

them provided there is not too much interference from Governments with plans for socialisation. Again I make a comparison with South Australia because I feel that our Government has not been progressive enough in encouraging oversea firms to establish industries in Western Australia. The motor body-building industry in South Australia has developed into a very large employing agency.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The largest.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Holden's motor body works received encouragement to locate the industry in South Australia. The South Australian Government, by making conditions very attractive, also induced the British Tube Mills to locate their manufacturing plant in that State. I had an opportunity of seeing the plant only a few months ago and it is certainly a marvellous plant. It has been engaged in manufacturing munitions and now will do excellent work to meet civilian requirements. Those industries were established in South Australia as a result of substantial encouragement given by the Government of that State.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is where the Liberal and Country Party members co-operate.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Yes, but we are not concerned at present with party politics. What we are concerned with are the opportunities missed by the Government of our State. Only a few days ago the executive head of a Dutch firm visited Perth. He was here for four days and I had the pleasure of having him to lunch at Parliament House. Nothing was done on behalf of the Government until such time as I brought the matter under the notice of the Premier and told him that a golden opportunity would be missed if the Government did not make some approach to the firm with a view to getting it to locate its industry here. The geographical position of Western Australia is such that it would be a very desirable place, I should think, for a Dutch firm to conduct its industry, it being the point nearest to the Dutch colonial possessions. I am pleased to say that the Premier did contact this gentleman and an appointment has been made for him to see the Premier on his return. The point I wish to make is that when the same gentleman arrived in South Australia, he was met at the aerodrome and afterwards entertained by the Premier of that State.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Probably our Premier did not know that he was coming here.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Apparently not, but the authorities in South Australia seem to find out these things for themselves. I am led to believe that, as a result of the contact made by the Premier of South Australia with this gentleman, there is a great possibility of a substantial plant—a munitions factory—being sold to the company in which it will found at least part of its Australian production plant. It was fortunate that I had known this gentleman ever since he first came to Australia two years ago and had an opportunity to introduce him to the Premier. The Premier took the opportunity offered; I give him credit for that, but so many similar opportunities occur and slip by, and that is why I have made the comparison between what is done here and the activities of the Government of South Australia, which has been so successful in inducing large manufacturers to locate industries in that State. I deplore the fact that our Government has not been so alive to the opportunities.

There is a task ahead of us which will need the combined talent of all sections of this and other Parliaments to cope with, and I trust that we shall all bend our efforts to make this world a better place for our children to live in than the world we have experienced in our lifetime. I support the motion.

On motion of Hon. E. H. H. Hall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 22nd August, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.**HOUSING.**

As to Workers' Homes Board Costs.

Mr. HOAR asked the Premier:

1, As the present day price of homes (£900-£1,000) now being built under the control of the Workers' Homes Board is undoubtedly a war inflated price, and is obviously beyond the capacity of workers in the lower wage groups to pay, has he given consideration to bringing these prices more into line with those that obtained for the same type of building pre-war?

2, If so, has any decision been made thereon, and what is the nature of the relief, if any, to be given?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

1, The homes now being constructed by the Workers' Homes Board are being erected under the Commonwealth Housing Scheme for rental only. They are not for sale. Rentals are fixed at not more than one-fifth of the family income, or the economic rent (based on cost) whichever is the lower, thus affording considerable relief to the lower wage groups.

2, The State Government will shortly be building houses under a day labour scheme and every endeavour will be made to bring about a reduction in the existing cost of building. With the war now ended, a large number of additional tradesmen should shortly be available for employment in the building industry and allied industries. This will considerably increase the quantity of men and materials available and should certainly bring about a material reduction in the cost of building.

VERMIN.

As to Report of Royal Commission.

Mr. LESLIE asked the Premier:

1, Is he aware that at the recent Road Board Conference delegates expressed regret and disappointment that the report of the Honorary Royal Commission on the Vermin Act was not available, although it had been presented to the Government some months ago?

2, Is it his intention to table that report in the near future?

3, If so, when?

4, If not, why not?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

3, Immediately after the report has been fully considered by the new Minister for Agriculture.

4, Answered by No. 2.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to Extension to Mundijong-Serpentine District.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Railways:

Can he give any indication as to when the promised extension of electricity to the Mundijong-Serpentine district will be made?

The ACTING PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

A decision in this matter has been delayed pending the supply from the district of information regarding the estimated number of consumers and current consumption. When the information is made available, a decision based on that information will be made.

COUNTRY HOSPITALS.

As to Requests for Financial Assistance.

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Health:

1, How many hospitals in country districts applied for financial assistance during the year ended 30th June, 1945, for the purpose of acquiring equipment and/or carrying out improvements or additions?

2, What was the total amount of such financial assistance requested, if any?

3, How many of such requests were granted, and what was the total amount?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 49.

2 and 3, Thirty-seven requests were granted for £3,801. The requests of the remaining 12 hospitals are under consideration and the estimates of costs are being prepared.

RAILWAYS.

As to Use of Collie Coal and Oil.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Is it the intention of the Commissioner of Railways to convert the fireboxes of a large number of locomotives to burn imported

oil fuel in place of our local coal, because of shortages in the supply of the latter over the last few years?

2, As the cause of these shortages, i.e., lack of manpower, will disappear in the near future owing to the termination of the war, will he have inquiries made to ascertain the wisdom of spending large sums of money for such a project, bearing in mind the development of local industry and the use of its products?

The ACTING PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

1, The present situation demands that special measures be taken to continue services, but it is hoped that conversion of a large number of locomotives to oil burning will not be necessary. No modification of fireboxes is involved and the change from oil to coal is a simple matter.

2, No large expenditure is involved, and the economics of the position are constantly under review.

COOKING STOVES.

As to Imports from South Australia.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for Works:

1, Is it a fact that South Australia has been exporting cooking stoves to Western Australia during this year?

2, Are there not local firms with the necessary plant to meet State manufacturing requirements?

3, What reasons have led to the importation of stoves into this State?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

3, Insufficient manpower, particularly moulders, to utilise local plants to full capacity.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. W. Hegney and Unemployment.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara): I wish to make a personal explanation. At the conclusion of my speech on the Address-in-reply debate, I stated that 2½ years after the first world war there were no fewer than 125,000 people out of work in Australia. Last evening the member for Pingelly disputed those figures and said there were only 40,549 people out of work at that time, according to the "Common-

wealth Year Book." My figures were taken from the census of April, 1921, and I will now quote from the Labour Report of 1940, No. 31, issued by the Commonwealth Statistician. According to that report, unemployment arising from all causes in Australia in April, 1921, involved 139,400 males and 21,500 females, a total of 160,000 people out of work at the time I referred to, not 125,000 as I said previously, and many more than the 40,549 mentioned by the member for Pingelly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. HILL (Albany) [4.38]: At the outset I wish to express regret that the member for Geraldton felt impelled to surrender the Premiership on account of ill-health. While I have been a member of this House, I have never hesitated to criticise the hon. member's administration and find fault with his policy, but politics are not personal, and I desire to thank the ex-Premier for the many kindnesses I received from him. I sincerely hope that for many years I shall have the privilege of classing him amongst the many personal friends I have made while I have been a member of this Chamber. I congratulate the member for Gascoyne upon his appointment to the important position of Premier. I recall my first meeting with him—he was then Minister for Agriculture—and our mayor predicted that he was a coming Premier. I trust that his time as Premier will be short, but that his time in leading the Opposition will be very long. I also congratulate the member for Murchison on his elevation to Ministerial rank. I presume we shall not now have from him the very long speeches on monetary reform.

I might be dense, but I cannot see that we can alter our monetary system or create credit without debt. I must admit that I cannot understand what might be termed high finance. I believe that at the close of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, the Prussians decided to make France pay for the cost of the war, and to this end imposed a very heavy indemnity. The result was that the people of France worked hard and paid the indemnity, thus creating prosperity in France and depression in Germany. I believe the position was so bad that Bis-

marek is reported to have said that if there were another war with France, and if Germany won, one of the conditions of peace would be that Germany would pay an indemnity to France. After the war of 1918, the Allied Nations thought they would make Germany pay. They could not collect enough cash from Germany, so they collected coal, and ships built in German yards. The result was that Great Britain obtained ships and coal from Germany instead of coal from Wales and ships from the British shipbuilding yards. As one English writer explained, it was not the German people that paid the indemnity, but the coalminers in Wales and the men of Britain.

Mr. Lamont, who was financial adviser to the American Peace Delegation at Versailles after 1918, gave an address on the responsibility of American bankers. He pointed out that at that time the Allies owed billions of dollars to the people of America, but that while America entered the war in April, 1917, it did not go into the firing line until June, 1918. During that period half of the debt contracted by the Allies was incurred. Mr. Lamont said, "Suppose we had had the choice: What shall we in America do—pay so many million dollars for all time or sacrifice many thousands of lives?" That choice was not given; but it was what actually took place. While America was providing the finance, the Allied Nations were providing men and making sacrifices. Mr. Lamont suggested that the American people should take that fact into consideration and wipe out a large part of the Allied debt to America. Unfortunately, his advice was not followed, with the result that there was a depression in America.

Our State Parliament cannot introduce a new monetary system. We must carry on under the monetary system of the world. I do not blame the monetary system for the financial position of this State. When we borrow money, we must pay interest on it until it is paid back. The heavy debt on our railways, our ports, our roads, and other activities is due to the fact that we have not paid back money borrowed to do the work. Today, our railways have a debt of £27,000,000, which I believe represents practically every penny borrowed and spent on the construction of the railways. Turning to our ports, let us

compare the port of Fremantle with the position in Melbourne. Fremantle has had over £3,000,000 from Consolidated Revenue and is paying practically every penny of interest on money borrowed since its construction. The Melbourne Harbour Trust, before 1939, had borrowed £9,000,000; but the trust had paid off £4,000,000 and was paying interest on only £5,000,000. Today, Albany is charged with a loan indebtedness of £270,000 odd. The total expenditure on the port from revenue and loan money since 1860 is only £217,000. We find also that there has been a large expenditure of borrowed money on roads. To a big extent that expenditure was for the purpose of providing employment. Roughly speaking, before the war we spent about £170,000 of loan money on our roads, and today we have an interest charge of practically the same amount.

I contend that it would have been better to provide work for the unemployed out of revenue instead of out of loan funds. We have another example of this in the reclamation of the Swan River. I am not opposed to that work, but I am opposed to its being carried out from loan funds. When we set out to do our post-war work, we must see that in borrowing money we make provision for repayment. I note that the Government has appointed a Minister for Transport. We will never get out of the muddle into which our transport facilities have drifted unless we have two things: sound administration and a sound port policy. I believe that the only activities under the control of the Minister for Transport will be railways and roads. I realise that is similar to the system operating in New South Wales. When I was over there, I spoke to the Minister for Transport and expressed the opinion that ports as well as land transport should be under the Minister for Transport. Col. Bruxner did not agree with me; he said that ports were an entirely different problem.

When one looks at the report of the Maritime Services Board of New South Wales, which is the authority controlling the ports of New South Wales, and considers the financing of outports there, one can quite understand why no Minister would like to control those ports. But in this State we have the simplest port and transport problem in Australia. In spite of that, we

have not had proper administration; we have not worked in with nature and used our natural advantages as we should have done. One of the greatest authorities on ports in the world has said that, in order to be effective, ports must adapt themselves to the changing means of transport. Our trouble throughout Australia is that we have not adapted port policy to suit the changing means of transport. In the days of bullock wagons and sailing ships, we wanted ports wherever we could get them. In these days, we need a limited number of big ports properly equipped—in other words, a modified form of centralisation. Because we have not adopted a modified form of centralisation, we have centralisation carried to the extreme. In no State and in no country have I seen what I term this cancer of centralisation existing in as bad a form as in our State. We have the biggest self-governing community in the world. We have half our population in an area a third of the size of London.

This unfortunate state of affairs contributes very largely to the fact that, while we have been fighting the greatest war in history, we have been, and still are, without an efficient naval base. It also contributes to the fact that the port of Fremantle is badly congested; that the railways leading to it are also congested; and that our naval, military and commercial activities are very severely handicapped. I often think of the late Lord Forrest, who was a persistent advocate for the development of Albany as a naval base for Western Australia. He also expressed an opinion that Western Australia should be divided into three provinces, the centres of which should be Geraldton, Perth and Albany. Had his vision become reality, we would be in a much happier position in Western Australia today. I am not going to worry about Geraldton. For 18 out of the last 21 years, that has been represented by a Minister or by the Premier. But I make no apology for again putting forward the case for the development of Albany both for naval and commercial purposes.

My position in this House is more difficult than that of the Western Australian members in the Federal House. During the last 21 years the port which it is my privilege to represent has had only £131 spent on it. The Sydney "Bulletin" spoke only

the truth when it described that port as one of the finest natural harbours in the southern hemisphere and the most neglected port of the British Empire. We have recently had quite an invasion of politicians here from Canberra. When I read the remarks which they made, as published in the Press, my mind went back to when I was about 20 years of age. In those days my ambition was to be a member or an officer of our permanent military forces. One of the books that I had to study was Napier's "History of the Peninsula War." One quotation from that book impressed itself on my memory. Napier pointed out that the Generals on the Peninsula would write home to the politicians in England asking for certain things. If it suited the politicians to provide those things, they were provided but, if not, they were not provided, and if the General failed to do the impossible he was recalled. When victory was gained the politicians in England threw out their chests and claimed the credit. I have here a cutting from a recent copy of "The Sunday Times," which reads as follows:—

"Navy Minister reveals figures. Government spends £8,521,000 on Fremantle in four years."

Our Navy Minister and Prime Minister in recent weeks have been claiming a lot of credit for what they have spent and what they have done at Fremantle. If they claim the credit for what has been done they must also be held responsible for the failure, a failure which has severely handicapped the whole of Australia and the Allied Nations, to provide an efficient naval base here in Western Australia. A few days ago "The West Australian" published a statement, by Mr. Chifley, headed "Defence of Western Australia." I read that statement with considerable interest and I will tell members a few facts that Mr. Chifley did not tell the people of Australia. Mr. Chifley referred to the epic tow of the "Ping Wo" and the "Vendetta" from Singapore to Fremantle. I saw the "Ping Wo" and the "Vendetta," but they were not at Fremantle.

The "Vendetta" was towed from Singapore to Melbourne. I will not forget the day after she arrived in Princess Royal Harbour. My little son, 3½ years of age, had been kicked in the head by a horse, and after the doctor patched up the injury he explained that it was not serious, and

as it was the first time I had met him I asked how the lad was getting on, and explained that I was the member for the district. The doctor turned to me and said, "What are you politicians thinking of? You spent those millions at Fremantle and here you have a naval base ready made." The next day my little boy was in the ward with two of the petty officers from the "Vendetta." They made a great pet of him, and I suppose he was the only Australian baby they had seen for years. As you looked out through the hospital window you could see U.S.S. "Holland" and her submarines which had escaped from Manilla, and also the "Vendetta" and the "Ping Wo." There they were, in the finest harbour in the world, and to protect them there were two obsolete 6 inch guns and no other facilities at all.

Before the last Commonwealth election the Prime Minister severely criticised the previous Government for closing down the work on the Henderson Naval Base. I propose to give members a few facts. It was in 1910 that Admiral Henderson discovered Cockburn Sound as a naval base. To place the true value on that report we must consider the events which led up to Admiral Henderson coming to Australia. In 1900 the British command of the seas, won at Trafalgar, was undisputed. The preamble to the German Navy Act of that year read that it was not necessary for Germany to have a fleet as large as that of the greatest naval power, because the greatest naval power would rarely be in a position to concentrate the whole of its forces against Germany. In other words, Germany thought that if she built a fleet and concentrated it in the North Sea she would be able to deal with the British fleet as the Japanese dealt with the Russian fleet in 1904 and 1905—smash it a bit at a time.

After the Russo-Japanese war the British Admiralty started in earnest to prepare for war with Germany and concentrated every available ship in the North Sea. The A.L.P. and others in Australia could not see that if the Germans were bottled up in the North Sea they could not attack Australia, so the cry went on, "We must have an Australian navy!" We were then paying £150,000 per year towards the upkeep of the ships that were based in Australian waters. The Government in power proposed to spend £150,000

on a local navy. That navy would have left Australia at the mercy of a raider of the "Emden" class. The Admiralty objected, and refused to allow Australia to have a local navy. Relations became strained, and fortunately there was a change of Government. The non-Labour Government that took office shelved the proposal for an Australian navy and increased the subsidy to the British navy to £250,000 per year. In return for that the Admiralty were keeping in Australian waters a fleet which cost £500,000 per year. Public opinion became more and more in favour of an Australian navy, and it was finally decided that Australia should have a navy which would provide sufficient ships for local defence, and those ships, at the outbreak of war, would be placed under the undisputed control of the British Admiralty.

The British Government then showed their generosity. They offered to pay £50,000 per year towards the Australian fleet. This, I am glad to say, was not accepted by the Australian Government, and in addition the Admiralty made a present of about £2,000,000 worth of docks, etc., in Sydney Harbour. Now we come to 1910. I was present at the fort at Albany when Lord Kitchener, accompanied by Lord Forrest, made his inspection. I was then Company Sergeant-Major in the militia. Lord Forrest, in conversation with one of my friends said, "You have been neglected here, but there is a change coming." Unfortunately, the change that took place was a change of Government. We again got a Labour Government in office and Senator G. F. Pearce became Minister for Defence. He was a Fremantle man.

The Minister for Lands: He was in the Senate. Fremantle does not want to be blamed for Sir George Pearce.

Mr. HILL: Fremantle should be blamed for his colossal blunders. The people of Fremantle took him round Cockburn Sound, and gave him a cheap meal, and said, "How about making this a naval base?" Members need not interject because I tell them a few facts which are unpalatable. Before Fremantle harbour was constructed Sir John Coode considered the question of opening a harbour at Cockburn Sound, but the proposal was turned down on account of its cost. All the available information on Cockburn Sound was sent to Admiral Henderson at Colombo. When he arrived at

Fremantle he was met by Chief Gunner Mutton, then D.N.O. in this State, and Admiral Cresswell, First Member of the Naval Board. I believe Chief Gunner Mutton is still alive and retired in Queensland. He turned to Admiral Cresswell and said, "Shall I go to Albany with the Admiral?" and the answer was, "No, this is the place here." On the same day "The West Australian" practically told the Admiral that he had to put the Naval Base at Cockburn Sound. The Admiral paid only a flying visit to Albany but, although he was there for a brief period only, he was able to despatch the following telegram:—

Unnecessary to inspect Cockburn Sound. Albany in every way suitable for a naval base.

It was in 1910 that Admiral Henderson came to Western Australia. In that year, Admiral Lord Fisher was walking in his garden and he said to Sir Maurice Hankey and Lady Hankey—

The war with Germany will commence in the autumn of 1914 and Admiral Jellicoe will be in command of the Grand Fleet.

If Admiral Henderson had been allowed to be influenced only by strategic considerations, he would have recommended that Australia should not go in for the construction of a naval base as the ships being built for her were sufficient for local protection but should put every penny available into the construction of ships to be based in the North Sea. Of course, if any such recommendation had been made at that period, it would not have been accepted in Australia. It took a war to demonstrate the folly of the Henderson scheme. In 1913, Senator Pearce commenced his Federal election campaign with a ceremony in the course of which he took over some land at Cockburn Sound on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. A few months before this, Mr. Winston Churchill, who is not unknown to the Empire, said that Australia did not need capital ships but cruisers, and he was taken to task by those great naval "experts", Mr. Andrew Fisher and Sir George Reid. The Federal elections resulted in a change of Government and the new Ministers took office. When they did so, they found that work at Cockburn Sound was being pushed forward in a most haphazard manner. They decided to suspend operations and brought to Australia one of the leading naval engineers available for that purpose—Sir Maurice Fitzmaurice. He did

not come out for the purpose of choosing a naval base but because of the enormous difficulties associated with the construction of the naval base at Cockburn Sound. With the outbreak of war in 1914—

The Minister for Lands: There was another change of Government.

Mr. HILL: I admit that there was. In fact, there was a dissolution of Parliament.

The Minister for Lands: And a double dissolution at that.

Mr. Styants: Who is telling this story?

Mr. HILL: In 1914, the Australian Navy was placed under the control of the British Admiralty. In fact, that change was made a few days before the actual outbreak of war. It was proposed that H.M.A.S. "Australia" should be temporarily based—not at Fremantle but at Albany. Had it been necessary at that stage, all British warships, apart from those stationed in British waters, could have been accommodated in Princess Royal Harbour at Albany and King George's Sound could have provided for the balance of the Allied Fleet. The German warships "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisau" had succeeded in running away from the British China Fleet, and were reported to be off New Guinea. H.M.A.S. "Australia" was despatched after them and the flagship of the squadron, H.M.S. "Minotaur," went to Albany. While based there, she escorted the New Zealand troops from Hobart and from Albany to Europe. Incidentally, I was standing on the parade ground at Albany when I saw H.M.A.S. "Sydney" steam in to coal for her fight with the German cruiser "Emden."

From 1916 to 1918 there was a Federal Public Works Committee in existence, the members of which visited Western Australia for the purpose of inspecting the work at Cockburn Sound. It was obvious from information gleaned at that time that the cost of the work at Cockburn Sound would be enormous, both for construction and for maintenance. Early in 1918, I became a member of the Chamber of Commerce at Albany for one purpose, which was to get that body to advertise the fact in the Eastern States that here in Western Australia the Commonwealth Government proposed to spend millions of pounds on the construction of a naval base within a comparatively few miles of one of the finest natural harbours in the world. Shortly after that, I had the pleasure of entertaining the

then Governor of Western Australia, Sir William Ellison Macartney. It was a warm day and His Excellency took off his coat and with that his officialdom. He had travelled extensively and had a vast experience, with the result that his conversation dealing with his experiences was most interesting. I turned the talk to naval defence and got the surprise of my life. His Excellency said, "I was Parliamentary Secretary to the British Admiralty at the time when Australia was negotiating about her fleet. I cannot see that Australia can carry out the Henderson scheme. It is far too expensive and any fleet to protect Australia should be based on Singapore."

A few days afterwards, the then Minister for Defence, Senator Pearce, visited Albany where two of the leading citizens—the late Mr. A. H. Dickson who, prior to his death, was very well known in Perth commercial circles, and the late Mr. Barnett, a leading businessman at Albany—interviewed him. I spoke to Mr. Dickson afterwards and said, "Will you tell me what Senator Pearce told you? As far as I can see, he simply spoke through the back of his neck." Mr. Dickson was rather indignant. He told me that Senator Pearce had informed him that Cockburn Sound had been chosen as a naval base in preference to Albany because any likely attack would come from the north and consequently it was necessary to have the naval base situated as far north as possible. In reply to that, I said, "But Cockburn Sound is not the most northerly port available." Mr. Dickson asked, "Which is the most northerly port?" I replied, "Singapore. Here is another question for you. Admiral Henderson recommended two primary naval bases in Australia—one at Cockburn Sound and one at Westernport. If he chose Cockburn Sound instead of Albany for the reason you mentioned, why was Westernport chosen as the other naval base, seeing that Westernport is the most southern port in Australia?" I am still awaiting an answer to that question. A few weeks after that, Senator Pearce went to England, accompanied by the Minister for the Navy, Sir Joseph Cook. I guarantee that what the British Admiralty told them was that they must revise their attitude regarding the Henderson naval scheme.

The Minister for Lands: What makes you say that?

Mr. HILL: My careful study of the newspapers at the time and what took place after their return to Australia. Sir Joseph Cook returned early in 1919 and when he arrived at Fremantle a change took place in the attitude adopted regarding the Cockburn Sound project. Prior to that period, politicians from the Eastern States were accustomed to visit this State and they usually said, "Look at our naval base." Afterwards, politicians kept clear of the subject until 1942. When Sir Joseph Cook returned to Melbourne and took his place in Parliament he was asked by the then member for Fremantle in the House of Representatives, Mr. R. J. Burchell, what the Commonwealth Government was going to do about the Henderson Naval Base. Sir Joseph replied that the question of naval policy was an Imperial one and that the Government was bringing out one of the leading Admiralty experts on naval defence.

The Minister for Lands: He was about the fifth Admiral to come out, was he not?

Mr. HILL: No, that was early in 1919. It was in May of that year that Lord Jellicoe came to Australia. He did not arrive at Fremantle but went to Albany from which he travelled to and from Fremantle by rail. In 1920 Mr. P. G. Stewart, the then Australian Minister for Works, accompanied by a Western Australian member of the House of Representatives, Mr. J. H. Prowse, came to Western Australia and later on all work at Cockburn Sound was abandoned. Mr. Prowse told me that the estimated cost of the work there was £18,500,000. Since then it has been stated in Parliament that the estimated cost for the completion of the work was £10,000,000, and that over £1,000,000 had been spent there on work that had to be abandoned. In his report Lord Jellicoe recommended the formation of an Empire Fleet or rather an Imperial Far Eastern Fleet. Unfortunately when finally war did break out we did not have that fleet in the Far East.

After Lord Jellicoe's visit, we had the Washington Conference and the period of disarmament. Somewhere about 1926 the British Admiralty sent a confidential report to the Australian Government. Although I do not know what were the contents of that report, I understand that it contained some very favourable statements regarding Albany. Mr. Prowse saw and read the

report, and I obtained that information from him. Later when the Empire started to re-arm, the controversy again flared up regarding the relative merits of Albany and Fremantle as a naval base. The Navy wanted Albany to be chosen and the military authorities took the stand that as they had to fortify Fremantle they might as well make one job of it. The politicians sided with the military authorities, and it led to a lot of arguing. Finally the Navy agreed to accept Fremantle as its port, and it was proposed practically to leave Albany out of it as a naval port. However, when the war broke out the naval authorities took a firm stand and wanted a garrison maintained at Albany.

Now we come to 1942. There was the fall of Singapore. During that most critical period of hostilities the U.S. submarine mother-ship "Holland" was based at Albany with her flotilla of submarines. The "Holland" was followed by the American mother-ship "Pelias." From information I have gathered I understand that once again the naval authorities urged that Albany should be developed as a naval port. Arrangements were being made with the Melbourne Harbour Trust to do what work was necessary, and while the investigations were proceeding, at Albany, rightly or wrongly, the local people who came in contact with visitors who were dealing with the matter, gained the impression that wires were being pulled against the project. Works were put in hand at the southern port and there were constructed four 1,000,000-gallon oil storage tanks and seven 1,000,000-gallon petrol tanks; and later again work was pushed on at Cockburn Sound. I understand that the Allies wanted a naval base here as a port that could be used as a base for an offensive to be launched to the north of Australia.

A statement appeared recently that 30,000 Dutch troops were to be stationed in Australia, and that seemed to indicate that the offensive was to be carried out against the Netherlands East Indies. When I was last in the Eastern States I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Debenham, Chief Engineer of the Marine Services Board of New South Wales and the Chairman of the Melbourne Harbour Trust, Mr. McKenzie. Those two gentlemen, accompanied by Major Howse, Commonwealth Director of Rail Transport, subsequently visited Western Australia. Their

mission was to see what could be done regarding Fremantle which was to be kept as a naval base and closed as a commercial port, and the commercial trade diverted to outports. There was also a proposal for the duplication of the railway line between Bunbury and Perth. After that matter was investigated, it was decided that the proposition was impracticable. Activities at both Albany and Fremantle then eased off, and I am of the opinion that, because of the lack of adequate port facilities in this part of Australia, the offensive which was to have been carried out against the Netherlands East Indies had to be abandoned. The troops who were to have been stationed in Australia were sent overseas to be employed in the uninteresting job of mopping up the enemy in the Islands that in the earlier days of the war had been by-passed, instead of playing a big part in the strategy of the Allied Nations.

It was stated in the Press last week that in March, 1944, an attack on Fremantle was anticipated. The report went on to say that all the shipping was cleared out of the Fremantle harbour. What the report did not mention, however, was that the two most important ships, the "Orion" and the "Pelias," two American mother ships, sailed down to Albany for safety. I have heard naval men refer to the Fremantle harbour as a death-trap. We had a striking example of that in January of this year. One burning bag thrown overboard was responsible for damage amounting to £500,000. One shudders to think what would have happened had our principal port had a bomb raid. There is another matter which Mr. Chifley omitted to mention. When Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser visited this State he inspected the naval base then being constructed at Cockburn Sound. He refused to use it, or could not use it, and so work there has once again been abandoned. I do not know how much has been spent on Cockburn Sound during the war period, but I have heard it mentioned that £3,000,000 was the amount.

I wish also to point out that in June last H.M.S. "Duke of York" called at Fremantle. There was a bit of a blow on, and so she and a tanker picked up anchor, went to Albany and anchored at Frenchman's Bay. Four weeks later our latest battleship "Anson" had the same experience. I heard one man put it this way: "Our two latest

battleships came to Fremantle to be fooled, and went to Albany to be fuelled." The tragedy is that despite the enormous expenditure on the attempted construction of a naval base in this State we are still without an efficient naval base. I understand the Commonwealth Government is today taking the attitude that Sir Bruce Fraser was only considering the present war, and that we must still provide a naval base at Cockburn Sound for use in the future. We owe a debt to the Commonwealth and the Empire, and so we should fight against any further expenditure for the construction and maintenance of a naval base at Cockburn Sound, while a few miles away we have one of the finest groups of natural harbours in the world. We can say that that group of harbours consists of a Pearl Harbour, a Scapa Flow, a Bataan, two Gibaltars and two Corregidors.

I sincerely hope that if we must prepare for another war, the places entitled to the greatest consideration will be chosen as naval bases, and not places with the most political pull. I would like to refer to the failure of our railways to provide super to farmers and to haul super from the ports. Only today I heard a farmer say that he had 24 tons of super in his shed and that it was there because he did not get it until the 22nd June, when it was too late to use it this year. At present, our wheat has to be transported in motor trucks at the rate of 5,000 tons a week. Strange to say, when I speak against the Henderson naval base, I am speaking against the official recommendation of an imported expert. Our railway troubles today are owing to the fact that our State Government failed to accept the advice of an imported port and transport expert. We have failed to handle our goods efficiently for reasons which I have previously mentioned. We have not a sound transport administration or a sound port policy. Sir George Buchanan, the expert to whom I referred, arrived at Albany and advocated the development of Albany as a port.

Much of the trouble in our railways today is owing to the fact that Albany, as a wheat port or as a port for the Great Southern, has been closed down in favour of Bunbury, and Bunbury, on its part, is closed down as a deepwater port. It is difficult to understand why the blunder was made of putting super works at Pieton within a few miles of

the Collie coalfields. Those coalfields today need trucks to carry 500,000 tons of coal per annum; and a few miles away are the super works which, when fully employed, require trucks for another 60,000 tons per annum. In order to improve our railway system I suggest that Sir George Buchanan's recommendations be adopted. I would also suggest that Albany be made the port for the Great Southern district. It would be necessary to provide super works there. I would further suggest that a site be reclaimed for those works and also for bulk-handling facilities without delay. By having super works on the waterfront, the sum of 3s. 6d. per ton would be saved on every ton of super used: and the Great Southern areas today, if those works were erected, would consume about 60,000 tons of super per annum.

If Albany is made the port for the Great Southern district, we shall relieve the congestion on the Collie-Brunswick section and on the Swan View-Chidlow section. The relief of those two sections would very considerably assist in the improvement of our railway service throughout the State. We have a terrific job before us to win the peace and to put our returning soldiers back to work as they are demobilised. At the southern end of our State today we have the largest area of undeveloped land to be found in the temperate zone. I have been producing in that end of the State for over 35 years and am confident of the future prosperity of what I termed last year "our southern province." I sometimes think it would be a grand thing if we at the southern end of the State could put a big barbed wire entanglement midway between Fremantle and Albany and form our own State, but I do not suggest doing so. What I do suggest is that the Western Australian Government should extend to the southern end of our State the same consideration which it in turn would like to receive from the Commonwealth. Western Australia is a very valuable asset to the Commonwealth. It is a grand State, with a grand future, and no part of it has a greater future than the part which I have termed "our southern province." I sincerely trust that in the period of reconstruction the people of Perth and Fremantle will realise the vastness of our State and take a comprehensive view of its future, and that Parliament will look at it with a big and broad mind.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.24]: I desire to compliment all those members of this Chamber who have received promotion, Ministers and the Chairman of Committees. In regard to the ex-Premier, I just make the remark that he was wise to retire and wise to remain.

The Minister for Lands: And wise to take his place.

Mr. NORTH: The few remarks I wish to make are not altogether new. I am afraid that in this Chamber, as the years go by, we all in a measure learn the general outlook of each other. Nearly every member who rises to speak after having made two or three speeches is inclined to repeat or enlarge upon certain familiar subjects.

Mr. McDonald: They run true to form.

Mr. NORTH: As my Leader remarks, they run true to form. That being so, I feel it is very difficult honestly to engage the attention of the House, although I do appreciate the politeness, and often the silence, in which my speeches are received. The first subject I wish to touch upon is; I admit frankly, not new. I wish to say a few words on the Grants Commission. Western Australia, in my opinion, has been very wise recently in realising that we cannot very much longer continue the policy of receiving a sort of dole from the richer States. I would urge once more very strongly, as I tried to do before, that there should be brought into existence a development commission which would have the power to provide finance in order to improve the position of our State, its earning power, its prosperity and its wealth, and thus relieve those other three ugly sisters—I refer to the old fairy story “Cinderella”—of their burden. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon that aspect, and I bring it before the Government in the hope that now the Commonwealth and State Governments are of the same complexion some improvement will be made in that direction.

The next matter with which I wish to deal is a very unfortunate slogan that seems to have got under our skin during the past 20 years. Unfortunately, some humorist in the Railway Department, seeing the letters “W.A.G.P.” invented the slogan “Wait a while.” For some reasons which are not altogether the result of State policy, but are due to the total effect of our

political and public life for the past 20 years, certain projects which should have been and could have been undertaken long ago are only now—thank goodness—coming to fruition. I refer to the Collie power scheme, the standardisation of our railways, water supplies for farmers in the wheat belt and such matters. We know from our war experience what has been achieved in the past five years and what we could have achieved in the past 20 years. The most important thing which we, as a State, have now to consider, is the wiping out of that phrase “Wait a while.” The only time when its use could be justified is on a cold morning when one hears the alarm clock, if an alarm clock can be purchased; I believe they are unprocureable at present. On such an occasion it is very nice to say to yourself, “Wait a while.” In public life, however, it is a hopeless, paralysing crime. The policy has not been applied only in Western Australia. Throughout Britain for the 20 years preceding the war that policy was followed, at a time when Germany was getting back into the ring to have a cut at us for a second time.

I wish now to deal with a rather delicate subject, the Liberal Party and Liberal policy, in view of two or three remarks which you, Mr. Speaker, allowed me to make the other afternoon on a personal explanation. I want to clarify my position. The wording of my remarks when I addressed the Speaker could be amplified. On that occasion I wished to state, as I do now, that the Liberal Party is attempting to build up its strength as a second party in Australia separate from the existing powerful party which governs Australia, namely, the Labour Party. In doing so it has this slight difficulty that its members are at liberty to express their own views. That is laudable, and suits me, but it may be embarrassing for a candidate—I am speaking now when the Fremantle by-election is passed; it was not when I spoke previously—to hear a certain policy advocated by the leader of the Liberal Party in Western Australia and supported perhaps in full by the Federal leader, and at the same time to hear gentlemen in another place exercising their fullest right of freedom of speech by expressing all kinds of contrary ideas. I wish merely to say that, shortly, we have ten points, and

the public is justified in expecting the policy of the party to be embodied in those ten points, or to be put forward by the leader.

Mr. Needham: Has it any policy? It is all to pieces!

Mr. NORTH: I thank the hon. member for interjecting. I noticed recently that the Labour Party very wisely fought to rid itself of what is called the Communist menace. I do not say that it is a menace, or that the Communists have anything to be ashamed of, but I do gather that the Labour Party does not wish to have any association with those people. The fact that the Labour Party is very powerful today is a danger to itself and to Australia. The time has come when we must consider, in politics, the need for maintaining two strong parties in the country.

The Minister for Lands: You are not going to ask for some of our members, are you?

Mr. NORTH: No, but I am going to make a suggestion that may stagger the Government. Any Government that faces the danger of too much strength, and knowing our Constitution which depends on two sides and the balance of power, might have the initiative to assist the weaker party with its organisation so that the weaker party could get on its feet again. I believe in the same way, that if both parties were to exchange their organising secretaries for a spell, they could learn from each other.

Mr. Doney: You are staggering us!

The Minister for Lands: You have the majority against you.

Mr. NORTH: We would then be sure that the future of Australia would be safe from those menacing bodies which seek to govern without parties and through a totalitarian system which means that our votes and our power to choose would go for all time.

The Minister for Lands: Are you speaking to the back bench?

Mr. Berry: I am wondering that.

Mr. NORTH: The members occupying the back bench are to be complimented on their presence here in this Chamber because that presence really supports the point I am trying to make. It proves, perhaps, that the Opposition is not strong enough or cohesive enough, and so enables these other gentlemen to come forward with their different ideas which are interesting and con-

structive. But they would not be so necessary if there was a strong Opposition. The Government will always do well if it is just in the lead. I do not see, in looking round this Chamber, any greedy faces. I do not see any Opposition members hungry for office. I have never seen the member for West Perth trotting his time to become a Minister. I think he is very willing to be where he is.

Mr. Fox: He is badly handicapped.

The Minister for Lands: He is in the wrong stable.

Mr. NORTH: He is willing to do his duty, under the Constitution, and help to maintain the government of this country, and so give us an assurance that tyranny will never come over Australia, because there is always another side of politics.

Mr. Needham: Sour grapes!

Mr. NORTH: What I am saying might be called sour grapes, but even so I am quite content. I do feel that the Government can be too strong, not necessarily here, but rather in the Federal sphere. That expression can be left where it is. I will say that I have not heard any unfair remarks from the Government, nor has it attempted to strike a struggling man when he was down! But we need something to hold this Constitution together, and the Liberal Party must not be allowed to become so weak that it will go out of existence. I leave that point, which is not evoking very much interest or bringing much consolation.

I come to another matter which is of greater interest to me and which was of great interest to Sir James Mitchell when he was Leader of the Opposition. But I am afraid the point was not of much interest to the House. When the subject was broached conversation used to start in a loud way. I refer to the epoch-making remarks and ideas of Sir William Beveridge in his work, "Full Employment in a Free Society." He deals with many facts and figures which, in the days of Sir James Mitchell, were important in this State. This work seems to show that we have quite a different future ahead of us than was thought previously. He appears to advocate that we must borrow heavily for at least 20 years in peacetime in order to maintain the circulation of the people's money, and the purchasing of goods. I do not say that he is right or wrong, but he is

one who follows the ideas of other reformers of the last 20 years who say that the existing purchasing power from industry is not sufficient to buy all the goods produced, and that all these public works and borrowings, which we have looked on with some concern, are really of very great value. He makes this new point which I think will interest the House: Every member here—except perhaps the Minister for Education who once advocated what I am about to refer to—is of the opinion that when we borrow £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 for a peacetime loan for public works we are increasing the taxation of the people by reason of having to meet the extra interest on that new sum of money, which is over and above the costs of the previous loan indebtedness and ordinary taxation. That, I think, was a commonplace axiom.

I did once hear the Minister for Education say, some years ago, that under certain conditions he would advocate the borrowing of money even for consumption. Sir William Beveridge, in his new work, picks up that point and argues that if we are to achieve a high level of employment, which every party advocates, we will have to do it by one means only, and that is by increased borrowing each year, just as in the war, but not, perhaps, at such a great rate. He claims something which to me is entirely novel, and I find it difficult to follow even today, but I think the House should be apprised of the information. It is that, by reason of this increased borrowing, the increased work and the increased money for private firms to take up and spend on certain projects, the extra work and wages would pay their own way in taxation from the additional workers who would otherwise be unemployed, and that the new taxation would meet the increased loans so that as the years went by the Government's budgeting would be in a more healthy position. There would be surpluses instead of deficits and there would be no extra cost to the taxpayer. In fact he assumes that, provided the interest is kept low, and is subject to a lower scale year by year, the taxpayer—the heavy taxpayer particularly and the small taxpayer too—would be in a better position, and would grow richer. That is something absolutely novel to me.

Mr. Rodoreda: Mr. Scaddan had that idea years ago.

Mr. NORTH: I might be asked, "Why quote Sir William Beveridge; he stood for Parliament the other day and got thrown out on his ear?" Well, so he did, but that is not altogether a criterion because I can remember, in my younger days, when H. G. Wells, who has been read by millions of people who have worshipped at his feet, stood for Parliament and got nowhere. At the very recent British elections Mr. J. B. Priestley, who also has millions at his feet, and who becomes so red that sometimes he is put off from the B.B.C., and is later put back again, went out on his ear. I can also remember that, when Mr. Bruce was Prime Minister of Australia, he went out on his ear because, I think, he challenged the picture interests in America on some taxation.

Mr. Needham: Mr. Bruce went out on the question of arbitration.

Mr. NORTH: Well, he went out on his ear nevertheless. The Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. MacKenzie King, was also thrown out on his ear the other day. Sir James Mitchell also went out on one occasion. To me it is no criterion that a speaker or writer is utterly wrong because he loses his seat in Parliament. That is no reflection on us here. We can all shake hands with each other and congratulate each other on having been returned 12 months ago. If Sir William Beveridge is right then we will see a very interesting development in our public affairs, and we will have to face the position that arises. It is easy to run away from these difficult questions, but we should face them. There is a volume of opinion in Australia today that price control is all right for the next two or three years. In fact, I think the State Premiers are being asked this very day by the Prime Minister to renew price control for three years.

Sir William Beveridge is trying to show that in the ordinary peacetimes we have never had a high level of employment. Even at the top of the booms he claims there was about 10 per cent. unemployment. In his opinion it would be possible to have 97 per cent. employment under his plan, and that plan would include price control. When the word "boom" is used we know that it is merely a phrase, as it were, and that it does not mean that it will lead to

the employment of all the workers but that it means the rising of prices, inflation. Sir William Beveridge pointed out that we were likely to go well ahead of the figures hitherto never reached, except during wartime. During the war price control became inevitable. We know that three years ago if we had not followed the example of Britain and other countries we would have reached the position where we could hardly carry on the war, so serious would price increases have become. Prices have been held for three years, and less than one per cent. has been the variation.

The question we have to face is this— if we are to aim at a high level of employment, which is not only popular but has the very powerful support of a cleverly written work with plenty of backing and expert opinion, we then have to say to ourselves, "What will happen at the end of the three years of price control now envisaged in the proposal before the Premiers?" Are we going to say, "Business is getting back to normal and we can revert to competition which will be sufficient to hold prices"? That is the biggest question before the country today. Must we devise or use some method of price control, or can we depend on taxation or other methods? No-one wants to face what happened between the two wars. Except under recent conditions we did not have a high level of employment. This question is a very important one, and I wish any Government of the day well in its attempt to come to a decision in the matter. Having had our experience we will know what to do, if things begin to go wrong again, for we learned what to do during the middle of the war.

I will now deal with another subject. I was very sorry to see some two or three weeks ago in the Press an article stating that no-one in Australia had begun to take any interest in the tourist trade after the war. I think this Chamber took a great deal of interest in it last session when, after several speeches had been made, this House carried a motion with regard to the rehabilitation of our tourist traffic. We are only waiting for the proper conditions of peace to arise when no doubt the Government will become active in this matter. In facing our future and assuming the creation of a governmental body in place of the Grants Commission, we would be well advised to look upon the tourist trade as one of the biggest

trades. As has been said before, Canada made the tourist trade its biggest industry before the war. It loomed as more important than wheat production or any other industry in the dominion. We know the claims that this State has to an extensive tourist traffic. We have the finest climate in the world and we have been complimented upon it by people in San Francisco who have erected a tablet praising the climate of Perth. There is a good deal of work to be done upon our vacant spaces.

What I am going to suggest now would not cost the Government anything, and perhaps after all these years of asking for things it may agree to the proposal. I ask the Premier to add to the portfolio of the Minister for Forests one for a Minister for Landscapes. If he would do that, and have a little alteration made to the Forests Act, that would enable the Minister for Landscapes to do more than he can do by merely planting trees as requested by some officer or local authority representative, and he would be enabled to use the department to transform the look of our countryside where it is not actually under cultivation. He could embark upon a programme of improving the appearance of our country roads by means of avenues of trees and clumps of trees at spots where today there is very little to look at. If we intend to embark upon an extensive tourist policy that is something which can be dealt with, taken on slowly at first, but something that may lead to the transformation of the appearance of the South-West, where the rainfall is so good, by the introduction of European trees and other landscape effects all of which would tone in with other works and activities associated with the reconstruction period. I remind members that a motion to that effect was passed last session. I hope the Government will come to the conclusion that the policy of attracting wealth to Western Australia in this way will not clash with the large industries of the Eastern States, where people are jealous of our attempts to develop enterprises that would constitute rivals to their own.

My last point in connection with public affairs of this nature has to do with power. I am not referring to power schemes which have been dealt with before. The Government here has an opportunity to do something pleasing and useful, namely, to bring about a system of uniformity of rates for

power units of electricity. In the metropolitan area we have a water supply in connection with which the same rates are charged everywhere. It is a uniform rate. Then we have an expensive electric power station at East Perth which uses hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of coal brought from Collie. When one inquires in the metropolitan area as to what rates are charged for current from East Perth one finds oneself in a maze, because all kinds of different rates are in operation. Yesterday the member for West Perth referred to the dawn of the new age. He said, dealing with a motion he was supporting, that 1945 might be the year of the birth of a new era. If that new era is to have any effect in the thousands of homes that we hope will be built we must see that the housewife, particularly if she has to rear a large family, has the opportunity to possess all kinds of labour-saving devices, which could more readily come to her door if a uniform and reasonable rate were charged for electric current.

I know this may be regarded as an invidious subject. There are many men in the Council Chambers who are engaged in business or are otherwise mercantile-minded. When I was Mayor of Cottesloe I know how tempting it was to do something that would please the ratepayers and give them low rates on their properties. It is easy to make a good fellow of oneself by agreeing to some such proposal. In order to do that the council would have had to agree to imposing a charge of 4d. or 5d. per unit for current, by which means it would have been possible to reduce the general rates. I am glad to say that the Cottesloe Municipal Council resisted the temptation. It receives its current direct from the East Perth Power House and for 20 years it has been retailed at 1d. or 1½d. to the ratepayers for domestic use. Anyone in the district who wishes to avail himself of the benefit of modern science in his home can do so. In other suburbs, where business men are in authority, they were unable to resist the temptation. They considered that the lowering of the rates was of more importance than of supplying current as near as possible to the price at which it was given to the local authority.

Mr. Doney: How about extending the uniform rates for lighting and water to embrace country districts?

Mr. NORTH: That sounds all right to me, but I should like to hear the hon. member on that subject.

Mr. Doney: The hon. member is "passing the buck."

Mr. NORTH: I admit there are two sides to the question. When I was in Durban many years ago, coming back from the last war, we were told that the council imposed no rates at all. The question arose, who found the money?

Mr. Doney: What was the taxation like?

Mr. NORTH: There were many attractions for visitors, merry-go-rounds and so forth. I was told that Durban lived on the visitors from Johannesburg and fleeced them well with the result that no rates had to be imposed. Can we as a Parliament justify the present variations in the electricity rates? Is it right that the owner of a house should benefit at the expense of the actual consumers of current? I have been told that there are suburbs where a charge is imposed that is 3d. higher than the rate charged at Cottesloe, in other words 300 per cent. higher. If the housewife is to bring up a large family, and be possessed of dishwashers, electric cookers and the like, she must have her current at the lowest possible price. We know that one electrical chief, giving evidence before a Commission in the first year or two of the war, said that if he had his way he would reduce the charge for current to the householder to ¾d. per unit for power, even if it were necessary to give subsidies to make up the difference.

Mr. J. Hegney: That would be a good thing for the people who used the homes.

Mr. NORTH: This is a very vital question. It may be possible by means of a round table conference to arrive at a uniform basis amongst all the suburbs of the metropolitan area. It would be a mistake to start the new era without arranging for current to be supplied to the people as near as possible to the cost of production. There should be no profiteering in electric current, which should be supplied as cheaply as possible. I now wish to deal with another matter, namely the question whether we are getting sufficient news about ourselves in Western Australia. Every day I am asked, "Is Parliament sitting? Will it sit next year? Does it ever sit?" If I do happen to be

away for two or three days and read the newspaper to find out what is going on in the Chamber it is very hard to ascertain whether it is sitting or not. When we are present, however, and hear the speakers we know what is going on, we read the accounts in the newspaper and everything seems perfectly good. We are reminded of what has been happening and we get a good impression, but the people outside do not.

The Press space is limited, though I sometimes regard the Press reporters as wizards for the way they condense the matter. Their efforts in this direction are really miraculous, and many times I have had reason to thank God that I have been spared in this way during my most dangerous and heretical moments—so often have my remarks been toned down and not much prominence given to them. The people in their homes are not kept properly informed of the proceedings in this Chamber. Years ago, Mr. Burgoyne used to write a summary of the proceedings in Parliament each week. This, together with the ordinary Press reports, did give a very good size-up of the week's work. When the war with Germany ended, Mr. Chifley and Mr. Menzies spoke over the broadcasting system, and I think it will be admitted by those who listened-in that that broadcast of the speeches right from the seat of government at Canberra was very gratifying. The people appreciated those speeches, and I have since read in the Press that Mr. Menzies, for one, has since become a convert to the broadcasting of certain matter from the Parliamentary Chamber. I consider that if we are going to start the new era satisfactorily, we shall have to make provision for microphones in this Chamber. My idea is that they would not be used constantly, but certain features would be of interest to many people.

The Minister for Lands: Do not forget that little piece of wood by which listeners could turn it off.

Mr. NORTH: In these days of mechanical wizardry, microphones could be installed, but probably it would depend upon the operators at the broadcasting station whether the speeches were put over the air. At any rate, those people would understand what the public wanted in the way of broadcasts.

The Minister for Lands: I do not know whether they would.

Mr. NORTH: At times excellent speeches are made in this House, and I am sure many people would like to hear them.

Mr. Thorn: Not the destructive ones.

Mr. NORTH: Perhaps on some sitting days the stations would not tune in to Parliament at all. This country is spending over £13,000,000 a year.

Mr. Thorn: We would want to know the political views of the person.

Mr. NORTH: We might take it turn and turn about. One day a week might be reserved for broadcasting Government business, and so on. We do not often hear you, Mr. Speaker, make speeches nowadays. Years ago, when you did speak from the floor of the House, we enjoyed listening to you, except when you attacked the Bar, but can I persuade you to suggest to one of our newspapers, perhaps "The West Australian," the idea of reviving the weekly column of Parliamentary news and also giving us, through Mr. Burgoyne or someone else, the expert publicity we used to get so that people will be enabled to learn something about the proceedings of Parliament? I do not intend that this publicity should consist of a mere report of actual speeches.

Mr. Leslie: Are you in league with Mr. Burgoyne?

Mr. NORTH: In what way?

Mr. Leslie: You seem to be giving him prominence.

Mr. NORTH: The point I wish to make is that the people are not properly apprised of the work done in this Chamber. They are entitled to know what is going on, and there should be provision to make it known.

Mr. J. Hegney: The speeches of members are reported by "Hansard."

Mr. NORTH: The last thing I would suggest is that there is anything wrong with the "Hansard" reporting. It is first-class, but it might be supplemented in the way I have suggested. If the Press feels that Parliamentary news is of no interest to the public, we might do something through "Hansard." I have been informed that in other parts of the world, the weekly numbers of "Hansard" are accompanied by advertisements, and that they have a large circulation.

The Minister for Lands: For the advertisements!

Mr. NORTH: I would not suggest that copies of "Hansard" should be distributed wholesale, but if the Press is not prepared to give our proceedings a column of space each week, a committee of this House might select from "Hansard" certain features each week which, accompanied by advertisements, might be put into circulation amongst people who desire more news of Parliament and its work. There are many people in the city who would like to know what is going on here. The ridiculous questions addressed to members show that. A month ago I attended a Liberal Party meeting; it meets sometimes.

Mr. W. Hegney: According to the Deputy Premier of Victoria, it will be meeting again shortly.

Mr. NORTH: At the meeting I refer to, a member of the Liberal Party gave an address to a gathering of electors, and the subject was based on what this House is like, what Parliament means, what members do here, who may vote, how to vote, and suchlike matters—a sort of kindergarten. But that man had realised what the position is. The people have so long been reading the news of Parliament as through a sort of gauze screen and the information reaching them has been so misty that they know very little about Parliament. They think that members are supplied with meals and drinks free of charge. They also think that members pay no income taxation. All of them think that.

The Minister for Works: Except the members of Parliament.

Mr. NORTH: Yes. Many people are under the impression that a member only has to mention in this House that something is needed in his district and it is supplied on the following day. A month ago some electors in my district took the Minister for Education and me to task regarding a bridge over the railway line at Cottesloe station. For years my reply has been that the bridge is the concern of the member for North-East Fremantle, but my electors will not accept that now. They claim that just as many people from Cottesloe as from North-East Fremantle use the bridge. They think that a member has only to ask for a new subway costing £20,000 or a new ticket-office and it will be supplied within a few weeks. Their com-

plaint is that members do not ask for these things. This illustrates the idea many people have of Parliament and of the power of members to deal with these problems. I felt that the lecturer I referred to did well in dealing with matters affecting Parliament in a kindergarten sort of way. There is room for publicity of what members have to do, what we succeed in achieving and of the problems that lie ahead. I am not dealing with this matter flippantly; in my opinion, it is one that needs attention.

The Minister for Works: Did the meeting appreciate your address?

Mr. NORTH: I did not give the address; it was given by a valued member of the party, a member of standing, and it was a good address. I would like you, Mr. Speaker, to make representations to the Press along the lines I have suggested and if you fail, arrangements might be made to issue weekly snapshots from "Hansard" and support them with broadcasts. If such information were published in pamphlet form, it could be readily placed. We might succeed in having the copies sold to local authorities. The local authorities get a very good run for their money in the Press. If somebody sneezes at a council meeting or knocks over a bottle of ink, it is all over the place.

The Minister for Works: What, the ink?

Mr. NORTH: If some of the local authorities were sufficiently interested to distribute these snapshots of Parliamentary proceedings taken from "Hansard" and supported by advertisements, quite a large body of people in each district would be reached. I would suggest having a frame set up outside each town hall and road board hall in which should be displayed notices affecting the member for the district, what he has to do, and these reports from "Hansard."

The Minister for Lands: I think you are trying to get some of us the sack!

Mr. NORTH: If the right matter were circulated amongst the people really interested in politics, they would get the information they desire to have and the House would get the publicity it needs. If such pamphlets were distributed by the thousand, they would probably get into the hands of many people who would not appreciate them and thus we would be doing more harm than good. That is the last thing I should want to happen.

Mr. Doney: Will not you say a few words about the proposed site for the new gaol?

Mr. NORTH: I had intended to speak of that, but time will not permit. I am grateful to members for the interest they have shown in my remarks, though I have not dealt with any abstruse subjects.

The Minister for Works: Is there much demand in your district for copies of "Hansard"?

Mr. NORTH: There is a select band of people who want to know everything that occurs in this House and look forward to getting "Hansard" each week, but there are thousands of others who have not cultivated the habit. It might be that if little snapshots were circulated each week, many other people might be encouraged to take an interest in Parliament who today know little of it or its work. It would be all to the good if those people could be raised to a higher plane and induced to give some thought to the affairs of this State.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [7.30]: I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to express my congratulations to those who have been elevated to positions in the Government of the State to which many people look with envy, but without a realisation of the responsibilities attaching to those offices. With regard to some of the remarks made during the debate on the Address-in-reply, for once in a while I have to confess that I agree with what the member for East Perth said concerning his dislike of the word "reconstruction." I think he must have been reading my mail, because I said that some months ago! I, too, do not like the use of the word; because to me, as to the member for East Perth, it sounds too much like returning to the order we knew. Perhaps the hon. member and I look on that order in different ways. We hear a lot said, particularly from his side of the House, about the need for full employment. In the pre-war years, we may not have had every person in employment; but, in my opinion, in view of the progress we have made scientifically, we have had over-employment of the individual in a country like ours, which is supposed to be civilised and advanced. We have been and are living in

a mechanical age, an age which has followed years of investigation, and research, and successful invention.

All that has happened to us as a result of the progress the world has made is that we have become slaves to the machines we have set up; and instead of easing the burden of living, we have actually made it harder. I suggest that we should change the catch-cry from full employment to one of easing the burden of living. We have made certain advancement in the easing of the working conditions of industrial workers. Amenities have been provided for them; their hours have been shortened; and their working conditions generally have been improved in a small way. But when we consider conditions which prevailed a century ago, when a huge amount of the work necessary to keep men alive had to be done by hand instead of by machines, and find that the hours they were employed in trying to earn a living were not many more than the hours we are compelled to work now, I think we must admit that there is something definitely wrong somewhere in the present order. It is not full employment we want; it is a question of making sure that everybody has a living, and that everybody enjoys the benefits of civilisation. We are an advanced nation, but I see very little difference between our position and that of the people we term the backward races of the world. We have to strive as hard as the African black or the Papuan nigger and, incidentally, we starve as easily.

The Minister for Works: But not as often.

Mr. LESLIE: We may not starve quite as often, but we starve nevertheless. And those people do enjoy a measure of freedom. To my way of thinking, the only real advance we have made in this scientific age is that, instead of going head-hunting, instead of organising raiding parties on neighbouring tribes in order to steal their cattle or the produce from their gardens, we now organise to fight against one another individually, in order to obtain privileges and positions. That is the stage to which we have advanced. We are not one whit better off.

Mr. Graham: Is that not the essence of capitalism?

Mr. LESLIE: Certainly not! In view of the cry that has been made about the need for employment, and the fact that the people who advocated improved conditions for the working man harp on the question of work for all, I contend that the party to which the hon. member belongs is the one which is trying to maintain the existing order. It is necessary for us to change our estimate of values in life, and instead of making machines and money and work our gods we need instead to ease the burden of living. Scientifically, we have advanced. We have wirelesses, and motorcars, and fancy curtains and carpets and all that sort of thing—

Mr. Thorn: And the atomic bomb!

Mr. LESLIE: Yes. All these things have been added to our lives, but all they have brought are added burdens. Our lives have been speeded up so much that people are becoming physical and nervous wrecks in order to keep pace.

Mr. Fox: What is the reason for that?

Mr. LESLIE: The reason is that there is a wrong outlook on life. One of the reasons is that the Labour Party has not changed its views for the last century.

Mr. W. Hegney: We have not changed our name, either!

Mr. LESLIE: For the party to which the hon. member belongs to change its name would be the least important move. It is the things the party does that count. We still hear talk of a reduction of the hours of employment by another hour a week. We still hear about the paying of big salaries. Never mind what is done so long as there is a big cheque for the work, irrespective of what it costs to live and carry on! In the early days a good job was done, when such reforms as the abolition of child labour—literally slave labour—were effected. They were excellent reforms; but now we hear the same old cries of the need for full employment instead of the need of releasing men from being slaves to machines.

Mr. W. Hegney: Who was it that fought for the changing of the conditions to which you have referred?

Mr. LESLIE: The particular section of the community represented by the Labour Party has received the biggest gain from scientific advancement. Its members have enjoyed improved industrial conditions.

They have had a reduction of hours and better working conditions. But what has the man outback gained from this scientific advance? He still works from dawn to dark as he did a century ago. He still works the same hours, and there has been no lessening of the volume of his work. This is a mechanical age, but what has it done for the farmer? It has merely increased his burden of worry, and he has been compelled to meet the cost of the mechanical aids necessary to enable him to intensify his efforts. He is not one whit better off than were those who, a century ago, went into a paddock with a hoe to till the ground. While overseas, I saw the primitive conditions under which the Arabs in Palestine work with a pointed piece of wood for a plough.

Mr. Withers: That is where the hon. member got his inspiration.

Mr. LESLIE: Possibly I did, but I endeavour to see what goes on around me and profit from what I see instead of living inside the same fence all the time. In Palestine, of course, they have their political troubles. They do not like Britain's migration policy and so on; but they are reasonably content, and their standard of living is good, in spite of the fact that they have no tractors and no 14-disc ploughs to get over ten times the ground their forefathers traversed years ago. They still cultivate sufficient to keep themselves comfortably alive and have a sufficient amount of leisure to enjoy the pleasure of living.

Mr. Holman: They still have their rich and poor.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, because they still labour under old land laws which we have not.

Mr. Fox: Are you in favour of a shorter working week?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: I am in favour of men and women profiting from scientific advances, whether by enjoying a shorter working week or no working week at all! I am in favour of people enjoying the benefits of civilisation.

Mr. Fox: You are on the wrong side of the House.

Mr. LESLIE: I am endeavouring to convert people on the hon. member's side of the House to a proper point of view.

Mr. Watts: It will be a Herculean task.

Mr. LESLIE: My friends on the other side of the House are possibly thinking of their nationalisation or socialisation policy. My opinion is that the implementation of nationalisation or socialism would mean the perpetuation of the evils that existed before the war; the putting into effect of that policy would be the turning of every one of us into slaves of employment.

Mr. Thorn: Too right!

The Minister for Works: What is socialism?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Were you not a slave to the banks when you were farming?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair and not mind interjections.

Mr. LESLIE: We have been slaves not only to the banks but also to the people employed by those who provide the wherewithal to the man in the country to enable him to increase his production to meet demands. We have been told there has been over-production and that because of that farmers went broke. There has been a defeatist attitude set up in the post-war reconstruction scheme that we must not over-produce for fear of collapse. There has never been such a thing as over-production in the world. We had wheat lying idle in our own country, while our own people were starving. There were markets for that wheat; but because we were not prepared to see the goods given to the people that needed them, because we wanted to maintain this great standard of living, as we call it, we said, "No, let half of the people starve so that the other half can live." The member for Pilbara amplified that policy when he mentioned in his speech, concerning vocational training in the post-war period, that we must look to the absorptive capacity of industry and make sure we do not flood it. He referred to the absorptive capacity of industry, in other words, the policy of "What I have I hold, and the devil take the hindmost"; and the fighting man, the man most deserving of consideration, must return to the pick and shovel, so that the so-called absorptive capacity of industry shall not be exceeded.

For the first few years after the end of the war there will be a shortage of labour, and every one of us, including members of this Parliament, will have to work hard in order to make up the leeway that has resulted from the war. But there will come

a time when that leeway will have been made up, it does not matter what Government is in power or how badly it muddles. I suggest that now in the time of prosperity—as we may call it, because everyone will be a slave to employment—the Government might consider setting up a commission or committee to investigate the possibilities of profiting from the mechanisation which is our civilisation, so that we can enjoy leisure and pleasure, without making our main concern the burden of a job, with all day to work at it. In that connection I have in mind particularly the primary industries and the men engaged in primary production because they, of all, have profited least. They have produced, but what have they got for it?

Whereas 20 years ago a man on a wheat farm, working with a team of horses and a small plough, produced a given quantity of wheat and bred a number of stock, today his production from the same land is considerably greater, though financially and in his actual living he is worse off. Yes, he is actually worse off, in spite of the fact that he is producing at least 25 per cent. more. This has saved him no labour and no worry, but has rather added to his burden of worry because it has added so greatly to his costs, and demanded greater effort. One of the reasons for this is that our basis of values is wrong. In this I might cross swords with the member for Claremont, or with our absent Minister for Railways, when I say that the world has made a mistake in adopting an unconsumable metal as a basis of value—a metal which is of no use to us. If this Chamber was full of gold, how many people would it keep from starving?

The Minister for Lands: How many people would be needed to keep it intact?

Mr. LESLIE: It would help to drown people if it were tied round their necks, but if this Chamber were full of wheat or wool that would be really useful. The time has arrived when we must base our values on the goods that are necessary for the people to live. Gold will get us nowhere. There has been talk—I think particular reference is made in this connection in the report of the Royal Commission on Rural Industries and it is one of the major portions of that report with which I do not agree—of restricting production. In my opinion we have never over-produced,

and an analysis of the world's population and its consumption capacity will reveal that the world does not—I do not say it cannot—produce sufficient to feed all the peoples of the world reasonably. To talk of restricting production is wrong, but to talk of altering our basis of distribution is another matter, and that is one of the problems which must be tackled in the post-war period. A return to that order of distribution which existed before, where the primary producer was the plaything of the speculator, cannot be permitted.

That condition must disappear and arrangements will have to be made for the man who produces to have the major say in where and how his produce is disposed of—the volume of production and as to what happens to it. That means that the producer must take an interest in affairs not only within the shores of his own country, but beyond the waters surrounding Australia. Unless he does so he will find himself in the position in which he has been for years, merely the man who comes behind, but who at the same time provides the wherewithal to keep the nation going. A statement which I would like to quote is one that I came across while reading a book by Julian Huxley. I think it sums up the position as it existed and as it will continue to exist if we persist in the idea of reconstructing the old order. This was after the last war, and Huxley says—

The promise of independence was only a fading shadow. Economic liberty proved to be an illusion. People now realised that they were slaves more than ever. As farmers they were slaves without wages or even a living standard, like the wage slaves were, slaves to an unethical and unjust system, and the whole lot, farmer, worker, and investor, were prisoners in the clutches of some large impersonal economic force, invisible, intangible and obscure, yet all-powerful and seemingly beyond anybody's control.

To my mind that intangible and invisible force is the fact that our friends on the other side are living in a day which is long gone and are still working on ideas that should be discarded, and which must be changed if we are to progress. We must have new construction and not reconstruction if we are to escape from slavery.

A matter which will interest this House and the people of the State generally is taxation. It is one of the things that keeps us in slavery and which, if it is allowed to continue as at present, will hold us down

to the slavery which we now have. For the year ending June, 1944, the direct and indirect taxation per head of population for Western Australia alone—based on the mean population—was, Commonwealth £41 11s. 3d., and State £2 14s. 9d., or a total of £44 6s. per head of the population. If we put that on to the family unit of four—as the basic wage in Western Australia is based on a family of four—it totals £177 4s. per year for that family unit, and the basic wage in Western Australia is £4 19s. 11d. per week, or approximately £260 per year. Yet we talk of paying high wages! It is time that we endeavoured to show people that it is not what they are actually paid but the value of what they are paid that counts. A £10 pay envelope is no use if we take £7 out of it in taxation.

Today we hear much of social services and I think it will interest members to know how much each of them contributes towards the social services that are provided by a beneficent Commonwealth. In the year ending June, 1944, the amount paid out by the Commonwealth Government for Western Australia, per head of population, based on the mean population—this actually represents the contribution made per head of the population—was £3 3s. 1d. per year for invalid and old-age pensions, for child endowment £1 18s. 4d., per head of population, and for the widow's pension 7s. 7d. per head of population. Then there was the maternity bonus, for which a total of £2,287,000 was paid out, the number to whom the bonus was paid in Western Australia being 10,439. The Western Australian percentage was .07 of the Commonwealth's whole, or £160,090 out of £2,287,000. For Western Australia this meant 6s. 8d. per head per year, and with the other benefits totals £5 15s. 8d. per head of population that we receive in social benefits for a taxation collection of £44 6s.

Mr. Triat: That is where figures can lie.

Mr. LESLIE: They are sound good figures. The weekly contribution per head of population, for the social benefits we enjoy in Western Australia, was 2s. 2d. If we take the family unit of four, on which the basic wage is based, we find that the breadwinner has paid £23 2s. 8d. per year or 8s. 10d. per week for social benefits. War pensions and war service pensions have not been included in that. We therefore paid £23 2s. 8d. per family unit, out of £177, for social services. In view of the fact that so many of the

people, under the present system, will never enjoy the benefits of the social services, owing to the application of the means test, would it not be a good idea to place this on a voluntary basis? I am satisfied that for a payment of 8s. 10d. per week the average working man, and the average man no matter what his class or occupation, would be prepared voluntarily to insure himself and his family against old age, and provide a pension for his widow and endowment for his children. He is paying this at present but without a right to the benefits. The £177 4s. paid per family unit compares with £82 11s. 4d. per family unit which was the taxation for the year 1939-40, the pre-war period and pre-war taxation. Incidentally I would remind members that these are the figures for the year ending June, 1944. The taxation ratio for 1944-45 has increased considerably, so that the figure is much higher, but those figures are not yet available to me.

If this high taxation is to continue we are going to keep our people down to the slave employment standard and it is unjust to compel every individual to contribute without giving him the right—not as a charity, but as a right—to participate in the benefits to which he contributes. If we are not prepared to do that let us put it on a voluntary basis so that any breadwinner or head of a family unit who believes that he can look after himself and his family throughout his working life and provide for when he reaches the age of 65, when he can no more reasonably enjoy living as—

The Minister for Lands: Cut that out! What age are you?

Mr. LESLIE: The Minister may be a super man! Why not let such a man please himself? If he thinks he can look after himself, why not leave him free to do so, and provide for a voluntary system of contribution? We are told that the present high taxation will continue. I am given to understand that that will be so. There is certainly no promise that there will be any reduction in taxation except perhaps to a very small degree. I ask what in the world will the State and Commonwealth Governments do with the huge amount of money they receive and of which they return so little to the people?

Mr. J. Hegney: Who told you that the high taxation will continue?

Mr. Mann: Your own Prime Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: It will interest members to know where the taxation comes from. I remind the House that the basic wage in Western Australia is £260 a year and, according to the Commonwealth Statistician's figures, the weighted average weekly rate of wage in Western Australia for the year ended the 30th June, 1944, was £6 1s. 6d. per week. That is the highest weighted average weekly rate in the Commonwealth. Do I hear members opposite say something about tying ourselves up to the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in view of that?

The Minister for Lands: Who suggested that?

Mr. LESLIE: The fact remains that we have the highest average weekly rate in Western Australia. Out of an income of £260 a year, the basic wage earner pays an average of £22 16s. 11d., or only 5s. 9d. less than he would have to pay as his contribution to the social insurance fund from which he is not entitled to the benefits. He would have to pay on a voluntary basis only 5s. 9d. more and he would be entitled to those benefits. Take the position of a man who under existing conditions has paid this amount for 20 or 30 years and has been thrifty; instead of wasting his substance, he has spent it in the right direction, has saved and ends up with a bank balance and perhaps some property as well. He has contributed all that money, and yet is not entitled to any benefits—unless he becomes a mendicant and begs for it. There is no reason or justice in such a system. We cannot leave the female out of the picture because she plays a very important part in our scheme of things, too. The woman's basic wage in this State at that period was £140 a year, and out of that amount she had to pay in direct taxation to the Commonwealth £4 18s. 8d.

It is interesting to note that the weighted average weekly rate of wage payable to females in this State was £3 5s. 10d. a week. In this instance it does not represent the highest in the Commonwealth. Of that taxation per head in Western Australia we receive £5 15s. 8d. per head of the population in social benefits and the Commonwealth Government has refunded to the State Government £5 3s. 2d., or a total of £10 18s. 10d. which was refunded to Western Australia per head of the population out

of £44 6s. paid to the Commonwealth. I do not quibble about that because the difference of £33 was devoted to the war effort—and we have well and truly won the war. Now, however, there requires to be a very big difference in the incidence of taxation levied in the post-war period. If the Commonwealth Government intends to retain £33 per year per head of the population of Western Australia, what will it do with the money?

Mr. J. Hegney: Make it pay for war loans.

Mr. LESLIE: That can be done without making the present generation alone pay for it, particularly as this generation was not solely responsible for the war.

The Minister for Lands: Surely posterity is not responsible.

Mr. LESLIE: But we want to make a new world so that posterity will be prepared to pay for the war and say that this generation has done a damned good job in the results achieved. I hope I have given members something to think about with regard to the incidence of taxation. I trust that the State Government will support endeavours that will be made for the removal of the means test which is applied under the existing social benefits legislation. Getting away from taxation for a moment—

Mr. W. Hegney: I wish we could.

Mr. LESLIE:—I wish to deal with drought matters and water difficulties. I raise that question despite the fact that at present we have a superabundance of water, and plenty is now flowing under the bridges—

The Minister for Works: And over the bridges as well.

Mr. LESLIE: We are particularly interested in the comprehensive water supply scheme that is proposed.

Mr. J. Hegney: What about the water that is falling now?

Mr. LESLIE: We had hoped that the present rains would be availed of in connection with that scheme, but I am afraid we shall not have the necessary catchments and pipes laid down for a long time and, in the meantime, there is still the danger of droughts. My complaint in connection with the comprehensive water supply scheme is that it is not proposed to apply it to all the districts that it should cover. I make that statement on the basis of the plan of

the scheme that I have inspected. In the north-eastern and northern portions of the Mt. Marshall electorate the farm economy has changed arbitrarily—wisely or unwisely—at the dictates of the Government, and the properties have become grazing propositions. It is a low rainfall area where conservation of water is an essential. The people there are deserving of adequate water supplies seeing that they are now going in for stock raising. In the circumstances, I urge the Minister to look at the plan of the scheme again so that he may appreciate the urgency of the representations of the people in that district and direct his engineers to ascertain whether it is not possible to include those portions as well. I think it can be done quite easily because in that area there are innumerable excellent rock catchments that could be dammed up and the water reticulated to wherever is necessary, similar to the No. 1 or Barbalin scheme.

In connection with the No. 1, or Barbalin Water Supply Scheme, which has been installed to serve portions of that district, if the Minister would take a run along the pipeline he would see what would appear to be a long convoy of poreupines. That would be the vast number of sticks standing out from the pipes where they have been used to plug up holes. Those pipes are badly corroded and leaking, and are totally inadequate in size to meet the present demands on the scheme for water. As the provision of the comprehensive water scheme would not seem to be possible until a considerable period has elapsed, I ask the Minister to consider giving almost a first priority to the reconditioning of the scheme and the laying down of new and much larger pipes where they are so urgently needed. Reverting to farming operations again, I must mention the question of manpower. We were disappointed to find that among the releases that the Commonwealth Government announced recently less than 100 were to be made available to the farming areas. At any rate, that is what I have been given to understand.

The manpower position in the agricultural areas has been extremely difficult and, as far as I can discover, it is little short of chaotic. More sympathetic consideration should be given to relieving the manpower difficulties of people in the outback areas. There have been many instances where sympathetic consideration has been deserved

but they have failed to receive it. While I was pleased to join with other members in expressing our gratitude to the Fighting Services for the sacrifices made during the war, I must also bear in mind that many have made considerable sacrifices on the Home Front. One particular case was brought to my notice. In its extremeness it cannot be regarded as entirely typical but from the standpoint of hardship and difficulties it can be classed as typical of many similar cases. I would like to read a portion of a letter I received dealing with the position of the late Mr. Tom Hesford of Minnivale, who applied for the release of one of his three sons from the Army. The letter reads—

The position as I remember it is that we phoned the Manpower Officer at Northam with an urgent request that the matter be given the utmost expediency and also gave all details and told him should he want any further details we would immediately supply them.

I am satisfied he treated the matter as urgent but someone up higher just thought he would be a bit clever and slow it down.

There was a little confusion concerning two brothers, one Tom and the other G.S., but Mr. Hesford did not mind which of the three boys got out as the work, as we told the manpower officer at Northam, was killing him as he was 73 years of age and three boys were in the Forces.

As you know Mr. Hesford collapsed while milking his cows on the 11th August and died on the 12th of heart failure accentuated by hard work.

While he was bad we got the local doctor to wire the Army and one boy was released and got here after a lot of trouble on Monday, August 13th, at 9 p.m.

Or more than a day after his father had died as the result of hard work, owing to the unsympathetic attitude of whomever it was that was responsible for holding up an urgent request in the manpower office. Now, this is the tragedy of it—

On Sunday, August 19th, the Army came up from Northam to get details of what boys were in the Army to obtain compassionate leave for them.

A week afterwards, the Army officers went up to investigate the urgency of the case and to ascertain whether compassionate leave could reasonably be granted to one of the boys to assist his old father who, by that time, had been five days under the ground! The member for East Perth says it is tragic and I agree with him. I maintain that unless the manpower question is

handled differently from the way in which it is handled now, there will be even greater tragedies. I have said previously, and I repeat it, that the men are not going to remain in camp now that the war is over and allow tragedies to occur. They will do something drastic about it.

Mr. Holman: But has not the Army the last say?

Mr. LESLIE: I know it has. But in this case the manpower authorities were evidently to blame for the delay.

Mr. Holman: Make certain of that, because the Army has the last say.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: But the Army will not take action unless a recommendation is made to it by the manpower authorities. It is necessary for the manpower authorities to act first, from what I can ascertain. In this case they failed to take the urgent action necessary.

I wish to say something about the season we are enjoying, or are not enjoying, according to people's tastes and ideas, at the present time. Our season, as members are aware, opened splendidly. Unfortunately, owing to lack of farm machinery and tractive power, farmers were unable to take advantage of the good opening and put in all the crops and do all the work they really desired to do. Their difficulties were accentuated by the fact that there was—to describe it charitably—muddle in the delivery and despatch of fuel supplies and super. The result is that very large areas which today should be benefiting from the copious rains are lying uncropped and idle. That is a tragedy, too, and I think it could have been overcome had the problem been tackled in the right way.

I am aware that the Premier, when Minister for Lands, did make representations to the Federal authorities in connection with machinery, but unfortunately his representations were no more successful apparently than were mine or those of members on this side of the House. I had a message during the height of the season from the Federal Minister for Commerce (Mr. Scully) in which he informed me that because of drought conditions in the Eastern States, farmers there were receiving preference and the machinery was being diverted to their use. Apparently, Mr. Scully was unaware of the fact that drought conditions also prevailed in West-

ern Australia, or perhaps he did not appreciate the necessity for giving us a fair and a reasonable spin such as the farmers in the Eastern States were getting. That is another instance in which I can agree with one of the members on the opposite side of the Chamber. In this case the Deputy Premier is reported to have remarked that the Western Australian public should be warned of the fact that the Eastern States were only too ready to rob Western Australia. Evidently, that applies to the highest as well as to the lowest. I commend the Minister for drawing our attention to that fact.

I hope some effort will be made early to overcome the difficulties with respect to farming requirements during the coming year. It is regrettable that the present rains are doing a certain amount of damage to crops, in my area at all events. While the damage is not extensive, unless we get some warm weather I am afraid we shall have to suggest to the Government that it take action to change our present meteorologist and secure another who will do better! With respect to the rains and floods, I hope the Minister for Works will put the hard word on the Treasurer—who I hope will not be as parsimonious as his predecessor—for a grant to the local governing authorities to assist them in meeting some of the expense which they will have to incur to repair damage done by floods. In my own district I know of several roads which have been washed away and of bridges that have been destroyed. As these roads are not declared main roads, the local governing authorities will have to do the necessary repairs out of the small finance available to them. It is only reasonable in such cases that the Government should assist in bearing part at least of the cost of putting those roads in reasonable repair.

There is another matter I wish to bring up. I asked the Premier a question tonight as to when the report of the honorary Royal Commission on Vermin will be available. I, with others, am somewhat disappointed that the report, although it has been in the hands of the Government since some time in May, has not been made available to members, or to road boards or to the public. I know that local governing authorities are, as it were, standing by waiting to learn the contents of the report. They

are not aware of its contents; neither am I. From statements made to me by responsible people, I learn that the local governing bodies appear to be convinced, or they have formed the opinion or impression, that the members of the Royal Commission did a very fine job. They base that opinion on the exhaustive investigations which the commission conducted, and consequently they believe it will speak with authority. They are looking forward to receiving the report.

While the previous Minister for Agriculture had several months to consider the report, it would now appear that we shall have to wait several months longer until the new Minister has had time to consider it. I suggest, and I do not consider it unreasonable, that the members of this House might have the opportunity, simultaneously with the Minister, to consider the report. When all is said and done, I doubt that he can do anything in the matter until such time as he is authorised to do so by the House, and it will save time if the report is made available to us and to the local governing authorities, so that the latter may at least get some idea of the recommendations of the Commission and plan accordingly. If this course is not followed, it may be that another 12 months will elapse before we can act upon the recommendations of the Commission.

On motion by Mr. Abbott, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.36 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 23rd August, 1945.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eleventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.36]: Mr. President, in common with other members, I desire to express my grateful thanks