conviction is that we shall have to work hard; that we shall have to rely upon the efforts of our people; that we shall have to rely upon sound government; and if we run away with the idea that the Government can plan everything and arrange everything, and that all we have to do is to obey, the consequences of this war will be very terrible indeed.

I trust that in the post-war period there will be recognition of individual responsibility. For instance, so far as returned soldiers are concerned, I do not think it is going to be entirely a matter of what the law says, or what the Government does; it will be a matter of what each of us is going to do to repay the sacrifices they have made on our behalf. And so in all matters. There will be a responsibility upon the individual that cannot be shaken off. There will be a responsibility on the Government to see that the individual is encouraged and helped; and one of my strongest doubts about these policies of full employment in a free society directed by government control and by price-fixing—which too often has the effect of discouraging increased production—is that confidence may be taken away. And if confidence is destroyed, hope is destroyed. If those who are responsible for the development of private industries are constantly afraid that some government action is going to destroy them, there will not be that enterprise and that initiative which are necessary. I trust that nothing of that sort will occur; because, I repeat, our future will depend upon the men and women of Australia, and it is up to the Governments to see that they are encouraged in every direction, to use to the best advantage their enterprise and initiative.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 1st August, 1945.

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

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Section "B," 1944.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1944. This will be laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTIONS.

INFANT HEALTH CENTRES.

As to Nurses' Salaries and Government Grants.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Have any infant health centres not accepted the new scheme whereby the nurse's salary is paid by the Department?

(2) If so, which centres?

(3) Will they still receive the £100 per annum grant?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Claremont, and possibly Cottesloe.

(3) Yes.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Cost, etc., of ASG Engines.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What was the cost of construction of each ASG engine?

(2) What is the cost of maintenance of ASG engines per ton mile of haulage as compared with the Pr. class engine?

(3) How many ASG engines have had broken cylinder castings and bent connecting rods?

(4) What turning facilities are there provided for ASG engines to obviate bunker first running, and do the same safety provisions apply as when running engine first?

(5) In view of the trouble being experienced with ASG engines and the opposition of the Enginedrivers' Union to them, why is consideration being given to procuring more of them?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Western Australia £18,000; (b) Eastern States £25,000. The purchase price of all ASG engines acquired from the Commonwealth Government is considerably less than the cost.

(2) Information not recorded.

(3) (a) 6; (b) 4.

(4) (a) Turning facilities not necessary; (b) Yes.

(5) No more trouble is being experienced than with any other new type of engine, and it was imperative to obtain new loco. stock immediately to cope with urgent wheat and defence traffic.

(*b*) *As to Alteration in Control.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier:

(1) What steps has the Government taken to change what the Premier acknowledged last year to be the unsatisfactory system of railway control in this State?

(2) If nothing has been done when is it proposed to take action?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) The matter is under consideration.

(c) *As to New Loco. Spark-arrester.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has he seen the statement by Sir Harold Clapp in his report on the standardisation of railway gauges that he understands "that a spark-arrester has been developed abroad which promises successful results in burning (local) coal under Australian operating conditions"?

(2) If so, has the matter been brought under the notice of the Commissioner of Railways?

(3) Has any effort been made to secure one or more of those spark-arresters for the purpose of giving it a trial in this State?

(4) If not, will he take up the matter at once with the object of having such a trial conducted here as soon as possible, and notify Parliament of the results obtained?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. The statement refers to Victorian brown coal and Leigh Creek (South Australian) coal.

(2) The Commissioner has read the report.

(3) No.

(4) The matter is being investigated to ascertain the type of spark-arrester referred to and its suitability or otherwise for Collie coal.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for one month granted to the member for North Perth (Mr. Abbott) on the ground of service with the R.A.A.F.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin—continued) [4.36]: Prior to the adjournment last night I was regretting that the ex-Premier had made no attempt to justify the change-over from contract to day labour in the matter of our building programme in this State; and I was regretting, too, that that programme made no provision whatever, so far as I knew, for the accommodation of big families. Plainly, families of eight, nine or 10 cannot be expected to live and thrive in the four-roomed and five-roomed houses that we are building today, while financial considerations will not allow them to rent houses that are big enough. I suggest to the Premier that this constitutes a very real problem and one that this Government should certainly tackle as quickly as possible before the building scheme we are now engaged upon is too far advanced. A family of 10—I know the House will agree with this—is a national asset and deserves to live rent free, while lesser families, down to say six, should have their rents proportionately subsidised.

I am not one who regards governmental bonuses and subsidies as a common cure-all, but I feel impelled to say that there can surely be no social circumstance other, of course, than those already provided for, with a stronger and more just claim upon the

public revenue of this State, or of any of the other States of Australia, than the home needs of large families. I can never understand why we in Australia are constantly pleading for bigger families while, paradoxically, we refrain from providing accommodation for such families. We have a habit of building small homes for which we charge big rents, and for some very poor reason we permit landlords to deny house room to children.

Our several statutes bearing upon the housing question do not harmonise, nor, for that matter, do our departments of administration. For instance, in department A—I am referring to the Commonwealth Government—we have Mr. Calwell, the Minister for Migration, yelling "populate or perish" or some such slogan; and next door to him, in department B, we have Mr. Dedman building houses so small as to offend against the building by-laws which will come into operation if Mr. Dedman has his way in the post-war period; and Mr. Dedman pleading too, at the same time, that if those houses of small size are not built the funds and material available will not be sufficient to see the job through. That is not very inspiring. Indeed, it is hardly credible. So, perhaps, we might produce a little evidence in regard to it. I have here a cutting from Federal "Hansard" setting out a question by Sir Earle Page, and the answer thereto by Mr. Dedman. The report is as follows:—

Sir EARLE PAGE.—Permits for the building of houses in the country issued by the Department of War Organization of Industry provided that the floor space should not exceed 900 square feet. In view of the fact that a statement supplied to me by the Minister for Post-war Reconstruction regarding building conditions in the post-war period, shows that all houses below a certain standard are to be demolished, and that that standard provides for a floor space well over 900 square feet, will the Minister now state whether houses built with a floor space of not more than 900 square feet, which is totally inadequate, will be demolished as soon as the Government's reconstruction activities begin?

Mr. DEDMAN.—The right honourable member alleges a discrepancy between instructions issued by the Department of War Organization of Industry and the Department of Post-war Reconstruction with regard to building permits. Whatever may be our ideas as to the scale and character of the house-building programme in the post-war period, the position to-day is that only a very small quantity of resources is now available for the building of houses, and we must make the best use we can of them. The issue to be decided at present is whether we shall build a smaller number of larger houses or a larger number of smaller ones.

Sir Earle Page.—The smaller houses would have to be demolished after the war.

Mr. DEDMAN.—That point does not arise, because the Commonwealth Government has no power to order the demolition of houses. That is entirely a matter for the Governments of the States. I have said previously that the Government is endeavouring to spread the resources at its disposal over the field of housing as far as practicable, and no more than that can be done at present.

Mr. Dedman makes no attempt whatever to deny the truth of the allegations set out in Sir Earle Page's question.

Mr. Watts: That is not very satisfactory.

Mr. DONEY: It certainly is not; far from it, because there we can see that Mr. Dedman, as the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, is telling Australia that post-war houses of less than a stated floor space—I understand that floor space to be something like 920 square feet—will be demolished, while the same Mr. Dedman, as the Minister for War Organisation of Industry, blandly issues instructions to build houses not exceeding 900 square feet, and therefore, of course, of sub-standard size. It can, in fairness to Mr. Dedman, be admitted that he is controlling, just now, and has been for some time past, a very difficult department. We know, too, that criticism is easy, but even so I think we are justified in asserting, in regard to housing, that the Commonwealth Government is making a pretty sorry contribution to the brave new world that it has for a long time now been promising us.

Those of us who listened to the answers to questions by members, by the Minister concerned, will recall that some almost unbelievable disparities were disclosed in the comparative costs of building four-roomed houses in the six States of Australia. The one I am going to deal with was given yesterday by the Premier in reply to a question submitted by the Leader of the Opposition. It was shown there that the cost in New South Wales is £1,300 for a four-roomed house. Victoria's price for the same house is substantially lower at £995. South Australia's price is down as low as £630. But that is for a semi-detached house. Had that semi-detached house been a completely detached house, the price would be something like £675. For the purpose of the comparison I wish to make, we had better regard the South Australian figure as being £675.

Western Australia's price for a four-roomed house was given in the reply as £919.

The South Australian figure, as I have explained, is for a semi-detached house, but even so there seems to be much that South Australia can teach us in connection with the economic building of houses, and something, of course, that it would be in our interest to learn. I would like to ask the Premier—I do not know whether he has familiarised himself with this matter—whether this State has approached South Australia with a view to copying its methods, and if we are trying also to copy its costs. If we are not doing these things, there follows the natural question, "Why not?" The New South Wales price, incidentally, is more than twice the South Australian price. Why is that? The answer seems to be that the New South Wales price of £1,300 is for houses erected by day labour and, of course, it supplies the obvious reason why New South Wales saw fit to deny its platform and turn to contract methods of erecting houses.

No figures were given for brick houses in Queensland, but it is noteworthy that the figures stated for timber houses were comparable with those of New South Wales in regard to high cost, and it would seem to follow, therefore, that the Queensland price for brick houses would be somewhere near that experienced by the New South Wales people. Unlike New South Wales, which is experiencing an obvious change of heart, the more pig-headed Queensland folk continue to maintain the requirements of their out-dated platform and policy. There is no doubt that this £1,300 for a four-roomed timber house is an absolutely murderous price! I hope that the Government of this State, remembering that price results from day labour, will reconsider the decision which it came to recently when it turned down the much more economical contract system and, for some reason which I hope later it will explain, decided to build by day labour.

The Minister for Mines: The best workers' homes in this State were built by day labour.

Mr. DONEY: That may quite easily be. The question is: How did the costs then compare with contract prices?

The Minister for Mines: I have been living in one for 30 years, and the building is as good as ever.

Mr. DONEY: If day labour remains true to its past—a very expensive past—and provided that the Government does not change its mind, I shall anticipate that a large number of young house-hunters, particularly the many newly-married couples and Service men, will lose a great proportion of their savings and be seriously inconvenienced for some years in consequence.

Mr. Watts: And so say all of us.

Mr. DONEY: With regard to the railways, I have a few words to say, and I can assure the Minister that he has no reason whatever to feel perturbed in consequence, for I intend to follow lines that may be regarded as rather unusual. In June and July of this year the State experienced very heavy floods throughout practically the whole of the settled areas. The natural result was that railways, roads, bridges, culverts and so forth were subjected to a very heavy strain and sustained considerable damage. We all anticipated that there would be a prolonged hold-up of traffic in consequence, particularly with respect to the railways, for never before in any month in any year of which we have records did the rain fall in such vast quantities. The point I am making is that the threatened lengthy hold-ups did not eventuate. Why was that? Credit for that surprising result must go to the men of the permanent way gangs in particular and, of course, to the railway engineers as well. They teamed up splendidly. I believe there was not a single hitch. As a result, the men did an excellent job and did it willingly, efficiently and uncomplainingly. I should say, too, that the trade and commerce of this State suffered very little in consequence of the floods.

The Minister for Justice: It is nice to have credit given where credit is due.

Mr. DONEY: Quite so.

Mr. Seward: But the permanent way men have always worked admirably.

Mr. DONEY: I do not think anyone inside or outside the House would be so stupid—and it would amount to rank stupidity—to cast any doubt on the value of the work done by the permanent way men in Western Australia. I know that when passing along a railway line men can frequently be seen standing on one side while the train passes, and some unthinking person might say, "Do these men never do any work?" The simple answer to such a query would be that if the men continued to work, the train would run over

them—and that would be the end of the gang.

With regard to the run from Albany to Perth, I think there was but one day when the train did not complete its journey. I know that the Leader of the Opposition was marooned for one night when the train was deviated from Wagin and proceeded through Collie, Brunswick and Pinjarra and thence to Perth. The next day that train made the journey to Perth direct although at times it had to creep along, feeling its way as it were, with the result that it arrived in Perth 16 hours late. However, in the circumstances that was a most creditable performance. I was to travel by the train the following day and I was in fear and trembling lest there woud be another corresponding delay on the trip. However, the Minister can lay this unction to his soul, that the train arrived on time with two minutes to spare. All this really stands to the credit of the permanent way staff.

The Minister for Justice: The endeavour is always made to run trains on time.

Mr. DONEY: That is so.

Mr. Watts: They do not succeed too well; and as a matter of fact they do better in time of floods than at other times.

Mr. DONEY: The fact that the railways do not always run to time is not due to any fault of the staff but is attributable to the Government. Two or three years ago, possibly more, I submitted a proposition to this House when I asked the Minister to take steps to get boilermakers and other experts in iron and steel work out of the annexe at the Midland Railway Workshops and at Welshpool, where they were not doing a tap of work at the time.

The Minister for Justice: They were fully occupied.

Mr. DONEY: I heard the Minister's explanation at the time he made it, but I was not prepared to believe it in its entirety. As a matter of fact, it is useless for anyone to deny that at that stage there was not ample work for those men and that they were not fully occupied where they were. I should say that 90 per cent. of the people know that that was the position. Those men had been withdrawn from work they had been carrying out on engines and rollingstock generally at the workshops at Midland Junction, Northam, Narrogin, Bunbury and other centres and were put in the munition shops where for a long period they simply wasted their time. There can be no two opinions about that. What I desired was that a sufficient number of the men should be returned to the workshops at Midland Junction and the other centres in order that they might devote a month or two to necessary work on the engines and rollingstock to bring them into better condition. Various excuses were raised by the Minister at the time. I admit that he could not have done otherwise. He had been given information departmentally, and he had to accept it as being correct. Even if he had had any doubt as to the correctness of the information, he could not have done much about it. In the circumstances I do not blame the Minister at all. I suggest that if those men had been sent back to the workshops twice a year, most of the trouble that has been experienced since with engines in particular and with rollingstock generally would not have occurred. If any trouble has arisen, it would have been to a small degree only.

To revert to the position of the railway workers, it will be recognised that the permanent way men had to work continuously throughout night and day to deal with the effects of the washaways. They had to continue their work until the damage was repaired and the rails were once more resting upon a firm bed. The point I am making is that the men who do this hard work at all times and under all conditions—they have to undertake what is probably the hardest work done by any section of workers in this State and have to undertake it in all weathers—deserve to be well housed. No one will deny that.

The Minister for Justice: No!

Mr. DONEY: Yet we find these men are housed under simply rotten conditions. Many of them are living in the most miserable dumps imaginable.

Mr. Watts: In shacks.

Mr. DONEY: Either word is unpleasant. That such conditions could exist does not reflect any credit upon the present or previous Governments. These so-called houses are small, mean, miserable and ugly. In winter they are cold and damp and very unhealthy; in summer they become as hot as Hades. I would ask what house pride is possible to a poor housewife under those conditions? She is due for house pride, but she experiences none of it probably for the

whole of her life, and this is a shame. I ask also what pride a man can feel in himself when he realises that this is the best he in life is able to do for his wife, himself and his kiddies. That is not a very pleasant position for him to be in.

The Minister for Justice: We agree that it is the life job of those men and that they are entitled to the best of houses with conveniences enjoyed by people in the city, and we are doing our best in that direction.

Mr. DONEY: If we admit in that generous and sympathetic way that these men are entitled to something better, and if year after year we make no attempt to provide it for them, of what avail is sympathy?

The Minister for Justice: We are endeavouring to give it to them.

Mr. DONEY: I have spoken of this matter constantly, not only in this House, but also from the public platform, and very little notice seems to have been taken of it. I had a private talk with Mr. O'Connor, who some few years ago as chairman of the then Housing Commission visited this State. I asked him whether he would take a note of some submissions by me in regard to fettlers' houses. He explained that that phase of the housing problem, strictly speaking, was not within the scope of his Commission, but he could not see why it should not be and if I had any submissions to make, he would gladly accept them and give them due consideration in conjunction with the the other results of the Commission's work. I may say, too, that so far as my party is concerned—in order to demonstrate its good faith in this matter—it has tied itself down to a certain programme of work for those men whenever we happen to change places with members opposite. Meanwhile the present unsatisfactory position continues to be what it has always been in my mind, and that is a stain upon the credit of successive Governments in Western Australia.

At the moment the Premier is not in his seat, but may I say that he assumes office at a time that can be properly described as psychologically critical indeed, though I wish it were otherwise. Members have probably noticed that one by one we are losing the many fond illusions we have been nursing for the past three or four years. The brave and beautiful new world that we at least half believed in seems to have passed us by; in fact, there can be no doubt that it has passed us by. People today, it would appear, are still as selfish as they were in 1938 and 1939. Human nature does not apparently change so easily. Those four freedoms —I do not need to explain them; they have been explained about ten thousand times— are not even mentioned today.

The Minister for Mines: By the way, what are they?

Mr. DONEY: They are not even mentioned today except by way of a joke, or perhaps as an instance of a sad and rather pathetic miscalculation by certain Federal Ministers.

The Minister for Mines: I think you are getting pessimistic.

Mr. DONEY: The best that civilisation could provide was to have been bestowed upon our soldiers, but things are not panning out as we anticipated or rather hoped they would. Even preference, which soldiers themselves—and most people agree with them—regarded as a sort of natural and unalienable right, is now to be shared by large groups of civilians which makes it no preference at all for Servicemen; certainly no preference worth having.

Mr. Thorn: And those who had it have lost it.

Mr. DONEY: That is so; those who had it previously have lost it.

The Minister for Mines: But did they have it?

Mr. DONEY: So it is evident that the national outlook can undergo rapid and very drastic and even very nasty changes. Even the great and glorious Churchill, the one man of whom it might have been said—if it can be said of anyone—that he saved civilisation from crashing, has been most ingloriously defeated in the Old Country. He might be described as the finest thing in the way of man the Almighty ever made, and he has been cast aside.

The Minister for Works: Churchill was not defeated.

Mr. DONEY: We know all about that, but all that Churchill politically and inherently stood for was turned aside by the British people. It is possible to hold one of a couple of dozen ideas as to why the British people made this change. I have several ideas. I do not think the reason was

a political one at all, but I do not intend to discuss that matter now.

Mr. Thorn: They might have held the same views as the people here will hold at the next elections.

Mr. DONEY: It might be regarded as a happening that can just as well be anticipated here when the time comes for the Commonwealth Government to face the voters of this country. Consequently, having regard to what I have been saying about our lost illusions, I remark in closing that there will be ample scope in the immediate future for the Premier to exercise his ingenuity and capacities, which he undoubtedly has. I want him to understand that although we on this side of the House are nominally oppositionists, we wish to help him and will be pleased to help him whenever we can.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [5.8]: I desire in the first place to express my regret at the change that has occurred in this Chamber—the relinquishment of office by the member for Geraldton through ill-health. I sincerely hope that the cause of his retirement will soon disappear and that before long he will be fully restored to vigorous health. During the years he led this Chamber he did so with distinction, and we are all fully cognisant of the good work he did while he had the honour of being Premier of this State. I desire to congratulate his successor. I feel sure that the mantle of the member for Geraldton has fallen on worthy shoulders, and that the member for Gascoyne will fulfil all that is expected of him as Premier of this State. I wish to extend congratulations also to the member for Murchison on his elevation to Ministerial rank. He has served a very good and effective apprenticeship in this Chamber, and I feel sure he will fill the new position with credit, though I daresay we shall miss his melodious voice——

The Premier: You have another melodious one in his place.

Mr. NEEDHAM: And I daresay the hon. member's voice will be somewhat modified in the new position he will occupy in future. I extend my congratulations also to the member for East Perth on the excellent speech he delivered in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply. I agree with his statement that the House this session is meeting under more happy conditions than it did last year. The conflict in Europe has been brought to a close. One of the greatest military powers in history has been completely annihilated and we naturally rejoice at that great victory. While doing so, however, we are mindful of those who made the supreme sacrifice, many of them belonging to this young Australia. We do not forget that they offered their lives on the altar of this country's liberty so that we might live in peace and security. I believe we are fully conscious of our responsibilities to the families of those for whom they mourn and we also realise our responsibilities to those men who have survived the horrors of war and returned to their homes and who look to us to ensure that their lives in future are made much easier and happier than they were before they offered their services to fight. We are also conscious of the fact that there is a stubborn task ahead of us to prosecute the war in the Pacific to a victorious conclusion and complete the annihilation of Japan; and the magnitude of that task must not be under-estimated.

During recent months we have read of the conference in San Francisco of a world-wide nature. We have read of what was done at that conference. We have been informed of a world charter which was drafted there with a view to preserving the world's peace in the future. That certainly is a very historic document, and it was signed by the representatives of 50 nations. In the drafting of the charter, the representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia played a leading and effective part. I refer to Mr. F. M. Forde, Minister for the Army, and Dr. Evatt, Minister for External Affairs. Dr. Evatt certainly made his presence felt at that conference, at which the representatives of 50 nations solemnly pledged themselves and their Governments to strive for the preservation of world peace—a very laudable object. I have said that that document will prove to be of great historic value; but I am wondering what will be its effect. Will it meet the same fate as other documents have met, which had for their object the preservation of world peace? I am somewhat sceptical about it. Will it be made effective, or will it just become another scrap of paper like many other documents that have been signed during the past half century? Members are well aware of many of those documents: I need not enumerate

them. But it is interesting to note that in the period between the 19th May, 1920, and the 11th May, 1939, no fewer than 4,568 treaties and international agreements were entered into; and in the year immediately preceding the war, 211 treaties of peace were signed.

If this world charter, which was the result of the conference in San Francisco, is treated in the same way as many of those other treaties and becomes another scrap of paper, civilisation will undoubtedly be doomed. My own reaction to this great conference and the work it did, and its comprehensive nature is this: That unless mankind breathes some life into the document, it will remain inert. It can succeed in its purpose only if mankind breathes into it the determination that the principles it contains will be observed, must be observed, and that the law of peaceable consideration will take the place of the law of force; in other words, that the law of conciliation and consideration will take the place of the law of the jungle. I venture to say that the first test of the world charter drafted at San Francisco will take place at the peace conference, whenever that may be held; the sooner it is held the better. There will have to be a change of heart on the part of one of the Big Five at least if that world charter is to be made effective and reach its objective. If the spirit of that charter is to be maintained, there will have to be a change of heart on the part of Russia, which is one of the most important Powers included in the Big Five. I refer to Russia's handling of the Polish question. I do not believe that Russia's handling of the situation in Poland is in strict accord with the principles laid down in the Atlantic Charter.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Hear, hear!

Mr. NEEDHAM: I have sometimes been amazed at the silence, or the tacit consent of the other powers included in the Big Five in connection with the treatment of Poland by Russia. I want it to be quite clearly understood that I fully realise the magnificent part the fighting forces of Russia have played in the great conflict in Europe.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: They had a revolver at their back.

Mr. Fox: Did the member for Subiaco say "Hear, hear!" again?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I said they had a revolver at their back.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I fully realise the fortitude and stoicism of the Russian people throughout this struggle. At the same time, while I realise all these things, I am disturbed at Russia's treatment of the Polish situation. I would be the last man in this House to depreciate in any way the bravery and heroism of her fighting forces; but I cannot agree with her treatment of Poland since the cessation of hostilities in Europe. I have been looking up one or two documents in connection with this matter.

We all know that Britain declared war against Germany nearly six years ago because of her desire to preserve the independence of Poland. That was one of the great factors that plunged this world again into a shambles after a short period of less than a quarter of a century since the previous war. Realising that, I thought that at least the matter of Poland's future and independence would be treated with greater consideration by Russia than it has been in the last year or so. Lenin himself was very outspoken on the Polish question. I intend to quote from one of his speeches to prove that his attitude was diametrically opposed to the attitude adopted by Field Marshal Stalin. Lenin condemned Russian imperialism. The principles that should govern Russian foreign policy in Poland were laid down by Lenin in a speech on the 12th May, 1917. That was the year of the Russian revolution. This is what he said:

> No one has oppressed the Poles as much as have the Russian people. The Russian people have served in the hands of the Czar, as executioners of Polish freedom. Why should we, great Russians, who have been oppressing a greater number of nations than any other people, repudiate the right of separation for Poland, Ukraine and Finland? If Finland, Poland and the Ukraine break away from Russia, it is nothing terrible. Wherein is it bad? Anyone who says so is a Chauvinist. One must be insane to continue the policy of Czar Nicholas. Once upon a time Alexander and Napoleon traded peoples; once upon a time the Czars were trading portions of Poland. Are we to continue the policy of the Czars? That would be a repudiation of international treaties; that would be Chauvinism of the worst kind. We say that boundaries are determined by the will of the population. No people can be free to oppress other people.

That is Lenin's own speech—or portion of it—in regard to the treatment of Poland.

Compare it with the attitude of Stalin today as the successor of Lenin. At the Yalta conference—one of the many held by the Big Five since the outbreak of World War No. 2—held in the Liradia Palace of the Czars, Stalin assumed the mantle and the policy of Czar Nicholas, trading portions of Poland with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt. I have quoted that statement from Lenin to prove that my own reaction to the situation between Russia and Poland has some cause and some justification. I will go further, in quoting the opinions of other men, men who hold more prominent positions in this world that I do, myself. They are men who hold prominent public positions in Great Britain and, if I mistake not, some of them will be included in the new Labour administration in Great Britain. I will quote from "The Record" of the 11th April, 1945. First there is a statement by Mr. Arthur Greenwood, M.P., Labour, on the 28th February, 1945. He said—

> The Big Three must not in any event regard themselves as the overlords of Europe. I do not think that the Big Three ought to determine the fate of small nations. I would point out to the House that it is foreign to the principles of British justice that the fate of a nation should be decided in its absence, and behind its back. There should be, in the East of Europe, a living beacon of Poland, free and independent, as a warning note to any future aggressive Germany. I say it really is a cardinal sin for the three great powers, one of whom has interest which we have not got, in the absence of a people whose lives are being bartered away, to determine the future of any country.

The next is Sir William Beveridge, M.P., Liberal—

> The fact that Russia has liberated any part of Poland is not any reason why she should have any part of it. It is essential for us to see that the Polish Government is one chosen to please either Soviet Russia or ourselves. We must take great care to make certain that those who are concerned with the formation of the new Provisional Government have every opportunity for their work; that they are able to make certain that before the elections take place all Poles, wherever they may be, have opportunity to get back to Poland; that they should make certain that all Poles, whether pro-Russian or not, can become candidates, and finally, that the election is held fairly and under international observation, which means that the elections are held after the withdrawal of any Soviet armies and any Soviet police.

The next is Mr. Petherick, M.P., Conservative, who says—

> Poland has not lost the war. She is our continuing ally. In the last 200 years this was the fifth time in which Poland had been cut up by adjoining powers. The Provisional Government was proposed as the result of Yalta. It was to be chosen by three eminent men. Would any country in the whole of the wide world accept such a Government?

Major Lloyd, M.P., Conservative, says—

> It was a very definite breach of the Anglo-Soviet treaty and a definite moral breach of the Anglo-Polish treaty. Free elections could not be held in Poland with the Red Army in occupation. We are trustees for Poland. We dare not let her down, but we are about to do so.

The last quotation I will make is from Viscount Elibank, who says—

> I venture to believe that there can be no possible guarantee of free and unfettered elections taking place in an atmosphere which has been created in Poland during the past five years of hideous war. Not one of us here will deny that in the struggle in which we have been engaged for five years Poland has taken her part without reserve, and with a courage and skill that cannot be surpassed. How is the establishment of a free and independent Poland to be accomplished?

I thought it would be well to refer to that question of Poland because, as I have already said, I am somewhat sceptical as to whether the World Charter drafted at San Francisco will secure its ends, and I am under the impression that unless the Peace Conference adopts another measure, that document might become another "scrap of paper." God forbid that it should!

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What about getting rid of Thornton from Australia?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NEEDHAM: I know to what the hon. member is referring.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: He is another Communist.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am under the impression that the hon. member is suggesting that this party is associated with Communism. If that is the opinion of the member for Subiaco, I say she is completely wrong.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Without doubt I am right.

Mr. NEEDHAM: She is one of the people who, I believe, are very diligent in fostering that view outside. I want to tell the member for Subiaco, or any other hon. member opposite, that there is no connection,

good, bad or indifferent, between the Communist Party of Australia and the Australian Labour Party.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Then why not get rid of it?

Mr. NEEDHAM: That libel has been tried a few times. Notwithstanding the fact that the Australian Labour Party, year in and year out and time and time again, has decreed and stated that it has nothing at all to do with Communism, good, bad or indifferent, there are people in this State who today are busy telling the electors of Fremantle, for instance, that we are associated with Communism.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I have a letter here from the Ironworkers' Union——

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the member for Subiaco keep order!

Mr. NEEDHAM: My hon. lady friend—

Mr. Fox: Fancy you corresponding with him!

Mr. NEEDHAM: Mr. Thornton does not represent the workers of Australia.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: He represents the ironworkers.

Mr. NEEDHAM: My hon. lady friend can deal with Mr. Thornton herself. I suggest to the hon. member that she should read the speech of the member for Kalgoorlie in the House of Representatives, the Minister for the Interior, and she will then find out what the Australian Labour Party thinks of Communism, and Thornton.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Mr. Thornton represents the biggest union.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will not warn the member for Subiaco again, if she does not obey the Chair.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I am sorry. I may leave the Chamber next time.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The hon. member left this Chamber once before—

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the member for Perth address the Chair and pay no attention to the member for Subiaco?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I will leave Mr. Thornton and refer to another important matter which I think is engaging the minds of the people. I refer to full employment. This question was also discussed at the conference at San Francisco, and I think it was one of the most important questions discussed there. I am glad to say that the leaders of the Australian delegation paid special attention to this particular question. The fifty nations there represented pledged themselves, through their representatives, to provide full employment for their people and, in my opinion, on the fulfilment of that pledge to provide full employment for their people depends the success or failure of the work of that historic assembly. On the foundation of full employment depends the nature and duration of the economic structure of the world, and thus of the maintenance of world peace. I think that will be admitted, without any argument in this Chamber.

Unless there is full employment when we get back into normal times, the work of the San Francisco conference will have gone by the board, but, despite the fact that the representatives of fifty nations pledged themselves to provide their people with full employment, we find, already, that many people who talked glibly about the new order are now condemning the proposals for full employment. They lose no opportunity—many of them—to say that the new order is inevitable after the destruction, devastation, horror and misery of the war, but, strange to say, we now find that their tune has changed a bit. Instead of saying that they would like to see full employment, what they now say is that they want maximum employment. There is a difference, the difference between full employment and maximum employment, and those people who called out loudly about the necessity for a new order, and who are now advocating maximum employment, are more concerned, I think, about maximum profits than about maximum employment. That cry is coming from some of the leading capitalists of this country. They say there should be maximum employment, and that full employment is an impossibility.

It is a well-known fact that the private capitalist has not yet been able to so order industry as to provide anything like full employment, and because of that we have had a succession of economic depressions. Private employment was never able so to organise its resources as to provide full and continuous employment, and if we are to have full employment it will be necessary, for many years to come, to have an absolute system of control of industry. Here I refer to the failure of the Referendum. If the people of Australia had agreed to the proposal submitted at the Referendum to alter the Constitution in order to give the Commonwealth Parliament sufficient and comprehensive powers to deal with

industry, there would have been a better chance for full employment than there is now. I am very much afraid that those who voted against those powers being granted to the Commonwealth Government will live to rue the vote. If we are to be spared recurring epidemics of unemployment and all the misery which these entail, there must be a measure of control of private enterprise.

The Speech delivered by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor referred to certain public works. We all realise that many national works are necessary. Foremost amongst them is housing. The sooner we get into full swing with housing the better; we realise what has been the cause of the shortage of houses. It is impossible for the manhood of Australia to be in two places at once. Our men cannot keep the Japanese out of Australia and at the same time build houses. I think that before long we shall be well on the way with our house-building scheme, and I mean from a national point of view, not only in Western Australia, but in all the States of the Commonwealth. The release of large numbers of men from the Armed Services and their deployment to industry will mean that the all-important question of housing will shortly be in a much better position than it has been for many years past. Among the many national works that must be undertaken early in the post-war period is the standardisation of railway gauges. This matter should have a prominent place in the order of priority, as I think it is amongst some of the most important works. It could certainly find a place in the category of urgent work. I admit we have been talking about it for very many years, and it has been the subject of public debate. However, I realise that the most urgent work of all is the provision of homes and it cannot wait until the war is over. It must be pushed on with as quickly as men and materials can be made available.

The problem of transport in the Commonwealth is of vast importance. During the war period the problem has been emphasised because of the differences in railway gauges. It is one of extreme difficulty, and the difficulty was enhanced the moment Japan struck. If ever we felt the need of a uniform railway gauge, we felt it from the moment when we started to mobilise our forces to repel the aggressor. There is no doubt about the urgency of the matter and I venture to say that it ought to be a question for discussion at the next Premiers' Conference. It should be placed amongst the urgent national works. Besides being of help from the defence point of view, many other advantages will accrue, not the least of which will be the opening up of new country and the re-organisation of our own railway system. I do not think we can boast much about the railway system of this State. The advent of the standardisation of railway gauges will probably lead to the modernising of our own railway system. I sincerely suggest to the Premier that when he attends the Premiers' Conference, which we hope will be held shortly, he will endeavour to have this question made a prominent one and dealt with urgently.

The Premier: It is on the agenda.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am glad to hear that. I accept the Premier's assurance that it is on the agenda, but I would like to see it get much further. As I have already said, the matter has been discussed publicly for the past 40 years. I would like to see a start made with the work. I would like to see men engaged on the construction of the section from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, so that ere long we shall be able to get into a train at Perth and travel to the Eastern States without changing trains. I desire to refer to the basic wage, which is a question certainly of vast importance. The manner in which it is determined in this State is, to my mind, out of date, and something should be done, and that very soon, to discover some new method of determining it. During the last annual inquiry held in June in the State Arbitration Court, a complaint was made by the trades union advocate, Mr. Davies, about the present formula for fixing the basic wage. During the course of his address to the court he dealt with three phases:—

(a) that the existing regimen does not accurately measure the trend of price fluctuation;

(b) that insufficient items are included in the regimen, and

(c) that the time is over-ripe for a new investigation to be held along the lines of the Piddington Commission and its report.

He further pointed out that the inquiry should be a Commonwealth-wide inquiry and

should be made by the Commonwealth Government for the following purposes:—

(1) The determination by a statisticians' conference of new principles by which information relating to prices can be obtained;

(2) The creation by the Commonwealth of a commission to investigate all matters pertaining to the basic wage with a view to fixing new formulae by which the basic wage will give to the worker a greater share of the national wealth.

It is obvious why he suggested a Commonwealth-wide inquiry rather than such an inquiry as that just concluded by the State Arbitration Court. He was looking at the economic side of the question. If, for instance, the basic wage were higher in Western Australia than in the adjoining States, that might prove to be disadvantageous to this State. In order to put the matter on a proper foundation, he therefore suggested that a Commonwealth-wide inquiry should be made on the same lines as those adopted by the Piddington Commission many years ago. The Piddington Commission comprised representatives of employers and employees engaged in industry and made certain unanimous recommendations which I need not discuss at the moment. In the course of the basic wage inquiry held this year, the trades union advocate pointed out that food was of the utmost importance and that many articles of food necessary to health were not included in the regimen. Such foods as fresh fish, fruit and vegetables, other than potatoes and onions, are not included in the regimen. These are an important omission, as the commodities are necessary to the health and strength of the worker. He went on to say that the statisticians' conference held in 1936 was of the opinion that comparable prices for those commodities of a standard grade could not be obtained, and that a further difficulty arose in consequence of the seasonal character of their production and consumption.

It appears that in 1936 there was a Statisticians' Conference held which was representative of all the States and the question of the compilation of commodities was under discussion. It was suggested that those I have mentioned should be included in the regimen, but for the reasons I have given they were not. The statisticians at that conference said that the inclusion of those items, even if the information could be obtained, would impair the accuracy and stability of the index. The unions' advocate countered all these contentions very forcibly. He said that while it is true that the regimen is only a yardstick to measure the movement of prices, people cannot live on those items of food alone, and that the facts appeared to indicate that the commodities not specified in the regimen had increased in price more than had the items which were included. There was a very important feature in the compilation of the basic wage. The regimen contains certain articles of food, and as their prices rise or fall so the basic wage is determined, but when we find items of food, necessary for the preservation of health, that are not included in the regimen and the prices of which increase at a rate greater than those of the items mentioned in the regimen, we realise that it is an unfavourable reaction on the compilation of the basic wage.

These items of food that I have mentioned apply particularly to growing children who certainly should have those particular classes of food even if the adults cannot get them. Apart, however, from that consideration it is contended that the information recovered in respect of the prices of commodities in the regimen is not correctly indicative of the price which the consumer has to pay. There is another important factor. In an exhibit which was produced in court at the request of Mr. Davies the item of rent was instanced as an example of what the complaints were about. Rent restriction legislation and regulations have applied for some time, but in the exhibit that I have mentioned, taking one industrial area only, the metropolitan area—but the same principle applies in all others—the house-rent figures returned showed an average weekly rental of 19s. 11d. for a four or five-roomed house for the June, September and December quarters, 1944 and the March quarter 1945.

Other examples could be quoted, and it is certainly considered by the trade unions of this country that the request made for an inquiry should be acceded to. It is an urgent necessity. The present method is outworn and the last basic wage, giving an increase of 2d. weekly, appears to be farcical when compared with the prices paid by workers for commodities not included in the regimen but which are essen-

tial. I say also that in the past two or three years prices have been fixed at a level much higher than the worker could afford. I am going to give some items which are not included in the regimen but which are necessary for the preservation of health. They are as follows:—

Beans, 1s. 4d. per lb.
Tomatoes, 10d. per lb.
Apples, 6d. per lb.
Cauliflowers, 2s. to 2s. 6d. each.
Fish, 2s. to 3s. per lb.
Poultry, 2s. 9d. per lb.

The basic wage earner, and those with only a small margin will indeed find it difficult to maintain a properly balanced ration. So I think that Mr. Davies gave sufficient proof, in the course of the inquiry in the Arbitration Court this year, of the necessity for a reconsideration of the whole position. The workers of this State—and I venture to say of the other States—are suffering for the time being because the increase given in the basic wage by the Arbitration Court does not in any way compensate for the high prices for certain items of food necessary for themselves and their children. I wish to refer to one more factor and that is the question of immigration. The war that is going on has taught us something, if we are only wise enough to profit by the lesson. One of the things it has taught us is the danger to which a thinly populated country is exposed.

We should know that because, when Japan struck in 1941, not only had we a very sparse population and a vast country, but we were ill-prepared from a defence point of view. It has been said very often that the Australian Labour Party is against any scheme of immigration. That is decidedly wrong. It is true that the Labour Party is against indiscriminate immigration by which people have been brought into our States without any preparation for absorption in industry; in fact, there was no industry for them. In the past they have been placed in competition, shortly after arriving here, with other people who were seeking a livelihood. To say that our party is not in favour of immigration is wrong. We have always advocated a balanced immigration, and that is essential if we are to populate this country as we should, and as is necessary. The oversea immigration organisation in this State is doing good work in that regard, but I think that it will be necessary to go a bit further even than that.

I would like to see a scheme of immigration whereby we would bring to this country people of British stock who had been advised of the possibilities of this young land. But before that is done arrangements should be well in hand to see that when they arrive there is work for them, either by way of absorption on our lands—our agricultural districts—or in our secondary industries, because Australia will have a greater number of secondary industries when we come back to times of peace than hitherto. There again we have been able, during the war, to make and manufacture many important pieces of the engineering craft, which some people thought we could never do. I have always maintained that we have had in Australia the necessary material and the skill to do this, and all that we wanted was the courage to tackle the job and do it. When we were faced with war the necessity arose; the emergency was there and our men proved themselves capable of doing the finest engineering work in the world. Therefore this question of immigration must be handled properly.

Recently an election has been held in Britain and the verdict of the people has been given in unmistakable terms. For the first time in the history of Britain; for the first time in the history of the Mother of Parliaments we find a Labour Government with an absolute majority in the House of Commons. That election brought about the greatest political landslide in history. But there is something more in it than merely the return of a Labour majority. There is something more in it than the fact that the Liberal Party of Great Britain has been almost annihilated and the Conservative Party considerably reduced in number. I suggest to my Liberal friends on my right who have recently changed their name from National to Liberal that they might change their name again because of what has happened to their friends in Great Britain. One thing the verdict of the British people emphasises is this: The peoples of the world are determined to have a better share of the good things of this life in the future than they have had in the past.

On motion by Mr. Perkins, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,700,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 2nd August, 1945.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [4.35]: I desire to join in the expressions of regret that, for health reasons, Mr. Willcock found it incumbent upon himself to resign the office of Premier of this State. Whatever differences we may have had in matters of policy, I think we are all agreed that Mr. Willcock left nothing to be desired as Leader of the Government and as a gentleman. As Premier, he was always readily approachable and was ever willing to listen to suggestions and requests and, as far as lay in his power, I think he was invariably helpful. I am glad, also, to congratulate the new Premier, Mr. Wise, on his succession to that office.

I was interested, last night, to hear Sir Hal Colebatch make reference to the manner in which Mr. Wise was approached and selected to come to this State. Very shortly after that period, I was staying for some time in the north of Queensland, and it was on the Atherton Tableland that quite a number of prominent agriculturists referred to the good fortune of Western Australia in having been able to secure the services of a young man who, in their estimation, was destined to go a long way as a tropical agricultural adviser. It is very pleasing to see that those prophecies have come true and I am sure we appreciate Mr. Wise equally as much as we appreciate Mr. Willcock.

If in extending congratulations to Mr. Marshall upon his elevation to Ministerial rank I modify my felicitations in that regard, I trust he will absolve me altogether from any desire to detract from his worthiness to be elevated to Ministerial rank. I have not the faintest desire to do any such thing, but I do want to say that, as a member representing a very important portion of the State, I think it is to be regretted that once again no place has been found in the Ministry for a representative of the South-West. I might be laying myself open to a charge of being parochial; but, be that as it may, I consider that is a fair statement. I think we could expect just a little bit better treatment than we have had. For the past 20 years, representation in the Cabinet has been denied the South-West though it has enjoyed the greatest prosperity and contributed in a large measure to the material progress of this side of the Commonwealth.

I am quite aware that the blame does not rest upon any individual shoulders; nor is any blame attachable to the Government. Apparently a majority of members in the Labour Caucus are unmindful of the importance of the South-West. That is the only reason I can advance, because in that Caucus there have been for many years several South-West representatives who, in my estimation, would have been quite capable of proving excellent Ministers. In speaking thus, I am voicing what has been in the minds of many people in the South-West for a long time. The matter has often been mentioned outside, and I thought that on this occasion I would repeat it in the House. In making this statement, I say again that I have no desire whatever to reflect in any way upon the election of Mr. Marshall, whom I regard as a very worthy member of another place.

His Excellency's Speech announces that agreement in connection with the principles involved in the establishment and operation of a War Service Land Settlement Scheme was reached at the Premiers' Conference in October, 1944, and as soon as details are finalised, legislation will be placed before us to give effect to it. Some of us have had quite a lot to do with land settlement, and we also have many vivid recollections of what happened on previous occasions. My mind goes back to the position following the 1914-18 war when soldier settlement was