

the British Government is doing in the matter of ameliorating the conditions of the people. For a long period I have received from the British High Commissioner at Canberra three or four long foolscap pages every week, each one of them referring to £1,000,000 for this and £2,000,000 for that and £3,000,000 for something else, every one of the things concerned being entirely desirable. Knowing as I do several of the leading members of the British Government, I am sure that they have been inspired by the highest ideals. But I have to ask myself this: Are six years of devastating war a fitting background for a new world? Does that background set up a condition of affairs in which it is possible to tell people that they can work less and earn more and indulge in all sorts of socialistic experiments? Yet that is what has been done. No-one is sadder than I to see what it has led to.

I firmly believe that if when the present Labour Government took office in England it had recognised the seriousness of the position, it could, by imposing conditions not half so arduous as those it finds necessary to impose now, have given relief to the position; and that is what we have to consider. We here are in a very happy position, largely for two reasons: (1) We were not invaded—and we have to thank other countries for that, such as China, Britain and America; (2) we do produce most of the things that are essential. Those happy circumstances should not blind us to the necessities of the times. I am afraid that because so many people have so much more money in their pockets than they ever had before, they think that everything in the garden is lovely.

Does it make sense that during the war when productive work was practically at a standstill, the Australian people increased their savings to the extent of £100,000,000 per annum? It does not make sense and we shall have to come back to sense. The sooner we realise those facts that the Prime Minister is constantly thrashing home—that we can only maintain present conditions, let alone improve them, by the highest possible standard of productive effort, with the closest co-operation between all sections of the community—and that implies a political co-operation which, I am sorry to say, we in Australia are far from achieving—the

better it will be for the nation. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. G. Bennetts, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.32 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 12th August, 1947.

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

CHAIRMEN (TEMPORARY) OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to announce that I have appointed Mr. Hill, Mr. Brand and Mr. Triat to be temporary Chairmen of Committees for the session.

QUESTIONS.

DAIRYING.

As to Stock for Soldier Settlers and Dairymen.

Mr. LESLIE (on notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1. Has he seen a newspaper report of a recent meeting at Rockingham whereat it was proposed to submit to the Government a request that cows and heifers now held by the Government for stocking farms under the Soldier Land Settlement Scheme should be made available to replace stock owned by dairymen which is destroyed because of T.B. infection?

2, Has any such request been received by the Government?

3, In order to avoid the possibility of any delay in the progress of Soldier Land Settlement, which delay would arise in the event of a shortage of suitable stock to adequately equip the farms when required, will he defer acceding to any request as indicated in No. 1 until the adequate requirements anticipated for the Soldier Land Settlement Scheme are first assured?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

3, Yes.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Amenities at East Perth Running Yards.*

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

What is the present position regarding the construction and installation of decent amenities for the workers employed at the East Perth railway locomotive running yards, in connection with which his attention is drawn to the statement of his predecessor in December last?

The MINISTER replied:

The signing of a contract with the successful tenderer covering the work set out in answer to the question asked by the member for East Perth in December last was prevented by the inability of the contractor to obtain a permit. A permit for four tons of cement for foundations was issued on the 6th March, 1947, and progress payment of £112 was made on the 18th April, 1947, for the work done. An application for the release of other material was granted in July, 1947, conditionally on bricks being drawn from country sources of supply. The matter of the release of this condition is now the subject of negotiations with the Housing Commission.

(b) *As to Service for Dwellingup Area.*

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

In view of the fact that the new Bunbury express will not stop at Pinjarra, has he taken any further steps to provide the most efficient rail service promised to the residents of Dwellingup and district when at a depu-

tation on the 11th July they asked for a daily bus service from Holyoake to Perth?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes; the Commissioner has been asked what provision he is making to serve the residents between Brunswick Junction and Armadale with a better rail service, subsequent to the introduction of the new Bunbury express. The Commissioner's proposals have not yet been received, but I am advised that the matter is receiving earnest consideration with a view to providing the best practicable service consistent with the needs of this district.

(c) *As to Price of Collie Coal.*

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

1, What was the price of coal, both large and small, of each mine at Collie, as at the 30th June, 1939?

2, What was the price of coal, both large and small, of each mine (including open cuts at Collie), as at the 30th June, 1947?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2)

AMALGAMATED COLLIERIES OF W.A., LTD.

	Price per ton at			
	30th June, 1939.		30th June, 1947.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
<i>Large Coal—</i>				
Co-operative Mine	0	15	4	14
Proprietary	0	14	6	14
Cardiff	0	13	9	14
Stockton	0	13	11	14
Stockton Open Cut			1	3
Wallsend Open Cut			1	3

Small Coal—

All Mines	0	10	4	5
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GRIFFIN COAL MINING CO., LTD.

Griffin Mine—Large	0	14	1	3
Griffin Mine—Small	0	9	7	6
Wyvern Mine—Large			1	2
Wyvern Mine—Small			1	0
Wyvern Mine—Un-screened			1	0

The 1947 price for coal supplied by Amalgamated Collieries of W.A., Ltd., is tentative only, and subject to adjustment after review of the production costs for January-June.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

As to Representation of Workers on Royal Commission.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (on notice) asked the Premier: As the industrial workers are more vitally concerned than any other section in connection with workers' compensation, will he reconsider the decision of the Government refusing to give those workers

a representative on the 'Royal Commission set up to inquire into workers' compensation and related matters?

The PREMIER replied:

It was considered advisable to confine the membership of the Commission to persons who did not directly represent any organisation which would be directly concerned. The members of the Commission now appointed are regarded as entirely unbiassed and every opportunity will be made available to every interested section to give evidence freely.

NEW CAUSEWAY.

As to Tabling File, etc.

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

1, When was reclamation work necessary in connection with the new causeway over the Swan river, commenced?

2, Will he lay the "Causeway" file on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Instructions were given to the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers to commence reclamation work on the 6th June, 1946.

2, Yes—for one week.

EDUCATION.

(a) *As to High School for Narrogin.*

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

1, Has he promised that the next high school to be built will be built at Narrogin?

2, If such a promise has been made by him, what were the considerations which caused him to make it?

3, Does he deny that on the criteria of numbers of children of high school age available, and degree of overcrowding at present existing in the respective districts, the claims of Midland Junction and Fremantle are far stronger than that of Narrogin?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No. I undertook to carry out the promise of my predecessor as soon as circumstances would permit.

2, Answered by No. 1.

3, It is the Government's intention to endeavour to hold the scales of justice fairly as between all parts of the State.

(b) *As to Bus Service, Harvey-Bunbury.*

Mr. REYNOLDS (on notice) asked the Minister for Education:

As there is a shortage of accommodation in Bunbury, will he, in these circumstances, arrange for a daily bus service for Bunbury High School students from Harvey, similar to that now operating from Donnybrook?

The MINISTER replied:

The service operating between Donnybrook and Bunbury was not sponsored by the Department and is privately controlled. There would be no objection raised to a similar service between Harvey and Bunbury if approved by the Transport Board pending the time when a Junior High School can be established at Harvey.

(c) *As to Brunswick Junction School Site, etc.*

Mr. REYNOLDS (on notice) asked the Minister for Education:

1, Has the architect yet chosen a new site for the Brunswick Junction State School?

2, Have plans been prepared and approved?

3, If so, when can construction be expected to commence?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No; but the School Sites Committee is giving the matter attention.

2, No.

3, Answered by No. 2.

(d) *As to Teaching Staff and School-Leaving Age.*

Mr. NEEDHAM (on notice) asked the Minister for Education:

1, What is the number of teachers engaged in the Education Department—(a) Males: (b) females?

2, How many additional teachers will be required when the increased school leaving age is operating?

3, If the number of teachers in the Department is to be increased because of the increased school leaving age, what steps are being taken to cope with the increase—(a) In the training of teachers; (b) in the provision of accommodation?

The MINISTER replied:

1, (a) 931, (b) 1,207.

2, The number is estimated at 50.

3, (a) The number of teacher trainees is being greatly increased; (b) the Government will use its best endeavours to provide the necessary accommodation.

MILK.

As to Contracts Between Dairymen and Treatment Licensees.

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

As the action of the Milk Board in refusing to approve of contracts except as between dairymen and holders of treatment licenses is not (according to the Minister's statement) in pursuance of a scheme, or part of a scheme for the improvement of the supply, delivery or distribution of milk for consumers, what are the reasons for the Board's action?

The MINISTER replied:

The action of the Milk Board is in accordance with its powers under section 26 of the Milk Act.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is an evasion of the question.

NATIVE ADMINISTRATION.

As to Engagement of Protector from Northern Territory.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY (on notice) asked the Minister for Native Affairs:

1, Is it a fact that a Protector of Natives from the Northern Territory has been engaged for service with the Department of Native Affairs of this State?

2, If so, is the appointment permanent or of a temporary nature?

3, If permanent, what official position will he fulfil?

4, If a temporary position, what is the special duty for which he is engaged?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Native Affairs) replied:

1, No such engagement has yet been made but such an engagement is under consideration. The gentleman mentioned is a West Australian who was a protector of natives in the Northern Territory and has had experience of natives in Western Australia.

2, Any such appointment, if made, would be to the temporary staff.

3, Answered by No. 2.

4, If an appointment is made, the officer will carry out duties as a protector of natives as assigned to him.

SCHOOL OF MINES, KALGOORLIE.

As to Appointment of Director.

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary, representing the Minister for Mines:

Will he lay on the Table of the House the file dealing with the recent appointment of Director of the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

In answer to the hon. member's question, Yes.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

The Premier and Private Houses Built.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [4.42]: I wish to make a personal explanation, Mr. Speaker, regarding a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition on the 5th August. In answer to his question, I informed him that the number of houses dealt with by private ownership completed in Western Australia for the month of March, 1947, was 205. I regret that a mistake was made in the information supplied to me. The figure 205 was the number applicable to the quarter ended March, 1947. The figures for the month of March are not yet separately available.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 7th August.

MR. GRAYDEN (Middle Swan) [4.44]: At the outset today, Mr. Speaker, I should join with other members in paying tribute to you upon your elevation to the Speaker's Chair. However, as a newcomer to this Assembly, I hesitate to do this. Such felicitations, I feel, are more rightly and properly the privilege of others in this august Assembly—others whose achievements of service to the people of this State I cannot hope to emulate. For me, as a newcomer, to offer you my congratulations would possibly savour of presumption on my part. In this House, which is the quintessence of

democracy, yours is the obligation to direct to the best advantage the efforts of those of us who stand on the floor of the Chamber seeking, as we do in our small way, to contribute to the welfare of the people of Western Australia and humanity as a whole. I will not presume to offer you congratulations, or to suggest that my feelings as to your great ability to carry out your task could be of any consequence. Rather I shall simply express the wish that you may have a long and enjoyable term of office and that the duration of that term may be marked by the greater welfare of the people of this State.

I take this opportunity of congratulating the member for York on his election as Chairman of Committees. I wish also on this occasion to thank the people of Middle Swan for having elected me as their representative in this House. I assure them that I will lose no opportunity of doing anything that may be of benefit to that district, and that in all other respects I shall do everything possible to justify their confidence in me. If I can do this and make a contribution—however small may be my ability to do so—to the progress and happiness of the people of this State, that is all I ask. If I can on some occasions in this House direct the attention of members to iniquities existing in our society, to cases of hardship and want, and ways and means of increasing the health and happiness of our people, I shall feel justified in having the confidence of my electors.

I do not propose to take up the time of the House this afternoon by touching on more than a few aspects of the matters dealt with by His Excellency in his Speech, nor do I propose to comment in great detail on those matters. I will simply put them before members as their urgency requires. I will add that those matters are some that it will be my privilege to emphasise on every possible occasion in the future, at greater length, while I remain a member of this Assembly. I will deal first with our attitude, in this State, towards our coloured and slightly coloured people. Although only a small proportion of our population is affected, and most of them do not have the right to vote, their conditions by all standards of humanity are such that their plight becomes a matter of great urgency. I had occasion recently to help a slightly coloured family living close to Perth. The treatment

they had received was typical of our attitude to such people in Western Australia.

The family of which I speak had been living for several months in a tent, within four miles of the G.P.O., on the Guildford-road. The tent had no fly, and was not rain-proof. Its sole furniture was a small table and a bed. On that bed, four or five feet wide, slept a man, his wife and their four children, the eldest of whom was about seven years of age. Members will understand their plight; a family of six spending these wet and windy months in a dilapidated and leaking tent, all of them sleeping at night in a rain-sodden bed. Under those conditions, the woman collapsed. She was taken to the King Edward Hospital where her baby was born two months prematurely. She was almost blind as a result of her experiences. She would have been much worse had not some neighbour sent for an ambulance. The neighbour was in a position to take advantage of these services in our society which, to all intents and purposes, are there for anyone to enjoy but to which most coloured people in this State would not presume to feel they had a right.

This man was wondering where to take his family. Forced by the complaints of people who lived anywhere near the vacant expanse of land where this man had his tent, and who simply passed it on their way to and from the city, the road board eventually had to intervene and enforce its by-laws. That morning, while the man was away at work, a representative of the local authority called and informed his mother, who had come from the country to look after the children while the man's wife was in hospital, that the tent would be pulled down that evening. The mother had to send the youngest child, seven years of age, to East Perth where the father was working to tell him of what had happened. The man informed me that he had never been in a court, but that if it was a case of pulling down his tent in those circumstances, then he would go into court. There was no animosity in his tone, no martyrdom in his make-up; he simply said he would not take his young children further into the bush. He had not had an opportunity to educate them himself and was determined that they should receive education.

I mention this simply to emphasise the difficulties in which it is possible for some

families in this apparently civilised and organised community to find themselves. I mention it also to point out that the slightly coloured people of this State have an inferiority complex and that we do nothing to make their lot easier. Instead, we add to their burden. It is not the Government that inspires that feeling in these people; it is to individuals we must look. The biggest thing we can do for the coloured people and the slightly coloured people does not cost the State one penny. The biggest thing we can do for them is to judge them by their worth and not by the colour of their skin. It does not lie within the power of Governments to direct the attitude of individuals towards these people. That is determined by the individuals themselves. The reflection is on the individuals of this State that they should have inculcated into those people the inferiority complex that they have, and it is a sad and sorry commentary on this State that they treat with such abandon a person who is down.

I have outlined the difficulties of one family in our community—the difficulties of a man striving to keep his family. I mention this only because it is typical of what a coloured man can expect in this State without the sympathy and understanding which should not be denied any man, simply because his skin is coloured. Eventually I was able to put this family into two back rooms in an unused ex-R.A.A.F. hall. It was surrounded by trees and scrub and was quite apart from the other hut dwellers in the vicinity. Yet some of those individuals complained; they complained that the man was slightly coloured and at the fact that he had been given a home. Yet I have it on the word of the school mistress that, even while the family was living in the tent, the two children attending school were amongst the cleanest and best-dressed of all the scholars.

Before I leave this subject there is one other point I wish to mention and it should be as refreshing to the people of this State as it was to me. I refer to the sympathetic consideration given to and action taken by the Premier, showing that even the smallest matter receives his attention. Although the Premier's time is fully occupied on larger matters affecting the State, he did not hesitate a moment to give his time and energies to ensuring that the plight of this particular family was relieved. I think it

worth recording that the Premier, while directing the affairs of the State, could yet make time to help an individual family such as this, a family previously unknown to him.

Now I should like to touch briefly on the housing situation. There is no need for me to stress its gravity; there is no need to embellish a problem that has become as acute as this one has. It has reached what amounts to a national emergency in Australia. We in this State are fortunate in having many of the raw materials for housing, much more fortunate in this respect than are the people in the sister state of South Australia. To build houses in our State is primarily a matter of obtaining material and skilled labour, and there is no reason why our organisation should not be brought to the very peak of efficiency. I do not intend to deal with this subject in any great detail. The time is short and the matter will be dealt with to a large extent by other members during the Address-in-reply. At the moment I wish to emphasise only one point. Granted that as much as possibly can be done is being done to speed up the supply of materials, to make the best use of the skilled labour available and ensure the maximum efficiency of our organisation; granted all this, the salient point that remains is to ensure that the homes are allocated where they are most necessary.

I have no wish to cast any reflection upon the Housing Commission. I realise, as everyone does, that its members are overwhelmed with applications for homes. Including rental homes, they have something like 10,000 or more applications. In these circumstances, cases are bound to occur where people, who are not quite as much in need of housing as others may be, are allocated homes. The Commission, of course, has to rely on the reports of inspectors, to a large extent, in determining priority. I say, however, that the people who should be getting homes are not getting them to the extent they should. They are not getting them to anywhere near the extent they should. Where the trouble lies I do not know, but I do know that we could find out. I am pleased at the Government's announcement that just as soon as the necessary amendment can be made to the Act, a woman will be appointed to the Housing Commission. I feel that in a mat-

ter as important as this, however, we can go very much further to ensure that these homes are allotted to the people in most urgent need of them.

I had intended this afternoon to outline one or two ways in which our machinery for allocating homes could be drastically improved; but on further consideration I am convinced that there are so many ways in which this could be accomplished that to outline any one aspect, or one or two aspects, would be pointless. The whole system needs a complete and thorough overhaul. I feel sure, if I were waiting for a home in the same circumstances as are thousands in this State, I would be much easier in my enforced wait if I realised that my case was being deferred only because some more deserving than my own were being attended to. I feel, too, that members of the Housing Commission would welcome such an overhaul. It would allay much ill-directed criticism of that Commission in the minds of all home-seekers and others. To reiterate, we must ensure that available homes are allocated to those most urgently in need of them. To do this, we must improve the efficiency of the machinery responsible for the allocation. This it is the bounden duty of the Government to do.

There are in this State thousands of families who will never be prepared to go into a workers' home with the object of spending the remainder of their lives paying off the tremendous cost of such a home, that is, if ever they do have the opportunity to complete the purchase of it. Workers' homes built by the Government in these days run into £1,100 or more, which means 20 or 30 years of a working man's life in paying for something which was completed in a few weeks. The scale of values is hopelessly wrong. If we can do anything about that, it will at least ensure that the man who wants to own his home ought to be able to pay for it within a reasonable space of time. We must arrive at a solution of this problem without very much further delay. Possibly the solution will be found in the cottage type of home. With such homes the working man can clear himself of debt within a reasonable space of time. The completed dwelling runs into half the cost of the worker's homes built by the Government.

I know many people living in the cottage type of home who are very satisfied. The

brother of a former Premier of this State lives in one, and his daughter in another, and they cannot speak too highly of them. Therefore, there can be no real objection to them. There is another aspect of housing I would like to touch upon, an aspect that I feel has not been sufficiently stressed in the past, and that is the matter of building two-roomed cottages with the object of completing the remaining two rooms at a later day. We should investigate thoroughly the possibility of building such cottages in this State, with a view to adding the further two rooms when the supply of materials makes it possible. Such cottages can be erected in an amazingly short space of time.

Not very long ago in Guildford I witnessed a trial demonstration. At 7.30 a.m. four men commenced building. At 5 p.m. that day the building was completed. Since that time, at the invitation of the builders, thousands of people have viewed this home. We could place 50 of them for families in Guildford alone. But I do not want to labour this aspect or the housing situation generally. I have merely singled out three aspects of the tremendous housing problem which confronts the people of the State. Hundreds of other factors affect the position. I shall leave them, secure in the knowledge that other members will deal with them at a later stage. May I add one thing? Already the new Government has taken some steps in regard to housing. It has formed a housing panel comprised of representatives of all the industries concerned to advise the Government upon ways and means of stepping up the housing programme in this State.

There are, of course, many improvements which have yet to be effected, but their accomplishment demands a certain amount of time. The Government is to be congratulated on the steps that it has already taken and also on the open mind it has on this subject, looking always, as it does, for new ways of increasing the efficiency of the building organisation in this State for the accomplishment of one of its primary objectives, which is to put roofs over the heads of those families which are so urgently in need of homes and of whose plight the Government is so well aware and whose condition the Government is so earnestly concerned about alleviating. To summarise briefly before I part from this subject, let us

make sure that homes in this State are going to those who need them most; and let us not burden a man with a home of tremendous cost, as the walls of that home will enslave him as surely as the walls of any gaol.

This afternoon I desire, Mr. Speaker, to speak particularly of Middle Swan. I want to outline to the House the boundaries of this electorate, and to emphasise that the residents of this area have received a shoddy deal in the past. I want to emphasise this and to express the hope that the Government will not allow that state of affairs to continue. I will do everything in my power to achieve that desire. Parochialism involves a narrow outlook at any time. The needs of the State must come before any one section of it; but there is no excuse for neglecting one portion to benefit another. Middle Swan is an example of a district being sacrificed to political expediency. The boundaries of the electorate were determined for political reasons and the people of Middle Swan have suffered ever since.

Hon. P. Collier: Who determined the boundaries?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I think the best thing we can do in Middle Swan is to divide it in two. The Swan River forms the natural dividing line. The interests of the people of Belmont and that side of the river are very different from the interests of those in the Bayswater area. In the past the interests of the people of Belmont and of the people in that area have been to some extent neglected, as the bulk of the population is on the western side of the river. I do not want to give the impression that Bayswater has fared well. It has not. The size of the electorate has been a contributing factor to the general neglect. The present boundary line of Middle Swan is through Welshpool, through and beyond Greenmount; it then encompasses Caversham, Beechboro, Hampton Park, Morley Park and Bedford Park and runs through Inglewood, Maylands, across the river up and through Rivervale and Carlisle and thence to Welshpool. As can be seen, it encompasses Bayswater and Belmont. In the very centre of the electorate there is another electorate, Guildford-Midland.

We have four main worries in Middle Swan. They are housing, drainage, transport and education. I have dealt at some

length with housing and do not intend to touch more than the surface of the other three matters, which have been so thoroughly aired with the Government departments and the Minister responsible that to do more than touch on them today would not achieve any useful object. The circumstances of these matters are well known to all. The main problem in connection with them is, of course, lack of money. Shortages in both labour and materials also have to be overcome. In regard to drainage, I would point out that certain areas in close proximity to Perth are extremely low-lying. In some cases these low-lying areas run across what may be considered main roads. The result is that when these areas become flooded, as they do periodically, the roads are impassable to traffic and large numbers of the residents for whom these roads provide the only outlet suffer considerable hardship.

These areas that are unfortunate in respect of flooding should receive some assistance from the Government because, as they receive less revenue than the higher areas, they cannot hope to develop to the same extent. Local authorities in these areas are in many cases completely unable to cope with the draining of land, the flooding of which affects the roads and the properties of the settlers within their boundaries. I know that in Middle Swan and in adjacent areas the drainage problem is very acute. The Minister for Works and Water Supply has visited various places where drainage is particularly urgent and has already seen fit to embark on drainage projects within those areas in order to improve the plight of the residents affected. I wish to emphasise that we are not asking for excessive amounts. We simply consider that this matter of drainage should be given a high priority in public expenditure and we want to ensure that that priority amounts to something. We do not want to see other works which have not the same degree of urgency or value to the State being proceeded with while areas in our district, upon which the livelihood and health of the residents depend, are flooded.

I do not intend to say much about the transport position. The matter is in the able hands of the Minister for Transport, and the Government is doing its best to remedy the existing state of affairs and to

put transport in the position that it should hold in this State, that is, in the very forefront of progress, not trailing dismally—very dismally—in the rear. Middle Swan, as I have said, has been shamefully neglected in the past; but in no respect has it been more shamefully neglected than in the matter of transport. That has been the greatest stumbling block to the progress of the district with which the residents have had to contend or possibly ever will have to contend. We want more transport; we want better transport and we want it as soon as it can be given. It has been a matter for gratification to us in Middle Swan that already the Minister for Transport has inspected the area and outlined certain tentative plans to us which mean that this difficulty will be overcome, to the very great benefit of the district generally.

There is only one point I wish to emphasise when dealing with transport on this occasion. It is that at Middle Swan we are at present in a worse state than are many other electorates in the metropolitan area so far as transport is concerned. I want to repeat that we are gratified indeed at the sympathetic consideration already shown to us by the Minister for Transport in this problem. We know that we will continue to get this consideration from him. We also know—and this is more important—that from him we will get the best transport it is possible to give us. With education, with particular emphasis on improvements and extensions to schools, we come to the final one of what I consider to be the four stock problems of Middle Swan. As with the problems of housing, drainage and transport, I do not wish to say much about this matter now. With the housing position being as it has been in the past, and from which we have not yet recovered and are not likely to for some time, we are faced with the alternative—schools or homes.

Many parents and public-spirited citizens are devoting their time and energies to organisations to develop their districts and improve the welfare of their children. Naturally they feel aggrieved when improvements to schools are delayed, but when they realise the true position they will agree that the Government has made the only possible choice in the circumstances. I, and everyone else, would like to see this Government embark on an ambitious school-building programme, but I would first prefer to see home-

less families housed. From the contact I have made with the departments concerned, and with members of the Government, I want to say that I have every confidence in the Minister for Education. I am sure that in his hands education in this State will, when it becomes possible, be given a new deal which will be the greatest thing that will have happened in our history.

There are many public undertakings which we, in Middle Swan, are anxious that the Government should commence as soon as the State's finances, and the labour and materials position allow. The most important of them, as far as we in Middle Swan are concerned, is the reclamation of the Swan River between Perth and Guildford. This reclamation will give to the State another stretch of river as beautiful as that below Perth. Then, too, there is the tremendous advantage that access to the areas involved would be to the residents in the cramped areas of Bayswater, Maylands, and East Perth. This is a task which should hold a high priority requiring, as it does, no equipment which cannot be spared from other projects, and very little labour. A matter of surprise, to those who are not familiar with it, is the comparatively low cost at which so much of our river has already been reclaimed and this reclamation has added considerably to the beauty of our city. We should take the first opportunity to reclaim the river from Bayswater to Guildford and thus extend its natural beauty while at the same time making the playing fields which could be constructed on its bank available to all, and, as I have already mentioned, particularly to the people in the crowded areas of Maylands, East Perth and Bayswater.

The plight of the old age pensioners in this State is another matter, to which, for a few moments I would claim the attention of the House. I do not refer to pensions, which is the concern of the Commonwealth, but to the accommodation provided by the State for these people. In the past we have felt that our obligations to the elderly people have been discharged so long as we have provided security of life—that is, a roof over their heads and the bare means to sustain life. Our attitude to this question typifies the showiness of our conception of helping those who need our aid. But the extent of our showiness in this matter does not end with the elderly people

who, as a last resort, move into these so-called homes provided by the State for old age pensioners. It extends to the thousands who are without relatives, or who for other reasons live in their own lonely homes rather than accept the rations and living quarters doled out to them in the existing State homes. I do not want to labour this point but simply to stress that the plea of other obligations is no excuse for allowing the present state of affairs to continue.

The time is long overdue for the building of homes and cottages to which our elderly people could retire in circumstances fitting to their dignity and needs. They should have homes where their wants would be attended to by a staff sufficiently large for the purpose. I am pleased to know that the home being constructed in the foothills is being built with this object in mind. I express the hope that the time is not far distant when our old people will be able to retire in circumstances that will be fitting to the lives of service to the State and to humanity that many of them have so unselfishly rendered and for which, up to the present, they have received such scant recognition. At an earlier stage this evening I mentioned parochialism in connection with dwelling too much on the needs of Middle Swan. I want to say that parochialism can extend much further.

The State itself can be parochial, and I believe we ourselves are to a great extent, parochial. When I say that I do not mean in regard to our relations with the other States, but in connection with the living conditions of the vast numbers of people very close to our shores. Only about 400 miles or so from the north of this State, commences a series of populated islands the inhabitants of which are part of a vast race which stretches right across that area. Many people in this State do not conceive of the number of people so close to our shores. Their attitude to life is such that many of them die annually from starvation and from sicknesses which could be avoided and cured with the most elementary medical care. I point this out merely to emphasise that our sole object in Australia must not always be confined to helping ourselves. We are in a position to do something actively in the way of assisting those less fortunate peoples, and it behoves every Australian to do so. The States and the Commonwealth should, at an early date,

evolve some way by which we could contribute, even if at present it is only a token contribution in the form of medical supplies, to the welfare of the peoples close to our shores, who are not in a position to help themselves.

There is only one other matter to which I wish to refer this afternoon, and before doing so I want to say that it was not my original intention, or my wish, to include any criticism not of a constructive character on this the first occasion that I have had the opportunity of addressing the House. The matter to which I refer was the unprovoked, unwarranted and vicious derision directed by a former Minister of the Crown in this House at the great principle of soldier preference. We had the spectacle of his deriding the principle of soldier preference, in a manner calculated to arouse the anger and the contempt of any one of us who has the intelligence and the human feeling to comprehend the suffering which was willingly endured for Australia and for all of humanity, including the likes of the member for Leederville who, I feel sure, was very dependent upon their protection and who now so contemptuously spurns and derides the sacrifices they made.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is a lie. When you can produce two sons who did their bit for their father you can talk.

Mr. GRAYDEN: The hon. member derided the principle of soldier preference.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I ask for those words to be withdrawn. I did nothing of the sort. I take exception to them.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is asked to withdraw the statement.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I withdraw.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You ought to talk about a man dependent on soldiers!

Mr. GRAYDEN: If the hon. member wants to make a speech he will, I presume, get an opportunity later.

Mr. Marshall: He will make a better one than you are attempting.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I must thank the House for its indulgence this afternoon.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You have every right to.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I want to pay a tribute to the new Government. Without exception,

the Ministers of this Government strive to do what they consider to be in the best interests of the people of the State.

Mr. Rodoreda: You ought to be a pretty good judge.

Mr. GRAYDEN: No matter is so large but that they approach it with new ideas, a new outlook and an open mind. No matter is too small for the Government to give it full consideration. In its sincerity, its new breath and its open mind, we have, in a few words, the basic qualities characteristic of the present Government. At any rate, they are a few of the basic qualities with which the present Government has proved to be richly endowed and which will distinguish it throughout its term of office to the very great benefit of the people of Western Australia. I want to emphasise those qualities, for they bring a breath of fresh air to a State struggling for breath. Members opposite have many times during the current debate referred to cobwebs, which characterised the term of office of the Labour Government and enshrouded the Government benches during the period. For 14 long years insincerity, sectional interests and lip-service to the public weal prevailed. With the advent of the new Government, the cobwebs have already gone.

Hon. A. H. Panton: But the spiders are there.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And the Government members are now tangled in the webs.

Mr. GRAYDEN: They have been swept from the Government benches. The cobwebs of insincerity, the cobwebs of sectional interests, the cobwebs of prevarication, the cobwebs of hypocrisy—all have gone. Members opposite still see cobwebs before them, and they look through a mirage of cobwebs.

Mr. Marshall: We look to the cobwebs on the other side of the House.

Mr. GRAYDEN: They will continue to see cobwebs. Habits of 14 long years are not swept away so soon. Labour members will continue to see cobwebs although they have already gone from the State's activities. They will continue to see cobwebs, in which they themselves are enmeshed.

Mr. Marshall: What forest did you find them in?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I felt earlier that it was my bounden duty to refer to the unprovoked,

vicious and quite unwarranted attack made by a member opposite on the principle of soldier preference.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I would advise you not to come back at that!

Mr. GRAYDEN: I felt bound, on behalf of the ex-servicemen of this State, to emphasise to members opposite just how his feelings in this matter were regarded by ex-servicemen.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You will take a long time to convince the soldiers of this State on that point.

Mr. GRAYDEN: We had the spectacle of a former Minister of the Crown deriding the principle of soldier preference in a manner calculated to arouse the anger and contempt of any one of us who—

Hon. A. H. Panton: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is repeating a statement he made earlier.

Mr. Marshall: Let him go!

Hon. A. H. Panton: I will not let him go. I have already asked for a withdrawal of a similar statement. You, Mr. Speaker, directed it to be withdrawn and now it has been repeated. I take exception to that, and I ask that the statement be withdrawn.

Mr. Marshall: And for an apology.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The rat-bag! Why bother about him?

Mr. SPEAKER: To what does the hon. member object?

Hon. A. H. Panton: I object to the statement that I derided the work of returned soldiers in this State on the question of preference. I did nothing of the sort. The fact is that I put up a fight for a returned soldier and opposed the appointment of a non-retained soldier. I ask that the statement be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Leederville has taken exception to a statement made by the hon. member and has requested that the statement be withdrawn.

Hon. P. Collier: And not repeated.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has heard the request. Does he withdraw the statement?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I withdraw the statement.

Hon. P. Collier: You should not have repeated it.

Mr. GRAYDEN: There is one other matter I desire to say in conclusion, and it is that I am very pleased indeed to have the privilege, of which I am very proud, of being associated with my colleagues on the Government side of the House.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The seeming political corkscrew has spoken.

Mr. Marshall: Did he not stand as an independent once?

MR. MAY (Collie) [5.36]: At the outset I desire to offer you, Mr. Speaker, my congratulations upon your appointment to your high office. I trust that during the period you occupy the Chair, while I have a seat in this Chamber I shall do, and say, nothing to cause you any alarm or concern. I am deeply conscious of the fact that I follow in the footsteps of a man who set a very high standard in public life. It has been very pleasing to me, on being elected to this House and mixing with my fellow members, to note the love and affection that all had for my predecessor. I trust I shall do nothing to lower the standard set by the former member for Collie. In common with the member for Murchison, I regret that the portfolio of Mines is not held by a Minister in this Chamber. However, I feel in the circumstances that we must accept the position as we find it. In the Lieut.-Governor's Speech reference is made to the forthcoming season and the anticipation of a successful harvest is mentioned. I am pleased to note that.

In view of the fact that we may anticipate a bumper harvest I shall deal with a basic requirement associated with a prosperous season. I refer to the question of coal supplies. In view of the emergency that arose about two years ago, it was decided that the open-cut system should be adopted in conjunction with deep coalmining. I am of the opinion that the open-cut as against deep-mining method should be regarded purely as an emergency measure. Coal that is easily obtained close to the surface is of a very immature nature and is often mixed with foreign matter such as gravel, which makes the use of open-cut coal very undesirable, particularly from the point of view of the consumer. Therefore I say that the open-cut method should be regarded only in the light of an emergency measure.

This brings me to the point regarding the development of the coalmines at Collie. I regret to have to admit that, for a very long period, more attention has been paid to winning coal quickly than to the future life and development of the mines, and I deem it my duty to direct the attention of the Government to the position at Collie. The matter, I feel, needs investigation and would, if attended to, have a far more beneficial effect than anything else on the output of coal.

I wish to say a few words regarding the distribution of coal. Under the National Emergency Regulations, it was considered advisable—and I think it was—to set up a committee charged with the duty of ensuring a proper distribution of the coal that was available. The committee was set up by the Commonwealth. During the period of the war it might have been very desirable for the Commonwealth to take that action, but now, two years after the close of the war and at a time when we are on the road to rehabilitation, I feel that the distribution of the output at Collie should devolve upon the State authorities. I shall give my reasons for this belief.

On the 26th June last, a conference of goldmining and coalmining interests was held at Kalgoorlie with the object of ascertaining what the Goldfields' requirements of coal were and whether the Goldfields people were prepared to use it. The conference assembled and one of the first questions asked by the Goldfields people was why the supply of coal had been stopped. I admit quite candidly that the coal representatives had no idea that the 500 or 600 tons of coal that had been sent to Kalgoorlie had been stopped. I made further inquiries and found that the reason why Kalgoorlie had not received its quota, as it had been receiving over a long period, was that the bunkering trade at Fremantle had to be supplied. I do not contend for a moment that shipping is not of vast importance. It is, but I maintain also that the future prosperity of the coalmining industry is also important.

I refer to the time just before the recent war when the Collie miners were working only two or three shifts a week. They were not getting enough to live on. This was due to the fact that the shipping companies in those days were using Newcastle coal. At present, however, they are not able to get Newcastle coal so easily, and conse-

quently they have sought supplies of Collie coal. I see no reason why the internal market for Collie coal should be sacrificed to people who are prepared to turn our industry down immediately they can get coal from other places. That is one reason why I have brought up the question of the distribution of coal. It is time that representatives of this State, if there is to be a direction of the distribution, undertook that duty. So far as the subject of distribution is concerned, I shall leave it at that.

One important question is that of the increased output of coal. The output has increased to almost 800,000 tons a year, and it is possible in the event of our being able to supply the requirements of the Goldfields and other industries that the yearly output will rise to 1,000,000 tons. I feel sure that this is a condition of affairs that every member is very desirous of seeing attained. For the present, however, there is no possibility of increasing the output of coal at Collie, unless we are able to put more men into the industry, and there is no chance of getting more men in the industry until we are able to provide them with homes.

We have heard this afternoon something about homes and I have no desire to enter into any debate on that subject. During the past year 307 men were given work in the mines and 301 of those employees left the industry on account of inability to find accommodation for themselves and their dependants. Therefore, in spite of the very acute position regarding housing in other parts of the State, I strongly urge the Government to do all in its power to provide more homes in Collie in order that the output of the mines might be increased to meet the requirements of the State.

I know that Collie has been given a No. 1 building priority and under that priority we have been getting houses built at the rate of one a month. At least two weddings take place every week in Collie, and therefore I do not see how we can hope to make up the leeway or keep up with the pace set by the number of marriages. I earnestly implore the Government to try to do something about the matter. If there is anything that the local governing bodies can do, or that I can do, to assist the Government to remedy the position, we shall be happy to do it.

Recently the State Electricity Commission took possession of some leases near Collie. I understand that the Commission intends to obtain its own coal supplies; but so far I have been unable to discover that it has made any great effort to take steps to provide its own coal requirements. I know the Commission is boring on its leases, but the boring is proceeding at a very slow rate. I would very much like to see some impetus given to the efforts of the Commission to obtain its own coal supplies. I would also like to refer to the consumption of our native coal on the Goldfields and to emphasise that we should do everything in our power to supply that demand. If we do not, it is quite on the cards that the demand will be met by the supply of fuel from without the State.

I feel I shall have the support of members when I say that, if it is at all possible to supply the Goldfields with our native fuel, we should take the earliest opportunity to assist in supplying that need. We can only do so by obtaining an increased output, employing more men in the industry and providing them with homes to live in. I wish to dwell on another aspect very briefly. The Minister for Mines has expressed his intention to grant additional leases in the coal-bearing country at Collie. Would it not be possible to give other companies an opportunity, if they so desire, to take up leases and put down their own mines, as thereby they would help to overcome the present acute shortage of coal supplies? I desire also to touch upon the railway position at Collie and the requirements of the Railway Department there.

I draw the attention of the Minister for Railways to several requirements. He has already expressed himself as willing to be most helpful and I am sure we shall have his assistance after I have explained a few items. First, the railway assembly yards at Collie are totally inadequate to cope with the goods and services that are being dealt with at the station today. There is not one line in the assembly yard with sufficient room to enable a whole train to be set up. This entails extra shunting. The position has been made worse now that the Garratt engines are again in service. Their increased load has aggravated the position at the assembly yards. I do not know when

the Collie railway station was built, but it seems to me it must have been many years ago; it is more like a rabbit warren than a railway station. With the amount of traffic passing through Collie and the shunting that goes on continuously day and night, it is high time the Commissioner of Railways gave some thought and consideration to reorganising the whole set-up of the assembly yards and the relative conveniences.

Something should be done whereby the trains can be assembled much quicker and much more simply than that is being done now. At present the assembly yards are faced on one side by Harvey-st. and on the other by Lefroy-st. Both these streets carry a tremendous amount of traffic day and night and have become positive death traps to the general public, owing to the continuous shunting over the two roads both day and night. Innumerable accidents have occurred there, and that is not to be wondered at when one realises the amount of shunting and the amount of traffic at the Collie station.

I suggest to the Minister for his consideration that he should at least close the shunting yards and take the shunting further west to the other side of Harvey-st., where there is no crossing and no danger to the public. There is ample room for the goods sheds at that site, and an island platform station could be erected. The site of the present assembly yards could be beautified by planting lawns and trees. This might be an inducement for the visitors who come to Collie to stay there a little while. I make that suggestion to the Minister for Railways in all sincerity. It would be interesting to know how much lost time occurs in the course of the year over both those crossings through the public being held up during shunting operations. I hope the Minister will give some attention to the settlement of this matter which I would ask him to believe is long overdue.

I want to say a word to the Minister for Works in regard to water supply. A most remarkable thing is that although in Collie we have plenty of water—so much that we could supply the whole State—the inhabitants are always short of it. During the summer months I am not able to obtain sufficient to water my garden. Our trouble is due entirely to the piping leading from

the dam to Collie. I am sure the Minister will look into that matter, which I think has already been brought under his notice. I hope he will act immediately so that the residents can have a supply of water through the reticulation service during the coming summer.

I would also draw the attention of the Minister for Works to our roads. God knows that Collie is isolated enough! It takes two hours to get from Brunswick Junction to Collie by train, and if one does it in that time one is lucky. Visitors only need to go there once and they say, "Never again!" Collie is situated in the heart of the forest country; and because the Forests Department has most of the land tied up and does not pay any rates, we have what I suppose is one of the poorest road boards in Western Australia, which does not get nearly sufficient revenue to maintain the roads that are used in the district. I would ask the Minister to give kindly consideration to that matter. It will be brought to his notice shortly and I feel sure he will be most ready to do something about it.

With regard to the record of the Collie miners, all through the war, as everyone knows, they stuck to their guns under conditions, which at times, were most revolting. They worked every holiday and Sunday whenever called upon, and I believe that for coalmining they hold the world's record. I want also to refer to decentralisation. I feel that when any company desires to establish itself in the country it should receive every encouragement from the Government. Recently it was decided to install and equip a wireless station some four or five miles from Collie, but I understand that so far the Government has not seen fit to grant the company the freehold of the 20 acres of land on which that station is to be built. As a matter of fact, the mast has already been erected. Whenever private enterprise desires to establish itself in a country district it should be given every opportunity to do so. We cannot expect people who have money and who are desirous of inaugurating some enterprise to go into the country unless they receive some encouragement in the way I have suggested.

Last Saturday afternoon I took the opportunity to visit the location of the recent subsidence some eight miles from Collie. There was not much said in the paper re-

garding the catastrophe that occurred there and I want briefly to give members some idea of what took place. The subsidence occurred $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Cardiff mine. I want members to imagine an area of approximately one acre suddenly disappearing to a depth of 100 feet. The jarrah trees growing on that particular acre of ground vanished. They cannot be seen now. That will give some idea of the fall-in that occurred at the Cardiff mine. It is estimated that approximately 1,000,000 tons of earth have entered the old workings of that mine. Just two hours before the subsidence occurred, 12 men were working under the very spot where it took place. We can imagine how lucky it is that there was not a dreadful catastrophe involving loss of life and desolation in many Collie homes! This is the biggest fall-in that has happened in the district. We have had them in the past, but they have been much smaller. This is something to be dreaded.

By the immediate action of the management and the men, the river was diverted so that it would not flow into the fall-in. A good job has been done and so far the water is still flowing away from that area. The amount of water and slurry that has entered the pit has covered an area, underground, of approximately 30 acres. Fortunately this has occurred in an old section of the mine which was worked out some years ago, with the exception of the pillars, and I think, and the general opinion is, that the fall-in has occurred as a result of extracting the pillars which has consequently prevented any support being afforded to the roof of the particular part of the mine. I am quoting this case to show members that coalmining is not all it is cracked up to be. Goldmining has its risks also, but in the treacherous nature of the country around Collie the work of the coalminers becomes very dangerous and calls for a good deal of skill and courage.

I have already said that the Collie miners hold a good record for their work, and I feel sure that whenever there is an opportunity to make their lot brighter, all members, particularly those of the present Government, will do all they can to that end. They will give them every protection and consideration. The State urgently needs the coal, and I feel it is the duty of all of us to give to the men working in this dangerous environment every consideration and

amenity possible. I hope the Government will do all in its power to give them these things which they deserve for working most of their life in the bowels of the earth, and away from God's sunlight. It is almost dark when they go to work and when they come home, and it is always dark when they are underground. They work under rotten conditions, and I earnestly make the plea that the Government will, whenever possible, afford them every consideration.

MR. ACKLAND (Irwin-Moore) [6.12]: May I join those who have gone before me in congratulating you, Sir, on being elected to the Speakership? As a new member, it is only natural that the first business of the House should be of particular interest to me, and it was with great pleasure that I observed you receive the unanimous endorsement of all members of this Assembly, irrespective of party. It was good to hear the kindly and eulogistic references made both by the Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when they congratulated you, one of whom was speaking on behalf of the two parties comprising the Government, and the other on behalf of the Western Australian Labour Party. I would also like to congratulate my friend, the member for York, on receiving the appointment of Chairman of Committees. I have for many years worked in close association with him in an industrial organisation, and I know that he will stand up very well indeed to the duties which will fall to him in his new position. I would like to go further and offer my sincere congratulations to the Premier and the term that has been elected to work with him. We have already seen their capacity for hard work. They have not spared themselves for one minute since taking over their departments.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. ACKLAND: Before tea I reached the point where I wished to congratulate the Ministry, and I stated that they had the capacity for work. I am of the opinion that, no matter how large or small the undertaking may be—there are three essentials to success. The first is a capacity for hard work, the second is sincerity of purpose, while the third is a considerable measure of commonsense. In this Ministry we have all three in abundance and, when we have add-

ed to that a great deal of ability, I believe success is assured. I wish I could proceed to congratulate members of the Opposition on the sportsmanship they showed when this House first met. I came here as a new member, without previous knowledge of Parliament, and to me it was indeed a great disappointment to see the tactics that were indulged in during the whole of last week. I expect it was a case of window-dressing in preparation for something to come, but to me it seemed a reflection on the great bulk of Labour supporters throughout Western Australia, in taking them to be arrant fools!

It was said that the last election was won on misrepresentation and advertising. That, coming from a Labour Opposition, would be amusing if it were not so ridiculous. The excuses for defeat were indeed laughable. We had a Labour Government in charge of the Treasury bench in Western Australia for 20 out of the last 23 years. At election after election promises were made to the people but were not fulfilled. We have the Government of today in office for four months, and right from its inception an attempt has been made to embarrass it. If we wanted proof of what has not happened in the past it could be found in the facts surrounding a deputation that was taken by the Leader of the Opposition to the Premier shortly after he took office. That, in my opinion, amounted to an admission of failure on the part of the previous Government to do what was required when it had the opportunity.

As the newly elected member for Irwin-Moore it is only reasonable and, I believe, right, that I should confine my remarks mainly to matters related to agriculture. Practically the whole of the electors of Irwin-Moore are to some extent dependent on the products of the soil. I can go further and say that all the people of Western Australia are dependent for their stability on the seasons, prices and conditions related to primary production. Tonight I will deal first with the wheat industry and wheat stabilisation. It is indeed pleasant to know that to-day all the wheat producers throughout Australia are speaking with one voice. It is particularly pleasing to me because, for a number of years, I have been working—together with a most sincere body of men—to bring into being a fair and reasonable

wheat stabilisation scheme, one under which the rights of both producer and consumer would receive fair treatment. Before I take my seat again I hope to have convinced the House that had a wheat stabilisation scheme such as that suggested by the ex-Minister for Commerce, Mr. Scully, become the law of this land, the producers would have contributed more than £180,000,000, which is a vast sum of money.

At the outset I will make the admission that the wheatgrowers of Australia are under a debt of gratitude and an obligation to the taxpayers of the Commonwealth. They have received considerable sums of money from the Commonwealth Treasurer. They are willing to admit that and to honour any obligation arising from it. From 1930 to 1941 they received an amount of almost £22,000,000 in subsidies from one source or another. From 1938 to 1943 they received, by reason of the flour tax, a further £4,500,000. Over a period of 13 years they received nearly £26,000,000. I will not tell the House that that was nearly sufficient to keep the wheat industry solvent. It was not, but at the same time the wheat industry should recognise that obligation, and is willing and anxious to do so.

I have said that up to 1943 the industry received nearly £26,000,000. In the succeeding two years, it contributed to the people of this country nearly £22,000,000. I am in a difficulty to find a term to describe this scheme, but had it come into operation, during the next five years the farmers would have contributed £22,500,000 per annum to the people of this country. This can easily be worked out. Sixty million bushels of wheat were used by the people of Australia; 32,000,000 bushels were used in the form of flour, 25,000,000 bushels were used by the stock feeders and the rest was used by breakfast-food manufacturers and processors of wheat generally. Every bushel of that wheat returned to the grower 4s. 1d. at siding. In 1938, when the flour tax legislation was introduced, the growers received 5s. 2d. per bushel bag basis port, and at that time the wheat was worth 4s. 4d. per bushel at the average siding on a bulk basis. Owing to increased handling costs, the value of that wheat had depreciated by 1945 to 4s. 1d. per bushel, or 3d. per bushel less than it was worth in 1938.

I have figures to prove conclusively that the cost of wheat production over that period increased by more than 50 per cent. The basic wage in 1938 was £3 15s. and at present the wheatgrower, in common with other industries, is paying £5 12s. 6d. A 20-combine in 1938 cost £164. The same implement was quoted this morning at £295, with another increase expected because no implement can be booked at a firm price. A header-harvester in 1938 cost £295 whereas this year the price is £366. Members opposite will readily admit that the ordinary cost of living, which the primary producer as well as everyone else has to bear, has risen considerably. Two years ago together with the member for York, and Mr. W. J. Russell, of Bilbarin, I was a member of a committee that made an honest attempt to ascertain the cost of producing wheat in this State. We do not say that we arrived at the exact cost, but we do say it was an under estimate because, every time we were in doubt, we took a lower figure.

After seven months of very hard work, during which time we co-opted a great many people to help us, we reached a decision that the conservative price was 5s. 5½d. per bushel at siding. Since then there has been another inquiry. The Farmers' Union of Western Australia asked our chairman, Mr. Russell, who, by the way, as well as being a practical wheat farmer, is also an accountant, to investigate the costs again. Instead of working along the lines we had adopted,—we tried to find an average farmer on an average farm receiving an average yield—he took something far more definite. He obtained the figures as presented by farmers to the Taxation Department. I saw the conclusions he arrived at. Since then Prof. Underwood of the University, who is in charge of the Institute of Agriculture, made available Miss Rowley to travel through the agricultural areas. Names of 100 farmers were taken at random and she inspected their books and taxation returns for the past two years. These figures are not quite complete, but it can be accepted that the cost of producing a bushel of wheat in Western Australia today is slightly over 6s. per bushel. For that, the grower is receiving 4s. 1d. at sidings today.

I have already mentioned that stock feeders were using 25,000,000 bushels of wheat yearly. Before the war, when the price of wheat was on all fours with the price of other commodities, stock feeders used an average of 8,000,000 bushels yearly. Then the price of wheat started to rise and, by 1944, they used 51,500,000 bushels of wheat. They were good business men; they were using wheat because it was the cheapest feed they could buy. Now they are permitted to buy 25,000,000 bushels yearly and they are getting it at 4s. 1d. per bushel at siding, whereas the grower could get an overseas market price of 16s. per bushel.

I do not for one moment contend that those industries can possibly afford to buy wheat at 16s. per bushel. I also say that those industries are necessary for the economic set-up of this country. We must keep the pig feeders, poultry farmers and dairy farmers in this country. Today, however, these industries are subsidised to the extent of £13,750,000 yearly by the wheat-grower by reason of the fact that we are selling wheat so much below the overseas value.

We are, however, prepared to fall into line with the rest of the people of Australia and keep those industries in production, but we are not prepared to continue carrying all the burden by supplying at the present price, and any Government that forced us to do so would be acting most unjustly, to say the least. It is the responsibility of all the people, and not of one section, to bear that burden. I have said that I support and am very much in favour of a wheat stabilisation scheme, a scheme which is just and equitable to all the people, the consumer just as much as the producer. I believe that it should be a Commonwealth scheme based upon the cost of production, with a reasonable profit; but I am going to ask members of this House if they think there is the slightest possibility of getting such a just and equitable scheme from the Commonwealth Government.

That Government refused emphatically the requests of the Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation. It wants to retain to itself the right to sell millions of pounds worth of our wheat to countries like New Zealand at a ridiculously low figure. It wants, also, to retain the right to do exactly as it likes with our product, without any consideration to us at all. It is not pre-

pared to give us justice. I doubt whether there is a single State Parliament in Australia willing to pass enabling legislation which will allow the Commonwealth to do that. We have the experience of South Australia, where the growers turned down the proposal by referendum. We have the experience of New South Wales and Victoria, as well as of this State. In the last session of our Parliament an amendment was moved to the enabling legislation. I believe the then Government was quite prepared to pass that enabling legislation and so inflict an injustice on the wheatgrowers not only of Australia but of Western Australia in particular.

I am quite convinced that we cannot get an Australian stabilisation scheme that would be suitable to the growers today and I strongly support the movement which I believe will be initiated by our Government to have a Western Australian wheat pool along the lines proposed by the Royal Commission which recently sat in this State. The people of Western Australia are under a heavy debt to that Commission. Its report and findings form a very valuable document; and the introduction of such a scheme in this State might well be the forerunner of similar schemes in other parts of the Commonwealth that could be allied to a central selling organisation to handle all our oversea wheat sales. Western Australia is in a most enviable position. We are cut off by great distances from the Eastern States and there would be very little fear of our contravening the Constitution, as there would be but little likelihood of trade between the States so far as Western Australia is concerned.

From stabilisation I propose to proceed to wheat-handling. At the outset, I desire to congratulate the Government on the prompt action it took in handing over the bulkhandling installations at Fremantle to the farmers' company. This co-operative company, which is in existence to render a service without profit, is one in which every wheatgrower who delivers wheat in bulk in this State is a shareholder. It has 7,316 farmer shareholders. Under the Bulk Handling Act, the company is responsible for the wheat from the time it is delivered at the siding until it is put in the ship's hold. During the war years, however, under war legislation, the Commonwealth Government built what is called

a hospital silo, a gantry and weighing hoppers at Fremantle. These cost £70,000. I say most emphatically that these were built despite strenuous opposition not only from Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd., but also from the two Western Australian members of the Australian Wheat Board, Messrs. Teasdale and Dyer, who cast the only dissentient votes when the matter came before the Australian Wheat Board. In addition, we find that the Western Australian Labour Government built a transfer tower and conveyor and shipping gatherer costing another £100,000.

There is no co-ordination between these systems. The capacity of the hospital silo is nominally 600 tons an hour: in fact, it handles 450 tons. The previous State Government's installation was built with the object of carrying 1,800 tons. It was only half-equipped and has a capacity of 900 tons an hour at present. When that wheat is shot into the ship's hold, there is a wheat trimmer which can only handle 300 tons an hour. Worse still, the maximum capacity of the Railway Department to deliver wheat to Fremantle over the past two years has been 3,000 tons per week, not sufficient to keep the State gantry working for two hours. When this work was completed, the Public Works Department approached the farmers' company and asked for comments. Previous to that, the farmers' company had submitted plans and specifications drawn up by men who had grown up in the wheat trade. These plans would have resulted in the Government securing a scheme which would have cost £118,000, and would have been suitable for Fremantle for very many years. But that is not all.

Had there not been a change of Government at the recent elections, plans were drawn up by the Public Works Department for the spending of a further £270,000 at the port of Fremantle. That would have been an absolute waste of money at a time when the State was crying out for useful expenditure. I desire to tell the House what that really means to the wheat industry. Had the £118,000 plan been adopted, the fixed charges—interest, sinking fund, maintenance and other charges which go with them—would have been 6½d. per ton and the working costs 8¼d., a total of 1s. 2¾d. per ton. Had the £270,000 been expended by the State and thus added to

the expenditure already incurred by the Commonwealth and State Governments, the fixed charges would have been 1s. 10¼d., and the working costs 7¼d., a total of 2s. 5½d. per ton; double the expenditure which would have been incurred under the co-operative company's plan.

From bulkhandling I would like to turn to railway matters, particularly as they affect wheat farmers. I claim to be able to speak with some authority on this subject. Since the inception of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. I have been a director. I was one of the first directors elected by the farmers of Western Australia. At that period, in 1933, I represented all the farmers north of the east-west railway, but to-day I am a director representing all the wheat farmers throughout the State. Our railway problems have been very serious indeed. As far as railway matters are concerned it has really been a godsend to the Government of this State that we have had two very lean years. Unless there is a considerable stepping-up of railway efficiency, it will take considerably more than two years to move this year's crop. I think that a conservative estimate of that crop is 30,000,000 bushels of saleable wheat, which means that 16,000 tons will have to be moved weekly. The highest weekly railage has been 13,000 tons in the past year; and, even excluding the period when we had a strike, it went as low as 3,000 tons. The average hauled is considerably below half what it is necessary to clear in 12 months.

Through their company, the farmers of this State have paid to the Railway Department the sum of £4,250,000 on the railage of bulk wheat. That represents in round figures £500,000 a year on an average crop; and ever since the company has been in existence, which is from 1933, it has been penalised right and left by the State Government. When the company first came into existence it altered at its own expense 160 railway trucks to make them fit to carry bulk wheat and provided fittings for extensions so that the maximum quantity could be carried in otherwise unsuitable trucks. That involved the expenditure of £55,820. Yet those same trucks were used for other industries, very often at the expense of Co-operative Bulk Handling. On one occasion, to suit the convenience of another industry, some

alterations to the trucks were made and the account was sent to the farmers' company to meet. I have mentioned that those alterations cost £55,820. The cost of handling those lines and extensions, which was done to make the trucks suitable, was £11,418.

We not only paid freight on the commodity in the loaded vehicles; but in order to make the Government's trucks suitable, we paid freight on the return journey so that they could be used again. Replacements and repairs cost £15,342 and in all, with the freight paid on those items—another £50,000—the expenditure totalled £162,580, or 16d. per bushel of the wheat carried. On behalf of 7,000 odd wheat-growers in this State I wish to thank the present Government for one of the very first things it effected on assuming office; namely, the removal of that unjust charge from the shoulders of the growers.

I should like to speak briefly on the matter of flood relief. I do not know whether members of this House are aware that two years ago an industrial organisation of which I am a member approached the Commonwealth Government for some relief for those farmers who had lost their crops through floods. We were told to go to our State Government, which we promptly did. We had a reply from the then Minister for Agriculture to the effect that the matter had been put to the Commonwealth Government. He also suggested that we should get a loan from the Rural Bank. At the same time that we were experiencing floods, New South Wales had droughts. The wheatgrowers of New South Wales received £1,500,000 and the dairy farmers received £234,000. Of the £1,500,000, £843,000 came from flour tax collections. The farmers in Western Australia had contributed their quota of that money, and in some instances the people whose crops were devastated by floods had a lower yield than the people whom they assisted to obtain relief. The present Government is going to be asked, even at this late date, to approach the Commonwealth Government for relief for those folk. In my pocket I have a list of more than 100 farmers who have sent in claims voluntarily; and not one of those men had a yield higher than five bushels, while many had no crop at all.

To the west of the Midland Railway there is a tract of poor country extending

from Gingin to Dongarra. I understand there are 2,000,000 acres of light land there and I am going to ask the Government if it will establish a light lands farm in that country. I do not request a big expenditure as at this stage that is not warranted; but a small pilot farm, where fodder crops could be tried out, is certainly called for. At Wongan Hills we have a light land experimental station. That came into existence after considerable opposition from the Agricultural Department. It was an almost unheard of thing to establish a farm on poor land, the idea being rather to establish one on good country. But several of us persisted and, as a result, the light land farm at Wongan Hills was established and has been of tremendous benefit to Western Australia. It has proved what can be done with soils of poor fertility, and today it is entering into an even more important role with reference to pastures and pasture improvements. Though I do not ask the Government to spend anything like the same amount of money on the west side of the Midland Railway, I do ask it to give consideration to and make preparation for the establishment of such a farm in that big tract of country. There we have the advantages of proximity to a railway and a very heavy rainfall. Even though the land itself is poor, I think the expenditure would be absolutely justified.

Within the boundaries of the Irwin-Moore electorate we have the Moore River native settlement. I do not pretend to be an authority on native affairs. Prior to my election I had nothing whatever to do with them. The information I want to give the House is certainly first-hand as I gained it after visiting this place and inspecting the conditions, and the suggestions I wish to make come from those whom I have been able to contact and who have been associated with the natives, and are very worried about them. I do not blame any Government, past or present, for the conditions at Mogumber, but they are a reflection not only on this Chamber but on all the people of Western Australia, and they should not be allowed to continue. I want to make it quite clear that, after my contact with the people administering that settlement, I have nothing but the greatest admiration for them. They are fighting an absolutely losing battle. They have no

opportunity to alter the conditions as they exist.

The Mogumber native settlement is a festering sore and a reflection on every one of us. The settlement contains school children, medical cases, v.d. cases, warrant cases, indigent natives and blind and deaf natives. They are all herded together. I went through the school there and I believe that the average intelligence of those children is nearly as good as that of white children. Their art work is outstanding. There were boys and girls of various ages together, and the school teacher in talking about them and expressing her worry at the conditions said—"In this class there are three pregnant girls, and I expect there are some with venereal disease." There are compounds for both young men and boys, and for girls. But it can be seen that the heavy link mesh netting has been torn down so that there is no hope of keeping the sexes separated. The natives who go there to recuperate, or who go there because of trouble with the police, are able to roam from one end of the place to the other. A valiant attempt is made to keep some sort of order, but it is quite impossible for that to be done.

Instead of having so many stations for these people, where they are all mixed up, I am going to ask the Government to establish six, one for male children, one for female children, a third for male v.d., warrant and delinquent cases, and the same for female cases, together with a station in the north and another in the south for the indigent natives. I believe that unless these people are separated there will be no hope of their ever being anything better than at present. I am going to make another suggestion which I believe will raise a storm of protest in some quarters in Perth, and that is that the wasteful expenditure of educating these children until they are a certain age and then passing them back to the influence of their homes, be discontinued. It is indeed a waste of money. I say that the children at a young age—I do not pretend to know just when; others will be more competent to give that information—should be taken away from their parents, except in the case of natives who have proved themselves to be good citizens. They should be removed altogether and trained for the industry, profession or calling for which they are most

fitted. I am convinced from what I have seen at Mogumber that it is an absolute waste of money to educate these children so far and then send them back to conditions where they can slip into the morass from which they came.

In conclusion, I want to make this point, and I appeal to both sides of the House, that we have in this Parliament one which is very nearly equal in numbers. We have a great opportunity to work for the welfare of all the people of this country. We in Australia are, perhaps, unique inasmuch as we emerged from this war far better, in a material sense, than we entered it. Great Britain has been forced to her knees because of the terrific sacrifices she made during the war and because of the attitude of her former allies. She has protected us since the foundation of our country. She protected us during this war. I am not suggesting for a moment that we did not contribute considerably to our own defence and to the winning of the war, but we are in a totally different position from that of Great Britain. We need to produce in abundance, and I believe that though this Parliament has not the influence of the Commonwealth Government it can, if it approaches this matter with a feeling of co-operation and a knowledge of its responsibilities and obligations to Great Britain, leave its mark on the history of Australia.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.20]: Might I be allowed to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on attaining your present high and honourable position.

Mr. Marshall: You are not sincere.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Out of all the members opposite I was most pleased to know that you, Sir, were to succeed to the office of Speaker. I feel sure you will conduct the business of the House as it should be conducted and will carry out the duties of your high office with great credit to yourself. Should you at any time be unfortunate enough to find your rulings disagreed with, do not let that worry you; the leading judges of the world have their decisions disagreed to at times. I wish you a happy time while you are in the Chair, though I cannot say I expect you to be there for more than two or three years. However, I wish you success while you are there. It is not my intention to keep the House long tonight, as I feel

that the Government must be given a chance to show what it can do. As someone has said, "By their deeds you shall know them."

I have no objection to the Government having made promises when it went to the country, as long as it attempts to fulfil such promises, but I find that it is falling down on the job and is not much good to the people of this State. I believe this Government will be known to posterity as "the cobweb Government." I think the Government tried to fasten that name on those sitting on this side of the House, but it is now getting tangled in cobwebs of its own invention. I will refer first to the cobweb of the Grosvenor Hospital at Fremantle. It is closed down, with a cobweb and a spider on top of it. After the election we thought it was only a matter of going to the Government in order to get it to lift the cobwebs from that hospital and re-open it, and that everything in the garden would be lovely, but on going to the Minister for Health and putting up a proposition relating to that and several other hospitals, this is the reply we received:—

In reference to the deputation re hospital accommodation in Fremantle. The suggestion that private hospitals are being closed by this department because they do not comply with the Private Hospitals Regulations is not correct—

That was dated the 7th May. This Government took office on the 1st April, and I shall always remember that date:—

—but actually none of the private hospitals in Fremantle comply with the minimum requirements of the Regulations and some of them deviate from standards so widely that in normal times they would never be licensed. Notices of existing defects have been served by inspectors upon hospitals and where immediate remedy is practicable it has been demanded. Wherever, through shortage of material or labour, inordinate expense or other difficulty, correction of a defect appeared likely to jeopardize the operation of the hospital, action has been limited to long term notices without penalty clauses. It has been the policy of the department to keep the private hospitals open even though the Private Hospital Regulations are not fully complied with. "Grosvenor" hospital was not closed by the department. This hospital has, for some years, been the subject of adverse reports by the department's inspectors and during 1946, notices were served upon the owner warning him that unless certain urgent corrective work was undertaken, a license would be refused him for 1947.

There we have the words of the Minister in denying that the Grosvenor Hospital at

Fremantle was ever closed or was being kept closed by the department or the Government then in power. The present Minister for Health says he cannot do anything about the re-opening of the hospital, that it was not closed by the department and that therefore no blame lies at the door of the previous Government. There is a publication to which I would like to draw attention, and for want of a better name I would call it "The Subiaco Comic Cuts." It reads:—

Thousands want homes—hundreds have the land, the material and labour . . . But permits, red-tape control continue. Result: Few houses being built. Break up of family life.

I want to know what the Honorary Minister is going to do about it. Will she stand up to these promises and get rid of the controls, or sell her principles in order to remain on the Treasury bench? That is what I want to know from her. I cannot see members on the other side getting rid of these controls. While the Honorary Minister was making such promises to the electors the present Premier was writing to the ex-Minister for Lands asking him to appoint the members of the Potato Board. They are now both in the same Government, but I think the Honorary Minister should get out of the Ministry and show her independence by coming over to this side of the House. She will never get rid of the controls by staying on the Government side. I come now to another passage that is a gem. I mean every word I say, and do not wish to become mixed up in the returned soldier controversy, but I must refer this to the young hopeful from Middle Swan.

Mr. Grayden: We are not political crayfish. We do not make statements and then back out of them.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: There is a further passage:—

You must not grow potatoes, barley, wheat, raise poultry, etc., without a license. Result: Restriction in production . . . black marketing.

Then:—

12s. an acre not to sow wheat. Eggs: New-laid unprocurable; 3d. per dozen added cost for Egg Board—for what?

That is followed by:—

Expensive but ineffective rehabilitation costs the public £127,000 in wages and rents (plus extras) to pitchfork thousands of ex-Servicemen into misfit jobs with uncertain future.

If the young hopeful from Middle Swan does not agree with that, let us hear from

him later. When standing before the electors the Honorary Minister said:—

During the war we accepted controls and regulations, believing that our freedom would return when the war ended. Since peace Governments have re-enacted many controls which if continued will lead to the subjection of the individuals of the State.

She also said:—

To increase production and to populate Australia with a healthy contented people, housing is most urgent and could be speeded if some controls were lifted.

Before passing on I want to know what the Honorary Minister is going to do about it. Will she help get rid of the controls, or remain a Minister?

The Honorary Minister: I will not give you another dinner.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I can afford to buy my own dinners, but I am worrying about the controls under which people are suffering. I want to know what the Honorary Minister is going to do. Is she going to get out of the Government and come over here, or is she going to declare her independence and get rid of these controls? There is something else I want to know from the Honorary Minister. Before she was appointed an Honorary Minister, she was regularly attending meetings of the 71 railway men who wanted their pension rights. The Honorary Minister used to go there and say, "Yes, I sympathise with you, but you will never get anything from the Labour Government. Put the other party in and then everything will be all right." Now, I understand, she has repudiated those men who wanted their pensions. What I wish to know is: Are those pensions going to be paid? Of course not! The Honorary Minister knew very well that there was no chance at all of their being paid, but she promised these men that they would get a pension if only they got rid of the then Government. Well, they have got rid of the Labour Government. Now, where are the pensions?

Mr. Styants: They think they are going to get them.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I think they will be disappointed, because the Honorary Minister has already repudiated them.

The Honorary Minister: No, I have not.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Honorary Minister did so on the opening day. She said, "We have gone into it and found that

it is impossible." She was asked whether it would not be possible to get 30s. a week for them and the reply was, "No, it would cost millions."

The Honorary Minister: Where did I say that?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Here, in the building.

The Minister for Lands: More corridor talk.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If the Honorary Minister will not answer my question, I shall pass on. Now I want to have a word with the Minister for Works. He promised the people in his election literature that, if elected, he would relax regulations on the housing so that two-unit families could get homes.

The Minister for Works: You cannot attach that to me.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I shall produce the pamphlet. Will the Minister believe it then?

The Minister for Works: I will, if I made the statement.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: He said the regulations would be relaxed to allow two-unit families to get homes under the Housing Commission.

The Minister for Works: When did I say that?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is stated in the Narrogin election pamphlet.

The Minister for Works: Have you a copy of the pamphlet? I should be glad to see it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes, but for the moment it is not in my hands. I wish to say, also, that a very bad report about homes appeared in this morning's paper. It was a most misleading report; in fact, I consider that it is bordering on political dishonesty. Reverting to the Minister for Works, the pamphlet I was referring to has been returned to me. The Minister said—

I will explain our intention to accelerate the building of homes.

He went on to promise that two-unit families would have homes built for them by the Housing Commission, and said the regulations would be relaxed to allow this to be done.

The Minister for Works: Is that what you referred to before?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes.

The Minister for Works: Then it is an entirely different wording and an entirely different meaning.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: In this morning's paper appears the following:—

New Record in W.A. Ninety homes finished last month.

Rental homes built and occupied under the Commonwealth-State scheme last month numbered 90—a record. It is believed that the 36 war service homes completed and occupied during the month established another record. This was announced yesterday by the Premier and Minister for Housing (Mr. McLarty). Mr. McLarty said that 156 private permits to build homes were granted during July.

If there was any record, it was a record for the Labour Government, not for the present Government, which had nothing to do with it. The Premier went on to say—

For the first seven months ended on July 31, the respective figures were: Rental homes, 390; war service homes, 146; private building permits, 1,154.

There again, with the exception of the building permits, that was another record for the Labour Government.

The Premier: There will be plenty of records if we go on.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Why does not the Premier get his publicity officer to say that these were the records of the Wise Government? If the publicity officer can make the people believe what is contained in that report, he will be earning his £800 a year.

The Premier: I do not think the publicity officer had anything to do with it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I do not think the Premier himself wrote that.

Mr. Marshall: I will guarantee that he did not.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: My object is to point out that that report is all wrong. The record was established by the Labour Government, and the children who are living in those houses should be taught to say in their prayers at night, "God bless the Wise Government." But for the Wise Government, they would never have had those homes. When the Premier was asked how many homes had been completed since the 1st April, 1947, under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, State Housing Commission, War Service Homes and McNess Housing Trust, his reply to everything was "Nil, nil, nil."

The Premier: You did not complete homes in three months.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: We do not expect the present Government to do so, but we expect Ministers to give credit where credit is due. The man in the street reading this report would say, "This Government is doing a wonderful job."

The Premier: So we are.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is almost as bad as the remark made by a man when he was getting off the tram. He said, "What do you think they were saying on the tram? This Government has got along quickly with the building of the Causeway." Ministers are getting credit for that the same as they are for building homes.

The Minister for Works: Where did we take credit for that?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I said that the man in the street was giving credit to the present Government for the way it was getting on with the work at the Causeway. It was pushing it along quick and lively.

The Chief Secretary: He could not have been a member of the Labour Party.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: No doubt he saw the work going on. Let me now have a word with our young hopeful hero from Middle Swan. The hon. member had the temerity to say that the boundaries of the Middle Swan electorate had been fixed for political purposes. I do not know whether to attribute that statement to ignorance or what I should term it, but I should like to inform the hon. member that the fixing of electoral boundaries is not a political matter. A Commission is appointed to carry out that duty, and the Commission consists of highly respectable and honourable gentlemen, who send their report to Parliament for acceptance or otherwise.

Mr. Grayden: But you ratified it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The hon. member should not be silly. Of course we ratified it. The boundaries were fixed by very honourable men, and their report was sent to Parliament for ratification or otherwise. There is no such thing as rigging the boundaries.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No one ratified the member for Middle Swan.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is just as well for young members to get hold of the facts and not cast aspersions on men holding high positions—men who are not members of

Parliament, either. The fixing of boundaries is done by men in high positions and their recommendations are ratified by Parliament or thrown out. Next time the hon. member wants to talk about somebody, he should choose a person who is in a position to hit back.

Hon. A. H. Panton: An old chap like me, for instance.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I have something else to mention. The member for Middle Swan handed out thanks to the present Government. When the hon. member was a candidate for the Federal division of Swan this is what the "Merredin Mercury" of the 5th September, 1946, reported him as saying—

One outstanding question which particularly concerned the Swan electors, a question which was a tremendous indictment of the present Government (a Labour Government) and of the Country and Liberal Party, was that these two parties sat in opposition, but they had not so much as raised their finger. One independent could have done immeasurably more alone. Their interests are all in the intrigues and sectional interest of party politics.

I can hardly believe that the hon. member is now sitting behind a Liberal-Country Party Government until I take a second look.

Mr. Marshall: What a lovely supporter he is! A little dandy!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Within one month he was endorsed by the Liberal Party as a candidate for Middle Swan.

Mr. Marshall: He knew all about that Party.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: He advertised himself as the man that the Parties feared. Fancy the Parties fearing the member for Middle Swan standing on his own! He said that he was a political bombshell. I do not think I would be out of order if I altered that word. It should not be political "bombshell," it should be political "acrobat." There is no doubt about that. He said—

For a representative free of party politics, Grayden is your guarantee against intrigue and deception of party politics.

A month afterwards he is endorsed by the Liberal Party.

The Premier: Have you had any Independents join your party?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Never a man who wrote stuff like that, anyway.

The Premier: Have you not?

The Minister for Lands: You would take them, all right.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Then he goes on to say that everything now in the garden is lovely. He is now sitting behind the members of the Government.

The Premier: He is right, too.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The member for Middle Swan said that the Minister for Works went to his electorate and did something about drainage. I want to tell the Minister for Works that he was invited to come to my district, but he made an excuse and did not come. Evidently drainage was not needed at Fremantle! However, the people of Fremantle, with their local governing bodies, waited as a deputation on the Minister for Works, who could go to Middle Swan, but they could obtain no satisfaction.

The Premier: He will take Fremantle in his stride.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: But he would not visit Fremantle when requested to do so.

The Minister for Works: I promise you that by and by, when I have a little time, I will go to Fremantle.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: But the Minister went to Middle Swan.

The Minister for Lands: You had 14 years in which to fix your drains at Fremantle.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: As I said, the Minister for Works could visit Middle Swan immediately, but he would not go to Fremantle. I will tell the member for Middle Swan what the Minister for Works is doing. He is putting up the licenses for our motor-cars. That reminds me. I was listening in to the election campaign and heard the member for Nedlands say that the Government was getting away with the loot like a thief in the night; but the Minister for Works is getting away with the loot in broad daylight.

The Minister for Works: I think I had better interject. I do not control the granting of licenses for cars. That is the function of my colleague.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: But the Minister for Works is the head of the department.

The Minister for Works: No, I am not.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Has it been shifted from the Minister for Works? Is it under the control of the Minister for Transport?

The Minister for Railways: No; you are wrong again.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If it is under the control of the Minister for Education, if he is controlling local governing bodies, then he is the gentleman who is getting away with the loot, and not the Minister for Works. Someone is doing it. I want to say that it is very wrong, until such time as petrol rationing is discontinued, to raise license fees. They were reduced by previous Governments because of the fact that the people were not using their cars so much owing to the restricted supplies of petrol; but now the Minister is not bothering about petrol.

The Minister for Works: There is no restriction of petrol.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Who told the Minister that? The Minister has a Ministerial car and his petrol supplies would not be restricted.

The Minister for Works: You can get as much as you like.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I am not complaining about the quantity which the Minister gets. The average man is restricted and cannot get what he wants.

The Minister for Works: It is a poor old thing you are putting up now!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is a poor old thing the Minister is putting up!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes, Sir. I wish you would stop the interjections. I do not like them.

Mr. Marshall: You are not a new member.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: We come to the Minister for Education, who is not present. I want to have a little to say about him. His case seems to be a repetition of that of the Minister for Works going to Middle Swan. The Minister for Education went to Narrogin and made promises.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He has a good mate at Narrogin.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister for Education said—I think he contradicted it tonight when replying to a question—

Housing and hospital accommodation had first priority at the present juncture. After that, primary schools came second. He would

say, after reasonable provision had been made to meet existing requirements in respect of these two problems, his attention would be given to secondary schools, with the result that the proposed Narrogin High School would be the first to receive consideration.

I copied that extract from the file and think I copied it correctly. The following is what was said some years ago by the then Minister; it was the decision of the department and a new Minister had not just taken office. He was replying to a deputation from Fremantle and said—

He agreed with the deputation that a high school for Fremantle was long overdue. He said the request had his complete sympathy. He realised last year that the establishment of a Fremantle high school could not be long delayed, and for that reason he had refrained from making additions to the central schools. Whether the new school could be financed at present was a matter beyond the control of either himself or the Treasurer. However, Fremantle had waited patiently for a long time, and he would do his best. He had had frequent requests from country districts and in all his replies had given them clearly to understand that the next high school would be at Fremantle. He could promise nothing immediately, except his vigorous support. He would interview the Treasurer as soon as possible, and he trusted he would have no difficulty in getting his sanction to the placing of a sufficient amount of money on the Estimates to make a start with the building.

That happened a good many years ago. Then the depression occurred and nothing could be done about the matter. Just when we were to get our high school, war broke out and the whole project was pushed to one side. Nevertheless, after having waited all those years, we find the present Minister for Education going to Narrogin and saying that Narrogin would get the first high school. I want to enter my protest against that. Fremantle has been waiting for so long that I think it should receive first preference. What I have just stated is the departmental opinion; it was not the opinion of the then Minister.

The Minister for Works: Your own Government broke a promise and built a high school at Geraldton.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I was not satisfied with what that Government did. I am not blaming it for deferring the building of the high school at Fremantle, because it was faced with the depression and the war. The Minister for Lands is present and I want to know what he intends to do for the housewives of this State. He promised them that bread zoning would be done away with;

if not exactly that, he said that the master bakers would have to meet and come to a decision themselves on this matter. The housewives of this State, when they heard that the member for Toodyay was in the Ministry, were very disappointed indeed.

The Minister for Lands: They are not disappointed. They have not conveyed that to me.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: They have conveyed it to me. They said, "We are not going to get bread zoning done away with, after all." I would not like to repeat to the Minister the word they used, but it was "crawfishing."

The Minister for Lands: No lady would say that.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I would not say that about the Minister, but what is he going to do for the women of the State to enable them to choose their baker? Is he going to do away with bread zoning or is he going to leave it to the master bakers to say that they will fix it and it will be all right?

The Minister for Lands: I will let you know privately later on.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Let us consider the attitude of the Government towards the workers compared with its attitude to the people higher up. You will remember, Sir, that at the Federal Arbitration Court case concerning a 40-hour week there was a representative of the State Government who indicated that the Government was quite prepared to leave it to the court to decide whether there should be a 40-hour week and more money, and all the rest of it. But one of the first things that the present Government did when it took office was to withdraw that representative and send another man along. The Minister for Labour said the time was not opportune for a change. It seems to me that the time is never opportune for those on the other side of the House to do anything for the workers. But what did we find when the beef barons of the North-West wanted something done? They wanted a deputation to the Premier. The Premier sidetracked them and sent them to the Deputy Premier. The result was that although the time was not opportune to do anything for the workers it was opportune for something to be done for the beef barons!

The Premier: Some of them haven't incomes equal to yours by a long way.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: All right; do not get excited!

The Premier: I am not.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: What did the Government do? It reduced the freight for livestock on cattle about 15s. a head. The workers in the North-West will not get anything out of it. The producers down south will not get anything. Meat is still going to be the same price, but the beef barons of the north are going to get a reduction in freight of 15s. a head. When the beef barons are concerned the Government is very sympathetic; but when the workers' case was being heard in the Arbitration Court, the Government withdrew its representative and said the time was not opportune. I hope the Government will be fairer in the future.

The Premier: We left it to the discretion of the court.

The Minister for Lands: You want to enlighten yourself on the matter a little more!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Do I?

The Minister for Lands: Yes; you have it all wrong.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I would like the Minister to tell the House all about it. I could tell the Minister a bit more if he would like me to.

The Minister for Lands: I would like you to tell me all you know.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I will tell the Minister that the freight was decreased on every bullock brought down, and it is not the people in the North-West who are likely to benefit but the absentee landlords, the absentee landowners. Does the Minister want to know who they are?

The Premier: Why not?

The Minister for Lands: You were talking about the 40-hour week.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister told the paper that the time was not opportune for that and withdrew one representative and sent another with different instructions. When asked for his opinion, the Minister said the time was not opportune. He said, "We are prepared to leave the matter to the Arbitration Court to decide, but we think the time is not opportune." So he sent his own representative over. Can the Minister deny that?

The Minister for Lands: Yes. We did not send our own representative over.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Well, the Government appointed another one over there. What is the difference? It is a case of tweedledum and tweedledee.

The Minister for Lands: He was much cheaper in his charges than the one you appointed.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Don't tell me the lawyers are scabbing on one another!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I wish you would stop members from interjecting, Mr. Speaker. I thought I was speaking, but it seems that other members have the floor.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I would appeal to the Government to treat everybody the same. If it is going to do something for the beef barons in the North let it do something for the workers. Let it not say that the time is opportune to do something for one group and not opportune to do something for another group. I would not care if the consumers were going to derive any benefit. But they are not; not one penny. The only people that will benefit are absentee landowners living down here and getting a rake-off.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is so. Most of them are absentees. There may be one or two living up there; I will not split straws with the Premier on that. But there are a lot of absentee landowners who are getting a rake-off from the decrease in freights. One other thing! When members opposite were complaining so bitterly around the country about the appointment of the McKells and the Mountjoys and working that for all they were worth, why didn't they mention His Excellency being appointed here? Nothing was said about that. Why did they not tell us that they appointed Mr. Ferguson, one of their political men, to a board? They made plenty of capital out of one case but forgot the others.

The Minister for Lands: We should tell you that we appointed Mr. Hegney to the Workers' Homes Board, perhaps.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: To a pretty inferior sort of job.

The Minister for Lands: Every man has a right to work.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: A little over the basic wage.

The Minister for Lands: Every man has a right to work. We acknowledge that.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I appeal to the Government to give all a fair go and when speaking about McKell and Mountjoy—

The Premier: They will get a fair go.

The Chief Secretary: I suppose you approve of Mountjoy's appointment?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I approved of His Excellency's appointment and I didn't mind Mr. Ferguson's.

The Chief Secretary: You approved of Mr. Mountjoy's appointment?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I approved of Mr. McKell. Of course I did! I think he is a wonderful man. If we had a few more McKells in this country we would be much better off.

The Chief Secretary: You win!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That is all I have to say at the moment. I will have an opportunity to speak again on the Estimates. I thank members for their attentive hearing.

On motion by Mr. Hill, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 13th August, 1947.

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

QUESTION.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT.

As to Request for Amendment.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines: Why was the application of the Fremantle City Council for an amendment to the Municipal Corporations Act to enable the council to institute a contributory superannuation scheme for its employees refused?

The MINISTER replied:

The council's application to have the law amended did not meet with refusal. It is apparent that the present system of Commonwealth Social Service pensions associated with a means test does not offer much encouragement to lower paid employees to contribute substantially to superannuation, as the extra benefit derived in many cases is small. It is desired, if possible, to achieve a scheme whereby greater benefit can be ensured to contributors and it is thought this could be done if the Commonwealth would readjust its ideas on social service pensions. Accordingly inquiries are to take place in Canberra on this subject and the Attorney General has the matter in mind. The Fremantle Council was advised to this effect and the matter has been pending until the result of such inquiry can be considered.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [4.34]: Allow me, Mr. Deputy President, to congratulate you on your elevation to the important position you now hold. At the same time I would pay a tribute to our President, Hon. H. Seddon, and I trust he will soon be well again and back with us to resume his place in the Chair. I desire to congratulate Mr. Parker upon his appointment to ministerial office and the leadership of this House. I trust that our proceedings this session will be marked with cordiality and that all matters requiring attention will be dealt with on an equitable basis. At the same time, I desire to pay a sincere tribute to the Labour Government which held office during the war years—years that, I am safe in saying, represented the most trying period in the history of Western Australia.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Not at all. What about the 1930-33 period?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: During the war years we were in danger of invasion and all our resources had to be drawn upon in preparation for repelling the invader. Nothing of that sort had occurred in the previous history of Australia. In those days all our available building material, our seasoned timber, our machinery from the mines and elsewhere were taken from the State and