power of some of the smaller stations, and also of some large stations, to cope with the dingo pest by poisoning. Some thought

should be given to these things. I understand that the State Government, through the Agricultural Department, has put out trappers in some northern districts, and those trappers no doubt will do much good. But the department is unable to furnish adequate supplies of poison. The Chief Secretary has expressed the belief that supplies will be available at the end of the year, but in the meantime the dingoes are eating the sheep and we cannot cope with the pest. I believe, however, that supplies of poison are now coming forward.

As regards strychnine and other poisons essential to a major industry, I hold that such lines should be given No. 1 priority. I have information that supplies were available in Victoria last year. Why could not they have been available in our North-West? I wish also to mention that horse-shoes have been in very short supply up there. Men cannot get their horses shod. As regards poisoning dogs, the position seems pretty hopeless. Now I turn to the question of transport. We have two State ships, which are doing an excellent job, but we were better served when we had the "Kybra." I do not understand why the Admiralty, which took over the "Kybra" has not released this ship, because the war situation is much easier and the vessel does not seem to be wanted in the Eastern States at present. We could do with it here. The Army has taken up quite a lot of the space on the boats travelling to the North and we have no cargo space. That could easily be remedied if we could have the "Kybra" returned to us.

The State Shipping Service would do us a good turn if it could get the "Kybra" back to Western Australia. The State boats are doing fine work, but are hampered by lack of facilities to transport our commodities. All our wool is being brought down as quickly as possible, but a lot of the clips are missing the sales down here. People are paying interest on overdrafts and are not getting their wool appraised. All these things might well be considered. The whole of the North is slipping to a certain extent with regard to transport. We have a very good plane service, but it has been quite incapable at certain times of the year of catering for the travelling public. Residents of the North have come south for health or business reasons, and have been put to consid-

erable inconvenience and expense by not being able to return when they desired to do so, because the planes have been booked right out. There is only one boat with accommodation and that provides for only 12 passengers. Consequently people have come to rely on the planes. Traveling overland is out of the question.

Some of our roads in the North are roads in name only. A lot of money has been spent on them at different times, but military trucks have cut them to pieces. I said last year that, in view of the way in which the Army was using the roads, it ought to take control of them. The Army has the manpower and the money for that sort of thing. Road boards in the North cannot find funds to keep such roads in repair. I think a lot of good could be done for the North-West if money were made available by the Commonwealth Government, which has practically ruined the roads. I do not think it is possible to find one decent road in the North. When I saw up there in December, to get along some of the roads by car was a nightmare. This question should be taken into consideration by the State Government and the Commonwealth should be asked to find money to repair the damage done.

I was agreeably surprised to hear references by Mr. Miles to schemes for the development of the North, but I think the Ord River scheme is too big an undertaking for Western Australia. It should be handed over to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth should develop all the country in the Northern Territory which includes Barkley Tableland, one of the finest pastoral areas in Australia. But I do not agree that the Commonwealth Government should have all the land north of the 26th parallel. I doubt whether any Government would be entitled to give it away. It would be a defeatist policy to offer to give it away. The Government could do much to develop this country north to Broome, Derby and Wyndham, where men have been putting up with quite a lot of inconvenience that could be overcome if a little sympathy were shown by the authorities.

There is scope for the development of the fishing industry along the coast mentioned by Mr. Miles. The sea is teeming with fish of all descriptions and with Commonwealth assistance a large industry could be developed after the war. There is enough fish

in Western Australia to feed the whole of Australia, let alone what could be secured in the Eastern States. To give away that part of the State would be to give away the Wyndham Meat Works. I doubt whether the Government would be prepared to do that. Mr. Miles compared the South-West with the North, but the cases are not parallel. In a recent trip to the South-West I was struck by its immense possibilities. There is a good annual rainfall in that area and, with pastures laid down, there would be a big future for that country. I would not like to say that too much money has been spent in the South-West, but I do assert that too little has been spent in the North-West. A number of difficulties facing those in the North-West could be obviated if the Government would only take a long view.

People in the North are isolated to a tremendous extent and folk down south do not realise what has to be endured up there. Residents of the North have been long-suffering and do not complain as they should do. Mr. Cornish mentioned the need for a water scheme. Onslow and Port Hedland have two of the worst schemes in the world. Some years ago the State Government began to put in a scheme at Port Hedland. A site 19 miles out, where there was a pool with an almost inexhaustible supply, was inspected and, being tested, the water was found to be satisfactory. A pipe line was surveyed to Port Hedland. At that point the matter was pigeon-holed, like many others connected with the North-West. Had that scheme been completed, it would have made a wonderful difference to that part of the West. The state of affairs existing there is scandalous and no other country would tolerate the absence of a water scheme in such an area. Quite a lot more could be said about the development of the North but I will conclude by referring to the fact that the pastoral industry is one of the major industries in this State. Further consideration should be given to fostering that industry and other industries in the North. I hope that something will be done in the future to ensure that there is no lack of supply of essential commodities for that industry.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** I am sorry that Mr. Miles, in his interesting

speech, made a great mistake in picking on the Collie miners.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I did not pick on them, but on the mining industry.

**The HONORARY MINISTER:** The hon. member particularly mentioned the Collie miners.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I did nothing of the sort.

**The HONORARY MINISTER:** The Collie miners have a wonderful record. I understood the hon. member to give them the cane, as well as the other miners.

Hon. G. W. Miles: No. I referred to absenteeism.

**The HONORARY MINISTER:** They have put up a wonderful record and if miners elsewhere had followed their example much more coal would be available. It must be remembered that we have men working in the mines who are from 60 to 70 years of age and that would account for a good deal of absenteeism. I admire Mr. Miles for the way he preaches the need of developing the North-West and I think the time has come when we should realise that the North and North-West must be peopled. To be convinced of that, we have only to listen to the remarks of visitors who come here—fighting men and public men and women—and who emphasise that we cannot continue to hold Australia unless we populate it. I agree that the North and North-West constitute a danger spot and agree with every word Mr. Miles said in that regard. In future we must have an open mind on this matter and be prepared to strike new ground in developing that country. There is much to be done.

Public men and women from the Old Country have more than once expressed the opinion that not too many people will be available to come from England as migrants and I think we will have a terrific job properly to launch a scheme of land settlement. Judging from past experience some difficulty will be encountered in getting our own people to undertake settlement in the North under any scheme the State or the Commonwealth Government may devise. It will take us all our time to persuade men from the Services to take up land in any part of the State. The big thing is to have an open mind in regard to the development of the North-West and to be prepared to listen to reasonable suggestions for its development. I heard with

great interest the remarks of Dr. Hislop when he gave his very detailed account of the condition of the Bunbury Hospital. As one who has been connected with hospitals as a layman, for many years—and who has had a great deal of experience of hospitals. I think the trouble today is not so much lack of money as a serious shortage of manpower. Wherever one goes one finds that a tremendous amount of work has to be done to bring not only hospitals, but also public buildings, factories and schools up to normal. The Chief Secretary will be able to give a very good answer to the case made out by Dr. Hislop. I rose particularly to refer to the interesting information the hon. member gave with regard to the mortality rate and the welfare of children generally. He gave some interesting facts with regard to the value of the work of the Infant Health Association in this State, and the infant health centres scattered throughout the State. The continuous survey of the Government Statistician's department is a reliable barometer in this regard. These returns are very encouraging to those who take a lively interest in this important subject.

The infant health movement in this State has never been more vigorous, more ambitious, and more anxious to increase its efficiency and usefulness than it is at present. There are 33 committees operating throughout the State, all affiliated with the parent body. Also, 104 clinics and sub-clinics are in operation, and for the year ended the 30th June last, 13,056 individual babies with their mothers attended the clinics. There were 137,280 attendances of babies and the number of consultations totalled 153,900. Effective visits to households made by the nursing sisters totalled 16,582. We have a comprehensive correspondence lessons scheme which operates from headquarters in Stirling-street. The sister there is occupied in dealing with the mothers of the outback who have not the opportunity to attend an infant health nursing centre.

There is highly commendable activity by many committees which do not as yet own their own centre buildings. Of the committees 17 are busily engaged raising money for building funds and as soon as possible after the war restrictions are lifted a building programme for 17 new modern clinics will be commenced in the metropolitan area

and country districts. The Bassendean Road Board and the local infant health committee are preparing to build. East Fremantle, Melville, Armadale, Kalamunda, Mundaring, East Scarborough, Beverley, Dowerin and Merredin centres are all engaged in building preparations. There are at present 22 centre buildings, including the headquarters at Stirling-street, Perth, which are owned by the committees and the association at a cost of over £16,000, all clear of debt.

It is very encouraging to see the increasing interest that the medical profession is taking in this movement, particularly in the country districts. It is not uncommon to find the local doctor an active member and sometimes chairman of the local infant health committee. I am hoping to see a development bringing about closer co-operation between the doctor and the infant health sister, particularly with regard to more efficient ante-natal supervision of the mother. The latter appears to me, as a layman, to be the weak link which must be strengthened to deal with what, I think, is the appalling loss of infant life one month and under, which was mentioned particularly by Dr. Hislop. I will speak of this later. Particularly Mandurah, Pinjarra, Bridgetown, Manjimup and Pemberton in the South-West are showing intense interest with very live representative committees, each of which has its plans for modern clinics well advanced and is ready to commence building operations when permission is granted.

In the metropolitan area also building activity by committees is very commendable. The Fremantle City Council has already purchased a central site and is preparing plans for the erection of a community building which will house a modern infant health clinic, a dental clinic, an immunisation clinic and a lecture room, and will cost approximately from £5,000 to £6,000. In this regard the Fremantle City Council has set a splendid example to kindred local authorities in Western Australia. In this great building activity the Lotteries Commission has rendered generous assistance. The personal interest taken in this work by the chairman of the Lotteries Commission (Mr. J. J. Kenneally) is keenly appreciated by our members.

Professional men and women are taking a prominent part in this campaign. They include the honorary architects to the asso-

ciation—Miss Allen, of the firm of William Bennett and Co., as Mr. Bennett is on active service, the Principal Architect, Mr. Clare, Mr. W. H. Robertson, honorary architect, and the Town Planning Commissioner, Mr. Davidson. Mr. Davidson has rendered valuable assistance and is always prepared to attend the different meetings at the country centres and, when carrying out his ordinary inspection duties, he does, if possible, meet the local people and give them the benefit of his expert advice.

I have received from Mr. R. J. Little, the acting Government Statistician, the latest figures available with regard to the infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births for the several States, and Australia as a whole, together with the latest information available from other countries. This makes interesting reading and comparison. The following are the mortality figures per 1,000 supplied by Mr. Little:—

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

	Metro- politan.	Country.	Whole State.
Under One Month—			
Year ended 31-12-42 ....	20.30	21.01	20.70
Under One Year—			
Year ended 31-12-42 ....	37.62	36.22	36.86
Year ended 31-12-43 ....	29.66	36.22	32.63
Six months ended 30-6-44	30.81	33.32	31.96

## AUSTRALIA.

	Under One Month.	Under One Year— 1942.	1943.
New South Wales ....	25.49	40.17	35.99
Victoria ....	27.75	41.67	35.76
Queensland ....	25.32	34.73	37.83
South Australia ....	20.39	39.72	36.67
Western Australia ....	20.70	36.86	32.63
Tasmania ....	28.28	42.41	40.56
Northern Territory ....	21.74	43.48	75.00
Australian Capital Territory	7.65	22.06	18.62
Australia ....	25.35	39.49	36.19

I do not include—and I think Dr. Hislop agrees with me here—the figures for the Australian Capital Territory in my comparison. They would give a false impression because that Territory shows the lowest mortality rate in the world, namely, 7.65 in the case of infants under one month. That was the rate in 1942. In the case of infants under one year it was, for the same year, 22.96, and 18.62 for 1943. Because the Australian Capital Territory is so small it would not be fair even to boast about those figures. For the purposes of comparison I have eliminated them altogether. The rates for New Zealand and for England for 1943 for children under one year are 48.46 and 31.37 respectively. If we compare these with the Western Australian rates we find that in 1943 there is a difference of only 1.26 per 1,000. New

Zealand is looked upon as a pioneer in the movement and it has always been at the top in regard to infant health mortality. If we compare our figures for the six months ended the 30th June of this year, with the latest New Zealand figures, the difference is only .59. Although later New Zealand figures may be even better, for Western Australia in wartime to produce a record like that is a marvellous tribute to the medical profession, the members of which are overworked because of the hundreds of doctors who are away with the Services. In addition, the nurses and those associated with the infant health movement are also overworked. For the purpose of comparison I would like to give members the mortality rates in other parts of the world. Later figures than those given for other overseas countries in the Commonwealth Year Book are shown as follows:—

Country.	1940.	1941.
England and Wales ....	55	58
Scotland ....	78	83
Northern Ireland ....	86	77
New Zealand ....	37	40
Netherlands ....	39	43
Sweden ....	39	37
Switzerland ....	46	41
United States of America ....	47	45
South Africa (Europeans) ....	50	52
Denmark ....	50	55
Germany ....	63	63
Canada ....	56	60
France ....	91	73
Elze ....	66	73
Finland ....	88	....
Belgium ....	85	84
Italy ....	103	116
Spain ....	109	143
Portugal ....	126	151
Hungary ....	*134	*117
Egypt ....	162	....
Ceylon ....	149	120
Rumania ....	*189	*160

\* Approximate figures.  
The League of Nations Statistical Year Book, from which these rates were obtained, warns that some may be too high because of incomplete registration of births.

With the object of trying to measure the value of infant health clinics and sisters to mothers and their babies I have, with the valued assistance of the Registrar General and his officers, conducted an investigation into the deaths of infants, including still-born children, over a period of 25 weeks commencing on the 26th February of this year to the 18th August. The deaths embraced in this investigation occurred in the metropolitan district, including Midland Junction, Perth and Fremantle. Every week the death notices were sent to us and inquiries were made from the sisters as to the attendances of the mothers at the clinics.

The total deaths were 116. Of these 68 were one month old and under, of whom 20 were stillborn. Some 43 of these babies with their mothers could have attended the clinics. Our investigation shows that of the 43 babies who died where clinics were available in the metropolitan area only seven had mothers who regularly attended the clinics, or 16.2 per cent. In the case of 14 deaths the mothers attended irregularly or 32.6 per cent., and 22 of the deaths, or 51.1 per cent., occurred where the mothers had not registered an attendance at the clinics. The mortality in this inquiry of 68 babies who died at the age of 1 month and under in a total of 116 deaths of babies under two years, which is 38.6 per cent., points unmistakably to the necessity for increasing the efficiency of the ante-natal service to mothers.

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

The HONORARY MINISTER: To increase the efficiency of ante-natal treatment is impossible during war time owing to the shortage of doctors and nurses, but in my opinion this grave loss should command the attention of all State Governments and the Commonwealth Government. We cannot afford this loss, and the organisation to deal with it should form an important part of the post-war programme. This is a striking illustration of the value to mothers and their babies of the infant health nursing service and is an effective answer to those who criticise the service and decri its value. During the war period and the acute housing shortage many young wives of servicemen have been compelled to live with their mothers or mothers-in-law. The infant health sisters have reported, especially in some parts of the country districts, great difficulty in persuading such mothers to attend the clinic regularly, due to the influence of their conservative mothers and mothers-in-law, who, in their days of motherhood, had not the advantage of such a service. This may be a contributory cause of the higher mortality rate in the country than in the metropolis.

I thought this a good opportunity to give an account of the work of the infant health movement. My opinion is that, whatever the State Government or the Commonwealth may do—and I hope each will do a lot—there is necessity for closer co-operation between doctors and these nurses, and I hope to see the day when infant health

nurses will work under the local doctors, particularly in the country, so that the present lack of supervision may be remedied and the movement may take its proper place under the guidance of the doctors. I support the motion.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** My first desire is to thank members for their expressions of goodwill on my re-election to this House, and I also join with my colleagues in congratulating other members on their successful return. We are still at war, but the improvement in the position is very pleasing to all of us. Recently momentous events have taken place in Europe and the Pacific. In Europe there has been a remarkable transformation. Events there are moving faster than at one time appeared possible, and it now seems certain that the ascendancy of the Allies will bring this struggle to an earlier finality than we had dared to anticipate. In reviewing recent events, one can only take pride in the achievements of our Forces and the statesmanship that gives direction, inspiration and encouragement in the amazing drama that is unfolding before the world today.

The early speakers to the motion confined their remarks almost wholly to the Referendum. This question has now been settled, and I do not propose to deal with the remarks of members in that connection. All I will say is that after analysing some of the speeches, they appear to me to be very illogical and not in accord with the attitude adopted by some of those members during the campaign. As usual members touched upon a multiplicity of subjects and will not expect me to reply to every point that has been raised. I propose to follow the procedure I have adopted ever since I have occupied this position by referring to many of the more important matters that have been mentioned. The first subject is that of finance.

The finances of the State have not been dealt with to any great extent during the debate. Members mentioning the matter, however, have referred to the fact that a surplus of £38,021 was shown on last year's operations, but have not been very enthusiastic over the Government's achievements. Mr. Baxter, for instance, said that it was nothing for the Government to gloat over, and it has even been suggested that the surplus has been obtained because rea-

sonable provision has not been made for maintenance of public buildings and railways, etc. The Government does not wish to gloat over the fact, but surely it is entitled to take full credit for having achieved its fourth successive surplus. This is an achievement the like of which has never before been recorded in the history of the State, and is strictly in accord with the undertaking given by the State Government to the Commonwealth that it would make every effort to balance the Budget, particularly during the war years. Consequently I say that although the surplus last year was small, the fact that it was the fourth successive surplus is something for which the Government is entitled to credit.

As to belated maintenance—a matter referred to by Mr. Dimmitt—provision was made in the expenditure from Consolidated Revenue for last year, both in regard to the railways and to public buildings. The following amounts have been allocated:—

	1942/43	1943/44	Total
	£.	£.	£.
Railways ..	120,000	50,000	170,000
Public Buildings	100,000	50,000	150,000
Country Water Supply ..	6,000	—	6,000
Total ..	226,000	100,000	326,000

Provision has also been made for the replacement of rollingstock to the extent of £144,759. This represents an amount received by the State for the purchase of rollingstock by the Commonwealth. These figures show that a total of nearly half a million has been allocated for the purposes mentioned.

Regarding the point made by Mr. Seddon when dealing with the Supply Bill relative to the application of the surplus towards a reduction of our indebtedness, it can be stated that the amount will be applied towards the reduction of the floating debt. It is true that the reduction of this debt means only a small saving to revenue because the interest rate is low, but it should not be forgotten that the floating debt represents a short term debt in the nature of an advance to be repaid as soon as possible. Mr. Seddon also expressed concern about the growing expenditure on salaries and wages, and thinks that, in view of the fact that our manpower has been considerably reduced, we

should expect to find a corresponding reduction in departmental salaries and wages.

The fact is that prior to the financial year just closed, the services had been reduced to a minimum. In the ordinary Government departments, the places of many male clerks have been taken by females. In the Public Utilities there has not been the same reduction in numbers of employees, and where additional revenue has been earned, it has been necessary to incur additional expenditure to earn the revenue. This is particularly true of the Railways Department. The revenue earned by the Railways is very high and has been exceeded on one occasion only, namely, in 1942-43, when an amount of £4,446,370 was received. The cause of the slight reduction to £4,419,766 for the year just ended—a difference of £26,604—has been in the falling-off in the amount of traffic carried on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

Dealing with secondary industries in this State, Mr. Baxter expressed depressing and pessimistic views in regard to their development. Fortunately for the State, these views are not shared by leading manufacturers, either here or in the Eastern States, who have frequently expressed gratification at what they describe as the genuine effort being made by the State Government to expand existing industries and establish new ones. Apparently Mr. Baxter has not shown sufficient interest in the State's development to acquaint himself with the progress that has taken place in regard to the local production of such items as linseed oil, plywood, canned fish, canned meat, canned vegetables, hops, salt, paints, sulphur, implement handles, paper, clothing, knitted goods, feldmongery, special leathers, minerals, machine tools, wooden ships and many engineering products which have made a direct contribution to the war effort.

These developments have been made possible by Government assistance rendered through the Department of Industrial Development, with the co-operation of other Government departments. I feel I can express the opinion that in most cases these are permanent additions to our secondary industries. The Government realises that before any great expansion of secondary industrial development can take place, one or

more large basic industries must be established; and with this end in view it has concentrated on the development of the chemical industry at Chandler and the charcoal iron industry at Wundowie.

In regard to the former, Mr. Baxter referred to the part played by the Martin brothers in the working of the deposits. Full credit must be given to the Martin brothers for the initiative and energy shown by them in the preliminary development of the project; but the ultimate success of the industry will be due to the technical knowledge and research now being applied by Government officers to the many problems associated with the development of a new process. Private enterprise failed to provide the money required to develop the industry, and it was therefore necessary for the Government to step in and provide the capital. Without this Government support there is no doubt that the present stage of development would not have been reached for many years, and Western Australia's agriculturists would at the present time be suffering from a considerably reduced supply of potash.

While on this subject I would refer to the remarks made by Mr. Seddon when criticising the present production and production costs of potash. He referred to figures and information which I had given him in a reply to a recent question relating to this industry. He said that production was comparatively small, whilst the cost—£37 per ton—was in excess of the estimate—£15 per ton—a figure given by me when introducing the Bill relating to the establishment of the industry. During the course of Mr. Seddon's comment I interjected that he was using the figures unfairly. The hon. member did not tell the full story. He failed to quote the qualification given in my reply to his question, namely, that modifications of the plant were nearing completion and that when these were completed the production would be doubled and a considerable decrease in cost would follow.

I pointed out that plans for the modification of the plant would result in the cost of production being reduced to about £14 per ton and that difficulties associated with installation have been brought about by a lack of priority for manpower as well as a lack of materials owing to war conditions. Then again, the hon. member contends that only a small quantity of potash has been pro-

duced. I would remind him, however, that a very definite contribution has been made to the fertiliser requirements of the potato-growing industry and other branches of agriculture, and that the production is now sufficient to obviate the necessity for importing potash fertiliser.

Members will realise that some difficulties will always be experienced in the commencement of a new industry of this kind. It is not unusual that adjustments must be made to machinery and equipment in the early stages of an industry in order to get the best from them, and that is all that has happened at Chandler. It has been reported to me that those in charge of the operations are confident that not only will potash be produced at the price which I mentioned when introducing the measure governing this industry, but that it will be produced at a price even lower when the plant is working to full capacity. The references made by Mr. Baxter to the charcoal iron industry show that he is ill-informed on the fundamentals of the project. He is doubtful whether it can be established on a sound commercial basis and says that he has yet to learn that charcoal iron is in favour today, even if it can be produced.

There is no doubt whatever that charcoal iron can be produced in this State, which is richly endowed with the necessary raw materials. Many plants are operating successfully in other parts of the world where charcoal pig iron is in great demand and commands a premium of approximately 30 per cent. in price above that for coke pig iron. No pains have been spared to obtain the best technical advice available to ensure the success of the Wundowie project, which will incorporate the latest developments that have been applied in other parts of the world. The Wundowie project is intended to operate as a commercial pilot plant to demonstrate the economics of the industry, which it is hoped may be the nucleus of a group of industries planned for the post-war period.

Reference was again made by Mr. Tuckey to electricity supplies and the need for a South-West power scheme, a matter to which he has evidently given considerable thought. He inferred that he was disappointed at the announcement regarding the proposal for the starting of the South Fremantle project without anything definite being done



with respect to a South-West power scheme, and he questioned whether the Government was proceeding on the right lines in respect of electricity supplies. The South-West power scheme is now the subject of an inquiry by the Electricity Advisory Committee, which has been directed by the Government to make a report. This committee has already taken evidence from most of the bodies and persons concerned, including the South-West local authorities, with the exception of Greenbushes, Donnybrook and Manjimup. It is hoped to complete the taking of evidence within the next few weeks, after which a report will be prepared. It is expected that this report will be received late in December.

In regard to the reference made by Mr. Tuckey to the fact that the Government continues to haul coal from Collie to supply the East Perth power station and to other matters which, he says involves considerable expense, transport, etc., these matters have recently been examined by the Electricity Advisory Committee, which is unanimously of the opinion that the establishment of a power house at Collie to generate electricity for the metropolitan area is not an economic proposition. Mr. Tuckey quoted the Yallourn scheme in support of his case, but the position at Yallourn is entirely different from that applying to this State. Extensions referred to by Mr. Tuckey as having occurred in Victoria can be readily understood when the population of that State, and the smaller relative distances compared with this State, are considered. Allowing for the 5,500 route miles of transmission lines outside the metropolitan area in Victoria, an annual increase of supply to over 100 farms is really not a very remarkable figure.

The number of small electricity concerns which have developed throughout this State was mentioned by Mr. Tuckey, but this is a phase which every community must go through. It cannot be expected that small country towns should go without the advantage of electricity until the whole State has developed to a condition where complete distribution is feasible. Every city and town in Australia has gone through the same procedure, firstly, by the installation of a small direct current generating plant, this being gradually increased until it is possible to convert to alternating current. It may be interesting to note that in Melbourne and Sydney there are still quite a number of

factories equipped with and running on the old direct current plant. By his remarks Mr. Tuckey apparently appreciates that an attempt at too big a scheme in the initial stages may so load it with charges as to render it a non-paying proposition for many years to come.

So far as the Albany Woollen Mills are concerned, in which connection Mr. Thomson was very critical of the practical suggestions put forward by the Minister for Labour, it would be very interesting to know what assistance the hon. member has given in an endeavour to solve the labour problems there. I am very pleased to say that the Minister has received advice from the secretary of the Albany Development Association to the effect that as a result of the methods adopted, the labour problem has been practically solved. I am indeed grateful to hear that, because I know just what the woollen mills mean to Albany. The fact that the Minister was prepared to go down and discuss their problems with the local people, pointing out to them the duty they had to perform just as he also had his part to play, has had an admirable effect. To the credit of the Albany people it can be said that they have pulled their weight in the provision of labour. I congratulate the Albany people on the fact that they appear to be solving what formerly was a very important and difficult problem from their point of view.

During his remarks Mr. Mann referred to the coalmining industry and to certain investigations that were taking place in respect of gases derived from Collie coal. It is a fact that an experimental plant for the gasification of Collie coal is at present being installed at the Midland Junction Workshops, the necessary finance being provided by the Government through the Department of Industrial Development. The inventor of the plant is Mr. F. C. Fox.

Hon. W. J. Mann. He is the man I referred to.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** The plant is designed to produce a water gas which can be supplied in varying quality and quantity. Mr. Fox's view is that gas of low calorific value should be used for industrial heating since it can be supplied more cheaply and easily, while gas of high calorific value can be produced for domestic use. His experimental plant is designed to supply gas of either description and separate outlets with their attendant adjuncts are being pro-

vided accordingly. Arrangements are being made to supply industrial gas to a furnace which can be fired with gas or oil at will, and it is hoped this will afford some indication of economic value. The installation of the plant is proceeding and it is hoped to be able to have a trial run at an early date. With Mr. Mann, I hope that the experiment will prove successful.

Hon. W. J. Mann: We all hope that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The result will be of great value, not only to the metropolitan area but to the whole of Western Australia.

Much discussion has taken place during the debate on matters relating to education, and those members who have devoted attention to this important subject have invariably complained regarding the facilities or conditions under which the pupils and their teachers carry on their work. The Government is not unmindful of the importance of education, and it has already submitted an extensive building programme to the Federal reconstruction authorities with the idea of meeting the post-war requirements due to an increased population and the raising of the school-leaving age. This building programme envisages the extension of secondary education, both in the metropolitan area and the country, and also an extension of technical education to the larger country centres. On more than one previous occasion I have mentioned to the House some of the matters we have in mind regarding this particular phase of education.

There is also an immediate building programme which the Government hopes to implement as soon as manpower becomes available. I think it only just to point out that most of our troubles regarding matters complained of in this House have really risen from the fact that manpower is not available to the extent we would desire in order to permit of the undertaking of works the Government has already approved and will be only too pleased to put in hand as early as possible. Until the position improves many of these undertakings must of necessity wait. It is emphasised that the Government fully appreciates the importance of getting on with this work in the interests of all concerned, and every opportunity will be taken to overcome the lag which was inevitable during the war period.

Dealing with the fact that the Principal Architect has already advised of a big pro-

gramme to be put in hand for the erection of additional schools, Mr. Wood suggested that as the Northam High School was hopelessly overcrowded, the Government should include that in the work. The department is well aware of the necessity for additions at the Northam High School, but as is the case with many other schools, the erection of additions has been delayed by the abnormal wartime conditions. At present additions, including the erection of a domestic science centre, to the value of £9,970, are on an urgent list which the Government hopes to commence as soon as practicable. Mr. Craig, Mr. E. H. H. Hall, Mr. Cornish and Mr. Wood and others laid particular emphasis on the question of providing accommodation for children attending high schools in country towns. This is a problem which has been receiving the attention of the Education Department for some time.

Before the war satisfactory accommodation was obtainable in all high school towns, and the department received very few complaints. Children were accommodated either in private homes, in the homes of relatives, or at hostels run by church organisations, the Country Women's Association and the like. In every high school town, with the exception of Kalgoorlie, such hostels were successfully run. During the war there has been a decided decrease in accommodation in private homes, and labour difficulties and so on restricted the activities of the hostels. In one instance—I refer to Geraldton—the hostel establishment was taken over by the United States Navy.

All this helped to make the position more acute, and so there has been a greater insistence on more hostels and more accommodation in country high school centres. The matter was recently again considered by the Government and it has agreed as an experiment to help a citizen committee financially to establish a hostel in one of the high school towns. Negotiations are in progress with the Country Women's Association at Bunbury, to put this experiment into effect and, should it prove satisfactory, an extension of the system will no doubt be made to the other country towns according to the demand. The Government would prefer, in order to maintain the interest of the citizens and parents in their local educational facilities, that these hostels be run by citizen committees. It does not wish to conduct

them itself, but will be glad to co-operate in every way with the local committees to secure the best possible results.

A matter referred to by Mr. Dimmitt was the training syllabus for teachers. He said that it was unwise both in principle and in practice to send improperly equipped teachers out into the field of educational endeavour to undertake the task of teaching children in the country, and that it was unfair to the teachers and all concerned. War circumstances have imposed the existing situation on the department, and the intention is, as soon as it is practicable, to extend the course of training for teachers to at least two years.

Regarding the education of afflicted children, particularly the deaf and dumb, and the blind, Mr. Dimmitt said that the department does not accept any responsibility in this regard. He conceded that the Government subsidised certain institutions, but conveyed an impression that nothing was being done so far as educational facilities were concerned. The department has not been as negligent as Mr. Dimmitt indicates. In recent years it has inaugurated a system of bedside education under which special teachers visit the homes of afflicted children to carry on their education within the limits of their physical defects and health.

This year the Education Department has established a school at the Children's Hospital, and is at present contemplating a similar establishment at the Fremantle Hospital. Prior to the war it held classes in conjunction with the Lady Lawley Cottage by the Sea and will re-establish the same facilities when that institution is again operating. So far as the deaf and dumb and blind institutions are concerned, the Education Department would be glad, should the opportunity be given, to co-operate with the authorities administering those institutions for the general educational improvement of their inmates. Mr. Seddon mentioned the need for repairs to schools on the Goldfields, and said that there was a remarkable contrast between the high schools and ordinary schools there and such schools in the metropolitan area.

As might be expected, repairs to schools during the war years have fallen a little behind, but this not only applies to the Goldfields but is general throughout the State. I am informed that during a recent inspection by the Minister for Education

and the Director of Education, schools in the Kalgoorlie area were found to be in a very fair state of repair. Some had been renovated; others were listed for renovation. It cannot be said, however, that an area like Kalgoorlie, with a high school, a School of Mines, a technical school and two central schools has suffered badly from the standpoint of educational facilities.

Particular mention was made by Mr. Seddon of the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie. This is to be painted and renovated this spring, and consideration is at present being given to the extension and modernisation of the experimental laboratory of the school. The School of Mines has been affiliated with the University for some time, and early this year such affiliation was renewed for a further period of five years. Recognition by the University extends to qualifying courses in the school leading to the University examinations in Chemistry I., Geology I., and for the fourth and fifth years for the degree of Bachelor of Engineering in the branch of Mining Engineering or Metallurgy. Recognition by the University of the teaching at the school of Physics I. and Theoretical Mechanics, has also been given for the year 1944. The School of Mines is under the control of the Minister for Mines, and its diplomas are recognised in most of the mining countries of the world. There is no intention of altering its present status and control, as was implied by Mr. Seddon during the course of his remarks.

Concerning school facilities in the North-East Province, Mr. W. R. Hall said he understood it was mooted that the Brown Hill school would be closed. I have made inquiries in this regard and am informed by the Education Department that it is not aware of any suggestion to close this school. Mr. Hall also referred to the Lakewood school, and said that he had heard of a proposal for a bus service for the children attending there. He was not favourable to the establishment of bus services. The fact is that the people themselves are agitating for a conveyance for the children attending the high school. The department cannot agree to this until it is able to make the same privilege available to other children similarly placed in other parts of the State.

Before leaving the subject of education, there is just one matter to which I would

refer, and that is the retirement of Mr. Lee, the headmaster of the Northam High School. Mr. Wood stated that Mr. Lee reached the retiring age early last year, and was asked if he would like to continue his position indefinitely on account of the war. After signifying his willingness to continue, Mr. Lee had received, about two weeks before the end of the last term, a telephone message from the Post Office conveying the terms of a telegram which indicated the termination of his appointment in two weeks' time. Mr. Wood considered that the way in which the headmaster was dismissed was scandalous, or words to that effect.

While Mr. Wood was mentioning this matter, I asked, by way of interjection, whether he had checked up on the facts, and he replied in the affirmative. On inquiry through the Director of Education, I find the case has been unfairly put by the hon. member, the situation being that Mr. Lee reached the age of 65—which is the compulsory retiring age—on the 17th October, 1943. On the 13th September of that year he was written to as follows:—

Although you will reach the age of 65 years on the 17th October, 1943, I shall be glad if you will continue until the end of this year. If necessary would you be prepared to continue until the end of 1944?

At that time the Government had refrained from retiring men on attaining the compulsory age, but during November Cabinet decided to pursue its usual policy; so that Mr. Lee, now being over 65, was due for retirement at the end of the year. As this decision reached the Education Department on the 7th December, the following wire was sent to Mr. Lee:—

You will be granted long service leave from beginning of next year and will be retired on expiration of leave.

It will be noted that the September letter did not commit the department for the year 1944. The department fully appreciates the services rendered by Mr. Lee, and both the Minister for Education and the Director of Education made it their business to be present at the farewell given by the school to him in March of this year. That, I considered, disposes of any suggestion that the treatment of Mr. Lee was a scandal.

Referring now to health matters, in his opening remarks Dr. Hislop, who gave the subject particular attention, made a com-

plimentary reference to the appointment of Dr. Park as Commissioner of Public Health, but was critical of the manner in which, he alleges, Dr. Atkinson was retired. He then proceeded to criticise hospital administration generally. Some of the statements made by the hon. member are not in accordance with the facts, and in some parts are grossly exaggerated. So far as the appointment of the new Commissioner of Public Health is concerned, the Government was indeed fortunate in securing the services of such a highly qualified man as Dr. Park, but to say that such an appointment was made at the expense of the retirement of Dr. Atkinson, as was implied by the hon. member, and that Dr. Atkinson was retired without any reference to, or discussion with, him, is utterly unfair.

The retirement of officers at the age of 65 is laid down by the Public Service Act, and only in exceptional cases are appointments extended. Dr. Atkinson knew months prior to the date of his retirement that that course would follow, and it is not true that he first knew of his impending retirement through the Press, as was stated by Dr. Hislop. Respecting the Bunbury Hospital, the doctor quoted at length a copy of a report which had been made available to him dealing with repairs which were needed to the hospital. As he states, this is an old hospital, but he exaggerated its age in his references to it. The hon. member stated that the hospital was nearly 100 years old, and yet for all to see there is a statement on the foundation stone that it was laid by Sir John Forrest in 1897—47 years ago.

One aspect which Dr. Hislop entirely ignored when dealing with the Bunbury Hospital was that it has been the policy of the various State Governments for the last 30 years, for expenditure on hospital buildings to be met on a pound for pound basis by the local authorities and the Government. Members representing districts in all parts of the State, many of whom have reason to be proud of the country hospitals, small or large, which have been established in their districts, know that those hospitals have been erected on that financial basis. For some years the department has conducted correspondence with the Bunbury Municipal Council with a view to stimulating some interest in the Bunbury District Hospital. The council has taken matters up and,

in turn, has endeavoured to interest the local authorities of surrounding districts, which are equally served by the Bunbury Hospital as is the town of Bunbury itself.

So far the interest shown has been in the direction of urging a new site for a new hospital, and this has been largely determined upon; but to date there is no indication whatever regarding the financial part that the local authorities or the local people are prepared to play in providing Bunbury with a worthy district hospital. That is in accordance with the policy of successive Governments; a policy that has been widely accepted, and if, over the years, the district hospital has outworn its usefulness, the department cannot accept sole responsibility for the continued use of an outworn and outmoded hospital. That does not for a moment excuse the disrepair and other bad conditions referred to in the report which Dr. Hislop read. One must remember, however, that the building is old and dilapidated, and that it is extremely difficult to maintain anything like good conditions in a building so designed and so old.

In fairness to the department it should be noted that in the last three years £900 has been spent in various repairs and renovations to the Bunbury District Hospital, so that the impression of complete neglect that one might obtain from listening to the report read by Dr. Hislop must, to some extent, be discounted. As already stated, a new site has virtually been decided upon; and if the local people are willing to play their part, there is no reason why fairly rapid progress should not be made in the erection at Bunbury of a district hospital worthy of its purpose and of the district. Dr. Hislop considers that hospital problems will never be overcome until the department has a medical officer as director of the hospitals. He makes the statement apparently unaware of the general arrangement of hospital management and control elsewhere.

It is recognised throughout Australia, although perhaps not accepted in New South Wales, that Victoria's hospital system is extremely good; and yet the Charities Board of Victoria, which is the controlling factor, is composed of some 20 members, only two of whom are medical men. The executive officer of that board is Mr. C. L. McVilley, who is not a medical man, nor has the Charities Board any

medical men on its staff, and yet it appears to be doing a very excellent job so far as Victorian hospitals are concerned. To some extent the same arrangements apply in New South Wales. A Hospitals Commission is the controlling body there, of which the Minister is the chairman; and of the three or four other members only one is a doctor. The executive officer is a layman, and, so far as I know, the Commission has no doctors on its immediate staff. At the present time the Hospitals Commission in New South Wales is brought in as a part of the Public Health Department. It has the professional staff of the Health Department to call upon for advice, but the Hospitals Commission is directly responsible to the Minister. It is worthy of note that each of the departments has a layman as the permanent head.

A point urged by Dr. Hislop was that some arrangements should be made at the King Edward Memorial Hospital for young medical men to have an opportunity of gaining experience there. As a matter of fact, such an arrangement was actually in practice some years ago, but this had to cease as the hospital premises became crowded. It is because they are so crowded now that there is no room on the premises to house any junior resident medical officers. The department is absolutely in accord with the idea, and provision will be made to put it into effect as soon as practicable. Dr. Hislop then discussed conditions relating to the mental hospitals, which have received so much publicity recently.

In this regard the first basic matter to refer to is the overcrowding in the institution, which is well known to the public and to the Government. It would be quite wrong to imagine that nothing has been attempted to remedy matters, as was implied by the hon. member. In the first place, a 65-bed block was erected in 1939 as a treatment block, which would have helped to relieve the congestion, but immediately this was completed the Army took it over for hospital purposes, and continued in occupation until November of last year. Since then it has been lying idle because it has been absolutely impossible to secure nursing staff.

Since before that date the problem on the female side of the institution has been very acute and the nursing staff short in numbers. It has been totally impossible

to provide the additional nurses necessary to staff this desirable addition to the Claremont Mental Hospital, which could have had the effect of reducing the overcrowding to some extent. Another, and perhaps more far-reaching step to meet the situation was taken when a property was acquired at Wokalup, for the establishment of a supplementary institution there. War conditions have precluded any possibility of establishing that institution. When it is established the overcrowding at the Claremont Mental Hospital should cease altogether. Regarding the female staff difficulties, the normal staff of trained mental nurses and trainees is 91. For some time after the outbreak of war these numbers were maintained, but when the war effort became intensified the numbers started to drop. Early application was made to the manpower authorities for the declaration of the hospital as a protected undertaking. Some months elapsed before this application was complied with. In the meantime the staff position had become serious.

The maintenance of numbers in any female nursing staff has its inherent difficulties, largely because of marriage and for other personal reasons. When the institution was declared a protected undertaking the number of nurses was down to 57. After that no-one could leave the institution without the approval of the manpower authorities, but cases occasionally arose where approval could not be denied, so that some three months ago the staff of trained mental nurses and trainees was as low as 45. In the meantime the organisation of the Women's Australian National Services, commonly known as the WANS, came to the assistance of the hospital and provided from 12 to 19 part-time assistants. The manpower authorities also provided personnel on a part-time basis. So far as the full-time staff was concerned, I have mentioned that the minimum went as low as 45. Since then the manpower authorities have been building up that figure, until at present it stands at 79.

One inference that has emanated from the publicity regarding staff difficulties is that the conditions at the Claremont Hospital are bad. That is by no means the case. The real disadvantage from which the nursing staff are suffering, and have suffered for two years, is a very much diminished staff entailing considerable overtime, day by

day and week by week, and the absence of annual holidays for over two years. Those are the disabilities which culminated in the protest of six weeks ago. It should be realised that women working in those conditions become highly strung and over-tired, and minor points which, in ordinary circumstances, would escape notice, become emphasised and magnified. Dr. Hislop made the statement that "the nurses' quarters at Claremont are the most drab, dismal, dark, dingy places conceivable." This statement is simply not in accordance with the facts. The main block of nurses' quarters is a two-storey building situated about 100 feet from the covered way which connects the main wards of the institution. If being erected today it would probably be further away from the wards, but even now it is very seldom that the nurses living in these quarters have any indication of the close proximity of the wards themselves.

Each nurse has a room to herself and has the usual supply of furniture which one would find in a single bedroom of an hotel. Any darkness in these rooms is due to the fact that black-out paint and similar applications have not been completely removed. There is ample verandah and balcony space. The quarters in question are as good a block of quarters as one would find connected with any institution in the State. The present dining room for the nursing staff is light and airy, but is large and rather cheerless. A new dining room has been planned and will be part of this year's programme. It should be emphasised that, under normal conditions, the department has no difficulty in securing staff. No complaints had been voiced until relatively recently, when those that were made were due to the overwork and long hours already referred to. Tuberculosis among the patients and the consequent risks to the staff were mentioned by Dr. Hislop who criticised the efforts that the department has made to segregate the male tuberculosis cases in one ward, about which he also complained. No one has suggested that this arrangement is completely satisfactory. Some two years ago sketch plans were drawn up for a block to house both male and female tuberculosis patients. It is confidently hoped that this work will be constructed as part of this year's programme, if men and materials can be obtained. As stated, the present ward used for tuberculosis male cases is not com-

pletely satisfactory, but under existing disabilities it was the best arrangement possible. Although Dr. Hislop is now so critical, I point out that when giving evidence in the Industrial Court on behalf of the employees' union he stated that he considered that this was an honest endeavour under existing difficulties, and that he would rather work under the new conditions for 6d. per shift less than under the old arrangements. It may be of interest to state that, in the opinion of Dr. Fitzgerald, the Acting Medical Superintendent, this temporary tuberculosis ward—imperfect as it is—is still superior to wards he has seen in some of England's leading sanatoria. That may not speak too well for the leading sanatoria in England but I think it indicates that this particular ward cannot be quite as bad as was indicated by Dr. Hislop.

With regard to Dr. Hislop's suggestions for the examination and testing of staff as well as of patients, the procedure set forth is quite sound and is in standard use, but to suggest that this procedure be now adopted at Claremont is to shut one's eyes to the insuperable difficulties that exist and which it is impossible to remove without a good deal of additional bed capacity in new wards, providing opportunities for further classification of patients, and without considerable additions to the staff. It should be emphasised that the difficulty experienced in regard to the female staff is only one of the numerous difficulties involved in the administration of the Mental Hospitals that the department has had to cope with under wartime conditions. Patients simply have to be received whether or not there are beds to accommodate them or staff to care for them. Through no fault of the department, and, for the most part, through no lack of activity on the part of the manpower authorities the staff difficulties have become intensified and trained nurses are simply not available. Of the staff that has been built up of recent months and is being built up now, the new additions are virtually all persons who are commencing their training, or persons who are willing to render or have been directed into rendering service to these mental cases.

Although Dr. Hislop gave credit to the Australian Trained Nurses' Association for suggesting what he said was the only remedy, namely, the withdrawal from the Services of

trained mental nurses, that solution was considered by the officers of the Mental Hospitals Department months ago, and was put forward to the Federal authorities in March. The same principle was urged upon the Commonwealth Government and the Army at a conference of Ministers of Public Health in Canberra last July, but so far has produced no result. Dr. Hislop in concluding his remarks on hospital matters referred to the kitchen and the food arrangements at the Claremont Mental Hospital. For a long time this section of the institution came under the aegis of the managing secretary, but, in making a recent appointment, it has been made clear that the Inspector-General has control over the whole of the institution and its activities, with, of course, all the necessary assistance from the managing secretary.

The difficulties here are emphasised by the fact that the institution is some 45 years old and the lay-out of the kitchen and accompanying stores, etc., is now what one would call antiquated. Fly gauze cannot be obtained in the quantities necessary to do what is needed. The dining hall is planned to act also as an entertainment hall when concerts are held. It, like many other parts of the institution, needs renovating, and this forms part of this year's programme. Dr. Hislop, in his adverse comment, confined himself to only a portion of the building; he has not told the House of those portions of the institution which have been renovated in last year's programme, and which now constitute very admirable wards, but which make the needs in other parts of the institution more apparent. As members know, the supplies of men and materials have been extremely limited, but last year approximately £6,000 was expended on renovations and repairs, and a similar amount will be spent during the current year. With the expenditure of that amount of money the institution will be considerably better than it has been for many years past, and to a large extent some of the criticism and objections raised by Dr. Hislop will thus be met. There again we have the difficulties to which I have referred on several occasions, namely, those of manpower and materials.

Members have been critical regarding housing matters. They complain that little information is available, and that the Government is not getting on with the job as

speedily as possible. That is entirely an erroneous impression and indicates a lack of appreciation of the difficulties confronting the Government in existing conditions. The Government is doing everything practicable but, as pointed out in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, great difficulty is being experienced in securing the necessary manpower. Mr. Thomson quoted a statement made by the Premier regarding housing proposals as between the Commonwealth and the States, and said that the Premier's statement sounded rather ambiguous. There was nothing ambiguous in that statement.

The agreement reached between the Commonwealth and the States regarding war housing is that, provided minimum and maximum standards of houses are submitted by the States and approved by the Commonwealth, and provided that the States agree to charge a rental for the houses not in excess of one-fifth of the family income of the occupier, the Commonwealth will share with the States in any resulting loss. It is obvious that, in the first stages of building, having regard to tenders already received, the houses will cost more than the lower paid worker can afford to pay rent for if the rent is limited to one-fifth of his family income. This difference in rent and any other resulting loss from the War Housing Scheme will be shared by the Commonwealth and the States in the proportion of: Commonwealth three-fifths, and States two-fifths. The standards fixed by the Commonwealth Government as one of the conditions under which it will meet its share of the losses is that the ceiling height should not exceed 9ft. 6in. It is true that the by-laws of many of the local authorities provide for a ceiling height greater than 9ft. 6in., but it is also true that many of the by-laws are out of date and badly need revising. It would be admitted by many of the local government bodies that there is a great need for a uniform set of building by-laws, and if these were drafted in the light of modern knowledge and building conditions it is certain that a ceiling height of not greater than 9ft. 6in. would be approved.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the Commonwealth Government recently conducted an inquiry at which evidence was submitted by architects, builders, welfare workers, doctors and housewives re-

garding building standards. The decision reached in regard to ceiling heights was that for modern conditions a ceiling height of 8ft. was ample, provided proper ventilation was installed, and that sufficient room was left between the ceiling and the roof. Mr. Thomson's estimates of the reduction in costs are not far out as regards wooden houses. It will be remembered that he questioned the estimates submitted for the erection of the first of the Commonwealth houses, and suggested that the difference in the cost of 10ft. ceilings and 9ft. 6in. ceilings respectively was infinitesimal. An estimate prepared by the Workers' Homes Board's architects regarding the saving in height of one foot is that for a four-roomed wooden house the saving is estimated at £16, and for a five-roomed wooden house, £19. Mr. Thomson estimates that a saving of six inches in ceiling height would represent between £6 and £8. For a brick house the saving of a foot represents, for a four-roomed house, £25, and for a five-roomed house £28. The fact is, however, that a 10ft. 6in. ceiling height does not necessarily make for a cooler or better house than a 9ft. 6in. ceiling, provided the latter has proper cross-ventilation.

Regarding the cost of the houses, it is true, on present prices, that a four-roomed wooden house would cost about £200 per room. The average price for the four and five-roomed wooden houses now being erected at Collie and Boyup Brook are:—

Collie—				
4-roomed	..	..	..	£83.0
5-roomed	..	..	..	£94.6
Boyup Brook—				
4-roomed	..	..	..	£87.5
5-roomed	..	..	..	£99.0

Though these prices are high, they approximate the increased cost of building since 1939, as revealed by statistics gathered from all parts of Australia. Building costs have increased since 1939 by about 30 per cent. The houses being erected at Collie and Boyup Brook would cost, in the metropolitan area in pre-war days, approximately £550 for four-roomed houses, and £625 for five-roomed houses. Adding the percentage increase in the cost of building since 1939 gives the figures of £715 for four-roomed houses, and £812 for five-roomed houses. Building costs in the country have always been higher than in the metropolitan area on account



of transport of labour and material to the site where the houses are being erected, and it is estimated that at Collie this increase would represent about 15 per cent. above metropolitan prices, and perhaps slightly higher at Boyup Brook. Adding these figures to the present-day metropolitan costs gives the estimated price of four-roomed wooden houses at £822 and five-roomed wooden houses at £932.

The Collie figures are slightly in excess of these estimates, and the Boyup Brook ones fairly substantially in excess, but it has to be remembered that no house building has been carried out in this State for nearly two years. Contractors therefore have difficulty in regard to manpower and material and there is no doubt that, in their tenders they made full provision for difficulties in regard to both items. It is hoped that as the building programme progresses and manpower and materials become more freely available, costs will be reduced.

In his remarks, Mr. Mann was very critical of certain matters relating to the poultry industry, and dealt with markets, prices, rationing and supply of suitable feed, etc. It would appear that he has been misled by information supplied to him by interested parties.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I have plenty of documents here to prove it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As Mr. Mann said, many of the matters referred to come within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Government; nevertheless they have been undertaken by our State Department of Agriculture, from which I have made inquiries. He commenced his remarks by saying that the Commonwealth Government offered all sorts of inducements and promises to poultry farmers to produce eggs for civil and military requirements, and that nothing had been done to help producers. Every opportunity was taken by the Department of Agriculture in this State to advise growers endeavouring to increase production as to the difficulties which they would encounter. These difficulties were well known to commercial poultry farmers but probably not so well known to men about to enter the industry. I understand that the complaints voiced by the hon. member came principally from several gentlemen who entered the poultry industry quite recently.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Only partly.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Short supplies of galvanised iron, wirenetting, timber and meal were all clearly set out by the department by means of press announcements, broadcast talks and advice to individual growers. No poultry farmer could claim lack of knowledge regarding those matters. So far as prices are concerned, the Commonwealth Government since 1942 has prevented a total collapse in the price of eggs, firstly, by the erection of egg drying plants to remove the surplus from the local market and, since August, 1943, by arranging for a uniform price for eggs throughout Australia irrespective of the surplus which would be available beyond normal local needs. This is probably the greatest single benefit that the poultry industry has ever had conferred upon it. Previously, whilst the price of eggs might be profitable until there were sufficient to meet local demands, immediately this was exceeded the price had to fall to export parity which in many years was quite unprofitable to growers.

Last season, whilst an undertaking was given by the Controller of Egg Supplies that the wholesale price of first-grade hen eggs would not fall below 1s. 6d. per dozen, the actual price was maintained at 1s. 7d. per dozen for all production during the flush season. It is many years since a price such as this was maintained during the flush season. The maximum price permitted by the Prices Commissioner during the year was 2s. per dozen for first-grade hen eggs. Representations have been made by the department with a view to increasing the maximum price, which would enable eggs to be stored to help in tiding over the short period. So far, however, these efforts have been unsuccessful. It is, however, the price which can be maintained during the periods of high production that is of particular importance to the poultry industry, and not special high prices during a period when farmers have very few eggs to sell. It was quite unfair of Mr. Mann to say that the price was reduced from 2s. to 1s. 9d. per dozen immediately after the Referendum.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is what happened.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Referendum had nothing to do with the price of eggs, as the price which can be maintained is governed entirely by the volume of pro-

duction and the financial resources which the Controller of Egg Supplies has available to subsidise any losses which may be incurred in drying or pulping the surplus. Mr. Mann also complains that the wholesale price of 1s. 9d. per dozen is not actually received by the farmers.

Hon. V. Hamersley: I am told that the price to the grower is 1s. a dozen.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know. Surely Mr. Mann was not serious when making this statement. Wholesale prices of agricultural commodities such as meat, butterfat, milk, vegetables, etc., which are determined from time to time and announced in the Press, are those applicable at the point of purchase or distribution, which is generally a market in the metropolitan area. From these wholesale prices the costs of forwarding the produce to market and a commission or charge for handling or selling the produce must be deducted. Exactly the same procedure is followed in the case of eggs, and the price received by the producer is the wholesale market rate less the cost of transport handling and marketing. Reference has been made to lack of supplies of bran, pollard, meatmeal and buttermilk. During last year, although flour mills in Western Australia were milling to their maximum capacity, there was a shortage of bran and pollard which at certain periods was estimated to be as much as 20 per cent. compared with the demand. It is unreasonable, therefore, to say that the Commonwealth or any other Government should make arrangements to increase the supply of bran and pollard. This can be done only by increasing the milling capacity in Western Australia, and there are many practical difficulties to overcome before this can be accomplished. Certain millers, however, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, did arrange to manufacture crushed wheat and other substitutes for bran and pollard which were suitable for feeding to poultry, and it is believed, upon the evidence of practical poultry farmers, that the industry generally did not suffer through a lack of supplies of wheat products.

The supply of meatmeal has presented very serious difficulties, not only in Western Australia but throughout the Commonwealth. When it became evident to the Department of Agriculture that supplies were becoming increasingly more difficult

to obtain, leaders of the poultry industry were consulted regarding the most practical methods of arranging for a system of rationing, and the system which ultimately was adopted with slight variations to meet different conditions, has worked remarkably smoothly and has ensured as equitable a distribution as might be expected. The average quantity of meatmeal used prior to the war was approximately 2,500 tons, of which only about 500 tons were manufactured in this State. The whole of the remainder had to be imported. It should be borne in mind that other States also have increased production in poultry, and the demand for meatmeal has increased in those States also.

The department was able to arrange with the Departments of Agriculture in Victoria and New South Wales that the same percentage of their manufacture as was sent to Western Australia prior to the war should continue to be sent under existing conditions. This was a very generous gesture by these States and is an indication of the goodwill with which interstate problems are discussed at meetings of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. Efforts have been made to increase the local production of meatmeal, and during the last four years the quantity has been almost doubled, but this has been to a certain extent at the expense of blood and bone fertiliser. Last season, as a result of the increased local manufacture, the quantity of meatmeal which was available to farmers in this State was 2,870 tons, which is much greater than the average received during the last six years and has been exceeded only on one occasion prior to that period. It is untrue to say that a monopoly of meatmeal has been created, as the department is endeavouring to maintain the same approximate relation between the manufacture of prepared mashies and the sale of straight meatmeal as existed normally.

So far as buttermilk is concerned, the statements regarding a monopoly in the supply of this commodity are quite misleading, and would give the impression that there are ample supplies of buttermilk held by certain merchants in Western Australia who will only make this available on terms profitable to themselves. The estimated quantity of buttermilk required by the industry per annum is 600 tons, the bulk of which would be sold during the chick-rearing season. Stocks of buttermilk

in Western Australia last week amounted to approximately 23 tons, practically the whole of which was imported. One grower alone has made inquiries for the purchase of 15 tons for this season's chick-feeding. It would be absurd to allow one or two growers to obtain all their requirements whilst the remainder of the industry would go without, but this apparently is what Mr. Mann advocated.

Efforts have been made to increase the production of dried buttermilk in this State and, although two butter factories are equipped with the necessary plant, these have commenced operations only recently owing to a lack of fuel. The local output at present is only 25 cwt. per week. The manufacturers holding this buttermilk ought to be congratulated on their foresight in purchasing these supplies from the Eastern States, some of which are known to have been purchased up to nine months ago and held in reserve for the manufacture of chick foods during the present season. It is felt that the sale of buttermilk in the form of chick foods is the most equitable method of distributing the small quantity available amongst all producers.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You do not seem to have justified the decrease in the price of eggs.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are other agricultural matters I should like to mention. Dealing with the question of rates which have been levied on irrigation projects, Mr. Craig complained that an undertaking given by an officer of a certain department at the inauguration of the scheme in the Collie district had not been complied with. He maintained that this official had informed a meeting that settlers desirous of participating in the scheme would be rated on the basis of one-third of the irrigable area held, but that the basis of rating had since been amended without authority to one-third of the total holding if the land was irrigable. The department reports that there is reason to believe that Mr. Munt, the then Under Secretary, at a meeting did make the statement attributed to him by Mr. Craig, but maintains that Mr. Munt was made aware of misunderstandings that had arisen in respect to the matter, after which he distinctly told a meeting held at Waterloo and other meetings, that the rating would be on 33⅓ acres, or one-third of the holding.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is not correct. I was at the meeting. It was one-third of the irrigable land.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am giving information supplied by the department. At those meetings settlers were told that they would be asked to sign a petition for the work, requesting the Minister to undertake the construction of the work, the rating to be on a basis of 10s. per acre per annum for one free watering and 2s. 6d. per acre for each subsequent watering, 5d. in the £ on the unimproved value to be the drainage rate. The Minister on his part would undertake not to levy for an irrigation rate on more than 33 acres of land comprised in any one holding during the first three years after the construction of the works. I am further informed that Mr. Munt explained—

A man with a large holding would be required, three years after the completion of the work, to pay 10s. an acre on one-third of his holding. The work would take two years to complete, so that large land owners would have five years to sell surplus land which would be increased in value by the irrigation works, if they desired to do so. For the first three years a man holding 10,000 acres would not pay more than a man holding 100 acres. A man who could show that his property would not benefit from the drainage would be exempt from the drainage rate.

In actual fact certain departures from these proposals have been made, one of which is that the irrigation rate is not 10s. per acre but 7s. 6d., and the rating for drainage is now on the acreage basis instead of on the unimproved value. With regard to the stipulation that for the first three years the maximum anybody would be called upon to pay in irrigation rates was to be on 33 acres, and then immediately increased to one-third of the holding, whatever the size of the holding, it should be remembered that the Government ultimately treated settlers far more generously than was originally set out, because the three years were extended to four, and it will not be until 1949-50 that all settlers will be rated on one-third of their holdings if irrigable.

In 1940, 46 out of 171 settlers in the Collie district had their rates pegged by the Irrigation Commissioners on less than one-third of their holdings. Later these were notified that it was the intention of the Commissioners to recommend to the Minister to increase their pegged areas to one-third of their holdings, if irrigable, and no objections

were raised to this. Actually cases exist in the Collie district where ratepayers are watering above their rated areas and others have been watering above one-third of their total holdings.

The Collie Drainage District was constituted on the 25th September, 1931. Prior to the works being proceeded with it was made clear that a drainage rate as well as an irrigation rate would be levied. The irrigation rate was announced at 10s. per acre, and, as I have already mentioned, this has been reduced to 7s. 6d. Before the completion of the scheme the drainage rate was fixed at 6d. in the £ on the unimproved value as at Harvey. Following requests made by Collie district ratepayers it was agreed to abolish the system of rating on the value basis as from the 1st July, 1936, and to rate on acreage as from that date. It is pointed out that if the rating on the unimproved capital value had been adhered to, the Collie district would have yielded more than it has done on the acreage basis.

In regard to the equity or otherwise of rates levied, I point out that the individual ratepayer has the opportunity, annually, to appeal against the irrigation and drainage rates. In any event the irrigationists should be the last primary producers in the State to complain in regard to the charges which are levied, seeing that they are now called upon to pay only about one-eighth of the cost of the water used on their holdings, the remaining seven-eighths being paid by the general taxpayers of the State—a condition of affairs which has been very pointedly criticised by the Commonwealth Grants Commission on a number of occasions.

So far as water charges are concerned, there is no body of primary producers resting more heavily on the shoulders of the general taxpayers of the State than the irrigationists. This is generally recognised by the farmers concerned, as very few complaints are received regarding charges, but on the contrary, a number of applications are received for the allotment of additional areas of irrigation water. Now I wish to deal with some of the remarks made by Mr. Parker. His was a typical speech.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker. I have been congratulated on it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sorry I cannot congratulate the hon. member.

Doubtless people will be glad to know that the hon. member has never been able to see what benefit child endowment is and also that he does not agree with the Commonwealth subsidy for hospitals. There are several other of his remarks which to me seem to be quite at variance with what one may consider to be the general outlook of the people of this State. He did, however, say that in his opinion politics had reached a very low ebb; and, on reviewing some of the statements which he made, particularly the charges which he made against at least two public officials, I think that politics have reached a very low ebb, especially when a member makes such statements and does not give all the facts of the case. I regret that the hon. member should have openly said what he did when he referred to the Police Department. I feel that the only way in which I can adequately deal with his remarks is to quote with reasonable fulness the reports of the particular officers concerned.

It is with some diffidence that I approach this subject, because one case in particular deals with the domestic affairs of an individual who has no opportunity whatever of replying, although the matter very vitally affects him. In the first place, Mr. Parker stated that the Police Force of this State seethed with unrest; and, in order to justify that statement, he referred to a case with which he had been associated as legal adviser. Mr. Parker criticised the Crown Solicitor, Mr. Dunphy, for his attitude to that particular case. There are many details in matters such as this to which it is not always advisable one should refer; nevertheless, I feel I cannot do better than quote a letter which I have received from the Crown Solicitor as a result of the publicity given to the remarks made by Mr. Parker. The letter will put an entirely different construction upon the case. It is dated the 5th September, and is as follows:—

I noted with some concern the report, on page 4 of "The West Australian" of Friday last, September 1, of a speech made in the Legislative Council by the Hon. H. S. W. Parker during the debate on the Address-in-reply. The report is headed—Police Force "Gestapo Methods," and in the first part of the report my name is mentioned on several occasions.

The reported speech contained so many inaccuracies that I felt compelled to write a let-

ter to "The West Australian," and to shorten this present report I enclose a cutting of my letter as published.

The preliminary facts were as under:—

In February of this year I had occasion to call for an investigation of alleged thefts of material from a Public Works job. A detective-sergeant was assigned to the task of making the investigation and he furnished a report. This report was submitted to Mr. Gordon D'Arcy and he furnished certain advice as to what further enquiries should be made. This was rather a difficult case, but a certain line of action was clearly laid down and I gave express instructions to the detective-sergeant as to how he should proceed. The matter was urgent, as time was running against us and the six months' limitation fixed by the Justices Act had nearly expired.

After nearly three weeks I got in touch by telephone with the detective-sergeant and found that he had not carried out any of my instructions. Under these circumstances, I asked for his removal and the substitution of a more energetic or capable officer. Another detective-sergeant was assigned the job and he obtained all necessary information in less than 48 hours.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Will you produce the file?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The letter continues—

The offender was eventually prosecuted and convicted on four separate charges.

My letter to the newspaper carries on from here.

Whilst the detective-sergeant was unquestionably guilty of neglect, I was unwilling to be a witness against him on a disciplinary charge as I do not think that this is a proper function for a Crown Law officer to fulfil. As my plea of privilege might not have excused me if Mr. Parker had put me in the box as a witness on behalf of the detective-sergeant, I urged him to leave me out of the case on the grounds that my evidence would do his client's case irreparable harm. I never at any time suggested that I could not be called as a witness before the Police Board.

I must admit that I got a shock when I read "The West Australian" on Friday morning last. Even the major correction which was made in Saturday's issue does not alter the fact that other unaltered statements are incorrect. I think members of your House will agree that officers of this Department carry out their duties to the public and Parliament in a spirit of equity and good conscience, and I feel that our tasks are sufficiently difficult without having our actions and decisions made the subject of misleading statements by any member of the Legislative Council.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I say definitely that that is an entirely inaccurate and untruthful statement. I ask you to produce the file.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member must ask me in a proper way. I am giving the facts of the case, not half of them. I have here, too, the report of the Commissioner of Police on this matter, and I hope that members will notice that I am not mentioning names—

Herewith the report of Inspector ——— in connection with the charges against Detective-Sergeant ———. Briefly the facts are as follows:—

The detective-sergeant was given an urgent investigation and was specially requested by the Crown Solicitor to interview a certain person who would give him sufficient evidence to complete the investigation and charge the alleged offender. The matter was urgent because the Statute of Limitation was in peril. The detective-sergeant did nothing in the matter and when taxed by the inspector three weeks later admitted not carrying out his specific instructions and put up the excuse that he had an informant from whom he was waiting to obtain certain information. The inspector rightly disbelieved the sergeant's excuse and challenged him to name his informant.

The detective-sergeant pleaded privilege and would not disclose the identity of his informant. The inspector rightly came to the conclusion that the detective-sergeant's informant was a myth and only an excuse to account for his negligence.

The inquiry was taken out of the detective-sergeant's hands and given to another detective-sergeant who completed the necessary investigation in a few days and brought the offender to justice.

In regard to the detective-sergeant refusing to disclose the name of his informant to his immediate superior, it is not the practice in general to request same from subordinates, except in special cases to verify that certain investigations are being made. At the same time detectives do inform their inspector of their sources of information; there is nothing to fear in a detective telling the inspector whom he is interviewing on a case and further it is his bounden duty to do so. It is only in courts of law that the name of an informant is kept secret and an officer cannot be compelled to disclose his informant's name. Definitely the detective-sergeant had no informant and has never produced him to this date.

It has always been the practice of the department when preferring a charge against a member for neglect of duty to do so under the regulations, although it is admitted that strictly speaking the charge should be under Section 19 of the Police Act, in the Police Court.

It is not a good policy to bring a police officer in open court on a departmental matter, where the matter would receive newspaper publicity, and even if the officer was found not guilty the odium would probably stick.

When the detective-sergeant was charged under the regulation with neglect of duty he

made no demur but applied for a board of inquiry under Section 26 of the Act. (The board consists of a resident magistrate, a representative of the Police Department, and a representative of the Police Union.) This was granted and the inspector preferred the charges. Although I knew he was doing so, I did not know the details until after the board of inquiry was granted, as it is always my practice to have no knowledge of details in case the officer charged may request me to deal with the charge, in which case I must have an open mind.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I ask you to read the Police report.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member desires to read the report of the inspector, that also is here. I think that what I have read is an absolute refutation of the charge which the hon. member made in this particular case.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: In due course I shall move to have the papers laid on the Table of the House, and then every member can read them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I come to the second charge which the hon. member made, this time against the Commissioner of Police. The hon. member took exception to the action of the Commissioner of Police in requesting an inspector and a sergeant to make a certain investigation at the quarters of a police officer at one of the suburban stations. Members will probably have a good recollection of what Mr. Parker said. In this case also, so that there may be no misunderstanding, I think I should quote the report which I have received as a result of the remarks made by the hon. member. I really do not like referring to this case, because it very materially affects the private and domestic life of a member of the Police Force. Again, I desire to avoid mentioning names. The report is from the Commissioner of Police and is as follows:—

This refers to the constable who was officer in charge of a suburban police station and resides in the police quarters attached to the station, and the facts concerning this man are as follows:—

In the first place the constable was divorced from his wife on 14th November, 1943, on the grounds of adultery with a certain woman. The suit was undefended and the constable paid all costs and an additional £300 to his wife. The woman in the case is a married woman, and her husband is a member of the R.A.A.F., and now in England.

On the 21st June last I published in the "Police Gazette," in accordance with Police regulations, a number of proposed promotions

of constables to the rank of third-class sergeant. Amongst the names submitted was that of the constable in question.

I think that shows the Commissioner had no ulterior motive as far as this particular officer is concerned.

These proposed promotions came before the Police Promotional Board on the 19th July last (the board consists of all commissioned officers with myself as chairman), and irrespective of appeals by any members of the Force, the board have to confirm the nominations of the Commissioner of Police. There were a number of appeals and one constable in appealing stated that the constable concerned was living with a woman in the police quarters at the suburban station. Some members of the board also stated that it was common talk that such was the case. The Promotional Board decided that the proposed promotion of the constable was not to be confirmed unless a favourable report was received as to his mode of living, and requested the Commissioner of Police to have investigations made. I subsequently instructed Inspector Rowbottom and Sergeant Richardson to visit the constable's quarters at Maylands at 6 a.m. on the 22nd July last (I do not consider this was an unreasonable hour), and see if there was a woman living in the quarters. The inspector and the sergeant carried out my instruction and saw the constable, who invited them into his quarters (sitting room). They told him of the allegation, and requested permission to inspect the quarters. He refused to allow them to look through his house (I attach copy of Inspector Rowbottom's report).

I then, through Inspector Tettersington, called upon the constable for a report as to why he refused permission for Inspector Rowbottom to inspect his quarters in view of the allegation made. His reply was as follows:—

In the first place no accusation was made against me; secondly, I was asked if I had anyone living in the quarters with me, to which I replied that I had not, which was the truth. It was then suggested by Inspector Rowbottom that he search my quarters, which I objected to on the grounds that I considered the quarters my private home, and no person had authority to do so legally except under warrant. The same thing would have applied if I had been residing in a private house.

On receipt of this memo. I then sent the following to the constable, through Inspector Tettersington:—

A commissioned officer accompanied by a non-commissioned officer visiting a constable's quarters at 6 a.m. asking the latter if he had a woman in the house, and requesting permission to inspect the quarters is definitely an accusation, especially in view of Police Regulations which read—"No member of the Force can, without permission of the Commissioner, have residing with him permanently

in Government quarters any other individuals other than his wife, children or other dependant."

If the constable had no woman on the premises what had he to fear; he should have been only too willing for the officers to see for themselves and clear up the accusation.

I can only assume by his refusal to have his house inspected, that there was a woman in the house. The constable will hold himself in readiness for transfer from Maylands.

You will note the ridiculous reply of the constable, in which he states that no accusation was made against him, and that no person had authority to search his quarters without a warrant. In my opinion the inspector could have, and should have, inspected the constable's quarters. Regulations on quarters read as follows:—

116. Quarters.—Each member of the Police Force is to receive either (a) quarters, subject to the conditions specified, or (b) such lodging allowance as may from time to time be approved.

(a) Quarters shall be granted and received subject to the following conditions:—

(1) Water rates shall be borne by the department where members of the Force are compelled to occupy quarters. Members of the Force shall pay sanitary rates when the sanitary conveniences are solely for the private use of themselves and their families.

92. Non-Commissioned Officers.—

(h) He will frequently, and at uncertain hours, inspect the quarters of the single members of the Force under him, and will see that the men are sober and conduct themselves with decency and propriety.

I can see no Gestapo methods in carrying out the above regulations. The constable, at the time, was a single man.

About 10 a.m. on the 22nd July, four hours after Inspector Rowbottom and Sergeant Richardson had visited the police station a woman came to my office and introduced herself as Mrs. ———, and pleaded with me not to do anything with the constable, and although her name had not been mentioned by any of the police visiting that constable's quarters, she let "the cap fit her." She denied that she slept at the quarters, but stated that she went there daily to look after the constable. She admitted that she was co-respondent in the case of Mrs. ——— versus Constable ——— for divorce. She said she loved the constable and would do anything for him. She was very agitated. I did tell her it was common talk that there was a woman living at the police quarters with the constable.

With regard to my informing the constable to hold himself in readiness for transfer, this

notification would have been given in any case, as the station was being converted into a sergeant's station.

I am credibly informed by Mr. John Dunphy, solicitor, that the husband of Mrs. ——— had instituted proceedings against her for divorce on the grounds of adultery, and the constable has been cited as co-respondent. The suit will probably be heard this month.

In regard to the Gestapo methods alleged, this is an irresponsible statement—nothing was done that was unfair. Here is a man whom I was prepared to promote, and at the last minute certain facts were brought under my notice at the Promotional Board which were of a serious nature.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: On a point of explanation, I never said that any Gestapo methods had been adopted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member agreed with the interjection at the time.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I did not agree with anything that was said.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The report continues—

Mr. Parker complains that no charge was made against the constable. Surely he is not so insane as to suggest that I would charge a constable on hearsay. The only thing to do was to investigate the allegation and the only method of testing the accuracy or otherwise was to visit the police station at an hour when the allegation could be substantiated or otherwise. This was done, and although the constable was told of the allegations he refused to allow his bedroom to be inspected. What conclusions can any reasonably-minded person come to, but one—that there was a woman on the premises. What had the constable to fear if there was no person in his quarters? The regulations are quite clear on the matter. I submit there was nothing unfair in the method adopted by me in investigating the allegation against the constable.

It is true that the department is not concerned with the private lives of their officers, but it is a different matter when a single man in charge of a station permits, as alleged, a woman who is married, to reside with him at the station, particularly when the woman concerned is the one cited as co-respondent in the case of Mrs. ——— versus Constable ——— for divorce. Such a mode of living by an officer of the Police Force brings odium on the department, and cannot be tolerated.

Mr. Parker states that inquiries were not made into the case; this is untrue, as the file will show. There is the report of Inspector Rowbottom, Sergeant Richardson, my minute of the 24th July, 1944, to the constable for a report and his reply. Surely I am entitled to make observations which are apparent, and not sit dumb as Parker would suggest.

I know of no serious discontent in the Service as to my administration, and I feel sure the Police Union will support me in this re-

spect. Of course, you cannot please everybody. In enforcing discipline there are always bound to be some malcontents who have imaginary grievances or otherwise, and who can obtain credence from members of Parliament of the calibre of the Hon. H. S. W. Parker who vent them in Parliament without seeking any inquiry beforehand as to the facts, but is prepared to judge me on one version only.

I am attaching the file in case there is some point you may want to clear up.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Will you tell me why the name of the constable was taken out of the "Gazette?"

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That was because the promotional board, as this report indicates, decided they would not consider him for promotion until such time as this allegation had been cleared up.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What was the date of the "Gazette" in which his name was taken out of the list?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot give the hon. member that information straightaway, but he can peruse the papers if he so desires.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I have seen the whole file.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In addition to that, it is well known that the parties concerned in this case canvassed a number of members of Parliament. The Police Union, which is concerned about looking after the interests of its members, was not prepared to do anything in this matter at all. No other member of Parliament was prepared to take the case up after making the necessary inquiries although pressed, particularly by the woman in the case, to ventilate the injustice done to this particular constable. Strange to relate, today's paper contains a report of the divorce granted to the husband of the woman concerned in the case, the husband happening to be a member of the R.A.A.F. who is in England at the present time. Members can put their own construction on this case from the details supplied. There are many others that could be adduced.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Don't you think you are slightly unfair?

The PRESIDENT: Order?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There were a number of other matters that I had proposed dealing with, but the hour is getting late. I shall refer briefly to the remarks by Mr. Miles yesterday when he made an in-

teresting contribution to the debate. He certainly put forward a very good case on behalf of the far North, and the only reply I shall give him at this juncture is that I have taken steps to ensure that his remarks are placed before the Minister concerned so that he may give consideration to the suggestions the hon. member outlined. Tonight Mr. Bolton dealt with a great number of subjects, some of which I have referred to generally in my reply and I think he will readily agree that I have not had any opportunity to make the necessary inquiries concerning some points he mentioned, more particularly his complaint regarding the Commonwealth having participated in industry, with which apparently Mr. Bolton does not agree. I would remind him, however, that in other parts of the world the type of industry he mentioned is one over which it is considered a Government should have control. I shall content myself with supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

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

#### **BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 2, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 3, Life Assurance Companies Act Amendment.
- 4, Plant Diseases (Registration Fees) Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

*House adjourned at 9.50 p.m.*