

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 31st August, 1944.

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

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT.

To Disallow Bagged-Wheat Charges Regulation.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter:—

That new regulation No. 148 made under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, 1902, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 24th December, 1943, and laid on the Table of the House on the 1st August, 1944, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.35]: On many occasions I have discussed the position of the Fremantle Harbour Trust and, while bearing in mind the effect of the war situation, I have pleasure in supporting the motion which deals with the handling charges on bagged-wheat. Despite the fact that this House has disallowed regulations on three previous occasions, little heed was taken of our action and it is time we clearly indicated to the Government that we expect notice to be taken of resolutions we carry. The Chief Secretary informed us that all the Fremantle Harbour Trust asks is that payment should be made in respect of services actually rendered. I have a copy of the Trust's annual report issued in 1939, which is the latest available. By reference to that report I propose to demonstrate how unnecessary it is for the Trust to impose this additional tax upon the farming community.

In 1936-37 after paying interest on the capital involved, together with sinking fund payments, providing £38,809 for assets purchased out of revenue and meeting all working expenses, representing a total of £411,276, the Trust paid into Consolidated Revenue £87,118. In 1937-38 the Trust paid £35,001 on assets purchased from revenue, £142,864 as interest on capital, £17,937 as

contributions to the sinking fund and £246,591 to meet working expenses, or a total of £442,393, and still had a sufficient surplus to pay into Consolidated Revenue £96,612. In 1938-39 the position was similar. The Trust purchased from revenue assets valued at £34,915, paid interest on capital amounting to £143,538, contributed to the sinking fund £18,901 and paid working expenses amounting to £247,243, or a total of £444,697, and yet was able to pay into Consolidated Revenue £88,011.

Thus in these three years, after meeting the whole of the working expenses, sinking fund, interest charges and so forth, the Trust paid into Consolidated Revenue an average of £94,609 annually. The figures show clearly that the Fremantle Harbour Trust can rightly be deemed to have become, and is being used as, a taxing machine. Therefore I feel we are justified in maintaining that position. The primary producing section of Western Australia, which is not in a position to pass on any increased cost as the Harbour Trust is doing, receives only the world's parity price for its wheat, and, on a rough calculation, that represents very nearly three-quarters of the total products exported from Western Australia.

The Chief Secretary: And the balance contributes nothing to the service!

HON. A. THOMSON: I am rather pleased at that interjection. It must contribute a considerable sum of money in providing work for the Railway Department and railway employees. It also provides considerable sums of money in payments to lumpers working on the wharves. Again, we find that the regulation provides for a charge of 1d. per ton register on all vessels coming into the port of Fremantle. On this charge there was imposed in 1917 a surcharge of 20 per cent. That surcharge was introduced during the last war. Actual increases of cost resulting from the war were deemed to justify the imposition of a surtax of 20 per cent. on all charges levied by the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

The astonishing feature is that the surcharge is still being imposed. One can easily perceive the position in which the primary producers of Western Australia will be placed if this regulation is not again disallowed. We may find the farming community of this State penalised for all time by the Fremantle Harbour Trust, in accord-

ance with this precedent. In 1938, according to the report, 81 vessels came into Fremantle to lift wheat, and, on a moderate calculation, they were in the harbour for an average of six days. No one can tell me that a vessel lies in the port of Fremantle without the State of Western Australia deriving some benefit from the mere fact of the expenditure resulting from the vessel remaining in the port.

While wheat may not be paying a direct charge to the Harbour Trust, indirectly it is contributing materially to the Trust's revenue. I estimate that on the 1d. per ton plus 20 per cent. the vessels in port during 1938 paid a minimum of fully £20,000 to the Harbour Trust for the privilege of coming into Fremantle Harbour, taking wheat and departing. I make no allowance for pilotage and other charges liable to be incurred. I merely point out the reason why, in the circumstances, we should not agree to this renewed demand made by the Harbour Trust, or by the Government as representing the Trust, in connection with handling of wheat. We know that the Labour Government tacitly opposed the inauguration of bulk handling of wheat here, and that as the result of much agitation it appointed a Royal Commission to go into the question, nominating a very estimable gentleman in the person of Mr. W. C. Angwin as chairman. When the Government appointed Mr. Angwin as chairman of the bulk handling inquiry in connection with a scheme submitted by the farmers' pool, I felt quite satisfied that the result of the Commission's findings would be satisfactory to the farmers; for, in my opinion, Mr. Angwin was a most honourable man and also a highly practical man.

Meeting Mr. Angwin and having a chat with him I said, "I must congratulate you on the findings of the Royal Commission." He replied, "Nobody could arrive at any other findings; the scheme submitted was so practical and so mobile, and in the event of any district going out of wheat, practically the whole installation could be transferred to some other centre." Then the Government, as the result of the findings of the Royal Commission, agreed to the introduction of bulk-handling in Western Australia. I say without fear of contradiction that the inauguration of bulk-handling of wheat in this State has saved the whole of

Australia considerable sums of money. The Eastern States considered, like Ministers here thought, that only one form of bulk-handling could be considered for even a moment—concrete silos. But the practical knowledge of bulk-handling of wheat gained in Western Australia demonstrated clearly that the system was brought into being by the farmers themselves.

The amazing feature is that the scheme has been fully paid for. The whole initial cost of bulk-handling in Western Australia has been met, and the system is now in the hands of the farming community. I want members to remember that Western Australia introduced bulk-handling into the Commonwealth, and that this system has meant not only a saving to Western Australia but, with a similar result, has been adopted in other States of the Commonwealth for the purpose of handling and storing wheat when wheat was all held in bags. We know the amazing loss that occurred here as well as in other States owing to the bagged-wheat system. South Australia experienced a plague of mice. We were saved that, fortunately, but the weevils were a great cause of trouble.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask the hon. member to connect those remarks with the charges on bagged-wheat at Fremantle.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I hope I shall be able to connect them, Sir. Because of the extraordinary conditions facing us owing to the war, it was found necessary to export large quantities of wheat in bags which, under normal conditions, would have gone oversea without bags. I would draw attention to the fact that it is not the farmers' fault that it has been found necessary to provide bags for which the farmers pay. Mr. Cornell said that the cost would be met by the whole of the people and that the Australian Wheat Board was going to pay it. The Wheat Board will not pay one brass farthing. The whole of the cost of handling wheat, either into the silos or out of them, is being borne by the farmers themselves. The cost is being deducted from the total sum they derive from their product. In view of the principle that has been adopted concerning the general run of things in Australia during the war, it is unfair that this charge should be imposed. I would point out that this House passed legislation pro-

viding that no owner of a house can charge a higher rent than that which was being paid in 1939. Then we have price-fixing in other directions. Why is it that wages for handling wheat at Fremantle have increased from 2s. 4½d. to 3s. 11½d., which, I think, are the figures given by the Chief Secretary? Why is it that an increase was permitted in that rate?

The Chief Secretary: That is since 1932. Do not misrepresent the position.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have no desire to misrepresent anything. That is the last thing I have in mind. I want to put the matter fairly and squarely. Since 1932, then, the wages of the lumpers at Fremantle have increased from 2s. 4½d. to 3s. 11½d. per hour. It would be all right if the farming community was in the happy position of being able to say that, because railway freights and super and handling costs had increased, they wanted so much more for their commodities. That, however, is denied them. Even the flour tax has not been increased, though there is talk of that being done. So the consumers of Western Australia, including the lumpers, are receiving the benefit of a fixed price.

An enormous amount of money has been paid annually—close on £100,000—into Consolidated Revenue. We are at war and the exigencies of war are responsible for the fact that the Wheat Board has had to put the exportable wheat into bags. In Western Australia we have our own system of bulk handling. In view of those facts, the Fremantle Harbour Trust should not, for the fourth time, expect this House to agree to an increase in the handling costs. I would like to show how unfair the Government has been in connection with the representation of primary producers on the Trust. Mr. Hamersley last night drew attention to the fact that at one stage Mr. Basil Murray represented the wheatgrowers and was succeeded, on his demise, by Mr. Tanner. Unfortunately, like many other good men, Mr. Tanner also passed on. One would have thought that, thereafter, in recognition of the fact that at least three-quarters of the total exports from the port are purely primary products, the primary producers would have continued to be represented on the Trust. Amongst the many products that are exported apart from wheat are fruit, frozen meat and butter.

The Chief Secretary: They defray the cost of handling.

Hon. A. THOMSON: All right. On the average, in normal circumstances, they have received very fair conditions. Bags have to be produced now, for which farmers have to pay, and they are very expensive. It is neither fair nor reasonable, therefore, that these extra charges should be imposed. The section of the community that provides so much of the export cargo has not one single representative to look after its interests. The shipping companies have a representative.

The Chief Secretary: No separate interest is represented on the Trust.

Hon. A. THOMSON: So far as my memory serves me—and I have dealt with this question on several occasions—it was always understood in the early days that Mr. Tom Carter represented the shipping interests. That was so from the inception. It was also understood that Mr. Bateman represented the interests to the merchants. That was a definite understanding.

The Chief Secretary: With whom?

Hon. A. THOMSON: That was the understanding, and, as I pointed out, at one stage the farming community had a representative on the Trust as well. We find that the Treasury is represented. In addition, Mr. Mann, who is a secretary at the Trades Hall, is on the trust, together with Mr. T. J. McMahon, who at the time of his appointment was a Labour supporter. I do not want to say anything derogatory about these men, but I point out that Labour has two representatives on the Trust, and I think the House will agree that the primary producers, who are responsible for so much of the cargo that goes oversea, should also have representation.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They are responsible for all of it.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, for practically all of it. If the primary producers had been represented on the Trust, these regulations would not have been so repeatedly brought before the House. I have quoted the figures relative to the financial position of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Australian Harbour authorities met in Hobart in February last and the conference was attended on behalf of this State by Mr. McMahon, one of the members of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Neither the shipping, the mercantile nor the primary producing sections were deemed worthy of representation on that occasion.

Only a Labour representative was sent to Hobart to discuss matters relative to Western Australia. I may be accused of reflecting on the Labour Party when I say this, but I feel bound to point out the unfairness of a position of that kind. I urge upon the Chief Secretary to use his influence with the Government to remedy such a state of affairs.

There should be at least one representative of the State's primary industries, a man who has a thorough knowledge of them, on the Fremantle Harbour Trust. If the Trust were showing a loss and had done so from its inception, we might have been prepared to waive our objection to this particular regulation. The farming community, however, is entitled to some consideration for the important services it has rendered to the Trust by the volume of produce it has been responsible for, and also for the valuable services it has rendered to the Government railways. Even if there were a slight loss in the handling of wheat by the Trust, the Government should, in all the circumstances, be prepared to carry it. Even if the Trust were not showing a profit in the handling of bagged-wheat, it should be prepared to extend consideration to the growers. This is the fourth occasion on which a motion similar to this has been brought down. I hope it will be the wish of the House that the regulation be disallowed. I also trust that when it is disallowed the Fremantle Harbour Trust will not impose another set of charges which may be practically the same in substance as the old ones. I trust the motion will be agreed to.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eleventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.5]: Since the House last met, I have had an opportunity to go round the South-West portion of the State, and was very much struck by the enormous development that has taken place during recent years and the work that is being done there. I have been in many parts of Western Australia. It seems to me that the South-West offers tremendous possibilities for the post-war reconstruction period. There is Collie with its coal and its new industries, and the

possibility of far greater industries. I was struck with the solidity of the whole country, and in every way with the thought of what a great place it must become. I am not attempting to suggest that it is any better than other parts of the country, but it is a place that has gone ahead solidly though slowly, and must continue to go ahead. Other portions of the State do not possess the same excellent climatic conditions as we find in the South-West.

I was very much impressed by the quantity of tantalite that was being produced at Greenbushes, and also by the reports from responsible people as to the apparent richness in minerals of the country round about. I trust that this great country will not be thrown back by the present policy of the Governments of Australia of endeavouring to give people something for nothing, because it does mean that the prosperity of the country must suffer so long as such a policy endures. We have widows' pensions, child endowment, and so on. I cannot understand why a wealthy man should receive 5s. per week for each child after the first. I have never been able to see what benefit the child endowment scheme is. It is of none to the people of Australia generally.

I could agree that the proper subsidising of families, where a subsidy would do some good, would be beneficial. The mere fact of holding out your hand to receive so much money because you have the joy and pleasure of a family seems to me entirely wrong, especially when a wealthy man receives exactly the same amount as would the man or woman who was in dire need. It is entirely wrong, but is an excellent vote-catching process. We are now to have a new benefit, the 6s. a day for everyone in hospital. A friend told me on Saturday he proposed to get a bed in hospital when that policy came into force, because he would receive 6s. a day and £3 10s. a week.

Hon. L. Craig: He will not get that.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The hospital expenses would be paid for him and he would receive £3 10s. a week as well. That is entirely wrong. Dr. Hislop pointed out that it would stop all benefactions to hospitals. It will not cover the expenses of the hospitals, but it is an excellent vote-catching scheme. That is all people care about. Unfortunately the trend of politics in Australia today is such that it does not matter about the country so long as a man can be kept where he wants to be. Too many mem-

bers of Parliament, I regret to say, appear to entertain the same idea. The mental hospital at Claremont is the last institution of that kind I have seen recently. If 6s. per day were given to the Government, just as the 25s. per head of the population used to be paid to it by the Commonwealth, it would enable the Government to do some good for the unfortunate inmates of that and other hospitals.

Why is the 6s. a day being paid? Does it not seem strange that that money should be paid? It is to be paid to the hospitals for each bed that is occupied, but for some unknown reason a person who is mentally afflicted and is an inmate of an asylum is deprived of the old age pension or the invalid pension. I saw a great many old people at the mental hospital who receive no pension, but the State receives 6s. a week on their account. One shilling a day is the pension for those people. One could understand the position if the Commonwealth handed over the pensions to the State, but there would be no votes in that. Unfortunately politics have reached such a low ebb today that it is not a question of what is good for the State but the immediate question is, "How much does this improve my present position and how can I retain it?"

We boast of our free education from the kindergarten to the University, and at the same time we receive requests for donations to the kindergarten movement. A request is made for free board and lodgings for the pupils attending high school and for the free transport of the children. I do not object to any of these things if the administration is what it ought to be, but I object to the handing out of largesse. Why should there be board and lodgings for pupils attending a high school unless we are satisfied that the State will benefit from having children educated to that state of efficiency? I should like to see all children brought up to a high state of efficiency, but we cannot afford it. Why should we have a free University to which anyone can go and stay as long as he likes, except during these years of war?

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: They have never been able to do that. They go out after two failures.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: At a free university there should be no such thing as a failure. I would not want a boy to attend a university if the knowledge had to be ham-

mered into him. If it is required to hammer knowledge into a boy let the parents pay for that to be done. Let us have a system of scholarships so that those who have shown themselves to be capable of assimilating the teaching may be encouraged to the utmost to get that teaching. It seems to me we want to go further in our primary education. Not long ago I was at an Army camp where I happened to see a large squad of men. I remarked to a sergeant that they were a fine lot. He said, "Yes, but you would be surprised to know that we have two here who cannot read or write, and there are very few who could do a decimal sum." The sergeant said that some of these men had been getting up to £5 and £6 a week driving a baker's cart. There is something wrong with our system when boys of 14 are able to earn £5 or £6 a week, and yet not be able to do even a simple decimal sum. That is a matter which requires to be looked into.

At every election many promises are made. The easiest possible way to catch votes is by making promises, because we must realise that in Australia an elector is fined if he does not vote, irrespective of whether he knows anything at all about the matter on which he is voting. I suppose the most colossal blunder any Parliament ever made was that of instituting compulsory voting. We force a person to go to the poll and vote, and fine him if he fails to do so, and he may be required to vote on a matter he knows nothing and cares nothing about. Then human nature steps in and says to the voter, "I will make you care; I will promise you something." That is what we in Australia are suffering from at the present time.

Everybody is apt to be caught with the easy-money cry. That is largely caused through forcing people to vote who have no desire to vote and who have no interest in any shape or form in politics and certainly have no knowledge of political questions. Had the Parliaments of Australia required people to take an interest in politics, there might have been something to be said for their action. I do not know how that could have been done, but it would have been infinitely better than forcing people to vote on matters they know nothing about. A candidate has to make promises because he wants votes, and the electors are going to vote for the men who promise most, that

is, the voters who do not take any interest in public questions. Nobody can get something for nothing. Whatever we get requires of us some corresponding effort or cost. But the present Governments do not care two straws about that. They say "We will promise this and that, and future generations will have to pay the cost. We will borrow all the money we can." Millions of money have already been borrowed for social services and future generations will have to pay.

Further, there is a tremendous amount of class hatred being taught in political circles in Australia. That is a shocking thing. It is class hatred to the worst degree and is being taught in a very insidious way. One of the most insidious ways was the effort made recently to rule out the playing of the National Anthem in favour of "Advance Australia Fair." One almost feels that "Advance Australia Fair" might be a slogan for a loan, but it is not. It may not be generally known that the Commonwealth Government, through one of its Ministers, endeavoured to get Australian broadcasting stations to play "Advance Australia Fair" instead of the National Anthem. An attempt was also made to get the picture shows to play it, but I am pleased to say that few picture shows do play it in lieu of the National Anthem. This indicates some of the propaganda that is being spread.

England is the best governed country in the world and has been for many years, but there class hatred does not exist—not class political hatred. Those who had conversations with members of the Parliamentary delegation must have been struck by the fact that Conservatives were representing industrial areas, while Labour members spoke in the most highly patriotic way of the wonderful country England is. All their remarks were most loyal. I regret to say that we do not always get similar loyalty in Australia. Unfortunately class hatred is sometimes preached with a view to catching votes that will keep somebody in power. It does not matter from what source the votes are got so long as they are obtained.

What do we find in Australia? A most deplorable state of affairs exists. Nobody may work in commerce or trade unless he joins a union. I have not the slightest objection to that. We not only force a man to join a union, but we also force him

to give up all ideas of freedom of political thought. This Parliament has done it, and done it in this way: We have not actually made unionism compulsory, but we have gone very close to doing it. If any union so desires, it may become affiliated with the Australian Labour Party. I have nothing to say against that party, but if I join a union and the union becomes affiliated with the A.L.P. I am bound to support in every possible way the selected Labour candidate, irrespective of what my views may be, and I am bound conscientiously to vote for him. Of course the vote is secret, but I am also bound to subscribe to the A.L.P. funds. That is entirely wrong.

The next step is pre-selection by that body, by whom I mean the manual workers, and a great many clerks who are members of the A.L.P. The candidate is selected by a minority or majority of voters on the roll, but they are not compelled to vote in the selection ballot. So the man who is selected as a Labour nominee might represent a minority and a small number of electors of that particular district, but every member of the A.L.P. is bound to work for and assist him in every possible way, and is not allowed any freedom of political thought.

The Chief Secretary: That is so much rot.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER: To show that it is not, I point out to the hon. member that Mr. Hodson was expelled from a union, and at the last triennial conference of the party a motion was put forward asking that the Metropolitan District Council reinstate him. He was expelled because he had attended another meeting; I presume it was a political meeting of some party with which the A.L.P. did not agree. The motion was ruled out of order by the chairman because Mr. Hodson had never made application to the Metropolitan District Council for reinstatement. Later on, at the same conference—this was three years ago—a motion was put forward that a plank of the Labour Party's platform should be freedom of speech. This was defeated on the argument that members had freedom of speech there but were not going to be allowed to exercise it outside. I have seen a printed record of the conference proceedings three years ago. Another gentleman, Mr. O'Malley of North Perth, was expelled because he openly supported a candidate for the North Ward of the Perth

Road Board against the selected Labour candidate. Therefore I claim I am not wrong when I say there is no freedom of political thought, and herein lies the damage that is being done in Australia today. I have no objection to the A.L.P. or to unionism, but I do object that because a man is a unionist he is bound to vote and work for the selected candidate.

A gentleman came into my office. I cannot use the words he employed as you, Mr. President, would not permit me, but he said in effect that he was about to be put on the mat on a charge of having received money to assist a National Party candidate at the last election. He added, "They are wrong; I never received any money for it." This indicates the tyranny of unions. It is the bounden duty of independent members to protect the under-dog from the tyranny and power of the unions if we wish Australia to advance. What I am saying was emphasised by the happenings at the recent Referendum vote in Kalgoorlie. Mr. W. R. Hall told us that an advocate for the "Yes" side went to Kalgoorlie and asked, "What is the use of getting gold out of one hole and putting it in another?" One of the head men of the Labour movement went to Kalgoorlie and told the people, "You have to vote 'Yes.'"

I have received some very disquieting news as to how the soldiers' votes were taken. I do not know whether it is correct—I sincerely hope it is not—and so I shall not refer further to it. We know, as we have read in the newspaper from time to time, that the selection ballot is not always above-board, and yet a member of an affiliated union is bound to vote for and assist the selected candidate in every way. That is entirely wrong, as members must agree. Members of this party go around the country urging the adoption of the plank of their platform that provides for the abolition of the Legislative Council. Yet the Legislative Council is the most democratic House in this State at present. The great majority of our members have been elected by free voters, as in several instances the only opponent has been another member of the National Party, so that the elector has been free in his choice. Of course one can understand why these people wish for the abolition of this Chamber. The voters for this House are usually men of experience, men of years and substance; they are required to have very little substance, but neverthe-

less they have some. It is not as easy to hoodwink such men as it is to hoodwink young men of 21 years who are just entitled to a vote and who are going to do exactly what the A.L.P. tells them. Of course such people want the abolition of this Chamber, but if it were not for this Council I fear some disastrous legislation would have been passed.

Members may recall that only a year or two ago a Bill was brought down in which it was made an offence for a person to ask an intending tenant whether he had any children. Fortunately, that provision was not passed by this House. Consider the promises that were made during the Referendum campaign! Work for all! If the "No" vote succeeded, slavery for the worker! What scandalous propaganda to disseminate! Because, unfortunately, every voter is forced to vote, that is why we get such catch cries as "Goodness knows what will happen to the soldiers if you do not vote 'Yes.' If you do vote 'Yes' you will get the world." Is that not bringing our political life to a very low ebb? Is it not time that we endeavoured to do something to improve it? What is happening now? Both the Commonwealth Government and our State Government have to go cap in hand to an outside organisation.

It will be remembered that the Commonwealth Government had to go to a party conference in Sydney to inquire how far our Militia could go. The Commonwealth Government will probably have to attend another meeting, now that we are advancing, to see if our soldiers can go past the limit fixed. The ideal of a free people—and I say "free people" advisedly—is that they shall be ruled by Parliament, not by some outside organisation, and the sooner the people wake up to that fact the better. Note the danger! A body having got all the power it wants is faced by a strong man, and the question arises, who is to be the first president of the Australian Republic, with "Advance Australia Fair" as his slogan? We are rapidly approaching that situation, and the people should be warned about the way things are going.

We must stop the present trend to rule Australia by a power outside Parliament. The great strength of the States at present lies in the fact that they have Legislative Councils to ensure Parliamentary rule, irrespective of outside organisations. It is very dangerous for persons outside Parlia-

ment to control the Government because they can do as they like without being brought to book. Is it not disgraceful to see the way in which the law is being flouted in all sorts of ways? Why not amend our liquor laws so as to allow country hotels to remain open at certain hours? Why leave it to the whim of some person to say whether a hotel shall remain open or not? Such a course opens wide the way to corruption. It is easy for the Government to rule according to what Parliament says; but it is not easy for a Government controlled by an outside organisation to rule as Parliament says. That is the danger to our parliamentary system. If one tries to bring about a reform there is talk of danger of loss of votes and hence it is said, "Let sleeping dogs lie." That is wrong.

I draw attention to the shocking state of our public buildings; of course it will be said that that is due to the war. I was recently at Claremont Mental Hospital and was astounded at what I saw there. I am not speaking as an expert but as an ordinary person. The curtains in the diningroom were smothered in dust, while the walls, which were only calcomined, were in a filthy condition. The whole place was dingy. Obviously no interest has been taken in it for years. The unfortunate inmates have no votes, so let them go! If the attendants want more pay, give it to them! If the authorities could only see a little beyond their noses, the attendants would be far happier if their conditions were made better. At present a small room is set aside for recreation purposes. It has to accommodate, I believe, about 90 nurses.

The few chairs there are comfortable, but I do not think more than ten attendants can sit down at a time. No provision is made for writing nor is there provision for a person to sit quietly and read. The nurses' quarters in themselves are fair, but badly placed. The kitchen, as Dr. Hislop pointed out, has no flyscreens. The nurses' dining-room is dreadful, and so are the lavatories. There is a tin washtub which is used for washing the cups of the tuberculous patients. It certainly looked as if the bath were used for that purpose, too; the tub was in the bathroom. That shocking state of affairs exists simply because the Government is afraid of losing votes if it does anything unpopular.

The Police Force is seething with discontent. Only yesterday I was appearing before

a board of inquiry. I am not committing any breach of professional etiquette in saying this, because my client told me that if what I said would assist in bettering the conditions of the members of the Police Force I could use the information by all means. My client was detailed to inquire into certain thefts. In the course of his duty the Crown Solicitor saw him; whether the Crown Solicitor gave my client instructions or not I do not know, but the first charge laid against him was that, being instructed by Mr. Dunphy, the Crown Solicitor, to interview a witness, he did not do so. That charge was altered to neglect of duty by failing to interview a witness in connection with a certain offence. I asked Mr. Dunphy to give evidence. He telephoned me and had the temerity to say that he would not give evidence because he claimed privilege. I told him to claim privilege, but I still asked him to attend the inquiry.

He told me first of all that he would be of no use to me as a witness, and later on said, "You cannot call me before a board." I replied, "If you adopt that attitude, I am not sure whether I can or not, but still I would like you to be present." On the morning of the inquiry he telephoned me. What the conversation was does not matter, but he did appear. The charge, however, had been wrongly laid before a board. It should have been heard in open court. I took the objection because I considered the case ought to be heard in open court, and so the board quashed it. The same detective-sergeant was charged with failing to divulge the name of the informer.

We all know that when a policeman or anyone else obtains information from an informer on a promise that his name shall not be divulged, it is very wrong indeed to divulge his name. However, the name of this informer was demanded from my client and he refused to give it. He first asked the inspector if he might interview the man and ascertain whether he had any objection to his name being given. He interviewed the man, who objected. My client accordingly informed the inspector, who suggested that he might bring the man up. My client replied, "No, I will not. If I do, you will know who he is." He was then charged with failing to give the name. Fortunately, a gentleman came forward and gave evidence that it was wrong to divulge the name of an informer, and the board thereupon said,

"We quite agree it should not be done." That is not the way to run a police department. That is not all, however.

Recently a constable in charge of a suburban station was divorced from his wife on the ground of adultery. His name was subsequently put second on the list of half-a-dozen men for promotion to third-class sergeant. A little later his name was removed from the list and a minute was sent to him. I understand that in the Police Department a man's domestic affairs are his own concern. However, one morning, at 6 o'clock, an inspector and a constable knocked at this man's door and asked whether they could come in. He replied, "Yes, certainly." They then said, "We hear you have a woman living on the premises and we want to inspect your room." He said, "Where is your search warrant?" They said they did not have one, so the constable replied, "You are not going to search my place,"—and he was quite right. Actually there was no-one else on the premises. I should think that any person would resort to fisticuffs after being wakened up early in the morning with a request to search his premises to see if a woman was there. No inquiry was made, but this extraordinary minute was sent by the Commissioner of Police to Inspector Tettersington. It is dated the 26th July, 1944—

A commissioned officer, accompanied by a non-commissioned officer, visiting a constable's quarters at 6 a.m. asking the latter if he had a woman in the house and requesting permission to inspect the quarters is definitely an accusation, especially in view of police regulations. No member of the force can, without permission of the Commissioner, have residing with him permanently in Government quarters any other individuals than his wife, children, or other dependant.

If — had no woman on the premises, what had he to fear? He should have been only too willing for the officers to see for themselves and clear up the accusation. I can only assume one conclusion by his refusal to have his house inspected, that there was a woman in the house. The constable will hold himself in readiness for transfer.

Hon. J. Cornell: Those are Gestapo methods!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Exactly. If a constable commits an offence, the Police Act sets out how he is to be dealt with. A charge has to be laid. The Commissioner has no power or right to take upon himself the responsibility for action of this sort. But, of course, this unfortunate man can do

nothing. He is settled! The fact that I am mentioning his case this afternoon will, I have no doubt, do him no good, but it might do the rest of the Police Force good. Just imagine the position! An inspector goes there at 6 o'clock in the morning, and says, "Have you a woman here?" The constable replies, "No," and the inspector says, "I want to inspect the premises."

What sort of an inspector is he? He was there and did not go into the room, although the bedroom door was open. What right had he to go into the house and make such a demand? True, they are police quarters for which the constable pays rent, but it is only human nature that a man would resent such action. Then the Commissioner says, "Hold yourself ready for transfer." If an inspection is not allowed, the assumption is that a woman must have been there. Is this man capable of controlling any force? I sincerely trust that when the office of Commissioner of Police falls vacant, we will appoint some highly qualified person to it. Possibly one of the soldiers who will shortly be returning will prove himself efficient enough to take charge of this department. It is one which must be run with the greatest care because I fear that once we lose our respect for the Police Force we shall be crumbling badly.

I hope that this Government, or some future Government, will bring down a Bill to prevent union funds from being used for political purposes. By so doing, every worker will be given absolute freedom of political thought, and I think all workers want that. Let the worker exercise his opinions in whatever way he desires. I have no objection to that. I do not care what are his political thoughts. When I employ men, no matter on what type of work it may be, I do not care what their political beliefs are so long as they have freedom of thought. I hope we will get a Bill passed enabling these people to have that freedom. We shall then have a truly democratic country. We shall then be governed as is England—by Parliament, and not by outside bodies. I have endeavoured to bring my views before this Chamber to show how I feel, particularly on the subject of the freedom of the individual. I cannot do better than quote the final words of this booklet, "What Britain Has Done. 1939-1943." It is

issued by the Ministry of Information. The last paragraph is as follows:—

Britain, covenanted with the United Nations, is going flat out in fighting this total war through to absolute victory over the enemies of the rights of the individual and of the advancement of mankind.

I hope that in the near future we will get something of that sort here.

HON. F. E. GIBSON (Metropolitan-Suburban): As one of the ten members successful in the elections last May, I tender my thanks to those who congratulated me on being returned. During the two years I have been in this Chamber I have experienced nothing but kindness from those with whom I have been associated. I hope that during the life of this Parliament those very happy relations will continue. Mention has been made by some members, particularly Dr. Hislop, of the wonderful work done by the Imperial troops in this war, which we now believe is approaching its end. For some considerable time past, and particularly since the invasion of France, the papers have been prominent in their praise of our Allies. I am quite in accord with that praise, but I frequently think that sufficient publicity or credit is not given to the troops from the Old Country, and I include amongst those troops the men from the different dominions.

Until the Japs struck Pearl Harbour and thus brought Australia into the immediate war zone, we were all fairly well aware of the trend of events in Europe. Since that time, as a result of Australia being in a much more dangerous position, we are apt to forget what is taking place on the many other fronts where our troops are engaged. Members will recollect Major Markham, of the recent British Parliamentary Delegation, telling us that after Dunkirk there was only one rifle for every three soldiers in Great Britain. At that time very few people outside those associated with Great Britain had any view but that the British Empire had come to the end of its existence; that it had no possible chance of recovering from the blows it had received from the Nazi regime!

But since that time England, to her eternal glory, led by a man who, I suppose, might be regarded as the greatest statesman of all time, not only survived but lived to build up an Army and an Air Force—she always had her Navy—which have played a major part

in defeating Nazi Germany and Facist Italy. We should never forget this, and we should not forget those lads of the R.A.F. who, in August, September and October of 1940, not only withstood the might of Goering's Luftwaffe, but swept them from the British skies and so saved the world for freedom. I was thrilled to read the tribute paid to Britain by our own Prime Minister when, among other things, he referred to her as "standing alone on the ramparts of freedom, defending the world against Nazi tyranny."

At this point I would like to refer to the remarks made the other day by Mr. Craig, and to those made this very evening by Mr. Parker. I am a loyal Australian, as are the vast majority of our people. About 98 per cent. of the people in this Commonwealth of ours are of British origin. The two members whom I mentioned made reference to the singing of "Advance Australia Fair." I personally have sung it, and have no objection to people singing it, but I do think it is overdone.

The Honorary Minister: It is a terribly tinny tune.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: Yes. There is a suspicion in the minds of many people that the singing of this anthem is being fostered by those who would rather sing any anthem but the National Anthem. We have to fight against that sort of thing. We are 98 per cent. British. The people of Australia are loyal to the Old Country, as England is affectionately termed, and the National Anthem satisfies us, because it is common to all Britishers.

The Referendum campaign has ended, and the people have given their answer. It was a most sordid campaign. Statements were made by both sides which reflected no credit on either. Some aspects of the campaign filled me with disgust. I will refer to one or two incidents. I might say, first of all, that I was not a "Yes" voter. About the lowest depths of journalistic indeecency were plumbed when we saw in headlines that the Prime Minister would not come and speak in Western Australia because he had no desire to sell his own State. That is a most terrible and cruel thing, and reflects anything but credit on those responsible for the advertisement. Mr. Curtin is probably as loyal an Australian as is any man in this House. On the other hand, a certain weekly paper stated that Tojo had advised the people of Australia

to vote "No," inferring that those who did so were associates of Tojo and his army and navy. These two advertisements instance the lowest depths to which journalism can descend.

Electoral reform is to be discussed in the legislation to be brought before the House by the Government. Surely one of the many ways in which our Electoral Act could be amended is to give attention to keeping partisans away from the polling booths. During the Referendum campaign, electors who went to the polling booths to mark their ballot papers were met by partisans of either side who endeavoured to push into their hands "How-to-Vote" cards. If an elector got a card from a fellow who wanted him to vote "Yes," it was not long before he was given one from a man, or a woman, who wanted him to vote "No." It is a dreadful thing that voters should, within a few yards of a polling-place, be pestered by such people. It makes no difference to the average elector who has made up his mind, but it confuses elderly and infirm persons, and results in many informal ballot papers being lodged.

I hope that a severe penalty will be provided for anyone attempting to influence a voter at a polling booth. Surely the electors have sufficient intelligence to make up their minds before going to a polling place. If they have not, then their votes are not worth having. There is another aspect in connection with electoral matters and public meetings. We hear a lot about the "freedom of speech." It was one of Dr. Evatt's points in his Referendum proposals. At most political meetings, and at some public meetings called for the purpose of placing before the electors questions of public interest, we frequently get a crowd of hooligans who make it impossible for the majority of people to hear what is being said. It seems to me that freedom of speech, under present-day conditions, is "freedom of speech so long as you say what I want you to say." Such a freedom cannot be one-sided; it must operate both ways. I trust that very heavy penalties will be provided in legislation to deal with that phase and that they will be duly imposed upon those who interfere with the proceedings at any public meeting convened in the interests of the community.

Now that the people of Australia have given their verdict and have refused to grant

the Commonwealth Government the powers it sought, the responsibility of the State Government and State Parliament to prepare for the post-war period has become urgent. When Parliament met last Tuesday after the decision of the people had become known, I noticed a sense of added responsibility among members and a recognition of the fact that, as a result of the negative vote, there was a greater need for careful consideration of legislation placed before them. Personally I was pleased with the result of the Referendum. I have always been a federalist; I was never a secessionist and never a unificationist. For this State to be effectively controlled from Canberra has never seemed to me to be possible. The closer a Government is to the people the better government they get.

For the future prosperity of Australia it will be necessary for the Commonwealth and State Governments to work in the greatest harmony to bring about the development of our rural and secondary industries. The most satisfactory arrangements arrived at by the Premiers' Conference that has just concluded constitute an indication of the fact that there is every hope of the Commonwealth and the States working together for the benefit of the people as a whole. This will have a most important bearing on the future of Australia after victory is won. To me it appears that, for some time after hostilities cease, business will prosper because of the accumulated savings of the people, but the time will come when the continued prosperity of Australia will depend on what we can sell overseas and the capacity of other countries to buy our products. There can be no one-way traffic, and in the time to come we shall inevitably find that we can sell only to those from whom we buy.

A member of the Parliamentary delegation that visited Western Australia recently emphasised the fact that Great Britain from being the creditor nation, was now the greatest debtor nation. In the pamphlet that was circularised among members yesterday that point was emphasised and it was shown that Great Britain had invested £1,500,000,000 in securities in order to pay the United States of America for materials supplied by that country. There was a time when loan transactions were in terms of £10,000,000 or £20,000,000 a year, but those days are passed. As the visiting parlia-

mentarian I mentioned earlier remarked, there are now no idle rich in England. Every man had to work and therefore it became possible only to buy from those to whom sales could be made. Great Britain has been one of Australia's greatest customers over a period of many years during which she has taken much of our wheat, wool, butter and other products. If we are to enjoy any prosperity in the future it will be through knowing where we can best dispose of our primary products.

I was greatly interested in the speeches of my colleagues who represent the rural areas. That was particularly so when they referred to the difficulties under which the man on the land labours at present. I am greatly concerned about the future of the wheat, wool, meat, and dairying industries, as I fully realise what prosperity in those parts of the State means to Western Australia as a whole and particularly to the metropolitan area. If those engaged in developing the land north, south and east of the Darling Ranges are not adequately encouraged so that their operations may be successful, the effect will be felt in the metropolitan area. I am afraid there will be fewer brass plates in St. George's-terrace and certainly less employment at the port of Fremantle.

In my opinion the condition of the men on the land must be improved. Water supplies, educational and transport facilities and, if possible, electric current must be made available. It was fortunate for Western Australia and a great compliment to the Minister for Lands when Mr. Wise was appointed chairman of the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission. I know of no man more fitted for the position than he, and no man who would be prepared to make a greater effort on behalf of his own State. Secondary industries are necessary for our development and as the State progresses so these industries will increase in number and in importance. Our population is small. We have only 470,000 people spread over 900,000 square miles of territory.

Our greatest need is more people, and the rate of our natural increase is so small that, from that source alone, a change could not be expected for a great many years. I do not think many migrants will be available from European countries for many years to come. Certainly I think every man

and woman will be needed in Great Britain to make up for the human losses due to the war and to make good the destruction caused by bombing. I am not sure, either, that the granting of further benefits to induce larger families will be helpful to those in receipt of them, for experience has shown that very little effect has been noticed from such schemes in an increase in the number of children born. I do not know that the benefits, to which Mr. Parker referred this afternoon, would have any effect in increasing the number of children in families. It is a fact that the average number of children in what may be regarded as families of the less fortunate members of the community is greater than the number in the families of those more fortunately circumstanced. It does not appear to me that very much benefit arises from that aspect of any child endowment scheme.

Birth control is a matter I shall not attempt to discuss at this juncture. So much can be said both for and against birth control, but I certainly think that if we are to seek an increase in our population the best way to secure it is in the form of our native-born children. With that object in view I do consider that legislative action should be taken against the sale of contraceptives. Members know that, in view of the nature of the business with which I am associated, I appreciate just what that means. I am of the opinion that legislation should be introduced that would make the sale of contraceptives illegal except under an order from a medical officer of repute. That should be necessary before any such purchase could be made.

The question of population is one that has to be answered one way or the other. It will probably not affect those of us who are here this afternoon, but those who come after us will have a serious problem to deal with. Fifty years in the life of a nation is not a long time, and who can say what the position in Australia will be 50 years hence? An industrialised China with its 400 millions, India with 300 millions and Japan with 100 millions will some day want to know what is being done in Australia. The Atlantic Charter is a great ideal; it sounds well and reads well, but I do not know that there is any guarantee that the conflicting interests of Great Britain, the United States of America, Russia and China will run without

friction forever. As we build today, so will we answer in the future.

It is to be hoped that there will be no repetition of the tragic conditions under which migrants were brought from England under the Group Settlement Scheme. I think I met almost every vessel that brought those migrants to Australia and I cannot help thinking that we were let down badly by the officials at Home who were responsible for the selection of those people. On their arrival at Fremantle it could be seen that many of those settlers were of the unfortunate and underfed of the industrial areas and factory towns of the Old Country. They were sent here to undertake work on the land in the South-West. They were given an axe, an implement they had never handled before; they were told to chop down trees, the like of which they had never seen before and they were expected to do work that the average native-born Australian would not contemplate under any consideration. The only way—and this opinion was confirmed in a conversation I had with Mr. Ross, one of the Canadian members of the recent Parliamentary Delegation—is to make the conditions of the man on the land such as to induce other people of their own accord to come and settle in our State.

The establishment of secondary industries in our country districts should be encouraged so long as the conditions existing make it possible for them to be operated economically. It would, however, be very foolish to spend large capital sums on the erection of plants and then find that the cost production made it impossible for them to compete with similar industries more favourably placed. Mr. Thomson made reference to the proposal to establish a blanket factory at Fremantle. I do not wish to interfere with the industrial activities of Albany or injure the town in any way. Objection to this project has been taken in certain quarters as it is considered to be opposed to the policy of decentralisation of the Commonwealth and State Governments. If the interests concerned in this industry at Albany are not permitted to erect a factory at Fremantle, I am convinced that some other interests will do so, and then we shall have to continue what we have done in the past, namely, send to the Eastern States for supplies of blankets and send our good money away to pay for them.

Hon. A. Thomson: There will be plenty of blankets available after the war.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: Yes, but I am looking for directions in which the activities in this State can be increased.

Hon. A. Thomson: If that factory is erected at Fremantle, what becomes of decentralisation?

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: The hon. member cannot suggest that the establishment of a factory in a city of 25,000 people will be centralisation. Why, Fremantle has a population only equivalent to that of a suburb of Melbourne or Sydney. Unfortunately the Commonwealth Government has not been lavish in its war expenditure on factories in this State, and the industries we have established have so far not had an opportunity of proving themselves. The answer given to the questions asked by Mr. Seddon regarding the price and output of potash were not very reassuring, and one wonders what will happen to the Lake Campion plant when supplies of potash are available from other sources as in pre-war years. Still, I sincerely hope that we shall be able to produce a sufficient quantity of potash at a reasonable price to compete favourably with the imported article.

We also have the charcoal-iron industry. This is an industry whose future I view with some anxiety. I am afraid that it is not going to prove all that we hoped for. Again we can only trust that this plant will do all that is expected of it. Then we have the plant at Pieton for the distillation of motor spirit from wheat. It now seems that this plant will not be needed. Petrol supplies will soon be coming forward in adequate quantity, and I am hopeful that all the wheat we can grow will be made available for those who need it instead of being used for the distillation of motor spirit.

One other matter I would like to mention is bound up with secondary industry and the securing of employment for lads in trained occupations, and that is the apprenticeship question. If we are going to have secondary industries we must have apprentices and train them for the work. I suggest that the Government, the Arbitration Court and the trade unions might take some action in the direction of liberalising the conditions under which apprentices are permitted to operate. We at Fremantle have desired to make technical training available for as many apprentices as the law permitted. The other day we had vacancies for two lads. We called applications for the positions, and I was

astonished to find that there were 44 applicants. The result was that two boys received appointments and 42 were disappointed. In view of what is being done in the way of junior technical training, I wonder what is going to happen to those 42 lads in two or three years time. There seems to be no possible chance of getting them apprenticed to a trade, and I suppose they will have to accept work such as sweeping out a grocer's shop or something of the kind. The matter of liberalising the conditions for apprentices is one that certainly ought to receive serious consideration. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 12th September.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.16 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 31st August, 1944.

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QUESTIONS (7).

ESPERANCE JETTY.

As to Revenue and Expenditure.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Railways:

What was the revenue from and expenditure on the Esperance jetty for the year 1938-39?

The MINISTER replied:

	£
Revenue	9,563
Expenditure—	£
Maintenance	7
Operating (a)	375
Interest	2,530
	<hr/> 2,912

(a) the operating costs shown represent the wages paid to lumpers only and do not include supervision or shunting, for which figures are not separately recorded.

METROPOLITAN MILK ACT.

As to Producers Licensed.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What are the numbers of producers licensed under the Metropolitan Milk Act in—

(a) No. 1 zone?

(b) No. 2 zone?

(2) Also what is the number of licensed producer retailers in No. 1 zone?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied:

(1) (a) 108 as at the 30th June, 1944;

(b) 262 as at the 30th June, 1944.

(2) 41 as at the 30th June, 1944.

SWINE FEVER.

As to Incidence, and Use of Swill.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has the incidence of swine fever been entirely eliminated during the past 12 months?

(2) If not, how many pigs have been affected during that period?

(3) What amount of compensation was paid?

(4) Is the regulation prohibiting the feeding to pigs of foods, termed swill, still in operation?

(5) If so, has consideration been given to the lifting of this regulation, as much valuable pig feed is still being destroyed?

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