

## COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

*Council's Message.*

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

**BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1.), £3,100,000.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.*

**Legislative Assembly.**

Thursday, 7th August, 1947.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

**QUESTIONS.****KOOLAN ISLAND IRON-ORE.***As to Consulting Parliament on Exploitation Proposal.*

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY (on notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

Will he undertake to give Parliament the right to decide any proposal that would involve the exploitation of the iron-ore deposits at Koolan Island for other than processing and manufacture in Western Australia?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

I cannot assume to give Parliament any right or take away any right it already has.

**RAILWAYS.***As to Appointments of Administrative Officers.*

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

Mr. C. Raymond, Acting Secretary for Railways, and Mr. Raynor, Acting Assistant to the Commissioner of Railways, were appointed to these respective positions in an acting capacity by the previous Government.

(a) Has the present Government made these appointments permanent under Section 68 of the Railways Act?

(b) If so, upon what date was the necessary Executive Council minute signed?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in Executive Council has approved the appointment of Mr. C. Raymond as Secretary for Railways and Mr. P. C. Raynor as Personal Assistant to the Commissioner.

(b) 23rd July, 1947.

**GOLDMINING.***As to State Battery Returns to Prospectors.*

Mr. TRIAT (on notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

In view of the statement attributed to the Minister for Mines in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of the 2nd inst., will he advise how many grains per ton a prospector would recover from a State battery from sands valued at 3 dwt. equalling 72 grs. per ton?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

10.8 grains per ton of ore crushed.

**CHARCOAL-IRON INDUSTRY.***As to Appointment of Mr. A. Gibson to Inquire.*

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

Will he lay on the Table of the House all papers covering the appointment of Mr. A. Gibson to inquire into the Wundowie Charcoal-Iron and Wood Distillation Industry?

The MINISTER replied:

Consideration will be given to the matter as soon as the report of Mr. Alexander Gibson is available.

## SAWN TIMBER.

### *As to Quantities Exported.*

Mr. HOAR (on notice) asked the Premier—

1, What quantities of sawn timber were exported to the Eastern States for the two six-monthly periods July-December, 1946, and January-June, 1947?

2, Are the quantities being exported further increasing?

3, What quantities of sawn timber were exported to places outside Australia for the two six-monthly periods July-December, 1946, and January-June, 1947?

4, Are the quantities being exported to such places increasing?

5, Has it come to his knowledge that the statement is freely made that jarrah is now easier to obtain in South Australia than in Western Australia?

The PREMIER replied:

1, July-December, 1946, 29,293 loads; January-June, 1947, 18,309 loads.

2, Figures show a substantial reduction, but production for the Eastern States has been higher than quantities actually shipped for January-June, 1947, owing to difficulties with regard to railway trucks and shipping. This will be reflected in higher shipments from July to December of this year.

3, July-December, 1946, 9,834 loads; January-June, 1947, 10,623 loads.

4, Oversea exports as above are within an approved programme. There will be some increase in oversea sleeper exports in the coming six months due to reduced requirements for the Commonwealth railway system.

5, Any statement that jarrah is more easy to obtain in South Australia than in Western Australia is contrary to fact.

## MILK.

### *As to Scheme for Improving Supply and Distribution.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (on notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Is the action of the Milk Board in refusing to approve of contracts except as between dairymen and holders of treatment licenses a scheme, or part of a scheme, for the improvement of the supply, delivery or distribution of milk for consumers?

2, If the answer to question 1 is in the affirmative, has the scheme for the improvement of the supply, delivery or distribution of milk to consumers been submitted by the Milk Board to him for consideration?

3, Has he approved of the scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2 and 3, answered by No. 1.

## HOUSING.

### *(a) As to Homes Completed and Under Construction.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (on notice) asked the Premier:

1, How many homes under Housing Commission control were—

(a) Completed in Western Australia for the month of March, 1947?

(b) Completed during the months of May, June and July, 1947, and for which permits had been issued in the time of the Labour Government?

(c) Under construction as at the 1st April, 1947?

(d) Represented in contracts let and for which construction had not commenced at the 1st April, 1947?

2, How many houses dealt with by private ownership were involved in aspects similar to (a), (b), (c), (d) in Question 1?

3, How many houses are at present in course of construction both by Housing Commission and private contracts in connection with permits issued and contracts let since the 1st April, 1947?

4, How many homes have been completed in respect to Housing Commission contracts approved since the 1st April, 1947?

5, How many young married couples and couples with one child have been granted homes and are in occupation of such homes and which have been approved for such occupation since the 1st April, 1947?

The PREMIER replied:

1, (a) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, 77; State Housing Commission and War Service Homes, 23; total, 100.

(b) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, May 69, June 45, July 90; State Housing Commission and War Service Homes, May 38, June 17, July 38; McNess

Housing Trust, May 2, June 3, July nil; respective totals, May 109, June 65, July 128.

(c) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, 563; State Housing Commission and War Service Homes, 165; McNess Housing Trust, 15; total 743.

(d) Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, 274; State Housing Commission, War Service Homes, and McNess Housing Trust, not available.

2, (a) 205; (b) May 43, June 128, July not yet available; (c) 390; (d) not available.

3, Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, 405; State Housing Commission and War Service Homes, 116; McNess Trust, 4; private, not available.

4, Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, nil; State Housing Commission and War Service Homes, nil; McNess Housing Trust, nil; private, not available.

5, Nine.

(b) *As to Purchase of Naval Base Military Huts.*

Mr. FOX (on notice) asked the Premier:

1, Has the Government given consideration to the purchasing of military huts at Naval Base, with a view for use for housing purposes?

2, What decision has been arrived at?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Yes. Representations have been made to the Prime Minister with a view to the State acquiring the buildings.

2, A reply has not been received from the Prime Minister.

#### FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

*As to Pine Plantation Near Beaconsfield.*

Mr. FOX (on notice) asked the Minister for Forests:

1, Is he aware that the Forests Department is utilising a valuable tract of country within one and a half miles of the Beaconsfield tram terminus for a pine plantation?

2, That this land is necessary for the further expansion of the City of Fremantle?

3, That the pines already planted cut off the currents of air from windmills to the detriment of primary producers?

4, Would he advise the Forests Department to discontinue planting pines in this area when there are thousands of acres of poor land available for this project?

The MINISTER replied:

1, The Forests Department is planting the University Endowment Lands at Applecross under agreement with the University. The area is known as the Somerville Pine Plantation.

2, The area is within the Melville Road Board District and outside the boundaries of the Fremantle Municipal Council. There is ample scope for expansion of the City of Fremantle without encroaching on the Somerville Pine Plantation.

3, Only one complaint has been received about pines cutting off the current of air from windmills, and this has been satisfactorily adjusted with the settler.

4, The agreement between the University and the Forests Department made in 1926 provides for a regular planting programme of 100 acres per annum and the whole of the area will have been planted by 1948. The plantation has been established on land particularly suited to the growth of Maritime Pines, which are developing very satisfactorily.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Third Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [2.25]: Mr. Deputy Speaker, having seen the files relating to the Metropolitan Market Trust and the Dairy Products Marketing Board, I find it necessary to make some additions to what I said the other evening. First, I desire to thank the Minister for having made the files available to the House; and, before I proceed further, I apologise to him for two statements which I made by way of interjection, one denying that I had deferred the appointment in connection with the Dairy Products Marketing Board, and the other that, with the exception of the appointment to the Potato Marketing Board, which appointment I had made at the request of the present Premier, I had not made any other appointment after the previous Government was defeated. I can give a completely satisfactory explanation of both these matters, but I apologise

to the Minister for having denied at the time that I had done those things, my recollection not having been thoroughly efficient.

I endeavour to strive for accuracy. I am not always able to achieve it, but I strive for it, and that is why I shall make some additions to what I said the other evening. Before I proceed to elaborate on the case with which I dealt, I desire to explain the two appointments to which the Minister for Agriculture has objected. He suggested that I should have made the appointment to the Dairy Products Marketing Board, but that instead of doing so, I deferred it. The facts are these: The papers relating to the Dairy Products Marketing Board reached me on the 25th March, some days after the previous Government had been defeated and within seven days of that Government's handing over to the new Government. The new Government took office on the 1st April.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Very appropriate!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: So, seven days before that, I had before me the papers recommending the appointment of certain persons to the Dairy Products Marketing Board. I submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that very properly under the circumstances, as the vacancy did not occur until the 8th June, which was more than two months after the new Government took office, I did not make the appointment. It would have been wrong of me, I consider, to do so. The Minister for Agriculture believes otherwise. He thinks I should have done it. I leave it to the House to judge what would have happened had I done so and what attitude the present Government would have taken under those circumstances. Therefore, I make no apology whatever for not having made the appointment. It is what 99 Ministers out of 100 would have done in the same circumstances. Any other attitude could not have been justified. With regard to the Metropolitan Market Trust the position was entirely different. The vacancy had occurred many months before owing to the election to the Senate of Mr. J. A. Cooke, who was obliged to resign his position on the board because of his election.

It had been the practice, in appointing a consumers' representative on the Market Trust, to ask for nominations from a body representative of all the unionists in the metropolitan area. That body is the Metropolitan Council of the A.L.P. I followed

the practice of my predecessor and asked the council to forward a panel of names, which it did on the 5th December, placing Mr. Webb as No. 1 choice. That was the choice of the unionists themselves. The Minister for Agriculture made some play the other night on the fact that I had appointed a man already in a good job to the Market Trust, and to a job which gave him an additional £3 a week. I did so, but on the recommendation of the unionists themselves, who submitted his name as No. 1 choice. The recommendation came to me on the 5th December. I immediately asked the Under Secretary for Agriculture to have the necessary papers prepared so that the appointment could be made. That appointment was therefore virtually made before the election. I will give members the exact date.

The Minister for Lands: I think you will find the Executive Council minute dated the 31st March.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am not talking about the minute, but the direction to the Under Secretary.

The Minister for Lands: I am sorry.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I received advice from the metropolitan council dated the 5th March. My minute addressed to the Under Secretary is dated the 10th March, and reads—

Please have papers prepared for the appointment of C. H. Webb.

So the appointment was virtually made before the election. It was not possible for the Government to have an Executive Council meeting so close to the election. We were all busy about the country. At the first Executive Council meeting after the election, the appointment of Mr. Webb was made. That was the 21st March. So the facts are that the vacancy had occurred months before whereas, with regard to the Dairy Products Marketing Board, the vacancy was not to occur until some months hence. Further, the decision to appoint Mr. Webb had been made before the election and the papers would have gone through in the ordinary way had there been time for an Executive Council meeting. Such meeting was not held until the 21st March, and at that meeting the appointment was made. If there is anything wrong in that, I fail to see it. That is an appointment which, under those circumstances, any responsible Minister would have made.

With regard to the appointment made to the Dairy Products Marketing Board by the present Minister, I find it was done by Cabinet decision. The decision to appoint Mr. Philp was a Cabinet decision. Therefore, the Government knew full well what was being done, and knew that it was not in accordance with its promise to the people before the election. We were told the other evening that two of the reasons this appointment was made were firstly the desire to put a returned soldier on the board, and secondly that Mr. Ryan was well over 70. So it was made under a misapprehension, because Mr. Ryan is not well over 70; he is 67.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Only a boy!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Not so much older than Mr. Philp.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Or the member for Nedlands!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the Government made the appointment under the impression that he was well over 70, that was a pretty slipshod way to do things—starting to guess, without making certain. Let us take the returned soldier aspect. The Government sought to capitalise the fact that a non-returned soldier was being put off the board and a returned soldier was being put on. That sounds all right, and it is all right if it is consistent—if that is the policy; sack everybody and put returned soldiers on.

The Premier: That is not the policy.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is what was argued in this case. "The man is not a returned soldier, so sack him and put a returned soldier on." But that was not done in connection with the directorship of the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie. There the man next in line for promotion was a returned soldier but he was passed over. He was attached to the School of Mines and was a returned soldier with excellent credentials, but he was passed over and a non-returned soldier from the Mines Department was given the job. So it is idle for the Government to plead that in connection with the £12 a year job it was necessary to put a returned soldier in but with a job where the salary was hundreds of pounds—pretty close to £1,000, I understand—it did not matter whether the man appointed was a returned soldier or not. That is pretty thin, and I understand that the R.S.L. at Kalgoorlie are up in arms over this, and have asked the Federal Attorney General to endeavour to

amend the Act so that such a thing cannot occur again.

Mr. Leslie: Not only for that one.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No.

Mr. Leslie: Not only for what the Government does, either!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is to stop the Government making a lot more appointments of that kind.

Mr. Leslie: It is to stop quite a lot more people, too.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is only the Government that can make these appointments here.

The Attorney General: Was it not on the recommendation of a Goldfields committee that the appointment was made?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The recommendation of the Under Secretary was that Mr. Ryan be appointed on the board.

The Attorney General: I am referring to Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not know.

The Attorney General: I think you will find that is so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But the Government does not take any notice of recommendations! The recommendation in connection with the Dairy Products Marketing Board was that Mr. Ryan be appointed. It was a recommendation from the Under Secretary. The joke of this is that Mr. Philp thought he had been appointed to the Milk Board, and woke up to find himself on the Dairy Products Marketing Board! What happened I do not know. He knew he was going on some board, but Mr. Ryan did not know he was going off until he read it in the "Gazette."

The Chief Secretary: I thought you told him.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: How could I? I said it would happen. I could not tell him it had happened, much the same as it will happen to other boards.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Minister has said it will.

The Minister for Lands: Of course it will.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister could have sent a letter to Mr. Ryan if he was just being superseded. If it was a just case of his appointment not being carried on and somebody else was to get the job, surely it

would have been a decent thing to send Mr. Ryan a letter thanking him for his services—which were perfectly satisfactory; otherwise, the Under Secretary would not have recommended his re-appointment—and telling him that Government policy was such that somebody else was to take his place. But that was not done. He was left to find out by reading the "Gazette." Governments do not usually do those things. That rubbed salt into the wound and made things worse. When replying to me the other evening the Minister suggested, or rather said, that I used in this House information he gave me when speaking to me in the lobby. I denied it. The Minister knows full well that he never spoke to me in the lobby. So I cannot understand the reason for his making such a despicable statement.

The Minister for Lands: Cut out the word "despicable" and—

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Was it not?

The Minister for Lands: I will reply later.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: All right.

The Minister for Lands: I want to be decent to you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is why you said that I used something you told me in the lobby and yet you never spoke to me.

The Minister for Lands: So you did!

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is a serious accusation.

The Minister for Lands: It is a serious accusation. We were speaking in the lobby.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: You never spoke to me in the lobby.

The Minister for Lands: That is all right. I will deal with you later.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The fighting weight is what?

The Minister for Lands: No, in the House.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the Minister thinks threatening me will do any good, I will tell him I am not to be influenced by threats.

The Minister for Lands: No, I would not threaten you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I tell the Minister that he does himself less than justice by persisting in saying that he spoke to me when he did not. Then he went further and insinuated that I was eavesdropping.

When he knew he had made a mis-statement about talking to me, he stated I overheard what he said. I say again very deliberately that I was never within earshot. It is true I did approach the Minister on one occasion when I saw him speaking half-way down the corridor, but immediately I came up the conversation ceased because I said, "Excuse me," and asked Mr. Ryan to come. I turned immediately on my heel and went. No conversation took place during that period.

The Minister for Lands: Did you come back again?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes.—No, not to the Minister. I came back to the door, but was not within 12 yards of the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: I will clear up one point now. I did not accuse you of eavesdropping.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister should read what he said. Firstly he accused me of saying something in this Chamber that he had told me in the lobby—a thing I would rather die than do. When the Minister found he was wrong he insinuated that I had been eavesdropping. What happened was this: I used in this House a statement which Mr. Ryan told me the Minister had made, and I kept to myself a lot more. If I were to tell the House what Mr. Ryan told me the Minister would take a header over the back of his seat.

Mr. Mann: Let us have it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, I will not do that. I had a perfect right to make use of what Mr. Ryan told me, because I did not give him, or anyone else, an undertaking that information coming to me legitimately would not be used. I, therefore, had a perfect right to use what he told me, as I have a perfect right to use all that he told me if I feel so disposed, but I will not do that. I will content myself with what I have already said. Whichever way we look at this appointment—it is only a very small one, but it is a matter of principle just the same—the Government has to admit that it is absolutely contrary to the undertaking it gave to the electors, namely, that appointments to all positions would be filled by persons with ability and knowledge. So, despite the fact that Mr. Ryan had been recommended for

reappointment and was still well under 70 instead of being more than 70, he was discarded and some friend of the Minister's, I suppose, was put on in his place. I do not quarrel with that if there is a vacancy, but I do quarrel when a vacancy is created for doing such a thing.

The Government has put in Mr. Braine as chairman of the Bulk Handling Committee. Now, Mr. Braine, is a friend of the Government's. A position was vacant and he was appointed. I make no complaint about that any more than the Minister should make a complaint about my putting Mr. Webb, a trade union representative, on the Metropolitan Market Trust. If a Government has an opportunity to give one of its friends a job we cannot expect it to appoint one of its enemies. But when the Government makes the definite pronouncement that its policy is to fill positions according to ability and knowledge, and it has no intention of living up to that undertaking, then I suggest I am entitled to criticise it and to point out what it has done!

Mr. Leslie: Would you concede that there are some people with ability and knowledge who are friends of the Government?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I hope so!

Mr. Marshall: Very few.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What is more, I have no objection to the Government's appointing them to vacant positions. If a Government appoints people without ability and knowledge then it will be in trouble.

Mr. Leslie: But this position was vacant.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, it was not vacant at all. The Government made it vacant by putting off a man who was already on it and who had given four years of excellent service. The Government did not even know how old he was.

Mr. Leslie: The fact that he had been four years there did not give him a mortgage on the job.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I agree.

Mr. Leslie: His time had expired.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But it was a reason for his being considered, seeing that his work was thoroughly satisfactory and could not be criticised. The Government ought to do the decent thing and admit the true situation, namely, that it did depart from its promise to the people, and that it had its own reasons

for doing so. It is taking full responsibility for having done so, but why try and justify it when it cannot be justified? Why say a man is well over 70 when he is well under 70? Why should the Government talk about putting a returned soldier in a job worth about £12 a year when it does not appoint a returned soldier to a job worth nearly £1,000 a year? There is no consistency!

My purpose in bringing the matter forward is to remind the Government that so far as I am concerned it will be given every opportunity to put into operation the promises it made. The promises which require time will be given time to be fulfilled, but where the Government has fallen down on its undertakings then it will be told about it, and I take it that it is part of my job, as a member of the Opposition, to mention these things when I see them, as I will later mention other things that I have seen. I intended to speak about this and give the facts, and not a lot of assumptions or opinions. That is why I have made the statement in connection with the appointment to the Dairy Products Marketing Board.

The Minister for Lands: You were very nasty in accusing us of being fraudulent.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is a fraud. The other night I quoted to the Minister the legal definition of fraud, and this fits it exactly. There are four lawyers in the Cabinet; let the Minister ask them.

The Minister for Lands: They would all differ.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It would not be the first time, either!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There is very little room for a difference of opinion about this. This fits absolutely the definition of fraud which I gave the other evening, and the Government has to take full responsibility for it. Many other things have already occurred on which the Government has fallen down badly in connection with its undertakings. It was said the other evening that during the election time it was to be expected that the Parties would say many things that are not true.

The Attorney General: I said it was to be expected that we would be hurt by things the other side said.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Is that it?

The Attorney General: Yes.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN:** You do not say that it is to be expected that Parties will say many things that are not true.

**The Attorney General:** No.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN:** But your Party did that.

**The Minister for Lands:** That is a matter of opinion. You wait until we dish up some of your stuff.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN:** That is a matter that can be proved. The Minister for Lands will have some trouble and difficulty in "dishing up" as he says, to this House some of the statements made by us during the election, that we could not live up to.

**Mr. Leslie:** You did not make any; you were not able to!

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN:** That shows what sort of a task confronts the Minister for Lands. In due course, at the appropriate time and on the proper subjects, the Government will be reminded of when it made extravagant promises and statements and subsequently failed to carry them out. Having cleared up the inaccuracies surrounding the case that I dealt with the other night and having, I hope, removed any doubt as to what happened in that case, I will not take up further the time of the House.

**MR. MANN (Beverly)** [2.51]: I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on your appointment to the position of Chairman of Committees. I regret that the Speaker himself is not present this afternoon, but I hope he will soon be recovered from his indisposition. I desire to congratulate him on having been elevated to the high office of Speaker of this House, an office that I know he will fill with dignity. I pay tribute to the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, the ex-Ministers, for courtesies shown by them in the past to members on this side of the House, both in the course of deputations and other administrative work. I always received from them the greatest possible consideration and wish now to record my thanks. To members of the new Government I offer my sincerest congratulations, particularly to the Premier. Of eight of us who were here many years ago only three now remain. Of those three, the Premier has attained his present high position, and the member for Toodyay is now Minister for

Lands. I hope they will remain with us for many years and I am sure that this new Government will govern efficiently and with a clear conscience.

To the young members who have so recently been elected I offer my congratulations. No doubt they have come here with marvellous visions of what they are going to achieve, but I assure them that, as time goes on, they will find themselves to be very small puppets indeed in this game of politics. I have often felt that outside the portals of this House of Parliament should be placed a notice reading, "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." I think most new members enter the House with the sincere purpose of reforming the affairs of the State of Western Australia, but they find eventually that the amount they are able to achieve is small.

The time has come when we should make some change in our Parliamentary system. For many years it has been the custom for a Cabinet of eight or nine persons to govern the State. That has applied in the past and it applies to the present Government. Those eight or nine persons are elected with full power and a full control in affairs of State. Actually the situation is little different from that which applied in Hitlerite Germany. In that case there was a man who picked the best brains in Germany to help govern that country. I hope the new Government will adopt a different system either that of the House of Commons, where each Minister has a Parliamentary under-secretary, so that the country is governed with the assistance of practical men; or even the Commonwealth system, where Select Committees are appointed to investigate the affairs of different departments. Hitherto the members of Cabinet alone have formed the supreme body, and that applies also in the case of the present Government.

In His Excellency's speech there is no mention of members of Parliament, but only of Ministers who will do this or that. The member for Guildford-Midland was for many years on the Government side of the House and I often wondered why he was not in Cabinet. I have always admired his ability and have wondered why he sat in the back benches. Had the then Premier been wise in choosing his Cabinet he would have had the experience and ability



of the member for Guildford-Midland to help in governing the affairs of the State. We have heard the member for North-east Fremantle charge this Government with fraud, and I think that is the most scandalous thing ever said in this House.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I made the charge and proved it.

Mr. MANN: The member for North-east Fremantle did not prove his case at all. This charge is a serious reflection on the House and I think it is up to the member for North-east Fremantle to withdraw his remarks. I believe the only reason he was allowed to get away with the statement was that the Chairman did not realise the seriousness of the charge he made. If such statements are allowed to be made we will soon have a bedlam here such as exists in the Federal House. Under the Standing Orders there is power to ensure that such statements, if made, are withdrawn.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Find the Standing Order and I will support you.

Mr. MANN: The Chairman of Committees has power to control the Chamber. The member for North-east Fremantle is perturbed over the appointment he mentioned, because the trade unions told him to make the appointment. The whole idea is that he was instructed by the Trades Hall to do it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is a new one.

Mr. MANN: We do not want the State to be controlled by the trade unions. I am disgusted at the comments of the member for North-east Fremantle and I think that even now he could apologise to the House. Following my remarks on a change in the form of Government, I think the Government should adopt my suggestion as to under-secretaries or should appoint assistant ministers. In 1945 I travelled with the Premier and other members on a tour to many parts of the State on a Select Committee dealing with vermin. That committee was eventually converted into a Royal Commission. In the course of that tour members of the committee were deeply impressed by the team-work achieved, and party questions were forgotten during the course of their investigations. In his speech on the 7th August, 1945, the present Premier said:—

I suggest that we should co-operate in regard to future planning. Since I have been in

Parliament I have had the privilege of serving on a number of Select Committees. I recently served on one that was turned into an Honorary Royal Commission. I have found that as a result of the work of those Committees much good has come about. The reports have come to this House and have been of benefit to the country. The Committees, as I have just said, consisted of representation from all sides of the House. I feel that such a committee could help in regard to the housing problem.

I hope the Premier will take note of those remarks and realise that that spirit is essential for the welfare of the State. I think he is honest enough, having made that statement, to carry it into effect. That would be for the better government of the State compared with the present system of government by Cabinet itself.

Mr. Marshall: It is fortunate for the Premier that you reminded him of his statement.

Mr. MANN: In "The West Australian" this morning there was an announcement regarding the appointment of Mr. Bateman to conduct an inquiry into matters affecting the native population. I am very glad to know that some such investigation is to be carried out, but I am sorry the Government appointed Mr. Bateman rather than choose three members, representative of the parties in this House, to undertake the task. What is Parliament for? We are elected from time to time to deal with the affairs of State, but when it comes to making inquiries regarding some subject, invariably we go outside Parliament to select a Royal Commissioner who is generally a magistrate or a lawyer.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Government is looking for brains!

Mr. MANN: That may be so, but at any rate it does not indicate any faith in the members of the House. Neither the present Government nor former Governments have indicated faith in members of Parliament but have gone outside to make appointments in connection with Royal Commissions and other investigations. I hope my remarks will encourage the Government to bear in mind that members of Parliament should be availed of to assist in administering the affairs of State. I have indicated some directions in which we could help. I trust then in future we shall not go outside the ranks of those who were elected by the people to participate in the administration of the State's affairs.

I desire briefly to touch on the question of soldier settlement. I am very much concerned today regarding the men to be placed on the land. A number of them have received their allocation of blocks, but nothing further has been done to any great extent. Nothing is known by them regarding the rentals they will have to pay, the stocking arrangements for their properties or anything else regarding their farm work. I have had this matter in mind for a long time, and I notice that the Government recently announced in the Press that it intended to launch some new scheme in connection with soldier settlement. I shall look forward to a further pronouncement of the Government's policy in this regard.

Hon. A. H. Panton: So will I.

Mr. MANN: I will go further and say that if the Government finds it clearly demonstrated that it cannot handle the problem in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, then it should send the Minister for Lands to Canberra to ask the Commonwealth Government either to allow the State Government to control the land settlement scheme for the Commonwealth or else that the Commonwealth should control it alone. Dual control is most unsatisfactory; it is no good at all. That was proved during the regime of the Labour Government and now we see the same sort of thing continuing. I make the suggestion that the Minister should be sent to Canberra so that the whole matter could be thrashed out. More properties are being selected and bought, and the price of stock is increasingly high; with nothing doing, the men who are to take up the blocks are wasting their time today. Instead of being on their own blocks they are wasting their time in other directions.

One of the silliest things ever has been the institution of the agricultural school for returned men, which has been set up at Harvey. It is one of the greatest farces ever perpetrated to take men who have spent all their years on farms and put them through a school of that description, where they are told how to conduct an agricultural property. It has often been said that the only way to learn farming is the hard way, and I defy anyone to prove that there is any rosy path to success in agricultural activities. A man will learn from his own

mistakes and not from any directions received from university men with their high flown ideas of what should be done. Within the last few days I met a young man who had just left the University and according to his degrees he was a duly qualified farm economist. He is full of ambition and quite certain as to how he will be able to assist the farming industry. I put one question to him to indicate that he had no possible hope of doing anything, except under favourable conditions. I put it to him that if we had a good season and prices were high, then it was all right, but that there was no power on earth that could control the seasons. All the theory in the world will not help, and the only way to gain success is the hard way.

Under existing conditions the soldiers' settlement scheme is a complete farce. I am afraid that when the men do eventually get on the land, what with the multitude of regulations and the methods of control exercised, they will be worse off than were the soldier settlers placed on the land after the 1914-18 war, and God knows they were badly enough situated.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Hear, hear, but these men will not be overloaded with debt.

Mr. MANN: Why go on purchasing properties when no attempt is made to get the men on the land and settled down? I repeat that it is the Government's duty to send the Minister for Lands to Canberra to discuss the whole question with the Commonwealth Government. If the State Government is not allowed to control the operations for the Commonwealth, then the Commonwealth itself should assume full responsibility. At any rate, I will certainly listen with interest to the speech of the Minister when he deals with soldier settlement matters and outlines the Government's policy. I certainly hope it will be more effective than that of the Commonwealth Government to date. I have no idea what the policy may be. Many young men are spoiling to get their own properties, and yet they have to work on other people's farms and so are making no progress themselves. They see the price of wheat on the world's markets at a high figure but no one can say what the price will be in the future. I prophesy that when prices do come down they will not stop half-way but will tumble down with a crash.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Then why put men on the land to face that sort of thing?

Mr. MANN: I want to know what is the position. Should prices fall, the soldier settlers may have a load of debt around their necks, due to the work of the economists who figure out the costs in connection with the scheme. I understand that the economists work out the actual costs that the men will have to pay on taking over their properties. Whatever decision is reached in that respect, any falling prices or adverse seasonal conditions will affect the whole position, and yet the men will have to pay. Some marvellous schemes have been evolved by the academic theorists in agriculture, but the practical part was not there. There is a great possibility that the exchange rate at present operating will soon cease, and it may be that with a fall in the exchange rate Great Britain's primary industries will suffer. The Prime Minister said recently that the exchange rate was under review. Whereas prices are high now, should there be a fall in the exchange rate and Australia receive 25 per cent. less than she has been getting in the past, the effects will be serious.

Many people are obsessed with the idea that we are living in the most marvellous country in the world. So we are, but unless the primary industries can stand up against the cost of production, then should prices fall the crash must be inevitable. While the depression we experienced in 1930 and in subsequent years was indeed bad, there is no doubt that we must face a changed position now within a year or two because of the enormous costs imposed upon our primary industries. We have to shoulder a 40 hour week and continually increased costs of production due to the turmoil and industrial strife in Australia. Because of these difficulties commodity values are reduced proportionately. In the years to come we will have to face a collapse not on the basis of production but of a starving world that cannot produce the goods that are essential. We say that we are living in a paradise, but it is a fool's paradise.

Hon. A. H. Panton: No-one knows that better than you.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member may regard this as humorous but should the collapse come that I suggest, it will be too late

for us to endeavour to organise for the future. I have said previously in this House that the moment that happens we shall see the effect of the work of the communists in reaping the harvest.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Will you tell the House how you tried to stop the strike here?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Tell us how you walked out.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Yes, a one-man strike.

Mr. MANN: Next I desire to touch on the transport question. I think it can be assumed from the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that we are to have a bountiful season, and I certainly hope that that will be so. If we have a harvest of 30,000,000 bushels of wheat, it will take two years to transport the grain to the seaboard. We have a very heavy lambing and a very large wool clip, and I assume that before long it will be necessary to cart water to various outback places. I feel greatly perturbed about the possibility of railway freights being increased. It may be necessary to increase them, but I tell the Government that if it expects the primary producers to carry the whole of the burden of freight and of reducing the deficit on the railways, it simply cannot be done.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do not you think the present Government will raise the freights?

Mr. MANN: I have no idea at all. I make that statement because a warning has already been given that we shall be asked to swallow this sugar-coated pill.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do you remember what was said before, particularly by the member for Nedlands?

Mr. MANN: I want to raise the question of transport generally. I consider it folly for the Minister or his Government to believe that the railways should control the whole of the transport in the State. We have a Royal Commission sitting, making an investigation chiefly into the question of constructing rollingstock, but the administration is the important part of the undertaking. If the Commissioner of Railways has decided that, under the powers given in the transport Act, he will force everybody to use the railways, another thought is coming to him. What happened last season regard-

ing superphosphate? No less a quantity than 60,000 tons was carted by road. I say to the Minister that it does not matter what his opinion is, the Government will be compelled to approve of road transport for fat lambs to the market, for superphosphate and for wheat.

I cannot imagine wheat being allowed to lie at the sidings for two years before it can be conveyed to the seaports. Why should the primary producers of the State be compelled to bear the whole of the burden of the railway deficit or the interest burden? It cannot be done. I suppose a Bill will be introduced at a later stage dealing with railway administration and I shall listen to the explanation of its provisions with the greatest interest. We have given the Commissioner full power over our transport and the people of the State have to submit to that dictation. Even if the railway capital were written down, interest charges on the money written off would still have to be found by the State.

The question we should ask ourselves is, "What is the future of transport?" I believe that aerial transport will play a very important part and that the day is not far distant when the railways will be merely the haulers of heavy freight and nothing else. Let us consider the position. In every part of the world today the demand is for quick transport. If we are prepared to continue with the present obsolete system of transport without expending millions of money to provide heavier tracks, etc., this State must go back. If we are to compete with our produce in the markets of the world and keep production costs within bounds, we must have better transport.

When the Government has our transport system investigated, the best man outside Australia should be employed to make it, regardless of what his fee might be. If the Government can secure the services of a man who is fully conversant with modern transport and its requirements—air, rail and road—he should be employed to the end that our railways may be put upon a proper basis. For years we have had maladministration. That cannot be denied.

Mr. Marshall: The Minister has already denied it.

Mr. MANN: I am not concerned with what the Minister has said, but I am con-

cerned as to what Parliament is going to do. Efficient transport is vital to the progress of this country. Nineteen thousand sheep are required each week in the Midland Junction market and we have had proof that the railway transport of live-stock is a thing of the past. The same trend is noticeable in regard to the transport of passengers. I consider that there ought to be a thorough investigation into all phases of the running and administration of our railways. The administration in the past has been bad. The Minister will recall that when the Labour Party was in power, a motion for the re-appointment of the present Commissioner of Railways was fought very bitterly by members of the then Opposition.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: What are you going to do about it?

Mr. MANN: We have reached a stage when we should resolve that if a man cannot do his job, he should go. The Lieutenant-Governor's Speech deals with one matter that to my mind is very important; I refer to the subject of migration. It states—Preparations have been made for the reception of migrants, but for the present it is considered that immigration should be restricted to those for whom accommodation will be provided on arrival.

I hope the Government intends to make arrangements to select the people who will come here from oversea. I understand that at the last conference in the Eastern States on migration—the member for Leederville was Minister at the time—it was arranged that the Commonwealth officials would select the migrants for all the States of Australia. Is that correct?

Hon. A. H. Panton: No.

Mr. MANN: Then can the hon. member tell the House whether the State will have any say in the selection?

Hon. A. H. Panton: We should have. We had a representative on the advisory committee.

Mr. MANN: Who is he?

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Agent-General; the latest appointee to that office.

Mr. MANN: I maintain that the State Government has a perfect right to select the migrants who are to come here.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We have made no agreement.

Mr. MANN: Then the Government should make arrangements for the selection. Unless we bring people to this State, we shall not be able to hold it because of the declining birth rate. I suggest that the Government should take up this matter seriously and send the right men Home to select the right people not only in England, but also in Europe—Norwegians, Swedes, and Germans. Young people in Germany are tired of their conditions and could well be brought to Australia.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: If we could arrange to send you to England, you would have to be in a better mood than you are today.

Mr. MANN: South Africa is drawing heavily on the migrants available in the British Isles and so are Canada and New Zealand. I am not concerned about the eastern part of the Commonwealth, but I am concerned about Western Australia where we have a population of only half a million. The Premier has a wonderful chance to adopt a sound immigration policy. One of the first planks in the Government's policy should be immigration. The immigrants who came here in the early days to pioneer the country did not ask to have houses provided for them. They housed themselves, and set about to develop this country. If men of that type were brought here today, they would help themselves and in so doing would help the State also. If the Premier loses this chance or defers action until the present housing shortage is overcome, he will find that he is too late. The field will then be for the southern Europeans, who will flock here in thousands. Unless we populate this State—the largest in the Commonwealth with relatively the smallest population—in 25 years there will be no Western Australia. In the islands to the north the Dutch are dispossessed and the Indonesians are in power, and I ask members to reflect upon what that will mean to Australia and this State in particular. Let us select suitable immigrants from the Old Country and assist them when they arrive here.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Thousands have been nominated and are awaiting transport.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MANN: I appeal to the Premier to select representatives from the trade union movement, the Chamber of Commerce and

the primary industries and send them Home to choose the right type of immigrants. I think by doing that we shall get a large population. It is far better that we should have, as immigrants, northern Europeans rather than southern Europeans. I wish the Government every success. I think the Ministry is sound.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Very noisy!

Mr. MANN: It is very sound indeed. I personally think the Government will achieve much. I hope it will.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you not think it could be improved on?

Mr. MANN: No. I think the best brains possible have been selected.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You have changed your mind.

Mr. MANN: I hope the Government will succeed because that would be for the good of Western Australia. I visualise the Government remaining in office for a very long time indeed.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You could see your own reflection in it then.

Mr. MANN: When I come to retire or am cast out of Parliament, I shall look back on my 17 years' association with members of this Chamber and think of the remarkable friendship that has existed between all parties. There has been no bitterness. We do not have squabbles here. Let us continue to carry on this Parliament in the way in which it has been carried on in the past. Our Parliament is unique among the Parliaments of Australia. I sincerely hope that that spirit will continue not only for the sake of goodwill among members, but for the good of the State of Western Australia.

MR. WILD (Swan) [3.25]: Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I, through you, congratulate the Speaker on his elevation to the high post which he now occupies. I have no doubt that he will add lustre to the office, as was done by his predecessors. To you, Sir, may I also offer my congratulations, although I hope that most of your work in the House will be in Committee. To the Cabinet I would also like to convey my congratulations. The members of the Cabinet have had very little opportunity to understudy those positions during the past 14 years, but I have no doubt that they will, by dint of application to the subject and hard work, overcome

those disabilities and rise to the occasion. I intend this afternoon to address myself to one or two matters affecting my electorate and then, prior to concluding, I shall speak on one or two matters that affect the whole State. First, I want to raise the question of the Plant Diseases Act which was passed by Parliament last session. I feel that this Act, as it stands today, has not the whole concurrence of the growers of the State. I speak particularly of Swan, because as members are aware, my electorate has a very big percentage of the men affected by the Act.

Growers are very perturbed over two provisions of the Act, Section 12 (b) and 12 (c), which give a municipal council, a road board or a certified fruitgrowers' association the opportunity to call for a poll of growers to decide whether a district shall be determined as verminous. Section 12 (c) provides that 60 per cent. of the growers, when the poll has been called for, must be in favour of such determination before effect can be given to it. I point out to the House that in Swan—I am not able to get a complete picture—taking the road from Kenwick through to Armadale we have 347 commercial growers; but in that same district there are over 1,000 orchards which, as you know, Sir, may have only one tree each. It has been said to me that the people owning these backyard orchards are not concerned with the poll; but I venture to say that if it means trespassing upon their own preserves and having to pay something, although I know it is but a mere pittance,  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per tree, or 6d. per acre as a minimum, they will probably go to the poll to record a negative vote.

In addition, Section 12 (d) provides that if the poll is defeated, the same set of growers cannot demand a poll again until the expiration of two years and nine months. Therefore, in effect, if these growers are defeated by the backyard orchardists, they will have to put up with the fruit-fly for a further two years and nine months before they can take action to eradicate it. I understand that the South Suburban Fruit-growers' Association in my district, with headquarters at Kelmscott, are taking action and have discussed the matter with the Citrus Council, and it is hoped that shortly some constructive criticism will come from them and that if they can think of a better method than the one already offered by the Government the Minister for Agriculture

will listen to their reasons and, if necessary and if thought fit, see that an amendment is put through to overcome their difficulties.

I wish to say a few words on the Kalamunda water scheme. This has been a hard annual for 25 years; and having perused the file, I find that the excuses for delaying the scheme have been insufficient population, the expense of the scheme and now, lastly, insufficient water. A few years ago Kalamunda was looked upon purely as a summer resort, but in latter years it has passed that condition and it is definitely an outer suburban area from which many people come to Perth for business every day. The population has increased to 3,000 in the last seven years. For that there are many reasons—the housing shortage down below, plus a road board alive to the time and prepared to allow people to erect structures not built down here. In fact people can there erect buildings with 9ft. 6in. ceilings and costing only £500 to £600. As a result the population has increased considerably. The late Hon. A. R. G. Hawke-

Hon. A. H. Panton: Not late! He is still alive.

Mr. WILD:—met a deputation last year or rather early this year, from Kalamunda in connection with this scheme and £100 was approved for a survey. I am pleased to see that this work is being undertaken, and would say to the Minister for Works that I hope when estimates are prepared for this big job we will have preliminary work or reticulation in the town undertaken before the Mundaring wall is completed. It was started in March of last year and I was led to believe it would take three years to complete. I understand now, however, that it will be closer to five years. I hope the Minister for Works will have the reticulation work commenced so that the day the wall is completed the people in Kalamunda will be able to turn on their taps.

My district is also very greatly affected by drainage. We all know that in the last two years there has been an unprecedented amount of rain. I was discussing the matter last Sunday with one of the old residents of my district. He has lived in Kelmscott for 40 years. He showed me a drain running through his property which 10 years ago he was able to step over, but to cross which today he requires the use of a 10ft plank. I have walked around this district

quite a bit in the last few months and I feel that a lot of the trouble is the result of closer settlement and of people moving trees and each man higher up improving his own property by draining water away, naturally to somewhat lower ground, with the result that the fellow at the bottom collects the whole lot from everybody higher up. I understand that a survey was commenced in Wongong during the war but could not be completed on account of the scarcity of surveyors. I appeal to the Minister for Works to see that this survey is completed and that an overall scheme for the whole of the drainage from Forrestfield to Wongong is undertaken as early as possible.

I do not intend to be at all critical of the previous Government. I would much prefer to accept things as they are today and try to face up to them. But I do think that with regard to the question of electric power the predecessors of the present Government cannot say that they were entirely blameless. Everywhere one goes in the Swan electorate one finds that people were promised power as far back as 25 and 26 years ago. I perused one file the other day in which it was indicated that in 1926 the people of Mundaring would have power within 12 months. But 21 years have passed, and I had to go to the board a couple of weeks ago and tell them that I regretted they would not get any power for another three years, because we had not any to give them.

In another district, Westfield—only a small centre—the people were told in 1922 that they were to be given priority for power. In 1940 the late Mr. Sampson went to them and said, "I think that if you all put in five per cent. of the amount required for the transformer to supply you, you will get power." Recently I was asked to find out whether those people should leave their five per cent.—it was only a matter of £121—where it was or have it back, and through force of circumstances I had to tell them that the best thing they could do would be to take their money back and get a little interest on it and try again in another four or five years' time.

I perused the report on the Government Railways, Tramways and Ferries, which provides some rather interesting information and indicates the foresight that must be exercised by the people in authority so far as electricity is concerned. This report

shows that for the last 10 years the power used in Western Australia—that is, with the available supplies we have had—has increased 100 per cent. If we go back to 1925 we find that between that year and 1935 the consumption rose 100 per cent. and from 1935 to 1945 it went up by 110 per cent. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that in 1955, instead of requiring 57,000 kilowatts, as we have at present, we will require 110,000 or 120,000. I put it to the Minister controlling power supplies in Western Australia that he does not want to think in terms of one 25,000 K.V.A. unit but in terms of 10 units of that size. We all know that in the past few years, particularly in the past 10 years, the use of electricity has increased and would have increased terrifically if we had only produced the available power. But it is rather like coal. I think one chases the other. Coal is based on power, but we must have power to drive industry.

How can we attempt to induce industries to come here from the Eastern States if we have not the power for them to work on? I put it to the Minister that he should give the matter very serious thought. I think it will be found that in a few years every house in Australia where power is available will be equipped with a refrigerator and with a water-heating system, thermostatically controlled. These things will be part and parcel of every house.

The Minister for Education: Have you worked out what Governments were in office during the two decades in which the demand for electricity increased?

Mr. WILD: I want to say a few words about education. During the past few years very much has been done by way of educating the youth of our country; but I feel we fall short in the matter of supplying children with the requisite training to fit them to go out into the world. We bring children into the world and I maintain it is our responsibility to see that they are fitted when they leave school to take their place on an equal footing with others. I base my argument, firstly, on what has come to be known in Western Australia as the measuring stick of education, and that is the junior standard. The figures last year—the latest we have available—show that there were 54,454 children at school, of whom 5,671 left when they reached the age of 14 years.

I am going to advocate that the leaving age be raised to 16. I know that will cause howls from all over the place! We have firstly to consider giving children the opportunity in life that I mentioned before and, secondly, as to whether standard VI., at which the preponderance of them—95 per cent.—leave today is sufficient to fit them in keeping with the demands of today. I say, definitely, that it is not. In raising the age to 16 we would be faced with a very big problem as it would mean we would have 20,000 extra children at school in the first year.

With the present shortage of materials, etc., I realise it would be impossible to cope with them, but I put it to the Minister for Education that we might ease the question in gradually so that in 1948 we would allow 25 per cent. of those who would ordinarily leave school, to carry on for another six months. In 1949 we could allow them to carry on for twelve months, and in 1950 for 18 months, and in 1951 for the full two years. It would mean additional teaching staff, buildings and administrative staff, and more money. But what are those things when it comes to our objective? I realise that we cannot all be doctors or lawyers, or have a university education, but at the same time, knowledge is no weight to carry and I do feel that it is our bounden duty to give every child, whether he be yours, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or mine, an opportunity when he goes out in the world to earn a good living.

Before concluding, I want to speak on the subject of T.B. I feel that in past years this matter has been pushed aside. We have all said, "It is someone else's baby," and so it has gone on. We have done little or nothing to eradicate it. I do commend the previous Government for the Milk Act it put through, because I think that is a step in the right direction. It aims at eradicating T.B. cows. But we should go much further than that and have a mass x-ray examination of the population. Such an examination would, I feel sure, reveal that a larger percentage of our people suffer from T.B. than we imagine. One thing we must do is this: If a man, woman or child is stricken with this complaint we must see that he or she is maintained in good circumstances during treatment.

I cannot help remembering the unfortunate case of a man who was in the army with

me in 1943. He did not serve outside of Australia and, as a result, was not eligible for repatriation benefits. He was stricken with T.B., taken to Wooroloo and discharged. I did not know of this at the time. He was sent to Hollywood with some ailment, and from there he was moved to Wooroloo. I first heard about his wife and family of three little kiddies. All she was able to get—I forget the exact sum—was in the vicinity of 25s. a week to maintain herself and the three children while her husband was in Wooroloo, absolutely incapable of helping her!

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is completely altered now.

Mr. WILD: Yes, and I hope it is. We must ensure that whoever suffers from this complaint can be certain that not only he, but his family, will be looked after sufficiently while the treatment is being undertaken.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You know that is the present policy?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILD: A small colony is being established at Wooroloo but we should go further than that. During the war we were able to spend £1,000,000 a day to go out and kill other people. If we could afford to do that, then we can afford to spend £2,000,000 a day to look after the health of our own people. In conclusion, I would like to say how pleased I am to have the opportunity of representing the electors of Swan. I hope that during my term here I will be of some assistance and that I will make some mark in the Parliament of Western Australia. I also hope that I shall not be tempted to criticise if I cannot be constructive. Furthermore, I feel that in Western Australia we have a magnificent State and, if we all pull together irrespective of our calling or station in life, there is no reason why this cannot be not only the peer of States in Australia, but in the whole of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

HON. A. H. PANTON (Leederville) [3.47]: In company with members who have already spoken, I desire to congratulate Mr. Speaker on his elevation to that position and to express my deep regret at his indisposition so early in the session. To you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I extend congratulations, and might I say that I think yours is



the harder job. I have held both positions for long periods, and I have always argued that the Chairman of Committees has a much more difficult task than has the Speaker. However, I feel that you will make a success of the Chairmanship, and am sure that members will do what they have done in the past, and that is, give every possible assistance. I desire also to congratulate the member for Sussex on his maiden speech. It is a bit of an ordeal to speak in the House when crowded with visitors and others. With him, I regret the circumstances that made it possible for him to come here, namely, the loss of our dear friend, Henry Willmott. We all knew him as a man, and appreciated his wonderfully good qualities. As the Premier said, he was a man who suffered a great deal, and suffered in silence.

I do not propose to set out on a critical speech. I am more in an inquisitive frame of mind today. I was rather interested in many of the statements made by Ministers during the short period they have occupied the Treasury bench. One which struck me particularly, and about which I am very curious, was that made by the Premier as to honours, the distribution of which was one of the new Government's first tasks. I am not one of those who cavil at the distribution of honours. The only thing that worries me is that I have not yet had one myself, perhaps because I am not in the right party to get it.

The Premier: Do not despair.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am rather curious as to what the Premier meant when he said, I think it was at the Lord Mayor's reception or a meeting of the R.S.L. Executive—

The Premier: It was at the reception to Mr. Troy.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The Premier stated—according to the Press, and they are always right—that his Government proposed to distribute honours only to those who gave service.

The Minister for Education: I think he said "to give honour where honour is due."

The Premier: To the deserving.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: He said the Government intended to distribute honours to those who gave service and, if I can, I want to get his definition of "service." To my knowledge there have been only three recipi-

ents of honours since the new Government came into office. I approve whole-heartedly of honours being distributed to those three gentlemen.

The Premier: There have been five.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I know only of three, the Lieut.-Governor, Sir Thomas Meagher, and Mr. Stubbs.

The Premier: Also Mr. Anderson and Sir John Kirwan.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am referring to the other three and will mention one in particular, seeking information. I refer to the ex-member for Wagin. I think members will agree that if anyone deserved recognition it was he, but what has struck me as being peculiar is, if it is a question of service, why the member for Wagin should have been singled out, as a member of Parliament, above certain others. I want to trace the history of two ex-members of this House whose careers ran almost parallel. The ex-member for Wagin and the ex-member for Collie both entered Parliament in 1908. The ex-member for Wagin went into the Legislative Council and later resigned to contest the Wagin seat, eventually coming into this House. Both those members entered Parliament in 1908, and left Parliament on the same day.

I do not know what is the Premier's definition of service. Is it service to the community? If that is it I wish to deal with the case of those two men in particular. I do not know whether the ex-member for Collie was asked to accept any honour. It may be that he was asked, but refused. I take it for granted that he was not asked. Both those members served the community equally well as members of Parliament. The ex-member for Wagin was at one time Mayor of Perth and was Speaker for only a fortnight short of three years. The ex-member for Collie was in Parliament for the same period. He did a tremendous amount of work after the 1914-18 war, in looking after the interests of returned soldiers who were being exploited by land sharks and others. During the whole time that he was in this House he was Chairman of the War Patriotic Committee, resigning just before he left. He also served overseas for a considerable time as a soldier.

If it is a question of service to the community, and that service can be given in Parliament, I would like to know the reason

for the differentiation between two men who, in my opinion, merited equally any honours that were to be distributed. It might have been that Mr. Wilson was in the wrong party. He has not spoken to me about it and I have not seen him for a considerable time. Last night I asked the present member for Collie, Mr. Wilson's son-in-law, whether he knew anything about it, and he said he did not. If we are to have a distribution of honours—I have no objection to it—let the distribution be fair and equitable, based on service to the community. I suggest to the Premier that he give this matter a little thought and consideration. If he did that there would probably be less objection to honours being distributed on the basis of what the Premier believes to be service to the community. If he does that I give my guarantee that I will always be prepared to help him. I propose to leave the matter there.

The Premier: I note what you say.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am glad to hear that. The Premier will be one of the few to do so. One could say a great deal about soldier settlement, and I was sorry to hear the member for Beverley speaking in such a pessimistic strain today. Had I known he was going to speak in that way I think I could have arranged to give him a little "sting" to put him in a better mood. We have heard some most distressing speeches and arguments about the man on the land, as to what he is suffering, and so on.

Whether the present soldier land settlement scheme is good, bad, or indifferent I think that, when it comes into operation, it will be one of the best ever instituted in Australia. The member for Beverley wants the Minister for Lands to go ahead with a State scheme, and yet on top of that he says we should have it immediately because he believes prices, which are good now, will be such, by the time the scheme is in operation, that the men concerned will be starving again. I do not think it would be a good idea to get the Minister to spend a lot of money on land settlement under those circumstances. I recall the member for Mt. Marshall making the suggestion that when we get the first man on the land under the scheme we should have a real bean-feast.

Mr. Leslie: I hope we will.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I suggest that the previous Minister for Lands should be invited, but I promise not to starve myself in the meantime, because I am afraid I would be very thin by that time. I think the present Minister for Lands and some other past critics have discovered, now that they are behind the scenes, that everything is not so easy as all that. The suggestion of the member for Beverley that the Minister for Lands should be sent post haste to Canberra to tell the Commonwealth Government either to get in or out is so much wind.

The Premier and the Attorney General will be going to Canberra shortly. I suggest that they should have a long and confidential chat with Mr. McLaren. If they do so they will find that he is not so easy to get in or out, and that the whole matter is not quite so readily dealt with as is thought by those who place all the blame on the shoulders of State Ministers. As a matter of fact, it may be that too high a standard was set for the scheme. Quite possibly that was so, but I am not one to agree with that. I believe that when the men are put on the land they will at least be able to make a success of their operations. If they do not, then it will be the human element that prevents success, and that result will not be due to anything that the present or the previous Government attempted to carry out. With regard to the proposal of the Minister for Lands—I do not know if he was annoyed at the time when he made the statement to a deputation—to recommend to Cabinet, I do not know if he has done so—that the State should proceed with a scheme of its own—

The Minister for Lands: We published Cabinet's decision that we were going to do that.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I warn the Minister and his colleagues that they will have many things to do before such a scheme can be put into operation. If it is intended simply to carry out the old idea, enunciated today by the member for Beverley, and put men on their blocks to develop them in the hard way, I can assure him that I am not prepared to support any proposition under which men will be put on heavily timbered country to progress the hard way. In the past we broke more hearts in Western Australia than ever the

Americans did while they were here—merely by putting men on the land in the hard way.

Mr. Leslie: The Americans did not break hearts the hard way.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: How do you know?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: As Minister for Lands, I had the experience of going round the country and noting the conditions that existed. That was because we did not have the machinery required for the work. We wanted to get on with the scheme for settling soldiers on the land and so the work was performed in the old hard way. I also had the opportunity in later years of seeing what could be done with the assistance of machinery as up to date as we could possibly procure. Not only was there an improvement with regard to the time factor, but also with respect to costs and so on. It materially improved the position with regard to clearing operations. I have taken out a few figures to indicate the improvement, and they could be bettered very considerably if much heavier machinery could be procured. Now that we have a Minister for Shipping and Supplies we should be able to do that.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: We hope.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The figures I have show what work was done by means of hand labour, which I class as the hard way and to which we had to resort in the early days, in the heavy karri re-growth country. These disclose that, including the burn-off, the cost was £36 per acre. Of course, that work was undertaken in the South-West on land that had been cleared for group settlement purposes and the scrub had grown up again. That was because the settlers had had to walk off the blocks. When we secured bulldozers the cost, including the burn-off, worked out at from £12 to £14 an acre and the work was carried out in about half the time that was required with hand labour. In the red gum country, clearing operations by hand cost £25 per acre, but with bulldozers the cost, including the burn-off, was brought down to £10 or £12 an acre. To clean up the fallen timber on previously cleared and seeded country cost from £7 to £8 an acre with hand labour, but with bulldozers the cost was reduced to £4 or £5 an acre.

It is obvious, therefore, that in any new land settlement scheme carried out by the State Government itself or with the assistance of the Commonwealth Government, the first thing to be done is to provide the necessary machinery with which to clear the land. If we are to start men off on repurchased estates that are partly cleared or on virgin country, the holdings must be properly cleared before wheat can be grown or dairy operations carried out. Someone has to pay for that work and in the past that has been the lot of the unfortunate settler. If he has now to pay even some part of that cost, at least let us clear the land as cheaply as we possibly can. It is marvellous to see what can be done with bulldozers, even with those of the type we have at the moment. It is amazing to see how much work they can carry out in knocking down the timber, pulling the trees together and stacking them in readiness for the burn. I suggest to the Minister for Lands that he should not allow himself to be stampeded into rushing men on to the land in the hard way. The member for Beverley and quite a lot of the old chaps talk that way. Thank goodness, I have not reached the stage, old as I may be, when I would talk along those lines and I certainly believe in giving the younger generation the advantage of up-to-date machinery.

The Minister for Lands: We have no intention of reducing the standard.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am glad to have that assurance and, if the Minister for Lands is going to stick to that, he will see to it that he will not be stampeded into rushing men on the land in the future.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I do not think the position has been improved since the Labour Government went out of office, and I cannot therefore see that the present Government can do much more. We had the advantage of three DH7 bulldozers hired from the Public Works Department at a cost of £13 10s. per day and four D4 bulldozers for which we had to pay £11 10s. a day. Even with that expenditure, we were able to clear land at a cost 50 per cent. less than was incurred under ordinary conditions. I understand that the possibility of obtaining bigger and better machines is somewhat remote, so I hope that when the Premier and his colleague are in Can-

berra they will use every endeavour to secure the best machinery available. There are plenty of possibilities in this country yet, but let us clear the land before men are placed on it.

Mr. Leslie: Thank goodness, someone still believes in the country!

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I believed in it before the hon. member was born and I still believe in it.

Mr. Leslie: There was not much indication of encouragement when you were on this side of the House.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The hon. member does not know the difference between encouragement and discouragement. He will see the difference now he is sitting on the Government side of the House.

Mr. Leslie: I have not changed one bit.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I want to clear up one point regarding the land question. The member for Beverley referred to immigration and said that we had made a new contract with the Commonwealth Government. That Government does not make contracts; it merely told us what it was going to do.

The Minister for Lands: It still does that.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: And will continue to do so, because it has control of the purse and proposes to utilise that power. What we got from the Commonwealth Government was an intimation that an advisory committee would be constituted comprising Mr. Beasley, the present High Commissioner in London, who would be chairman, and the State Agents-General. We had a guarantee from Mr. Calwell—that it will be found on the file—that no migrant would be brought from the Old Country to this State unless our Agent-General was satisfied with him.

The Minister responsible for immigration knows that there are sufficient nominated people waiting to come to this State, who will be a little or no burden to the Government or the State, to fill all the ships likely to be available during the next 12 or 18 months. That applies to Great Britain. We have made no agreement except to represent the Commonwealth and look after the migrants when they arrive here. As regards the turn round of the boats at Fremantle

instead of sending them on to the Eastern States, that was not decided upon at the conference I attended. It was mooted by the Federal Minister at the time that he was going to look into the question of dealing with the boats in that way and of bringing some people out by air. That was the last I heard of it until I saw in the Press what was being done.

I thank the Premier for his kindness in tabling the file relating to the appointment of the publicity officer. I say more in sorrow than in anger that Mr. Clementson, in his usual astute way, has tied himself up, according to the file, to a good agreement.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Tied the Government up!

Hon. A. H. PANTON: He has tied himself up also. I am sorry to see that he has agreed to work 48 hours a week just when we are battling for a 40-hour week, and I believe that journalists work about 36 hours a week. At any rate, he has to be there 48 hours a week, though I do not know whether he will be working those hours. He is to hold the position until 1950, so he will be fairly right.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: He hopes to be there till 1950.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Well, if anybody shifted him, he would have the right to compensation. It is an Executive Council minute. I do not blame Mr. Clementson. I supported him ardently when he was selected as a Labour candidate for the Senate.

The Attorney General: He is quite a highly qualified man.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I have nothing to say against his qualifications, but there is nothing in the file to indicate that applications were called for the position. I suppose there are other qualified journalists who could have done the job equally well.

The Premier: Did you call for applications?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No, but we appointed a first-class man who had served efficiently in the Navy.

The Attorney General: There might have been other returned men with qualifications.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: There might have been, but they had no opportunity to apply for this position.

The Attorney General: I mean that in the prior case you referred to, they had no opportunity to apply.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: There might have been a dozen. Do not let us get at cross purposes. The policy of my party is preference to unionists, and when the Minister for Lands rushed in the other night and asked me where I stood, I said "preference to unionists." I have stood for preference to unionists all my life, and will continue to stand for it. My experience has been that a large number of returned soldiers are good unionists. Let me tell the Attorney General that if he consults the records, particularly of Government employment, he will find that 95 per cent. of the top jobs in the service are held by returned soldiers, not because this party appointed them but because they were the best men for the job. That is what should happen.

But the present Government has flaunted its policy of preference to returned soldiers—the Minister for Lands definitely said so the other night, and so did the Attorney General—and if they stand for that, they at least should have found out whether there were returned soldiers qualified for this position. A salary of £850 a year for three years is not a bad job. I suggest in all fairness to journalists who may be returned men—I do not know how many there are or their capabilities; in fact, I do not know that I am aware of the names of any of them—that these top jobs should be open to them and, so long as I am here, I shall maintain very definitely that they should be given an opportunity at least of making application.

I venture to say that when the Premier led his Cabinet down to the R.S.L. executive to be entertained by a large meeting of returned soldiers, of which I was very proud, the R.S.L. had a right to conclude that they had a Government that would honour that policy. The majority of Ministers are returned servicemen; a large number of the members sitting behind the Government are returned men, and the R.S.L. had every right to believe—as a member of the R.S.L. and an executive officer for the last 23 years I certainly believed—that all returned men would have an opportunity to apply for these jobs. I have remarked about the action of the Minister for Lands

the other night in rushing in and asking what I stood for. I stand for two things and am proud of both of them—one is preference to unionists and the other is the policy of populating this country by good soldiers who gave service in the war.

On motion by Mr. Grayden, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.16 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 12th August, 1947.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### HOUSING PERMITS.

*As to Two-unit-family Homes, Fremantle.*

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Minister for Mines:

1, In his policy speech prior to the recent State elections, the Premier promised he would issue each month permits to build a limited number of homes for two-unit-families. How many of these permits have been issued to applicants in the Fremantle area during

- (a) April,
- (b) May,
- (c) June,
- (d) July?

2, If none was issued during the above period, when does the Premier intend to allot a quota to the Fremantle applicants?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No such promise was contained in the Premier's policy speech but the answer to the question is nil.