

(3) What is the estimated cost of the second section which has been started

(4) What is the estimated cost when the full scheme is completed, including necessary land resumptions?

(5) What is the total area of land considered necessary adequately to provide the necessary space for the whole buildings?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) £658,000.

(2) Approximately £1,180,000.

(3) £525,000.

(4) and (5) The ultimate capacity has not yet been decided, consequently cost and area cannot be indicated.

HOUSING.

As to Cost of Homes at Hilton Park.

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Chief Secretary:

What was the cost of homes contracted for in 1946 and completed at Hilton Park in 1947, under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The average contract prices for homes built in Hilton Park in 1946 were: April, 1946, two bedroom, £925; three bedroom, £1,090.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [4.36]: At the outset of my remarks, I offer you, Mr. President, my congratulations on your victory at the recent elections and on your re-appointment to the honourable position of President of this Council. I trust that your occupancy of the Chair will be as pleasurable to yourself as I feel it will be of benefit to the members of this House. I would like to offer my congratulations to Sir Frank Gibson and Sir Charles Latham on the honour bestowed upon them by His Majesty the King. Their long record of public service is known not only to the members of this House but throughout the length and breadth of the State. I trust they will both be spared for many years to enjoy their honours and to continue the

good work for which they have been known so favourably for such a long time. I am sure the members of this House will agree that this signal favour has not been conferred upon them undeservedly.

I would like to take this opportunity of paying a tribute to my predecessor in this seat, Sir Hal Colebatch. He is a distinguished citizen of this State and the Commonwealth, and his very long period of public service is recognised not only in Western Australia but throughout the whole of the Commonwealth. I realise the very high responsibility that is laid upon me in succeeding such a distinguished gentleman and I can assure members that it will be my constant aim to prove myself a worthy successor to Sir Hal. I would also like to express my gratitude to hon. members for the very warm welcome they have extended by word and deed towards new members. I am sure that I am speaking for my colleagues in this respect, and in the short time we have been here we have already formed what I feel will be lasting friendships.

I have listened with a deal of interest to the speeches so far delivered on the Address-in-reply. The variety of the speeches has intrigued me and I really wonder just how the Leader of the House will possibly be able to answer all the points covered by those speeches. As one of the members for the Metropolitan Province, I am gratified to know that the Government intends to take advantage of the visit of the British Town Planning Expert, Sir Samuel Abercrombie, and consult him about the long range development of our capital city. As one travels through the outer suburbs, particularly in the northern areas, one is conscious of a problem that will become more urgent every year. I feel that there should be a blue-print for a long range plan for the future extension of Perth. I am glad that the Government is alive to its responsibility to future generations.

The speech of the member for North Province, Mr. Miles, greatly interested me. Certainly the years have not diminished his enthusiasm, and he is to be congratulated upon still calling himself a visionary because I remember that the Old Book says that, where there is no vision, the people perish. During the war period it was my great privilege to be stationed in the great

North-West of our State for a period of six months, and, in the course of my duties, I travelled regularly from Carnarvon to Wyndham, through the back country and round through Marble Bar. Those of us who remember—and all will remember, though in the days of peace we are apt soon to forget the days of war—and know just how we felt about those North-West areas in the dark days of the war, should be able to make a very realistic approach to what I consider is a national No. 1 problem.

We have to remember that the world is shrinking every day. When we realise that we in the city of Perth are only eight hours distant from Broome, we must appreciate that the coming air age brings national responsibilities, and the story told by Mr. Miles of the decrease of population in the North over the last 20 years down to 6,000 or 7,000 at the present time, represents a national calamity. Thinking of the potentialities of those areas, we have to bear in mind that, if it be true that New Guinea is the front door of Australia, then our North-West must be regarded in the same light, because, unless we as a people, either through the State or the Commonwealth, appreciate the urgent need for the rapid development of those areas, we are going to encounter grievous trouble. The Premier should be congratulated upon having made a trip through the northern part of the State and I trust he will make vigorous representations to the Commonwealth Government to ensure that something is done, not on a long range plan, but on a short-term plan, in order that those areas may be populated and made safe for democracy.

In the course of my remarks, I do not propose to cover a wide range of subjects. I wish briefly to refer to some of the problems that formed the main issues during my recent election campaign, and I think that they are topics of interest to the electors, if not of the State, at any rate of the Metropolitan Province. Before dealing with those topics I should like to say a few words on the question of price control. The Metropolitan Province, to my mind, is the nerve centre of the commercial and manufacturing life of the State, and it is has been my privilege for many years to be associated with those interests. In my particular walk of life, I have been in constant touch with business people and I know something of

their reactions in this present contingency. The Government can be assured of the loyal support and co-operation of the business community of our State in the task ahead. The success of State price control is so vital that any possibility of failure cannot be entertained. The business community is anxiously awaiting the announcement of the Government's plan.

Quite recently I had the privilege while in the Eastern States of contacting the State authorities and business interests generally and learning something of the proposed set-up in the various States. After deep consideration, I feel that the Victorian plan is an excellent one and would be very suitable for Western Australia. For the information of members I propose to give a brief outline of the Victorian plan as I believe that that State is moving in the right direction. The name of the first official is decontrol adviser, which to mind, is a very different thing from a price control officer. The decontrol adviser, operating in an honorary capacity, will take the chair at meetings of the decontrol advisory committee, which the adviser will select with the approval of the Minister in charge, namely, Mr. Oldham, the Attorney General of that State. The committee will be advisory to the price decontrol adviser so that its decisions will not necessarily be binding when advice is tendered to the Minister.

The objection to a nominated committee is that Cabinet would be overwhelmed with nominations from organisations and much ill-will would be created as a result of the final selection. The committee is to be fully representative of all interests. It will therefore consist of a manufacturer who is acceptable to the Chamber of Manufactures, a distributor who is acceptable to the Chamber of Commerce, an outstanding retailer, two representatives of rural interests, one of the larger producers such as the graziers and one of the smaller producers such as the dairy farmers, and three consumers' representatives, one of whom will come from the Trades Hall, while the other two will be women chosen respectively with the Liberal and Country Party interests.

The set-up will be as follows: There will be no commodity committees operating under the advisory committee. The co-operation of all trade organisations will be sought and a request made for applications

to be submitted for decontrol or, where that is not immediately possible, for simplification of existing controls. These requests will be submitted to a three-fold test—

(a) Is decontrol sound from a business economics point of view?

(b) Can it be achieved without creating administrative problems in relation to items where continuance of control is essential in the public interests?

(c) Is de-control in the national interests at this stage?

Subsequently, after consideration by the committee and more especially by the member of the committee most closely in touch with the particular problem under review, and after discussion with the prices decontrol adviser and the prices commissioner on the administrative side, advice will be tendered to the Minister. The Minister will then consider the advice from the Cabinet point of view and of policy generally, and will transmit the necessary instructions through to the prices commissioner. The routine therefore will be:—Trade organisations to the prices decontrol advisory committee; from the prices decontrol adviser to the Minister; from the Minister to his administrative officer. It is intended that the prices section will work in Victoria as the prices decontrol branch of the Attorney General's Department and it is proposed that the commissioner will be known as the prices decontrol commissioner.

I trust that our Government will use the wealth of experience that is at its disposal in connection with this vital work, since I believe that on its successful functioning, moving towards ultimate decontrol, lie the future fortunes of this Government. I say that in all seriousness. Never has there been a time when the business interests of Western Australia have been so happy and willing as they are now to co-operate from the point of view of seeing that there is at least a stabilisation of prices with a view to ultimate reduction.

During the elections I mentioned on the platform, many times, the question of Communism. It will be remembered that in the House recently I asked the Government a question concerning the ramifications of Communists in this State. I realise just how careful the Government must be in answering that type of question, though I feel some information could be given not only to

this House, but to our citizens regarding the activities of Communists. I am quite aware that a member in another place has described this as "Red-baiting," but I think that if one considers what is happening in Malaya today, one is justified, as a citizen of the Commonwealth and of Western Australia, in inquiring as to whether we ourselves are free from this pestilent minority which ultimately—and this has been proved in the case of many countries—is able, through apathy and carelessness on the part of law-abiding citizens, to seize control and thus end the liberties of the people.

No-one can possibly be impressed—and I think that goes for men of every political creed—with the Commonwealth Government's attitude on the question of Communism. I believe that whilst it is alive to the danger of Communism, it is prepared to use Communists for political advantage; and until we are honest, until we put the welfare of our country beyond the reach of party politics, I am afraid we are not going to get that straight and undeviating line of conduct that one would expect from freedom-loving citizens. I would like to know whether our own State Government is satisfied with the information received from the Commonwealth as far as Western Australia is concerned. I believe the time has arrived for us to make our citizens aware of the aims and objectives of the Communist Party. They are quite plain and straightforward. They are simply these—

We pledge ourselves to intensify our revolutionary knowledge and practice to better equip ourselves for the historic task now facing us of gaining the people of Western Australia towards the Soviet socialist state.

That statement formed part of a report to a conference of Communists and was unanimously carried by that conference in this State. It is just as well to realise that these Communists have pledged themselves to reach this objective by revolution and, if necessary, by violence.

I suppose most members have read the story of the close-up in Malaya as reported in today's issue of "The West Australian," and I am sure it will be felt that such things could not occur here. But the very fact that they are happening within a few hours of Australia's shores should make us wide awake to the danger that confronts us. I suggest that the question of dealing with

Communists is far beyond a party question. Think of the tremendous ravages they were able to accomplish in Queensland and think of the memorable stand—and I pay a tribute to the Premier of Queensland and his Government on that stand—which was taken! I am not quite sure whether they will not have to pay a much greater price for freedom. I suggest the time has arrived when we, as a freedom-loving people, and when this Government should be prepared to come out in the open and support men of the calibre of the Queensland people who refused to bow down to the few—the minority—who endeavoured to sabotage the whole industrial life of that State.

Twenty years ago the Communist membership was 200. Today, in Australia, on the Communists' own figures, it is 20,000. It must be noted that this party has never believed in large numbers, but has always worked as a minority, influencing and neutralising the rest of the citizens in the particular States in which they have worked. That point should be taken well to heart by citizens of this State. I feel that the Government should do something to give our people some idea of the fact that Communism is not only a menace in the Eastern States, but that these individuals are firmly planted in Western Australia.

I desire to speak for a few moments on industrial relations, and if I might be pardoned for doing so—bearing in mind the remarks of my friend Mr. Bennetts who spoke of the iron curtain that fell around Sir Hal Colebatch and the reactionary forces that arrived in this Chamber—I would like to give reasons why I consider I am at least fairly competent to talk on the subject of industrial relations. I was born in an artisan home where the eternal struggle to live was a very real one and where the family's budget was vital every week. I was almost one of the foundation members of the furniture trade union in Perth, and that might surprise Mr. Bennetts. In the development of my life I have never lost the contact or the point of view of the working man, and as the years have gone by it has been my privilege to lead the employers' organisations of Perth—and I honestly believe that these organisations are not quite as black as they have been painted.

I would like hon. members to cast their minds back to the dark days of the

war emergency when the Commonwealth Government called upon every citizen in the Commonwealth to do everything in his power to co-operate with the Government to resist a common enemy. I am sure that every member in this Chamber took part in that co-operation. The war, by the grace of God, some outside assistance and plus our own efforts, was ultimately won, and I say quite definitely that the contribution made by the businessmen of Australia towards the solution of the immense problems which faced Australia at that time, was of immeasurable value. Apart from some odd letters which some people ultimately received from the various Ministers, what has been the net result of that effort? I say advisedly that every sense of co-operation, every spark of unity, has been destroyed by a subsequent appeal by the Commonwealth Government to class prejudice. I am not defending employers, but I wish to give members a correct and true picture of the situation as I know it.

Let me inform the House that I lived in industrial England before unions possessed any power at all, and I know the tyranny of the employers under those conditions. I could go on, but I do not want to weary the House, concerning the individual bad employer of the Georgian days. I have been in Australia for many years and I have seen the wonderful job done by the industrial labour organisations, but since the war we have lost our sense of values. It appears to me that the extra power given to the Commonwealth Government during the war years, has been used not for Australia as a whole, but for a section of the people, and in endeavouring to serve that section, it has failed miserably. Every rise of the basic wage is followed by a rise in the cost of living. I believe we must get back to basic principles and if the employers admit the evil that existed in the old days, so surely the modern trade union should remember this fact instead of creating a tyranny. It is time we called it a day. We must do this because any rise in monetary wages means increased costs to the workers, and that is doing much to cause an inflationary spiral.

We cannot depart from the old gospel of work and high wages. I believe that men should be able to sell their labour on the best market, but once having sold that

labour, the time has arrived for them to deliver the goods. I do think that there is a clarion call not only to the employing interests of this State, but also to the Labour leaders, to be honest and come right out and tell the world that the only way there can be any real improvement in the living standard is by an increased effort, a united effort, and co-operation between management and staff.

I do not know whether any members have been fortunate enough to peruse a publication entitled "Thinking Aloud," and read in it an article on "The Gospel of Work," as written by A. L. Rowse, who is a well-known historian and a Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford. This gentleman has also been a Labour candidate for the British Parliament on several occasions, and is a very staunch member of the Labour Party. I wish to read one or two extracts because I believe his remarks apply to Australia just as much as to England. He wrote—

For a long time now, I have had this article, with its message, on my conscience. For I know in my bones, as someone who comes from a working class family, has always kept contact with working people, and is deeply anxious that they should do well by the country in the day of their power, that there is something wrong with them and their attitude towards work. It is not, I believe, beyond remedy; but it is very important that someone, above all one of their own should speak out and tell them the truth, with sincerity and simplicity.

There is a most enlightening parallel here to what happened in Russia after the Soviet Revolution. Since we are caught in the difficulties involved in the transition to a new social order, there is every reason why we should profit from other people's experience and avoid the mistakes that cost them so much suffering. For the first four years after the revolution (1917-22), Lenin kept to the programme of complete "wartime communism" which was partly inherited from the controls of wartime and partly due to rushing through the policy of nationalisation regardless of consequences.

The consequences were terrible. Industry went cranking down to complete disorganisation and decay; paralysis afflicted the whole of enterprise; incentive to work was lost throughout the economic system; famine stepped in; hundreds of thousands died of want. Even later, under Stalin, it is the upsetting and damaging of the monetary incentive to work—the simplest and most natural barometer for enterprise—that has necessitated such brutal and barbarous compulsion to work, the forced labour gangs, the concentration camps, the knocking of people on the head, and all the rest of it. And though a lot of that is simply in the Russian tradition—their his-

tory has been full of it—there is a most important lesson for the Labour Movement and its Governments to learn here, if we are to avoid the slow-cranking down of the economic machine to inefficiency and decay with all its consequences in a declining standard of living for all the community. What is the point of all the bright blue prints for the future if this is what is going to happen? The lesson of the Russian Revolution—and we have their experience before us as a lesson: If you monkey about with the monetary incentive to work, if you discourage enterprise and even things up to such an extent that nobody wants to do anything, you set going a process of economic inefficiency and decline with dire consequences—such as only the most drastic remedies can arrest.

The final quotation I shall read from the article refers to trade union restrictions and is as follows:—

One other lesson we can learn from their experience—as to the role of trade unions in a Labour State. Under a socialist, or a semi-socialist economy, there is no good purpose served by the restrictive practices of trade unionism. Their whole aim should be to increase production, since their possession of political power ensures that the surpluses made do not appreciably accrue to private interests any more: they are distributed by social taxation, in social services, etc., back to the people. There is, therefore, no moral justification whatever for their restricting production in any way or by any practices whatsoever; they ultimately impoverish themselves and lessen the whole community's standard of life . . .

And so I think that, whether we like it or not, if we wish to avoid the dreadful recession that we hear so much about, and which has been quoted by our own Prime Minister, the sooner we can get rid of his false value and everyone in his own particular line adopts a keen sense of duty, the better it will be for Australia. We must have a widespread recognition of the community of interest which all sections have in policies leading to improvements in efficiency, the enlargement of our national income and a just distribution of the products of industry. This can be achieved only by an appreciation of actual responsibility by employer and employee towards one another. There must be a generous measure of trust and confidence between employer, management and employee. It was Viscount Cecil who said on one occasion—

Under modern conditions industrial success can only be achieved if all concerned put their whole energy, mental and physical, intellectual and muscular into the common undertaking. They must work as partners and not as rivals.

I now wish to pay a tribute to the commonsense of the mass of workers in this State, and of the employers because as we view Western Australia in relation to the rest of the Commonwealth, we have to admit that we have been fortunately free from industrial strikes of any magnitude. We have only had one strike that we could even talk about, and sometimes I think it would be just as well if we tried to visualise why it is that we in Western Australia have been so fortunate. I consider it is because of the commonsense of the working man and the general attitude of the employers. The more one mixes with the working man the more one becomes convinced of his inherent good sense and decency. However, there is something else to which full marks should be given for our freedom from industrial strife. I refer to the State Arbitration Court.

Since the introduction of the Arbitration Act, credit for which must be given to a Labour Government, there has been built up in this State a record of arbitration second to none in the Commonwealth of Australia, and that has been made possible by the attitude of employees and employers. The employer, it will be conceded, occasionally demonstrates that he has some good points. If we are going back to the time when the Commonwealth Arbitration Court decreed the provision of a 40-hour week, it will be remembered that it was quite competent for the employers here to insist that every separate industrial union should make application to the local Arbitration Court in due course to have that provision applied to its section. The attitude of the employers, however, in common with that of the present Liberal-Country Party Government, was to say to the employees, "You shall have the 40-hour week." That spirit of sweet reasonableness, we felt, and we still feel, should do much to cement the cordial relationships between Capital and Labour. We also agreed to the provisions for annual leave, which involved an extra 14 days on the then period, as well as to the increased margins which first of all applied in the metal trades and subsequently, by agreement, were conceded in every other skilled industry throughout Western Australia.

That was possible because we have, I believe, an Arbitration Court in this State that is functioning as is no other tribunal of that nature in Australia today. We must

realise that on our State Arbitration Court bench we have the youngest personnel of any tribunal in any other part of Australia. That suggests that we have men on the bench who realise we are living in fluid times, and they are able to adjust themselves to changing conditions. Because of their ability to conform quickly to changing trends, I believe they have saved this State quite a lot of trouble. We are also blessed in that regard by the best regulated apprenticeship system operating in the Commonwealth. For that we have to thank the original Industrial Arbitration Act, plus the development of appropriate regulations as the years have gone by, together with the attitude of those who have sat in the Arbitration Court. To them we can be thankful for the development of a very wonderful system of arbitration.

I believe that if we could only realise the advantages of the worker and the employer getting together, and if we could only appreciate just how far we can proceed by that means in getting down to basic principles in endeavouring to apply a little more than the ordinarily acknowledged rate of work today, particularly in view of the tremendous problems facing Australia in these times, we would derive infinite advantage. There is no doubt that under any system of inflation it is the working man who will suffer. I believe something should be done in the matter of get-together conferences, such as have been suggested on many occasions by the Prime Minister of Australia. Failing that, I consider that with the ramifications of Commonwealth awards, much good could be derived from free and frank discussions between Labour leaders and the representatives of the employers in this State.

On the question of our railways, after a searching inquiry and the conclusions of the Royal Commission that investigated our system here have been made known, it is the intention of the Government to bring down legislation dealing with the situation. In those circumstances, I feel the present is not the opportune time for lengthy statement on the subject by any private member. On the other hand, bearing in mind the financial state of our railways and their past history, I trust that the Government will see that in any suggested increases in freights and charges, which have already been forecast in His

Excellency's Speech, the provision made in that regard will be commensurate with the seriousness of the position. Naturally, on such a matter we will possibly not see eye to eye with the people who live in the country areas.

However, what are the facts of the case, from the financial point of view? It is well over 30 years since there was any adjustment of freights and charges. If we had been prepared to run our businesses on the basis of no adjustment for a period of 30 years, we would possibly have been out of business altogether 28 years ago. Seeing that we are living in a period when primary production is prospering and high prices prevail, surely it is not too much to expect that the Government will see to it that the present awful trend in our public finance is stemmed to some extent and the necessary adjustments made to that end! Should the State fall on evil days once more, we shall assuredly have to go to the aid of anyone living in the country districts and possibly we shall have to remit charges under such conditions. I suggest to the Government, therefore, that if it is to do anything in the way of increasing freights and charges, the alterations shall be commensurate with the present seriousness of the railway financial position.

I shall finish my remarks on the note of private enterprise. I believe in private enterprise. I am a product of private enterprise. One of the tragedies of these modern days is the fact that no young person in this year, 1948, can start in business and make a success of it under the conditions that exist today, as was possible for me in 1912. We have lost so many privileges, which have been taken from us one at a time, that if one were to regard the sum total of them, one would get a shock at the realisation of what has been lost. Whatever the Government attempts in the way of commercial enterprises, the private business man could do better. I view with alarm any departure on the part of the present or any other Government in the direction of embarking upon commercial undertakings. I believe the whole administration under Government control prejudices any chance of success in the running of a trading concern. I still believe—I may be a pessimist—that notwithstanding the Royal Commission's conclusions with respect to the Wundowie project, time will

tell and that the Government, if not very careful, will be involved in a much greater financial loss than it ever anticipated. I feel that at this stage I should sound that note of warning. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.26]: May I be permitted Mr. President, to express my personal appreciation of the fact that you have been restored to comparatively good health, that you were successful in being returned as one of the representatives of the North-East Province, and that you were unanimously elected as President of this Chamber? I feel it is a tribute that this House paid to you in electing you to your present position unanimously. During the short time I have been in this Chamber I have always found you to be most tolerant and to recognise, and allow for, the shortcomings of members. At the same time you have always endeavoured to carry out the business of this House with the dignity and decorum that are so essential. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the newly-elected members and I trust their stay in the House will be most pleasurable to them.

My congratulations also go to those members who were again returned at the last election, and also to Sir Frank Gibson and Sir Charles Latham respecting the honour that has been bestowed upon them. I desire to associate myself with the eulogistic remarks that have been made concerning them.

We have heard a great deal recently about price-fixing. In the Lieut.-Governor's Speech I notice that reference is made to the fact that, following upon the withdrawal of the Commonwealth Government from price fixation, we are to have placed before us certain legislation for the purpose of controlling prices. I believe it will be necessary for some time to come to fix the prices of certain essential commodities until supplies in that regard at least reach some equality as between the supply and the demand. Due to the fact that this is not a large manufacturing State, it will be necessary to import certain products and manufactured goods from the Eastern States. Bearing in mind the provisions—I think I am right in referring to the particular section—of Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution,