

Although it was anticipated that there would be a deficit last year of £186,808, the actual deficit amounted to £47,552. Had not a special supplementary grant of £628,000 been received on the recommendation of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, the deficit would have been £675,552. Revenue during the year amounted to £14,352,875, as against an estimate of £13,906,393, this being an excess of £446,482. The excess was made up as follows:—

	£	
Taxation .. ..	99,598	
Territorial .. ..	142,873	
Commonwealth Grants (exclusive of the special Grant of £628,000) ..	145,000	
Other Revenue ..	271,689	
	<hr/>	
	659,160	
Less Business Undertakings under-estimated ..	212,678	
	<hr/>	
		£446,482

Expenditure last year amounted to £15,028,427, this being an excess of £935,226 over the estimate of £14,093,201. The increase was accounted for by—

	£	
Interest .. ..	23,143	
Exchange .. ..	54,251	
Social Expenditure	106,435	
Other Public Works	12,218	
Business Undertakings .. ..	452,968	
Other Expenditure	301,832	
	<hr/>	
	950,847	
Less Expenditure over-estimated—		
Sinking Fund ..	£1,619	
Pensions .. ..	14,002	
	<hr/>	
	15,621	
	<hr/>	
		£935,226

This excess was mainly due to the re-establishment of peacetime activities; the increased cost of materials, and basic wage adjustments also being contributory causes. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and passed.

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

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

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 5.44 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 6th August, 1947.

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

## AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

*Section "B", 1946.*

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, 1946. This will be laid on the Table of the House.

## QUESTIONS.

### BIRTHDAY HONOURS.

*As to Recommendations to Home Office.*

Mr. HOAR (on notice) asked the Premier:

1, Were the honours conferred on Western Australian citizens, as mentioned in the Birthday Honours List published in "The West Australian" of the 12th June, recommended by the Labour Government?

2, If a decision regarding Birthday Honours was made by the Labour Government, on what date was such decision made?

3, If the answer to No. 1 above is in the negative, was any communication sent by the Lieut.-Governor to the Home Office as expressing the wishes of the Labour Government?

4, If so, on what date was the communication sent?

5, On what date did the new Government reach a decision as to who should be recommended for honours?

6, On what date did the communication go to London carrying the Government's recommendations?

The PREMIER replied:

1, No. "These honours were recommended by my Government.

2, I do not feel at liberty to disclose confidential information affecting the actions of the previous Government.

3, Yes.

4, 5, 6, Communications regarding honours are strictly confidential as between the Government, His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, the Commonwealth Relations Office and His Majesty the King, and no good purpose would be served by disclosing this information.

### PERTH CITY GAS.

*As to B.T.U. Standard.*

Mr. TRIAT (on notice) asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

1, What is the B.T.U. of Perth City gas?

2, Who is the chemist making tests?

3, Is Perth gas boosted with oil?

4, What is the gas B.T.U. before boosting?

5, What quantity of oil was used by Perth Gas Works for 1946?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 481.

2, Continuous tests by Standard Calorimeters.

3, (a) Part of plant only. (b) Oil is not used on main section of the plant processing Newcastle coal.

4, (a) With the process in use this figure is unavailable. (b) 550 B.T.U.'s. Not boosted with oil.

5, 750,000 gallons.

### SHIPPING, INTERSTATE.

(a) *As to Limitations and Effects.*

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

1, Are the serious limitations in interstate shipping which were experienced in this State during the war years still continuing?

2, Are shipping limitations still having prejudicial effects on Western Australian industries, including house building?

3, It has been reported that the change-over of Eastern States factories formerly engaged in war industries to peace-time production has been difficult and slow. Can he advise whether this is so, and if so, is it having any effect on Western Australia's requirements?

4, Can he give the House any information in connection with the overtaking of any lag in meeting our requirements from Eastern States which was due to war causes?

5, Is he experiencing the same cordial interest and helpful co-operation experienced by his predecessors in office, from the Shipping Control Board?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Shipping is still a difficulty in securing commodities from the Eastern States.

2, Yes.

3, I have no official information on this subject.

\* 4, Action has been taken to expedite supplies of many commodities. If the hon. member will indicate the specific items on which he desires information I shall endeavour to supply it.

5, The Shipping Control Board has been most helpful and co-operative to my Government.

*(b) As to Shortage of Galvanised Piping.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Premier:

1, Is he aware that several important industries, including the pastoral industry, need large quantities of 2 in. galvanised piping annually?

2, Is he aware that the inability to obtain 2 in. galvanised piping is a serious threat to the maintenance of water supplies and the watering of hundreds of thousands of sheep in pastoral districts?

3, Is he aware that in recent times the quantities of large-sized piping coming forward are negligible and the future for the important large sizes is very dismal?

4, Will he vigorously take up the question of large supplies coming to this State with the manufacturers in other States?

The PREMIER replied: I am aware that there is a shortage of 2 in. galvanised piping. I am also aware that it is having a serious effect in the pastoral districts, and that there has been a shortage of larger sized piping. This matter has been taken up with the manufacturers. I understand that the position is that they have been concentrating on  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. piping which is required for housing purposes. I have already made representations to the manufacturers and I will continue to press for additional supplies for the pastoral areas.

**RAILWAYS.***As to Return of A.S.G. Engines to Traffic.*

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

What change, if any, has been made by the present Government in the arrangements set down by the previous Government for the expeditious return to traffic of A.S.G. engines?

The MINISTER replied:

Owing to the fact that the Midland Workshops are employed to capacity, it has not been possible to effect any change beyond expediting work on the A.S.G. engines wherever possible, and this is being done.

**BUNBURY HARBOUR.***As to Commencement of Development Work.*

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

1, When were the Bunbury Harbour development plans first approved?

2, When was preliminary work in connection with the scheme commenced?

3, Was he correctly reported by "The West Australian" recently when it credited him with having made a statement at Bunbury to the effect that he had only lately heard about these plans for the first time?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 7th October, 1946.

2, February, 1947.

3, My remarks as reported in "The West Australian" are necessarily abbreviated. I was not reported as saying that I had "only lately heard about the plans."

**ALBANY HARBOUR.***As to Tenders for Dredge.*

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

When was Ministerial approval first given for the calling of tenders for the supply of a dredge suitable for the proposed harbour development work at Albany?

The MINISTER replied:

September, 1946.

**NEW CAUSEWAY.***As to Estimated Cost and Commencement.*

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

1, What is the total estimated cost of constructing the proposed new Causeway over the Swan River, including the cost of dredging?

2, When was approval for this undertaking first given?

3, When did actual work in connection with it first commence?

The MINISTER replied:

1, £566,800.

2, 20th February, 1947.

3, 21st May, 1947.

**EDUCATION.***As to Big Bell School Enrolments and Additions.*

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

1, What was the enrolment of the Big Bell School for the quarters ended September 1945, December 1945, March 1946, June 1946, September 1946 and December 1946?

2, On what date was the Public Works Department requested by the Education Department to prepare plans for additional accommodation at the Big Bell school?

3, On what date was Treasury approval given for the erection of additional accommodation?

4, On what date were tenders called for the work?

5, When was the contract let and on what date was work commenced?

The MINISTER replied:

1, September, 1945, 15; December, 1945, 47; March, 1946, 96; June, 1946, 112; September, 1946, 113; December, 1946, 113.

2, 14th June, 1946.

3, 20th August, 1946.

4, 8th November, 1946.

5, Contract let the 16th December, 1946; work commenced the 27th June, 1947.

#### ROAD BOARDS.

##### *As to Applications for Road and Plant Grants.*

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

1, How many road boards have so far applied for grants from the £192,000 made available by the Commonwealth Government for roads and road plant?

2, What is the total amount of the grants applied for by the road boards which have so far submitted applications?

3, How much of the amount applied for is for—

(a) roadworks;

(b) road plant?

The MINISTER replied:

1, (a) 22.

(b) 17 others seek information.

(c) Other applications are anticipated.

2, £67,400.

3, (a) No amounts specifically stated.

(b) £67,400.

#### NATIVE ADMINISTRATION.

##### *As to Terms of Reference for Inquiry.*

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY (on notice) asked the Attorney-General:

1, Have the terms of reference issued to Mr. Bateman for an inquiry into native affairs yet been published?

2, If not, will he please quote them to the House?

3, Was this inquiry suggested or recommended by the acting Commissioner of Native Affairs?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

1, No.

2, The reference to Mr. Bateman was as follows:—

The Government has decided that the position of native affairs in this State should be re-examined in the light of conditions which have arisen since the report of Mr. H. D. Moseley, R.M., in 1935. For this purpose, the Government would be glad if you would—

(a) make a survey of existing native institutions as defined in the Native Administration Act, 1936;

(b) advise as to the present and future value of such institutions;

(c) advise whether any new institutions are desirable and, if so, the nature thereof and the objects to be served by them;

(d) make such recommendations as may seem to you proper to advance the education and welfare of natives generally, including their employment and vocational opportunities;

(e) make such recommendations as may seem to you proper as to existing laws of this State relating to natives and any amendments thereto;

(f) inquire into and report upon such other matters, if any, as the Government may later desire to refer to you for your consideration.

3, The Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs was informed that, in view of the time which had elapsed since the report of Mr. H. D. Moseley, R.M., in 1935, the Government thought the time had arrived when a further survey of native affairs should be made.

#### NORTH-WEST.

##### *As to Passenger Transport from Broome.*

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY (on notice) asked the Minister for the North-West:

1, Is he aware that a number of passengers from Broome are unable to secure passages south?

2, If so, what does he propose doing to ease the position?

The MINISTER replied:

1, It is known that two passengers holding return tickets issued at Fremantle were unable to be accommodated southward on the "Koolinda" owing to the lateness of their application for berths.

2, If required, passages can be arranged on the next southward vessel, which is the "Kybra," leaving Broome on the 7th September. If the passengers prefer to travel by plane the boat fare will be refunded.

#### WAR-TIME CONTROLS.

*As to Honorary Minister's Attitude.*

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (on notice) asked the Honorary Minister:

1, In view of her statements reported in "The West Australian" during the election campaign that she would abolish wartime controls and regulations, will she enumerate the controls and regulations she has been able to abolish?

2, Will she give the House a list of controls removed by her or by the Government since the 1st April, 1947?

3, Does she consider it is desirable at this stage to remove control of materials necessary for building?

4, Does she intend to oppose the continuance of the controls and restrictions affecting dried fruits production and marketing and apple and pear marketing as she did before becoming a member of the Government?

5, Does she intend to oppose the control now existing by the licensing of potato growers, and registration of barley growers as she did during the election campaign?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

1, Most of such controls are under Commonwealth legislation.

2, Answered by No. 1.

3, 4, 5, Discussions on Government policy are at this stage premature.

#### PUBLICITY OFFICER, APPOINTMENT.

*As to Tabling Papers.*

Hon. A. H. PANTON (without notice) asked the Premier: Will the Premier lay on the Table of the House the papers dealing with the appointment of Mr. Clementson as Government Publicity Officer, including the contract made between the parties?

The PREMIER replied: Yes, I will have the papers tabled.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

*As to Representation of Workers on Royal Commission.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Premier: Is it a fact that the Government has refused a request from the organised industrial workers of this State for direct representation on the Royal Commission set up by the Government to investigate workers' compensation and related questions?

The PREMIER replied: Yes, it is a fact that the request was refused. The Government considers that all sections who are interested will have access to the Commission and will be able to place their views before the Commission.

#### HOUSING.

*As to Questions Expunged from Notice Paper.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Premier: Since the questions I asked yesterday in relation to housing have been expunged from the Notice Paper, is it his intention to reply to them?

The PREMIER replied: I assure the Leader of the Opposition that I had no part in having the questions expunged and they will certainly be replied to tomorrow.

#### COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Premier, Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

*Library.*—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Nimmo and Mr. Tonkin.

*Standing Orders.*—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hall, Mr. Sleeman and Mr. Rodoreda.

*House.*—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cornell, Mr. Yates, Mr. Graham and Mr. Styants.

*Printing.*—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Grayden and Mr. Triat.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Second Day.*

Debate resumed from the 31st July.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gaseoyne) [4.46]: I expressed regret yesterday that it was not possible for me to be present on the open-

ing day of Parliament and to listen to the Speech delivered by His Excellency and to the moving of the Address-in-reply by the member for Sussex. It is almost traditional that new members moving the Address-in-reply should receive congratulations and be given a patient and silent hearing. Having read the speech delivered by the hon. member, I do congratulate him, quite apart from the requirement of tradition, because it appears to me from a perusal of what he said that we have in the hon. member one who will make thoughtful contributions to future debates in this Chamber.

Yesterday, when taking the opportunity to congratulate new members, I mentioned that I felt there would be occasions when they would experience a sense of frustration in their efforts here. They will have many periods of disappointment at the slowness of movement within Parliament and administratively in connection with matters affecting their electorates and matters of some national importance. I would repeat that there is a big responsibility placed on members of Parliament to maintain and further improve the prestige of Parliament. This can be done only by assiduous care and attention to affairs national as well as to the affairs of individual electorates. I recently read a very thoughtful work by Peter Howard who was, for a lifetime, a political correspondent in the House of Commons. He said—

Once upon a time the private lives of members of Parliament set a standard for the nation. Indeed it was impossible for a man or woman with a spot on their moral character to hope for nomination as a candidate.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They get the spots afterwards now!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: This boils down to the point that the public life of any country depends to a degree on the private lives of those who run it. That is a very important approach to a Parliamentary career. If one is to give of his best in Parliament it is very important that he be jealous of the things which go to make an individual a man of integrity.

The Address-in-reply speech of any member is likely to be very different from a speech made on such a Bill as that which was dealt with last evening—the Supply Bill. For several centuries it has been the custom, particularly from the days of King Charles, who had many disagreements with

Parliament and had always to go to Parliament to get the wherewithal necessary to carry on, that grievances should be ventilated and expressed before Supply is granted. Although the sentiment was expressed by one member opposite last evening that it was an unusual happening that grievances should be ventilated or speeches made on the Supply Bill, it is not even an uncommon custom in this House, for reference to “Hansard” will show that on many occasions the tradition initiated at or before the time of King Charles is likely still to be observed in the legislative halls of Australia. I have had the opportunity of reading the Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, and I find that it savours of an anxiety to impress upon the people that there are tremendous difficulties and they need to forget many of the statements made in February and March last. It was easy then to be glib as to what would be achieved in a magical kind of way, but now we find that His Excellency's Speech reeks with excuses to the effect that war-caused difficulties are serious indeed. I will quote one—though there are many—pertinent paragraph to illustrate the point. It reads as follows:—

A satisfactory feature of our post-war economy is the rapidity with which discharged members of the Forces have been absorbed in industry. Unemployment is at a minimum and, unfortunately, the progress of many important projects and industries is delayed through scarcity of labour. As a consequence the community continues to suffer shortages which it is the constant endeavour of Ministers to rectify as rapidly as possible.

That paragraph suggests two things; firstly, it makes an admission that there was a strenuous endeavour—with much success—by the Government's predecessors in office to grapple with post-war problems. Secondly, it suggests an acknowledgment that there are war-caused difficulties and that, though some were surmounted, many were being grappled with successfully and many still remain. That is an interesting admission, as the Premier in his policy speech said, “It is no use saying there was a war.” The Minister for Education said, “The already worn-out excuse of war-time limitations cannot be sustained.” It is interesting to place side by side the present reactions of members of the Government and what they were pleased to say, to draw attention to the sugges-

tion that the Government at that time had no excuse because "It is no use saying there was a war." It is very interesting to weigh the remarks of the Attorney General last evening when he said that problems are more than ever present in a period which follows six years of war. He said—

No person who has any sense of values would possibly overlook the fact that there must be a serious dislocation of any country following a world war.

I entirely agree with him, but that does not measure well side by side with what was said at the time of the elections. We find, as to the problems that were very real at the time of the election, that the altered circumstances in the past four months—the discovery that there was a war—must give members of the present Government considerable concern. It must be acknowledged that following such terrible turmoil every civilised country is finding the greatest difficulty in history in returning to normal. The only question to which I wish to refer as an election aftermath is that of housing. I regret that I have not the information before me—although I know the answers—that the Premier intends to supply to me in answer to the questions that were passed over yesterday. The questions that were answered clearly show some of the misrepresentation on this subject during the election period. Perhaps of all subjects that were misrepresented the misrepresentation of the housing position was the worst.

In reply to my question yesterday the Premier disclosed the fact—which we affirmed but which they denied—that building costs in Western Australia were and still are cheaper than those in any other State. Although that fact is now presented to the House by the Premier, we find, in some of the advertisements used during the election period, statements made, not merely fallacious but entirely untrue. Comparisons were not made in any way but statements were made which suggested that Labour had a housing racket—those were the words used—and that prices had risen with Wise to an alarming degree. Of course the information that was provided as a basis for those advertisements and the manner of their presentation were false.

One of the most notable of those advertisements included what purported to be a

photograph of a house partly completed. In that advertisement it was suggested that there was a housing muddle, and the interesting feature of it is that the Government had only been in office 28 days when a photograph of the same house, taken in the same street, was used as a magnet for home-seekers, and to show that dwellings were being constructed. That building, in the same street, was used to show what the Government was doing. What an amazing set of circumstances! It was quite coincidental that the photograph used for that purpose was one taken to show that there was a housing muddle. It was a half-completed house, of which thank goodness there are still some in process of building under the contracts let by the Government's predecessors. I repeat that, of all the subjects misrepresented during the election campaign, housing was most misrepresented.

I have said publicly—and I repeat—that no State, from a standing start such as we had, has a better record of progress in the housing situation than that of Western Australia. I will quote a passage shortly, referring to the position in South Australia, which was looked up to as an example that other States might follow. In spite of their organisation preserved during the war, and even with their duplex houses, the record of housing in South Australia is not more favourable than ours. To show that the Premier regrets his own publicity—publicity for which he was responsible, publicity given even with his own photograph attached—and admits it was wrong, I will read what he said in Melbourne, published in the Melbourne Press of the 22nd June this year.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: We follow you round, Mr. Premier.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It reads as follows—

Mr. McLarty, the Premier of Western Australia, said that Western Australia had the lowest building costs in Australia. This was due mainly to two things. The Government had stricter control over the issue of building permits and the release of materials than any other State and it had a sound working arrangement with master builders for fixed prices for certain types of construction. These prices were never increased except when wages or materials increased.

The Premier went on to say that Perth had no slum problem, or that Perth's slum problem was not serious, and that the Gov-

ernment's policy was to concentrate on getting up new houses rather than to go on condemning old ones.

The Premier: That is a sound policy.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, but how contradictory of the advertisements that I assume were designed, authorised and issued by the Premier a few months before! It is very interesting.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think some of them were written by the Attorney General.

Mr. Marshall: Political somersaulting is nothing new to him.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I would refer next to the position in the much-vaunted State of South Australia and give to the House the reasons why South Australia should be held up as an example, but I have stated publicly—I repeat it—that South Australia was the only State that did not conform during the war period to the specific request of the late Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin, to discontinue building of all kinds so that artisans could be released for war purposes. From the evidence contained in the South Australian Housing Trust's reports, and particularly in that covering the 12 months ended June, 1946, I have extracted the following information. Appendix "A" shows that the number of houses erected during the years from 1939 to 1945, inclusive, was as follows:—

1939	..	..	..	..	290
1940	..	..	..	..	276
1941	..	..	..	..	118
1942	..	..	..	..	150

Members will notice the rise that took place during the worst of the war period.

1943	..	..	..	..	174
1944	..	..	..	..	316
1945	..	..	..	..	280

No Government, and no State, unless it had its building units and its aggregation of artisans retained intact, could possibly have been in a position to attain an increase in construction during these war years. I am certain that the Premier and those associated with him were as anxious as his predecessors in office were to see that the request of the Government of Australia, in the time of the dire extremity of this nation, was given effect to and that building operations should cease. I believe that course was in accord with the Premier's desires and his wish to do all that was pos-

sible in the defence of this country. I have sought information with regard to the different types of construction as between the States. The duplex home, which I notice is to be introduced to a considerable degree into our housing facilities in Western Australia, is the usual type constructed in South Australia.

I find that in that State—again I have taken the information from the Housing Trust's report of last year—the duplex type two-bedroom house involves an expenditure of something like £1,590, exclusive of the land, fencing and paths. The average over-all area of that type of house is 1,630 square feet, which runs out at a cost of £97 10s. per square. That cost is in excess of that entailed in building operations here irrespective of the fact that our homes are not duplex structures, and the main points of difference in this State may be stated. It is of interest to local authorities that they should know what they are. South Australia has concrete foundations placed on top of the ground in lieu of the excavation method employed here. The ceilings are 9 feet high as against 9 feet 6 inches high here. They are equipped with corrugated iron roofs instead of tiles. The omission of verandahs is another point while the rooms themselves are smaller in size than are ours. I have it on the authority of our Housing Commission that that type of house could be constructed here on a comparable basis, using the South Australian plans and specifications, for £92 per square. There is no doubt that the specifications of the South Australian homes would render them sub-standard according to the requirements of many local authorities in Western Australia.

With regard to sewerage connections it is essential, if we are to meet the statutory requirements in Western Australia, that each home shall have a separate drain; but in South Australia the duplex homes are usually connected up to the sewer by one party drain. These are differences that not only vary costs but also affect standards. During last session I believe the member for Subiaco, who is at present an Honorary Minister, made a statement about the poky rooms that were being provided here. I would point out to her that those rooms are larger than the ones provided in the South Australian duplex homes catering for three



bedrooms—according to their plans compared with ours in Western Australia. In an endeavour to be wholly fair and certainly temperate in my criticism on that point, I shall leave that subject entirely and simply be prepared to watch with interest the progress that the present Government is about to make. I hope that, in spite of their inability so far in connection with housing and other problems to show any sort of improvement on the progress achieved by their predecessors in office, Ministers will be able to do so.

I wish for the sake of the people of the State and for the sake of Ministers themselves that they will be enabled by improving circumstances to achieve the greatest peak in the target they could possibly reach in home construction in Western Australia. If there is anything that we on the Opposition side of the House can do to assist the Government to achieve its objective in that respect, it will be readily available if Ministers will be sufficiently fair to acknowledge that the difficulties were there in spite of endeavours they made to ignore them. In further reference to war matters it can safely be said that the anticipation of the war ending was something that could not be pegged down to any particular date by anyone. Although during the election campaign much was said about neglect in preparing and planning for peace, members will find in "The West Australian" of the 8th August, 1945, a report of a speech made at Fremantle by Mr. Chifley in support of Mr. Beasley's candidature. In the course of the Prime Minister's remarks he was reported as follows:—

Mr. Chifley said that he was not prepared to say how long the war was likely to continue. There were many factors that could bring it to an earlier end than the most optimistic could expect; there were many other factors which could prolong it, but next year we should reach a victorious conclusion.

In the leading article of "The West Australian," dated the 1st August, 1945, comment was made upon the change of Government and it stated—

Mr. Wise has been called to the leadership of his party and the Government in difficult times. For the moment the war in the Pacific is holding many problems in abeyance, but if the war ends during his premiership it will release a multitude of political problems.

Let members note the date—the 1st August, 1945. Russia entered the Pacific war on the 9th August of that year and the headlines in the issue of "The West Australian" for the 15th August, 1945, set out that Japan had surrendered. It is remarkable how quickly events that framed the history of the world moved during those few weeks. No-one would have dared to express the view, even on the date when Russia entered the war on the 9th August, that hostilities would end before possibly the lapse of an additional two years.

If members wish to read something both illuminating and entertaining they should refer to the speech delivered in the House of Commons on the 16th August, 1945, by the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill. In that speech, delivered within 30 hours after the surrender of Japan, members will find that Mr. Churchill said that the nation was ready for many years of war. Although enabled to demobilise many of its personnel in the Forces, it was prepared for a continuance of hostilities till a successful conclusion was reached. I do not propose to weary the House by quoting from the speech at length, but in it they will find the story of the atomic bomb, the plans that were made and when they were made, and, in short, a wonderful summary that discloses how no-one, however he might desire such a happy consummation, could possibly indicate that there was not to be a continuance of hostilities for many months or, in fact, for years. At that time Australia had 700,000 men in the Armed Forces.

What a different proposition that was to the position that obtained with the cessation of hostilities in the 1914-18 war. In the earlier war we had 167,000 men in the Armed Forces, most of them overseas. During the recent war, even with the tremendous accretion in population, there were 700,000 men whose discharge by any country or any Government presented a serious proposition. For many months before the surrender of Japan the Government of the day pleaded with the military leaders of the Commonwealth for the release of engineers and architects to prepare plans and prepare the way for the artisans on their release from the Forces. The Premier and those associated with him will find in the Premier's office not merely pleadings, but evidence of continuous

pressure exerted on the military authorities to release, in anticipation of the cessation of hostilities, all of the engineers, architects and skilled workmen who, in our view, were required a year before the war ended for employment on plans for peace. I hope, if the Premier and those associated with him do find interest in the reading of the matter, that they will some day mention that that was the case.

We were very concerned with plans for engineering projects which were being developed, for reticulation and conservation of water, and for the construction of buildings. Engineers and architects were not available to prepare the plans for these projects; and, unfortunately, it took many months to secure their release because of the objection of commissioned officers to releasing those men for return to civil life, as their release might have meant a reduction in the status of the officers. It is unfortunately a fact that the discharge of many men rested on the decisions of people who had the say as to the number of men they would control. Those were matters which gave the Government of the day considerable concern, but ultimately the Government's efforts bore splendid results. I am not one of those who, now the war has ended nor at any time during its continuance, believed that we were fighting for some ill-defined Utopia which would bring tremendous benefits and an altered way of life at the conclusion of hostilities.

I am afraid that far too many people anticipated a kind of golden age of plenty awaiting them after the war. Members will recall that more than once I expressed the opinion from the opposite side of the House that we should take a more realistic view and I said I would never tolerate the idea that the country was fighting for some kind of illusory new order. It is important to point out that the nation fought to prevent its own extinction and that its main reward is its survival. We have triumphed over evil and have retained the standards and privileges which we still enjoy. I would like to emphasise our motive, because cannot we all recall the days, particularly the days in the early part of 1942, when people were fleeing from this city, people who would have sacrificed everything they possessed to be guaranteed immunity from invasion by the enemy?

Was not that the position in February, 1942? We should be conscious of the fact that, instead of fighting for some illusory new order or some ill-defined Utopia, we were fighting for our privileges and standards. We are indeed fortunate to be here and to have those standards and privileges preserved to us. If we view the impact of the war on this nation, we get a picture which shows that we were in a serious plight; that our national debt has been tremendously increased; and that the spectre of death for years haunted almost every family. Yet we have this satisfaction, that the great sacrifices made by those who did not return, by those who did return but are mutilated and maimed, and by those who are whole, resulted in a great triumph over wrong.

If we regard the matter from a broader focus, I think we can say that Australia emerged from the war, so far as her home circumstances are concerned, perhaps less mutilated than any other country engaged in the war. That, indeed, is something to be thankful for. I am not particularly concerned with the enormity of the national debt owing to the war, provided that the cost of the interest and sinking fund necessary to honour the public commitments is reasonable when compared with the national income. Whether it will necessitate ultimately an absolutely altered viewpoint of national finance, no-one can say; but it certainly means that the nation must gird itself for an effort in work in all spheres in order to meet the great responsibilities facing us.

Whether the Government would acknowledge it or not, I think in fairness it should concede that the months of the demobilisation were exceedingly difficult for the Government. Tens of thousands of men and women, unsettled in mind, had to be absorbed in the community. So far as the previous Government is concerned, I can simply say that those who were charged with the responsibility for absorbing those men and women worked under great strain day and night to make the merging of war circumstances into peace the easier. It will be remembered that overnight there was a demand for the cessation of control. I have heard the Honorary Minister speak on that subject both during and since the war. Business was required to be as usual; controls that had become irksome had al-

most overnight to be considered as unnecessary. All these matters created many difficulties for the Government, which had to achieve something during the months of emergence from war conditions to those of peace.

I wish to refer to a subject that members of this Chamber know has been a hobby of mine for many years past—the economic stability of the British Empire as affected particularly by rural production. We have in that subject the opportunity for concentration of thought that can only have good results if we wish to make any contribution at all to an improvement in the circumstances of the producers of Australia in their efforts to meet international requirements. We emerged from the war in very altered circumstances so far as concerned our rural commodities and rural production. Costs mattered little in very many industries, prices mattered not at all if supplies had to be delivered, uneconomic production loomed up everywhere during the war; industries were subsidised by the nation and prices for commodities in demand but which were not being produced in the older countries reached tremendous heights.

Australia today is faced with the task of getting back to normal conditions and with the necessity for curbing her enthusiasm for commodities which war buoyancy made profitable. Australia must make her rural industries pay, and the basis to begin from is her rural industries shorn of subsidies and of the short-term increase in prices for many commodities. It is necessary in my view to analyse this matter from the international aspect, the aspect of world food shortages and particularly, as far as it can be gauged, the combination of increased demand and increased prices, as otherwise these will give rise to a false outlook as regards our agricultural settlement. It is noteworthy to draw attention to the main political and economic factors which will influence the ultimate position of trade in farm products.

We must face the changed financial status of Britain, now a debtor nation, with no overseas credits and great difficulty in obtaining them. Britain would have to avoid overseas purchases and this will have a bearing on her own agricultural policy, as distinct from her desire to perpetuate her war-developed agricultural industries,

which meant so much in sustaining her during the conflict. If Britain perpetuates to a great degree her capacity to produce food, as she did during the war, it will have an influence on some industries, but fortunately not Australian industries, which benefit from Empire preference. The second point that I think has an effect on the future of Australian rural production is the capacity of such countries as France, Italy and Belgium so to organise their economic structures on a basis that will enable them to take part in international trade. There is, too, the German position which is particularly significant. With her diminished industrial powers, and with her attention turned to rural production rather than to industrial production, Germany will cease to be a market for many of the products which she formerly imported. The list of world trade which I have gives the percentages of imports of rural production into pre-war Germany, and shows the possibility of an impact on Australia's production of many commodities which are exported to a considerable degree.

The Attorney General: Russia's wheat production may be a prominent factor.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is a factor, but unfortunately I have not, in any of my researches in past years, been able to get a clear picture of Russia's wheat-producing capacity. The member for Guildford-Midland, who has a knowledge of wheat merchandising and of the wheat trade generally, will, I think, admit that if we had reliable figures appertaining to Russia and China we could more easily measure the obstacles in framing a world agreement in regard to wheat, because those two countries have been and still are immeasurable factors. It is known that Russia, in one year, produced as much wheat as Canada and the Argentine combined. If Russia does not decide to raise her nutritional standard, and becomes a world exporter, the international outlook for wheat could be altered tremendously.

I think, too, that the changed financial status of India may bring about a progressive policy of nutrition. If that be so, it is quite a possibility that India will become a market for much of Australia's production, and particularly for such commodities as wheat and those associated with the dairy industry. I think that India presents great prospects, and that one of the

early actions necessary by Australia—all States combining with the Commonwealth—is a quick survey by those alert enough to see the prospects of exploiting the betterment of nutritional standards in India and the Near East. There is, too, affecting international trade in rural products the changed financial status of South Africa and also Canada. Both of those countries emerged from the war as creditor nations, and one has not to think very long to realise what a difference their position can make to Australia.

Canada, as a creditor nation, will not be so anxious to export commodities, but rather to industrialise herself and to continue to exploit the opportunities presented to her by the war. She will be apt to disregard land settlement policies which she fostered in the past. The changed financial status of these countries can have an important bearing on future prices within the continent of Australia. The urgency for the export of their goods has considerably diminished.

Another point, too, is that concerning the level of freight rates. If shipping companies and organisations are anxious to collaborate, they will be forced into the position of giving special consideration to the freight rates obtaining to transport Australia's primary products overseas. With rising costs it is very vital that freight rates be viewed from the aspect of their levels as at 1939 rather than as at 1945. These things will have an important bearing on our capacity to continue in the successful occupation and production of many of the farming lands of this State.

But overshadowing all these things is the problem of how the United States of America will use her tremendous financial and economic resources. Without the aid of financial and technical assistance from that country in reinstating and re-establishing Europe, and in reinstating the industrial and economic plans of the European countries, their reconstruction will be very slow. Unless the Government of the United States realises the responsibilities attaching to it, in making its financial resources available to internal Europe, there will be, in my view, a possibility of such bitterness and such retardation within Europe that the United States will go down in history as a nation that

not merely failed to accept its opportunity, but failed miserably in its responsibilities! If the richest country in the world is not prepared to recognise its responsibility to use its wealth in re-invigorating, particularly the central countries of Europe, the prospects of peace must be affected, and so must the external and internal stability of Europe.

I fear that I could weary the House with this subject, but I suggest it as one which might well serve to give to members of this Chamber food for thought and opportunity for speeches. It gives more than opportunity for speeches; it gives the chance to take action based on thoughtful contributions and suggestions. There has been no period in the history of this nation when greater attention was necessary to what careful and thoughtful planning will make as a contribution for future generations. I think, therefore, that courageous financial policies, greater international trade, the will to work and the spirit of understanding, rather than suspicion, are essentials in the whole plan. All of these things are invaluable to Australia's future. The stability of existing industries, the encouragement of new ones and the maintenance of subsidies will all have an impact on many industries that we have become accustomed to consider as being soundly established.

We need look at only one which is affected by the supply of world fats. The fats position is the most serious in the world's outlook for food. Never in recorded history has it been so serious. That, of itself, suggests a serious threat, unless it is properly examined, to the dairy industry of Australia. For example, whale oil, which is now being produced at the 1939 figure of £24 a ton, is capable of being made into margarine at 4d. a lb., and that is a commodity so palatable and attractive as to be almost indistinguishable from butter. All these things are merely expressing thoughts which, in the future, will have an important bearing on many of Australia's industries.

I will conclude my remarks on what might be regarded as a parochial note. Members have not, for many years, heard me mention one of the most important industries of this State—the banana industry. It will take me only a moment or two to traverse, briefly, its history. In 1923, an attempt was made to grow

bananas in Carnarvon in an arid area entirely different from their natural habitat. It was a locality with a 6-inch to 8-inch rainfall whereas in their natural clime they require 90 inches. As an officer of the Department of Agriculture, I saw the first attempt made to establish the industry on the banks of the Gascoyne. Because Carnarvon was in the same latitude as Bowen, it was thought that bananas must grow at Carnarvon, in spite of the 70 inches difference per annum in rainfall. That attempt failed. I was the officer responsible for discovering the plants that were dumped in the river. They were diseased and could have constituted a threat to any possible revival of the industry.

Some plants remained through the years, but it was not until 1931—and the records can be verified by the Minister for Agriculture—that, acting on my recommendation, 500 plants were imported from Queensland. In 1932, some 4,000 plants came over. The history of the industry since then has been that some of the business people of the district itself have had, uppermost in their minds, doubts as to whether the industry could possibly exist. No private bank or big firm contributed a shilling to its establishment. One or two storekeepers, and some local people with faith in certain persons in the industry, made their contributions, but the banks contributed nothing. They advanced not a penny until they found that the men had assets and something which was tangible. The number of permanent banana-growers today is 90, and the number of casual growers—that is, those on seasonal production—is 23. The area under bananas on the Gascoyne River is approximately 270 acres, and the anticipated output for the next six months is 16,000 cases. The anticipated planting for this year is 35 acres, and the peak production figure of the last six or seven years is 24,000 cases.

I raise this matter on this occasion for a specific reason. There is, in the development of post-war agriculture in the other States, an expansion of tens of thousands of acres for the planting of bananas. I expect an influx into Western Australia within the next two years because of the improbability of the population of the Eastern States consuming the production of those States. That gives rise to the possibility of dumping in Western Aus-

tralia, which would be detrimental to the industry in this State. Having to some extent shown an interest in the development of the industry, which has so far produced almost £500,000 of wealth for Western Australia, I say to the Government that I expect from it a continuation of the interest that its predecessors showed in it.

It is an industry which has no parallel in the world—bananas grown under irrigation. The only other possible comparison is that of the industry in the Canary Islands where the plants are partly grown under irrigation. Bananas at Carnarvon have been produced in the drought years without a spot of rain falling on the plants, which, as I have said, require in their natural habitat 90 inches of rain. This industry has brought to the district, in an area where 15 to 20 sheep used to feed, 90 families of Australians. It is my intention later in the session to bring down legislation of a most protective character, protective to the limit that Section 92 of the Constitution will permit, to ensure not only that dumping from the Eastern States will be rendered difficult but that every opportunity will be given for the industry in this State to progress.

**MR. PERKINS** (York) [5.47]: At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate you on your elevation to the high position that you now hold in this House. I have already congratulated you privately, but take this opportunity of doing so in public. I am rather surprised that members of the Labour Party have been so thin-skinned—if I may put it that way—on the question of election propaganda. I am amazed that so much exception has been taken by members of that Party in this House—during this session—to the election propaganda of other Parties, when the severity of criticism in Labour propaganda, in many instances that one can think of, has run to much more extreme lengths than anything quoted so far against other Parties in this House.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We have not quoted half of it yet.

Mr. PERKINS: While I deprecate untruthful or exaggerated election statements, from whichever Party they come, it is little use the pot calling the kettle black, and I am doubtful whether the Labour Party can be held up as an example in this matter as far as its election propaganda is concerned.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It would make that statement much stronger if you could give a single example from the last election.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not intend to delve into it as I do not think it would serve any useful purpose, but I do wish to express my surprise at so much exception being taken by the Labour Party when it is common knowledge that no Party is entirely blameless in this regard. I personally think the Labour Party is less able than other Parties to take exception to what was done during the election campaign. I come next to the exception that has been taken to the tying up of State and Federal politics. I believe it is impossible to keep them entirely separate, in view of the fact that they overlap at so many points. Whether or not members of any Party would wish to keep State and Federal politics in watertight compartments, I think the public—when all is said and done the public make the final decisions in these matters—do mix the two together. That has occurred in both the Federal and State elections recently held. I do not think it can be objected to, and certainly members of any Party in either sphere are entitled to point out how far they are responsible for actions that have been taken in their own particular fields. There is this overlapping of policy, and in Western Australia I think it is difficult for the Labour Party entirely to dissociate itself in the public mind from industrial troubles occurring in the Eastern States.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Tell us why?

Mr. PERKINS: Western Australian Labour sends its official representatives to both industrial and political movements in the Eastern States.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Are you sure of that?

Mr. PERKINS: I am perfectly certain of it, and the interjector knows it is true. When we find shortages of essential goods produced in the Eastern States, due to industrial troubles caused by union bodies on which industrial labour in Western Australia has a voice, the public of this State are entitled to ask what representations have been made by the relevant bodies in Western Australia in order to obviate those industrial disturbances.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: It is a pity that you do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. PERKINS: In many instances, so far as the public knows, little action has

been taken to influence those unions in the Eastern States.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Your lack of knowledge is terrible.

Mr. PERKINS: The Leader of the Opposition has referred to the many difficulties that this situation has created in Western Australia, and I do not think I need stress them. As an outstanding example we have the shortages met with in the housing industry. It is well known that such difficulties have existed for a considerable time and we are not likely to see the position entirely rectified until there has been a great improvement in the production in the Eastern States of certain essential commodities. One item of policy to which reference might properly be made is the introduction of the 40-hour week. I believe many people other than members of the Labour Party regard the 40-hour week as a desirable objective but it is open to question whether the proper time to introduce a 40-hour week is when we are short of nearly all essential items.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The time is never opportune.

Mr. PERKINS: In recent statement from the Eastern States it has been clearly indicated that unless workers in industries in which the 40-hour week has been granted are prepared to work overtime it will involve a one-eleventh less production of those commodities.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They said that 50 years ago when we asked for the eight-hour day.

Mr. PERKINS: There have recently been indications that such a reduction in supply is taking place. The reduction of supplies in the housing industry is one item that has been mentioned, and the housing position has repercussions on many other industries. If the unions that have been responsible for pressing most strongly for a reduction of working hours to 40 per week were told that their members would be prejudiced in obtaining various essential commodities that are in short supply at present, they possibly would view the situation in quite a different light. Whether that question has ever been properly brought home to those people, I am in some doubt. One would think that in a period when commodities are in short supply, not only the general public but also the workers immediately en-

gaged in industry would consider this particular aspect. Perhaps it is difficult for the persons actually concerned with the reduction of hours to take a broad view of the whole situation, but one would expect the leaders of the movement to give the workers a clear lead. That clear lead, however, has not been given by any great number of Labour leaders.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What do you want them to do?

Mr. PERKINS: In justice to the Prime Minister, I must mention the statements by him that have indicated the dangerous position into which he fears Australia is drifting. Some very good statements have also been made by leaders in New Zealand, but there are far too few leaders of the industrial unions or of political Labour who have been prepared to take the risk, if I may so express it, of jeopardising their own positions by adopting a sufficiently statesman-like attitude.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Have you ever read what Comrade Thornton said?

Mr. PERKINS: If he is one of the hon. member's leaders, Heaven help the movement! I have been leading up to this point that many of us have for a long time entertained fears as to where the present drift in Australian finance is likely to land us. Statements recently made by the Prime Minister indicate that we may expect a depression. Many of us had hoped that sufficient machinery would be set up to obviate the recurrence of a depression on the scale of which Australia has had experience.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We have not got one yet.

Mr. PERKINS: But we have been warned by the Prime Minister that we may expect one. I have grave fears as to where we are heading. The surplus spending power in the hands of the people of Australia continues to increase. In speaking of surplus spending power, I am referring to money that would be expended if the goods and services were available to spend it on. In a period when we should expect production to increase in order to balance that surplus spending power, the relation between available goods and services and the spending power in the hands of the people should be improving rather than becoming worse. Yet all the statements being issued by financial institutions and made by leaders of the

Commonwealth Government seem to indicate that the position is serious. From our own observations, too, we can readily believe that the production of many essential commodities is not improving; in fact, in some cases it appears to be getting worse.

I think most economists agree that any system of price control should be used only in an emergency as a bridge between a period when, for any extraordinary reason such as war, a large surplus of spending power would inevitably be built up, and the period when, under more normal conditions, production would increase and balance the spending power. Surely, then, it is reasonable to expect at this stage after the conclusion of hostilities that there should be some building up in the level of production.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I should like to hear the Speaker on that point.

Mr. PERKINS: Controls were continued in order to prevent prices from soaring to absolutely unreasonable heights. Under any system of price control, it is impossible for the prices commission to see that prices are kept strictly fair as regards the relationship between one commodity and another and to maintain a proper balance between essential and luxury articles. There is a tendency to be rather easier on the price-control of luxury articles than of essential goods and services, which bulk so largely in the determination of the basic wage as well as in the lives of the people generally. There is a natural tendency for firms to concentrate on the production of articles that are luxuries or semi-luxuries, on which a larger margin of profit can be made than on the production of essential goods. There is even a tendency, due to the very heavy taxation rates now operating, for some firms to mark time, more or less, and for their executives to avoid the further worry to themselves that an increase of production would cause, the value of which extra production would be largely offset by their having to make heavier contributions to taxation revenue.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They should have their businesses taken away from them.

Mr. PERKINS: I suggest that the hon. member advocate that policy on the hustings when he gets an opportunity.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I shall do that, too.

Mr. PERKINS: In any event, we are running into a very difficult period indeed.

Many of us expected that, with this lapse of time after the conclusion of hostilities, we would be much nearer than we are to balancing production and the supply of goods with the spending power of the people. Actually, as I have already stated, the position is rather worse than it was. I hope that our worst fears will not be realised and that eventually production and supply will be balanced not by the very unjust expedient of a vicious spiral of prices and a measure of inflation in Australia, such as has taken place in other countries where mis-government has occurred. It is possible for this to happen in Australia unless we are wisely guided by our leaders, and unless there is willingness on the part of all producers to increase production and thus bring about a state of affairs where the goods and services available will equal the money in the hands of the people. I do not think I need say anything about the undesirability of any measure of inflation, which would upset not only financial relationships, but also the economy of the nation.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: So would deflation.

Mr. PERKINS: There is no danger of deflation just at present. The danger is all from the other side. I think the Address-in-reply is the occasion when some of these extremely dangerous national trends should be discussed by members. I desire to take this opportunity to mention my fears in this connection and my belief that it is the duty of leaders of industry, whether they be employers or employees, trade union officials or persons in any position of influence, to direct their attention to increasing production. Whatever shortages exist can only be supplied by increasing production. All sorts of means of re-distributing goods and services available may be employed, all kinds of rationing systems introduced, but the only way properly to satisfy our people is to increase production to the point which I have already mentioned.

Mr. Reynolds: We will have another depression like the one in 1929.

Mr. PERKINS: The hon. member's leader in the Commonwealth Parliament has suggested that a depression is coming. Mr. Chillee said quite definitely that there was danger of another depression.

Hon. A. R. G. Ilawke: That is something different.

Mr. PERKINS: Apparently his fears are based on such a depression because of the paucity of production of certain of our essential commodities. One can easily see that a depression could occur and I do not think I need stress that point. The production of one industry is the raw material of another industry. If we allow the extreme left-wing unions, such as the Iron Workers Union, to hold up the production at the Broken Hill Co.'s works at Newcastle, and if we allow the extreme left-wing members of the Miners' Union in the Eastern States to hold up essential coal production there, it will mean that we shall have a diminishing quantity of raw materials for our industries in Western Australia.

Members are aware what is taking place in our industrial establishments. We have the Welshpool tractor industry held up because of shortage of essential materials from the Eastern States; we have body-building works held up because they cannot obtain iron sheets; we need buses for transport, we need school buses and materials for the rehabilitation of our transport system generally. All of these things are held up because of the shortage of materials that we need from industrial establishments in the Eastern States. Members must realise that the diminishing supply of these essential materials from the Eastern States must eventually throw men out of employment in our State.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why not make them in this State?

Mr. PERKINS: That is a very bright suggestion! The member for Fremantle knows that it is absolutely impossible to manufacture some of those essential commodities economically in Western Australia.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We should make our own iron and steel.

Mr. PERKINS: The member for Fremantle knows that that is impossible. In order to do what he suggests, it would be necessary to establish such an industry on a large scale basis. Such industries are now established at certain points, and I am very surprised indeed that any member of this House should advocate that Western Australia should become an entirely self-contained unit. I have just been listening to the Leader of the Opposition, who is the leader of the member for Fremantle, advocating a better approach to world affairs.



and a wider conception of international trade, and here we have a member suggesting that Western Australia should be a self-contained unit! I submit that that kind of argument does not make sense.

I point out again that the output of one industry is the raw material of another industry; and unless the men employed in the basic industries of Australia are prepared to do their part it is possible that unemployment will be created at remote points in Australia. Such unemployment, when created at one point, would have a snowballing effect, and goodness only knows what the eventual result might be. The only way out of our difficulty is to increase production, and it is not right that the ear of the public should be tickled by people, who should know better, with suggestions that the result can be achieved by some other means. I was interested to hear the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition on wheat production. I could hope that the Minister controlling the Commonwealth Department of Commerce and the prominent officials employed there shared the view of the Leader of the Opposition in this Parliament.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. PERKINS: Before tea I was making some comments on the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition concerning wheat production. I said that I wished certain Federal Ministers and permanent officers of the Federal Department of Commerce held views more akin to those of the Leader of the Opposition on that subject. For several years we have been hearing forecasts from both Federal Ministers and permanent officers of that department that we would shortly see a very serious slump in wheat prices. I can remember that about two years ago we were told that unless something was done rapidly to organise the wheat industry, it would be too late because the then existing price could not possibly continue. However, since then there has been a rise of about 5s. a bushel; but we are still hearing forecasts that the wheat prices are going to slump.

I am one who believes that in times of high prices it is desirable to put something by in order to tide us over the more difficult times that may occur in the future. But I do not believe that a very serious slump is close at hand or just around the corner, as

certain officers have forecast. This question of wheat prices opens up a very wide field indeed. It is to the benefit of wheat producers and the people of Australia as a whole that the international price of wheat should be kept at as stable a level as possible; because obviously whatever we do within Australia regarding the international stabilisation of prices must be very seriously affected by what happens to the international price of wheat. If there is any very serious slump in international wheat prices and in Australia we try to keep the internal price paid to the producers at a payable level, it will be necessary to interfere with the internal economy on farms by some arbitrary restriction of production if we are not going to build up an absolutely unmanageable surplus in Australian production.

We cannot control international prices to any degree without setting up some kind of international organisation, which does not seem practical politics. It must be fairly obvious that if an attempt is made to control the price of wheat within Australia and no attempt is made to control the prices of other primary products produced on wheat farms, then in the event of a slump in prices of those other products there will be a tendency for a concentration to be made on the production of wheat. The position in the past has been that when the international wheat prices have fallen the international prices of other products have also fallen. If the prices of other products fall on the international market and there is no stabilisation scheme in regard to them in force in Australia, they will fall to unpayable levels and the tendency on the farms will be to pay greater attention to the production of wheat. So actually a very heavy strain indeed would be put on whatever fund it was possible to build up to provide for the internal stabilisation of wheat prices.

Therefore it is of very great moment both to the wheat producers and to the economy of Australia generally that international prices of wheat and other primary commodities should be kept as stable as possible. Members will probably recall that at the worst period of the depression, between 1930 and 1940, when the wheat price at sidings in Western Australia was as low as 1s. 8d. per bushel, the price being paid to wheat producers in the European consuming countries was never less than about 8s.

a bushel. In every one of those European consuming countries the price to the producer there was kept far above the free international price of wheat, the price that was paid for the wheat which was exported from Australia to those European consuming countries—or any other consuming countries for that matter.

Of course those countries had various systems and legislation which provided for imposts on the wheat being imported in order to bring the imported wheat up to the level of the home produced wheat. It seemed to the producers in Australia at that time that if it was possible to divert the energy of those producers of wheat in those European producing and consuming countries to other forms of production, it would be possible very soon to deal with the apparent over production of wheat that existed in the world at that time. But the position then was wholly artificial and for one reason or another it was necessary for those European countries to make their economy as self-contained as possible. So they adopted the policy of producing as much wheat as possible in order to avoid damage to their internal economy.

We heard many statements from world leaders that were endorsed by all political leaders in this country along the lines of the Atlantic Charter—or the Four Freedoms as we knew them. One of those Four Freedoms was to provide in effect for much greater freedom of trade between the nations of the world. I submit that if that policy could be carried out, most of the difficulties we have experienced in regard to slumps in international prices for primary products would be very greatly reduced indeed, if not entirely eliminated. But there seems very grave doubt at present as to how many of the ideals outlined in the Atlantic Charter are going to be translated into practice. I am afraid, very little! The difficulties that Britain is now facing, which the Leader of the Opposition referred to a some length, show very clearly how far we have fallen short of the ideals of the Atlantic Charter.

Recently, in the Commonwealth Parliament, a considerable amount of debate took place on the Bretton Woods Agreement. I have read quite a deal of literature on that agreement and, as I understand it, the reason prompting it was to set up a kind of international bank or exchange which would

do the same for international trade as our ordinary banking system does for the various exchanges which take place between the people living within our own national boundaries. It was, in effect, to provide for the freer exchange of international goods and services as required by the various people of the world. That was a very worthy idea but it does not seem to be working particularly well. Certainly we seem to be drifting back into the bad old position that existed prior to the war, when countries were striving to be as self-contained as possible. We were really retarding progress and getting away from the benefits which we had come to regard as being obtained by a proper division of labour, and which achieved such an outstanding improvement in our internal economy. Therefore I think that all producers of primary commodities should be concerned about this trend in international affairs.

If the idea of nations striving to make their economy as self-contained as possible is again to become the general policy of many countries, then I am afraid we will see once more the difficulties which followed the awkward period between 1930 and 1940. It is hard for us in Australia to suggest any policy to reverse that trend. Obviously, in international affairs, the Commonwealth can play only a minor part compared with other nations, particularly the United States. I think that many of us are extremely disappointed that the United States of America has not taken a more realistic view of where its policies must lead if it persists in its attitude of restricting trade. If it does not amount to anything else, it must result in restriction of trade.

Mr. Marshall: Would not that affect its internal economy?

Mr. PERKINS: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: It is affecting it now. America has 3,000,000 unemployed and expects to have 6,000,000 by the end of the year.

Mr. PERKINS: It will affect the international economy of every country because obviously each time a nation places restrictions on international trade and upsets the flow of commodities it causes repercussions and means that there is a state of continuous flux in the economic affairs of that nation. It appears to me that it is liable to produce the same unsatisfactory sort of economy

which existed in many countries prior to the war. I was particularly relating my remarks to wheat production, and I very much want to make the point that, so far as wheat prices are concerned, although we are accustomed to think of 5s., 6s. or 8s. a bushel as being very high prices for wheat in Australia, such prices are, judged by what is paid to the producers of wheat in the great consuming countries, very moderate. When our producers were receiving only 1s. 8d. a bushel at the siding, the Governments of these European consuming countries found it necessary to pay their wheat producers 8s. or more per bushel for the wheat they grew.

If a kind of world economy could be evolved whereby these European nations which are able to produce perishable food-stuffs of one kind and another—milk, fruit, eggs and other foods commonly termed by medical people protective foods—could go in for that type of production, we in Australia could produce the other basic foods, such as wheat, much more cheaply than would be possible in the European countries, and that would be to the benefit of both peoples. We could concentrate on the production of those foods with which we are well equipped to deal, and that would enable the consuming countries to concentrate on the protective foods, which would ensure a higher standard of living for their people. That would be a distinct benefit to the consuming nations and also to the Australian producers of wheat, wool, meat and other primary products. It would, also of course, be of distinct advantage to the Australian economy as a whole. I did want to make that point, because I fear that far too many people in Australia fail to realise that during the difficult period when wheat prices were very low here the amount paid in the great wheat-consuming countries was several times what was received by the producers in Australia.

Touching on a couple of rather more domestic questions, I would like, first of all, to congratulate the State Housing Commission on making such a very good job of the difficult problem confronting it. It has the unenviable task of allocating the limited supplies of materials available at the present time among the many people who need them so badly. As far as I am able to judge, a reasonably good job is being done. Of course, anomalies will occur, but I think there is not much cause for dissatisfaction. I want to

touch on a matter, the full significance of which many people do not appear to realise. Reverting to the difficult period between 1930 and 1940, our primary producers were then receiving very low prices for what they were producing, and that, in turn, caused a great deal of financial hardship in the country areas. It was impossible for many people—if any—to improve their standard of living to any great extent. Western Australia was particularly hard hit because in the earlier period, following the 1914-18 war, much of our outer wheatbelt country and a considerable amount of our dairying country was only in the developmental stage.

During the period of good prices which then existed the money received went back into the development of the properties and not much was spent on the improvement of farm amenities. In the period from 1930 to 1940 one would have expected amenities to be installed had there been more money available to the primary producers. That is what happened in other States at an earlier period, when, after the pioneering work was finished, good prices were available and many farmers were able to improve their amenities. Since pre-war there has been an improvement in the finances of most of our farmers and there is evidence of anxiety to improve living conditions, but that, unfortunately, has coincided with a shortage in the supply of many materials. We cannot do much about it in some respects, but I think materials will have to be allotted for this purpose.

The Housing Commission has to hold some balance between the needs of the metropolitan area and towns and those of the country districts and I think it is necessary to allot a reasonable quota to the country areas if we are to encourage our farmers to stay on the land and carry on their production. I know there are many desperate cases in the metropolitan area, but there are also many farmers and their employees living under bad conditions. Many farm houses would, if they were in the metropolitan area, be declared unfit for human habitation. They would be condemned by the local authorities. It is only natural that farmers should try to improve their living conditions, and if some encouragement to that end is not given there will be a tendency for them to drift to the metropolitan area where numerous other attractions are available.

During the period from 1930 to 1940, and even earlier, there was a tendency to employ only single men on farms. For a long while I have considered that to be a great weakness in the organisation of our rural community. It has had bad effects and has made living conditions more difficult for the farmer. It has given the farmer's wife a great deal of extra work to do in cooking for perhaps two or three men in addition to her own family. It has not been satisfactory from the point of view of the men concerned. It is only to be expected that young men will at some stage desire to marry and have families of their own, and I am afraid that in far too few instances was there suitable housing available for them on the farms. Consequently during the period before the last war the farming industry lost many good men, particularly to the Goldfields, where working conditions were better.

It is now almost impossible to obtain single men for farm work, as there are many other avenues open to them in the metropolitan area and elsewhere, and they tend to gravitate away from the farms. I do not blame them for that. There has been considerable demand on the Housing Commission for permits to build homes on farms to accommodate married men, and such a demand is likely to be intensified. I hope it is, because until the men required to work on farms can be properly housed that industry will not reach a satisfactory state. If we are to maintain production and develop our farms to the maximum possible extent, so that Australia may play her full part in feeding a hungry world, it is vital to do everything possible to gear up production on farms and elsewhere to the highest pitch.

I do not think Australia's record in both secondary and primary production since the war is one of which we can be proud. I have already referred to production in secondary industries, but, in the case of our primary industries, we have not done particularly well. Since the war there has been some increase in wheat production and this year the figure is likely to be improved. In other directions the figures do not compare favourably with those of the pre-war period. One of the most important limiting factors on farm production is shortage of labour. It is unreasonable to expect that any great number of single men

can be induced to go back to the farms under present conditions, and a healthy development would be to employ more married men on such work. That policy would have many social advantages. The Minister for Education knows how difficult it is to provide adequate educational facilities in country areas. If we can provide a greater density of population, by employing more people with families in the rural areas, it will then be easier to organise school facilities to serve such districts.

One domestic question to which I desire to refer is that of water supply. We have recently had from the Government some announcements on the comprehensive water scheme. In country areas there are divided opinions as to the reticulated water scheme. In some districts the communities are clamouring for it, and in others they say they do not need it. There is one area south of Cunderdin, the residents of which have signed a petition requesting that they be not supplied with any reticulated water scheme. They say they have sufficient water supplies already. I think the wishes of such people should be respected. There are surely enough requirements on which to spend available Government finance without forcing upon some people something that is not wanted. I consider that the people actually on the job should be the best judges of what they need.

On the other hand, people in some areas are clamouring for an immediate improvement in water supplies. For instance, only this morning I received a petition signed by 129 ratepayers of Bruce Rock asking that the mains be extended to that centre from Merredin. As members will realise, in many wheat areas the rainfall has been quite sufficient to bring the crops along nicely, but has not been heavy enough to fill the dams, rock catchments and other natural catchments in those areas. The dam that supplies the town of Bruce Rock is only one-third full and, on present indications, the people in that centre will be on water restrictions by October. Quite likely the Government will be hauling water by rail from Merredin to Bruce Rock by the new year. Thus the position there is very serious. I hope the Government will be able in the near future to obtain some pipes for putting in that extension. If 17 or 18 miles of large-sized pipes were

laid in the first section, a smaller pipe could be used to carry the water the rest of the way and tide the people over this difficult period.

I mention these facts to show the varied conditions that exist in the country areas. While I am aware that plans are in hand to deal with the water supply position in a big way, I believe that, in regard to more urgent cases, it should not be necessary to wait until there occurs a period of recession, or whatever name may be applied to it, when it would be deemed desirable to instal water schemes to provide employment because of slackness of other employment generally. We should not wait until then to effect some big improvements.

Mr. Triat: Are you yourself in favour of a comprehensive water scheme?

Mr. PERKINS: I consider it is necessary to make a survey in order to ascertain where a water supply should be provided. The only survey made so far has been along the lines of where it was hydraulically possible to send water, but no survey has been made to discover where the water is required by settlers, and that information is equally essential as is the survey to ascertain the hydraulic possibilities. To force any facility on people when they say they do not need it is merely wasting national resources and some such investigation as I have mentioned is very necessary.

However, I raise the other point as to the need for catering for some of those places where water supplies are urgently required. At the west end of my electorate, the mains are in poor condition and the quantity of water coming through in normal times is unequal to the demand. Members will have seen the very fine market gardens now being conducted on the outskirts of York. At certain times of the year, quite a large proportion of the green vegetables used in Perth comes from those gardens, and the gardeners for a portion of the year depend upon water from the Goldfields scheme. It is very important indeed that the pipes should be adequate to meet domestic as well as gardening needs in those areas. No doubt the Minister is well in touch with these matters, but I have mentioned them to give members an idea of the complex nature of the problem in just one part of the State.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Government upon having appointed a commission of inquiry into the railways. The transport system presents one of the most difficult problems with which the Government has to deal, and unless a considerable improvement can be made, the effect on the economy of the State may be extremely serious. I believe that the member for Irwin-Moore will have something to say about the transportation of wheat.

Mr. Triat: What about the transportation of superphosphate?

Mr. PERKINS: That also is bound up with the problem. Unless we can improve our transport system so that it will be able to deal with essential commodities and convey the wheat to the port within the year following that in which it is produced, it will not be of much use producers carrying on with another crop. Unless the transport system can handle the crop in the current year, it will be necessary to re-allocate essential material from the common building material pools to provide storage for the excess wheat that cannot be conveyed to the port. Naturally the present high price of wheat cannot be expected to continue indefinitely, and therefore it is most desirable to sell our wheat as quickly as possible, not only that it may be made available to feed a starving world, but also that there may be obtained for the producers as good a price as possible. From whatever angle the problem may be regarded, it is most desirable that our wheat should be conveyed to the port as quickly as possible.

If the wheat is not transported to clear the bins for the following harvest, materials normally used in the building programme—galvanised iron, timber, etc.—will have to be allocated to the country in order to provide increased storage for wheat. Actually, all we are doing is putting off the evil day, because some time or other our transport system has to deal effectively with the carriage of our essential commodities. In any event, I consider the Government has made a good start by instituting this inquiry. At least, whatever action is taken, the Government, the members of this House and the people of the State will be as well informed as possible of all the problems involved.

**MR. NEEDHAM** (Perth) [8.10]: I desire in the first place, in common with other members who have preceded me in this debate, to tender to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your elevation to your very high office. I feel sure that in anything you may do in your position you will worthily uphold the traditions of the Speaker's office so well known and so well established in the Parliaments of the British Commonwealth. I also feel sure that while you occupy that position you will follow the splendid example of your able predecessor and deal impartially with members and with the subjects on which you have to rule. I also join with members in the chorus of congratulations to our friends opposite who occupy the coveted positions of members on the Treasury Bench. I am sure they will acquit themselves well, as far as their abilities will allow them, in the carrying out of the responsibilities of their offices.

I particularly congratulate the Honorary Minister on her elevation to Cabinet rank. She also, I feel sure, will be assiduous in the discharge of the duties appertaining to her responsible position and will carry them out in the same way as she discharged her duties while a private member occupying a seat on this side of the Chamber. Already she has acquired the Ministerial ability to evade direct questions; so far as she has gone, she has proved herself an apt pupil in that respect. I also desire at this juncture to congratulate my leader on his eloquent speech this afternoon when speaking on the Address-in-reply, and particularly on his references to the international situation. At the present moment we see but little prospect of an immediate improvement in the economic condition of the world today.

It has been truly said that the world is now in a worse position, in a sense, than it was during the war years. During that period there was the agony of mind associated with the effort to overcome or stem fanatical Fascism. But, as I have said, in a sense the world was never in such a bad position as it is today. In 1940 and 1941 Britain's stand was the means of saving the world for sane Government. Had it not been for that stand, I venture to say we would not be assembled in this Parliament today, nor would we be enjoying our present freedom. In spite of the fact that that little island alone faced the world against ruthless tyranny and the worst enemy that history

has known, in her present day of trial and distress she is not getting much assistance. What with the dollar greed of America and the obstinacy of Russia, it is hard to say when or how she will emerge from the economic slough in which she finds herself.

I wonder whether, after all the sacrifice of human life and the agony and devastation that have followed two global wars in the short period of a little over thirty years, it is all going to be in vain, and that we shall not achieve the target which was aimed at—world peace. I have often wondered whether it would not be possible to bring about one tithe of the co-operation between the great powers that existed during the war years. It is most remarkable that when the enemy was knocking at our door there was a unity of purpose, a unity of thought, and a unity of action which, if followed in peace-time, might save the world from destruction. However, we must do all we can and hope for the best in this terrible trial.

I will not attempt to follow the somewhat involved speech of my friend the member for York, particularly that portion dealing with the dangers of inflation and a probable depression. At one stage of his speech he predicted that a depression would follow our current situation if it were allowed to continue. He quoted what Mr. Chifley said in this connection, and in the next breath told us there was no immediate danger of disaster to our wheat industry—the more wheat we produced, the better. All I can say about the danger of inflation is that it must be admitted. I would add that we would be in even greater danger of inflation had it not been for the masterly way in which the Commonwealth Government has handled the financial situation during these trying years.

The member for York also referred to the 40-hour week and the effect it would have, if granted, on our national development. I am not at all alarmed about that, Mr. Speaker. The matter is before the Arbitration Court and I am prepared to stand by whatever that Court decides. I have watched very carefully all the criticism of the case for a 40-hour week in industry and I find very little difference between the arguments against the 40-hour week and those that were adduced when, as a youth, I heard people speaking against a

reduction of working hours first from 60 to 54 a week, then later in life from 54 to 48 and finally from 48 to 44. The same arguments were used all along the track. The danger to the national economy, the flight of capital from the country, and all the stock arguments that were then advanced are being advanced again today. I have no fear that the nation will not survive the adoption of a 40-hour week. It will survive the 40-hour week just as it survived a reduction of working hours from 54 to 44.

I come now to the question of the last election and its results, and the first thing to which I would refer is the shocking condition of the electoral rolls during the March campaign. I venture to say that I have contested more elections—both Federal and State—than any member of this Parliament; but I have never found the rolls in such a shocking condition as they were on this occasion. I am not going to blame anyone for that. I do not blame the officials of the Electoral Department. They carried out the system prevailing under the Act. I do not believe in attacking any officer of any department from my position in this House, because these men have not an opportunity to reply; but I suggest that one of the first things the Government should do is to revise the whole of our electoral machinery. It wants revision badly.

I do not remember any election I have fought at which so many people were wrongly struck off the roll. I am not alone in making that statement or in holding that contention. The two gentlemen who opposed me in the Perth electorate had the same opinion as myself and expressed it publicly at the declaration of the poll. Some people were to blame for their names not being on the roll; I admit that. But others had their names removed through no fault of their own, and there were more of them than of the other kind. Some electors who had been on the roll for 10, 15 and 20 years and had never left their domiciles had their names removed and many of them did not even receive a note of objection to their enrolment. It would be a wise thing to provide for an overhaul of our electoral machinery, and one reform I would like to see effected—and I have advocated it for some time—is the establishment of co-terminus electoral boundaries.

Mr. Mann: Why was that not done 14 years ago? You had been in power for 14 years and nothing was done.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Are you biting already?

Mr. NEEDHAM: It has not been done because two authorities, Federal and State, are concerned. My friend from Beverley is in the unusual position of being in power at the moment. We will see what use he makes of the opportunity during his short period of power.

Mr. Fox: He has not much power.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I suggest that we should try to institute co-terminus boundaries. That is to say, the boundary of a State electorate should be the same as the boundary for the State sub-division of the House of Representatives. That system obtains in two or three of the Eastern States. I think it prevails in Victoria and Queensland, and it has a double advantage. When an elector makes a claim for enrolment his name is placed on the Federal and the State rolls at the same time. This saves printing and other expense. Another reform that should be brought about is that when the department objects to the name of some elector being on the roll, the letter stating the objection should be registered in order to make sure that the person concerned receives it.

The last election resulted in a change of Government, but I would say deliberately that that change of Government was effected by members of the present Government party making statements that were not altogether true. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the present Government found its way to the Treasury bench through false pretences.

The Attorney General: Every Government always does!

Mr. NEEDHAM: The member for North-East Fremantle made an even stronger statement. He said that the Government found its way to the Treasury bench by means of fraud. I will content myself by saying that it did so through false pretences, because the members of the Government party told the people on the hustings that they would do certain things they knew to be impossible of fulfilment. They ignored altogether the state of affairs that existed as the result of six years of war.

Mr. Marshall: They knew all about it.

Mr. NEEDHAM: They made the people believe that once they got on to the Treasury bench, all the difficulties that had been occasioned by war would be removed. The election of March last was not fought on what I might call rival policies—that is to say the policy of the then Government as against that of the Opposition. It was fought entirely on the difficulties that the people were then suffering and still suffer, despite the change of Government. That suffering will continue for some considerable time and this Government cannot prevent its continuation. One would have thought, after reading the propaganda of the gentlemen who are Ministers today, that the housing problem would be settled immediately they were re-elected; that houses would come up, like mushrooms, overnight.

The Premier and his deputy, in their speeches, made light of the difficulties with which the then Government was confronted, and ignored entirely the situation brought about as a result of the war. They made out that the problems relating to soldier settlement, power, education, health, hospitals, nurses, etc., would all be fixed up in a short time. As I have already said, the position has not improved in any way and, before I resume my seat, I shall give instances of where the Ministers now admit the difficulties facing them, but which they entirely ignored when on the hustings. The leading article in "The West Australian" of the 2nd April, the day after the Premier assumed office—the 1st April, as I said yesterday, was a very appropriate day for the Government to take over because, if its members were not April fools they succeeded in making fools of the electors who put them there, as events have since proved—mentioned that the Government was pledged to getting things done. We will see what it has done since being elected.

The present Ministers, when private members on the hustings, spoke airily of the disabilities due to long years of war. It was the difficult task of members on this side of the House, when seeking re-election, to point out to the citizens the reasons why there was a housing problem, and why there were shortages of schools and hospitals. It was because the manhood of this country, some 700,000 of them, had

been engaged not in production but in a work of destruction. Those men—some of whom I am glad to see here tonight, because they have survived the ordeal—could not be building houses when they were trying, with their bodies, to save us from the atrocities of a Japanese invasion. But the present leaders occupying the Treasury bench ignored that trouble. They did not tell the people of those difficulties. They brushed them aside and said, "Put us on the Treasury bench and you will have plenty of houses, hospitals and schools, and doctors, nurses and dentists galore." We will see later how they got on with that.

Hospitals and houses were to be built overnight. The hospitals were to be manned at once; ample nursing staff was assured. Soldiers were to be settled immediately on the land, and additional school accommodation would be found. Also, there would be a plentiful supply of power for industry. Those, in essence were the promises contained in the policy speeches of the two leaders of the Government. But that was before the election!

The men who made those promises knew perfectly well that they could not be accomplished. The fact is that all the disabilities under which the people were labouring were ignored or flatly denied. The administration of the Labour Government was blamed for all the troubles being suffered by the people. The member for York tonight suggested that we on this side were somewhat sensitive about certain criticism levelled at the Labour administration during the last election campaign. I can assure him that I am not in that category. I have been long enough now in the public life of this country to have got over any sensitiveness I might have had. But there is a difference between extravagant statements, which I admit are sometimes made by both sides, and what I might call remarks amounting to false pretences, and incorrect statements.

The Attorney General: What about forgery?

Mr. NEEDHAM: Their chickens are now coming home to roost! The charges of ineptitude levelled against the Labour Government have been found to be groundless. I want to emphasise that point. It is now admitted that the shortage of materials for



housing, and other conditions beyond the control of the State Government, were responsible for the lack of homes, and the promises of an early remedy are impossible of accomplishment. There is a difference between the statements made by the leaders of the Government during the election campaign and those made since they have become Ministers of the Crown. An important question dealt with during that time was in connection with power.

We were told that when the breakdown in power supply occurred last year it was the fault of the Labour Government. That was emphasised in the Press and on the platform. The Labour administration was charged with having failed to make provision against such a contingency. It was charged with failing to realise that there would or might be a break-down in the power supply, and with failing to make provision for such emergency. The new Minister for Works has repeated that charge in his warnings that cuts in electricity may be necessary this winter. It was bad enough to make that charge—which was unfounded—during the election campaign, but it was considerably worse of the Minister for Works to repeat it when he had inside knowledge of his own department. A repetition of that charge is less excusable today following, as it does, a comprehensive statement by the Chairman of the Electricity Commission, Mr. Dumas, in which he set out that tenders were let for the new power station at South Fremantle in September, 1945. He is not a member of the Australian Labour Party, but a responsible officer under the State Government. He said that tenders were let for the new power station in September, 1945, 18 months before the election, yet members opposite accuse the Government of that day of not having prepared for an emergency that might arise in our power supply.

Those tenders were let only a month after the surrender of Japan, in August, 1945. There was little time lost between the surrender by Japan and the Government headed by the present Leader of the Opposition getting to work on the important question of power supplies. Mr. Dumas goes on to say that the only reason why the new power station cannot be completed within the contract period is that conditions in England over the last two years

have rendered it impossible for the contractors—not the Labour Government—to carry out their promises. Everyone knows the industrial conditions obtaining in Great Britain since the cessation of hostilities, and Mr. Dumas has told us officially that it is owing to those conditions that the contractors cannot fulfil their contract.

Mr. Marshall: Members opposite have known that all along.

Mr. NEEDHAM: They know perfectly well that the present position is not the fault of the Labour administration, but of things entirely beyond its control.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Hear, hear!

Mr. NEEDHAM: The date of the contract of that huge undertaking is proof positive—if such proof is needed—that in the preceding six years of global war, with an all-out war effort, while the result of the war was still incalculable, the Labour Government carried through the preliminaries for this undertaking to meet future power needs. My leader, at the close of his speech, quoted a statement by the then leader of the British nation, The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, about the uncertainty of the end of the war. At that time no-one knew when the cease-fire would be sounded and hostilities ended. Notwithstanding that uncertainty the Labour Government led by Mr. Wise, and charged with ineptitude by the gentlemen opposite, had the foresight to make provision to increase our power supply so that there would not be a repetition of the difficulties faced when supplies ceased a while ago. The composite or coalition or fusion Government—call it what one will—now has a chance to overhaul transport, to get the railways operating efficiently and to expedite the house-building programme.

Mr. Marshall: I will bet they cannot.

Mr. NEEDHAM: "The West Australian" realised after the election that there were difficulties in the way of this Government, just as there were in the way of the preceding Government. Even that newspaper had some doubt as to the ability of the present administration to move more effectively than its predecessor. Since the elections were held I have had the responsibility of introducing several deputations to different Ministers of the Crown. The organisations represented by the deputations wanted cer-

tain things done. While the Minister to whom the deputation was introduced lent a sympathetic ear, he told the deputation that the position was very difficult and that there were shortages of labour and materials.

The Attorney General: They were difficult; you asked me to define the word "obscene."

Hon. A. H. Panton: And you could not do it.

The Attorney General: He could not, but left it to me.

Mr. NEEDHAM: At any rate, Ministers did not say that when seeking the suffrages of the electors. Then again I introduced a deputation to the Minister for Works. It was representative of the Western Australian Progressive Educational League. The request placed before the Minister was for sewerage connections for the schools. The Minister was very sympathetic.

Mr. Marshall: No doubt!

Mr. NEEDHAM: He pointed out to the deputation the difficulty with regard to materials and labour. I took a deputation to the Minister for Health, who was asked to provide more medical and dental attention at the schools so as to safeguard the health of the children. Here again the hon. gentleman was very sympathetic. He asked the deputation where he could get nurses or dentists or doctors. The same Minister when, as a private member of the Legislative Council, he spoke on the hustings, did not put that question to the electors. Rather did he make out that there were quite a number of doctors, nurses and dentists whose services should have been availed of.

Mr. Marshall: Pretending to be Mandrake. What boloney!

The Minister for Lands: You should know about that!

The Premier: Yes, you are an expert on that subject.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The Minister for Education was also approached by a deputation that I introduced. It also was from the Progressive Educational League. He, too, was sympathetic with the requests made to him.

Mr. Styants: There is one thing about it; you got plenty of sympathy.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Practically all the deputation asked for had been promised by the Minister's predecessor in office.

The Attorney General: And were those promises carried out?

Mr. NEEDHAM: He adopted the same attitude as the other Ministers and referred to the lack of materials and so forth. He mentioned the lack of everything that was necessary to make our educational system better.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And even quoted the war.

Mr. Marshall: And this two years after the war had terminated. We will give the Government war all right.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Next I wish to deal with the policy speech delivered by the Premier as leader of the Liberal Party. In the course of his remarks the Premier said—

One of the Liberal Party's prime objectives will be to give this State a practical Government that will get right down at once to meeting the needs of the people.

Mr. Marshall: That is boloney all right!

Mr. NEEDHAM: The Premier continued—

We are not going to spend our time in following political theories or trying to secure party advantages but in seeing that people get houses and material for houses; that people on farms and in factories and in businesses get the requirements that are needed to extend their production; that the householder and the housewife can go into a shop or warehouse and get what they want, and that our money in the Savings Bank or in our pay envelopes can be converted promptly and at a reasonable price to meet our requirements for a satisfactory and expanding standard of living.

Mr. Styants: Who said that?

Mr. NEEDHAM: The present Premier.

The Premier: It sounds like Churchill, does it not?

Hon. A. H. Panton: And he did not get the same result, did he?

Mr. NEEDHAM: At any rate, that was included in the Premier's policy speech. There is another extract that is worth reading so as to remind the hon. gentleman just what he said and how he and his colleagues misled the people. I say they wilfully misled them.

The Minister for Lands: It is not like you to say that.

Mr. NEEDHAM: In the course of his speech when dealing with his party's objectives, the Premier said they included—

A long-range policy of progress and expansion based on the Liberal plan for population, power

and water. A practical Government to overcome housing and other shortages and provide good management of the people's business.

In spite of that, questions submitted to Ministers during the past few days show that the housing problem is just as difficult as it was when the Premier was making that statement of policy. He may reply, in common with his colleagues, "Well, what chance have we had of doing anything in the four months during which we have been in office." I know that will be the stereotyped reply and they will say, "Your people were in office for 14 years. We have been in office for four months." It must be remembered that included in those 14 years was the transition period from war to peace and that is the time when trouble ensued. There was no difficulty in wartime. At that stage there was plenty of money and work, too, was plentiful. Everything was satisfactory from that standpoint. It is the transition period that causes the trouble. No-one knows better than the present Premier what the difficulty was, and so I say that he and his colleagues wilfully misled the people. The hon. gentleman went on to say—

Federal aid and a progressive policy for education, including smaller classes, suitable buildings and space, improved training and conditions of teachers, encouragement of technical, domestic science and kindergarten training, school libraries and adult education.

Further on he said—

Adequate regional and district hospitals and nursing service, including a college block system hospital, training and adequate remuneration and conditions.

These were some of the things that he said the Liberal Party stood for. All this was very promising—but nothing has eventuated.

The Premier: After four months!

Hon. A. H. Panton: They are coming up the ladder.

Mr. Styants: At any rate, Ministers have committed themselves to something.

The Premier: Yes, that is so.

The Attorney General: Nothing achieved after four months! What pure drivell!

Mr. Marshall: Ministers will probably not be in office long enough to permit them to accomplish much.

The Attorney General: We will do more in 14 years than the Labour Government did.

Mr. Marshall: The people are regretting their decision even now.

Mr. NEEDHAM: We know what those armed with a little brief authority are capable of doing. When the Premier was speaking at Pinjarra in his own electorate in connection with a request for the provision of a high school, he was reported as having said—

They must remember, however, that there was an acute shortage of both labour and materials, and money must be found for hospitals, housing and urgent transport needs.

That was what the Premier said in Pinjarra about a month after the general elections. That was an entirely different attitude from that adopted by him as Leader of the Liberal Party when speaking at that centre before the elections. The claim that the Government has not had much time in which to do things will not stand, for the reasons I have indicated. Under ordinary conditions, following upon a change of Government, I would not criticise Ministers as trenchantly as I have done but would have allowed them time to find their feet. I have quoted from the policy speech to indicate the unfairness of Ministers' utterances during the election campaign, so as to allow the country and the House to know exactly what was said.

Mr. Marshall: Deliberate distortion and not honest.

The Premier: You paragon of virtue!

Mr. Marshall: It was practised designing.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Then there is the case of the man who came to scoff and remained to pray. Let me contrast what the member for Katanning said in his capacity as Deputy Premier with what he said as Leader of the Opposition. In "The West Australian" of the 18th July of this year there appeared a report of a speech by the Deputy Premier at Geraldton and it contained the following reference—

Speaking as Minister for Industrial Development, Mr. Watts said there were a number of industrial ventures in the State both small and large which had been financed and assisted by the State Government.

He did not say which Government had rendered that assistance, but continued—

The majority of these ventures were today making some contribution towards the production of essentials in the State and in some degree for the export trade. One or two of them were somewhat ambitious and only the future

would reveal what would be the result of this ambition. Chamberlain Industries Ltd., which was to engage in the manufacture of agricultural tractors, promised to make a great contribution to the development of Western Australia.

When travelling to Geraldton the Minister broke his journey at Carnamah where a deputation waited upon him, and during his reply the Minister is reported as having said—

His Government had inherited a legacy of overcrowded schools and dismal educational conditions. It had been decided to erect a new school on the site given by the road board and plans were being prepared for the erection of three class rooms, head teacher's office, store-room, etc. The project was listed on the works programme for the current financial year and he expected the building would be under way within twelve months.

In another part the Deputy Premier was reported as follows:—

Mr. Watts accused the Government of having failed to provide equality of opportunity in education. The anomalies in regard to living-away-from-home allowances must be removed, and the privilege of dental and medical attention extended. Children obliged to remain on correspondence classes will be provided with periodical opportunities for contact with other school children. We will enter into urgent negotiations with the Commonwealth Government to provide funds for the extension of education.

Those statements made by the hon. gentleman from time to time differed entirely from what has happened since he became a Minister. The present Government is unique in two respects. In the first place the Cabinet includes four lawyers. I do not think that has ever happened before in the history of the State.

Hon. A. H. Panton: There should be nothing wrong with the Bills; no bad drafting.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The Government is unique also in the fact that one of the Ministers is a woman.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It includes also a couple of bush lawyers.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The presence of a woman in the Cabinet is all to the good. I believe the Government has established a record as far as the number of legal members is concerned, and it certainly has established a record by including a woman in the Cabinet. This is a fusion or coalition Government.

The Premier: I was waiting for that.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Its members will never be able to agree upon any particular matter of legislation. They are neither fish, flesh nor good red herring. It will be a case of regress, not progress. Members ought to bear in mind that when the Deputy Premier and Leader of the Country and Democratic section in the fusion Government made a statement in Geraldton, he said that if the policy of his party was not implemented, he would walk out of the Government.

Mr. Marshall: Then he will walk out at any time now.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I have never known of reform legislation to emanate from a fusion Government.

The Attorney General: A fusion Government was good enough to run England during the recent war.

Mr. NEEDHAM: We have had fusion Governments in the Commonwealth arena. Early in the history of Federation there was the Reid-McLean Government, followed by the Deakin-Cook Administration.

The Attorney General: That was before I was born.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Is that so?

Mr. NEEDHAM: Last and by no means least, we had the Mitchell-Latham Government in this State, and members do not need a very keen or powerful memory to recall the activities of that fusion Government.

Mr. Marshall: In the Commonwealth sphere they could not agree.

Mr. NEEDHAM: If the days of miracles are not over, it will be a miracle if anything in the shape of progressive legislation emanates from the present fusion Government. In conclusion let me paraphrase some lines from the famous poet Moore. He wrote—

You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,  
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

The Attorney General: Lovely!

Mr. NEEDHAM: Of whatever legislation this fusion Government may bring down, we shall be able to say—

You may praise, you may flatter the Bill if you will,  
But the blight of the fusion will hang round it still!

On motion by Hon. J. T. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

## COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

*Council's Message.*

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

**BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1.), £3,100,000.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.*

**Legislative Assembly.**

Thursday, 7th August, 1947.

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

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

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

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

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The MINISTER replied:

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

(b) 23rd July, 1947.

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

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

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

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

10.8 grains per ton of ore crushed.

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

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

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

The MINISTER replied:

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