

It might be said that I should not mention this matter, or that I should nominate the firm concerned. I do not wish to do that. But if the existing Government is to condone such practices by private enterprise, then it must be condemned for such a policy. It is often alleged that trade unionists and Government employees do not do their fair cut of work; that their record is unfavourable by comparison with what is done by employees in private enterprise. Although this is addressed to me, I would like to quote a letter I received, as an example of the type of work done by people employed in Government enterprise.

Back in 1955, during our term of office, a gantry that led from the coal hopper handling plant to the South Fremantle power station was burnt down. As a result, coal could not be obtained, and we had to resort to oil. The next day was Labour Day; and in my capacity as shop steward, and, because an emergency existed—inasmuch as power could have been cut off not only from the business firms, but also from domestic lighting and so on—it was decided that the men should work on Labour Day. And this they did. I received the following letter from the State Electricity Commission management:—

This Commission very much appreciates your loyal support when called upon to work at very short notice on Labour Day (Monday, 7th March, 1955) whereby it was possible for this Commission to maintain its services to the community irrespective of a very serious fire on the coal handling plant at South Fremantle Power Station.

The object of this note is merely to place on record the appreciation of the Commission for your efforts, which are indicative of the keen sense of responsibility experienced by the employees for the well being of the community.

That is over the signature of Mr. Edmondson, the late lamented manager of the State Electricity Commission. I mention that as indicative of the attitude of the people employed in Government service, and as a direct contradiction of the allegations made that those Government employees are not conscious of their responsibilities.

Finally, I wish to mention the subject of the 17s. 6d. The Minister concerned in this House replied to me tonight in relation to that matter. In the letter I addressed to the Minister I mentioned several points, and requested that he give urgent consideration to seeing that the people in the Fremantle area in particular—because I know of them—be given immediate assistance.

The Minister never replied to my correspondence, despite the fact that Mr. Young, who is 2 I.C. of the Child Welfare Department, intimated to me that he would reply in connection with the withdrawal of the 17s. 6d. I wrote back on the 23rd May and mentioned three cases. I admit that they were married men—deserted husbands—who were in receipt of 17s. 6d., given by our Government for the purpose of helping these fathers who were trying to keep their families together. I mentioned these three cases specifically to Mr. Young, who wrote back and said they would be considered on their merits. That was on the 23rd May.

None of those three cases has received the sympathetic consideration which it was alleged they would be given. In my correspondence I also asked the Minister for immediate assistance to the above families; and I repeat that to the Minister and ask him to give consideration to these requests. I ask him to hasten immediate assistance to those families; and, further, that his officers in Fremantle be given authority to pay the supplementary 17s. 6d. to the cases outlined, and to use their discretion in future to assist any unfortunates similarly circumstanced.

I also mentioned that the Minister's officers at Fremantle are conscientious and capable, and that I felt sure they would not abuse any such authority delegated to them. I still have not had any reply to that request; and those unfortunates have not received any assistance, as was promised by Mr. Young on behalf of the department. Would the Minister responsible inform the officers at Fremantle that they have authority to recommend cases such as I have outlined to him and others which are similarly urgent?

MR. O'CONNOR (North Perth) [8.22]: In this, my maiden speech, I would firstly like to thank members on both sides of the House, and also the officials and staff of Parliament, for the advice, assistance, and information they have given me since my election to the Legislative Assembly. It is very pleasing for a new member to see that, apart from any contention that might exist here, there is no animosity whatever between members on either side of the House. In fact, they mix outside this House in a manner that most people would find difficult to appreciate.

I have also noted with great interest the ability in debate that members on each side of the House possess. I appreciate the high standard set by some of these members, and I sincerely hope that in due course I will be able to attain the high standard set by them.

I do not want to touch on any contentious points tonight, because I do not wish to take advantage of the Opposition in this respect. My congratulations go to the

Premier and his Ministers on their election to the high offices they hold—positions which I know they will fill most capably. Most of all I would like to offer a special word of appreciation to the electors of North Perth for the confidence they have shown in electing me to represent them in this House.

I am fully aware of the responsibility placed on my shoulders, and I take this opportunity of assuring them that I will do all in my power to ensure that my contribution is worth-while. Unlike the electorate of Murchison, which the member representing it tells us is 300,000 square miles in extent, the electorate of North Perth is possibly the smallest in size in Western Australia; although that is not the case so far as population is concerned. It is a fairly old area, almost completely built up. We do not have a great number of sewerage, drainage, or road problems which are so prevalent in outer electorates. There are, however, several portions of the North Perth electorate which have been neglected, and it is about a couple of these that I would like to speak.

One of them is a vacant allotment on the corner of Eton-st. and Seldon-st. This allotment is in one of the nicest portions of the electorate. It is situated where homes are particularly well looked after, and where gardens and lawns are kept neat and tidy.

For a great number of years this allotment has been in a very bad condition. At one stage the residents got together and cleared the scrub from the allotment. They also got rid of the rubbish. But from time to time, trucks come along and drop loads of rubbish there. I sincerely hope that in the near future we will be able to have this cleared properly.

Another area to which I would like to refer is that known as Smith's Lake, which lies between Loftus-st and Charles-st. It is a swampy area, and is fairly well known to most of us here. There is quite a considerable amount of traffic using Loftus-st. and Charles-st. There are people going to and from Scarborough; and some going to other beaches and to Osborne Park, etc. This particular section is a complete eyesore in the electorate. Smith's Lake comprises approximately 60 acres, and is almost completely covered with rushes. When these dry off in the summer they invariably catch fire, almost smoking the residents out of their homes. I have been in touch with the City Council, the Town Planning Department, and the Minister, and it appears that in the near future something will be done about converting this area into a playing field.

Another point on which I would like to touch is the matter of housing in Western Australia. A number of people consider that the housing lag has been overtaken. We know that that is not the case. At the moment there are several thousand applications for State housing and war

service homes. The waiting list is approximately three years, and this creates a great deal of hardship to a number of people who are living in cramped and sub-standard conditions.

It has come to my notice that during the last three years a number of terminating building societies have come into operation in Western Australia. The first loan from one of these societies was made in January, 1957. That society has since built 220 homes in the metropolitan area, approximately 120 of which have been built from Government finance; the balance from moneys obtained from outside sources. I believe that particular society has recently been granted from outside Western Australia, a sum of £250,000, to further develop housing in the next 12 months.

I also believe, following that, that further sums will become available. Last week I noticed in *The Sunday Times* where another of these terminating societies has been granted approximately £80,000 from the State Housing Commission, and about £320,000 from the Bank of Adelaide, and sources in England. I understand there are about 49 of these societies in operation in this State; and if others can be encouraged to endeavour to obtain money from outside sources for building purposes, it will not only help us to overcome our housing lag but it will also assist considerably with any unemployment we might have.

Yesterday, Sir, one of the members in referring to yourself, mentioned that you were opposed by a Country Party member in your district. I am pleased to see you are still with us. He did mention that should you have not won the seat, you would possibly have been applying for social services the next day. I wish to say that I have much more confidence in you than that. I feel your qualifications and ability are such that if you had not won the seat, there would have been a number of people seeking your services immediately, and it would not be necessary for you to collect those social service payments.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on the high position you have achieved, and to wish you every success for the future.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [8.31]: First of all I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment as Speaker of the House. I know you will do your best to uphold the tradition set by those who have gone before you and give fair and impartial decisions in the position in which you are placed.

I now wish to refer to one of the subjects mentioned by the Premier during the election campaign at Carnarvon. It was very pleasing for me to hear him state, when he was at Carnarvon supporting his candidate,