

beings. In England there has been a tremendous development in the provision of amenities for workers. It is a common thing for an organisation of a reasonable size to have its own playing fields and its own recreation halls; and while in Western Australia we have not developed amenities to that extent, I believe the time has come when we must look to these things and treat employees as part of a great co-operative movement—because, after all, that is what industry really is and the very small return which comes from any turnover is only the result of efficient management, plus the efforts of the men within the factories.

So I am hoping that we in these days, recognising the great responsibility that is ours, and realising just how short the time really is as far as Australia is concerned, will get together and endeavour to appreciate just where we stand concerning these big questions. It is only by complete co-operation between management and labour that we can really be successful. Before I sit down I would like to say one word to private enterprise. I am a great believer in private enterprise and the phase I notice in these de-valued days is that the man who in 1939 believed in private enterprise is today called a reactionary. I want to sound a note of warning to private enterprise. We must take up our responsibilities. In days when the inflationary spiral is just around the corner, it may well pay private enterprise to pause a little and be prepared to sacrifice in order that it may continue, because I believe that private enterprise is on trial at the moment. I believe it will prove itself, as it has done before, capable of dealing with this emergency; but I feel that it is my duty in my position to say to private enterprise, "Be careful and be efficient."

**HON. J. McI. THOMSON** (South) [5.25]: I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for and appreciation of the cordial welcome I have received as a new member in this House. I also desire to express appreciation of the sentiments voiced with regard to the hon. member whom I have had the privilege to succeed. I am indeed proud to have followed my father to this House and I know that my pride and pleasure are shared by him. I am very conscious of his high standing in the political life of Western Australia and of the responsibilities that devolve upon me as his successor to prove myself worthy of following him.

I can assure you, Mr. President, and the House, that it will be my honest endeavour to prove as worthy a member as he was in the years he served the State. I remember when at school, attending this House on many occasions and having the privilege of sitting in the President's and

Speaker's galleries in the two Houses. It is pleasing today to see that there are still one or two members in this Chamber who were here then, in the early 1920's, and I am proud to have the privilege of working with them.

The major problem that is facing the country areas today is that of water supply. Unless we provide sufficient water for the country districts the prosperity of the State will be largely affected. I trust that a bold and vigorous policy will be adopted by the Government to ensure that the people in the dry areas will be adequately served. I was pleased to read in the Press, over the week-end, the statement of the Minister for Works regarding the work that is being undertaken in the Lake Grace, Newdegate and Lake Biddy areas. I hope that along with these operations the Government will be able to and will use all its endeavours to utilise to the fullest extent the various rock catchments in this State.

I was particularly pleased to notice that the Minister referred to the Kent district. This area has problems peculiar to itself inasmuch as it is not a good holding area. Therefore it is necessary to bore for the water which has been detected by diviners and of which I understand there is a large quantity. I trust the Government will not allow the matter of cost to be taken into consideration when dealing with this problem. When we realise that at this time of the year the dam in North Pingrup has a depth of only 2ft. 6in. and summer is nearly upon us, it behoves us to look for ways and means whereby we can increase supplies in the coming years.

Next I shall refer to the extension of the water supply from Collie to Narrogin. I would like to see a pipeline laid, simultaneously, to Pingelly and Katanning. The urgency of that work will be apparent when it is realised how inadequate is the water supply of those two centres. Although the position at Katanning is not quite as bad as that at Pingelly, in the coming summer both those towns will be extremely short of water and the position will not improve under present conditions. The matter of water supply to country areas immediately brings to mind the question of sewerage.

Water supply and sewerage should go hand in hand in our country districts and I trust that a sewerage scheme for our country towns will be implemented, thus enabling us to do away with the present most unhygienic method of disposal. More consideration should be given to the proper utilisation of the waste matter from country sewerage systems. I would draw attention to an address by Mr. J. C. Jessop, in the Country Hour, in Victoria recently. Mr. Jessop, who is chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, said, with reference to the farm at Werribee—

The farm soil had been found to be deficient in mineral and organic matter. Over the past 26 years, due to the sewage, the phosphates in the soil have increased six times and the nitrates four times. There had also been an increase in other minerals and elements. Before this experiment the farm carried one sheep to 1½ to 2 acres. It now carried 14 sheep to the acre and the mortality rate in cattle and sheep was below one per cent. per annum. The 450 residents on the farm were among the healthiest in the State. The outstanding lesson to be learnt from the experiment was that apparent waste could be converted into wealth.

I feel that we are not using this valuable waste to the best advantage at present and I trust that, when these long needed sewerage schemes are put in hand in country towns the waste matter will be utilised to the advantage of the primary producers in the areas concerned. Housing is a question of great importance today and I congratulate the Government on its honest endeavour to increase the supply of building materials. It is indeed pleasing to note that the Government has been prepared to import into Western Australia—although at increased cost—cement, iron, steel, and, in more recent weeks, asbestos, in an effort to meet the long felt need for greater supplies of building materials. I believe that the lifting of permits for dwellings of up to 12½ squares was a step in the right direction, and, although it will not solve the problem of shortage of supplies I think the re-establishment of private enterprise in the building industry is a move—as in any other industry—for the betterment and advantage of the community as a whole.

The lack of adequate supplies of timber is causing both builders and the Government grave concern today. I refer particularly to seasoned timber. Scantling is available, although one has to place an order well ahead in order to be able to complete a contract on schedule, but seasoned timber for flooring, mouldings and joinery is almost unobtainable. I believe that the whole timber position should be investigated by a Royal Commission. Kiln dried timber is extremely difficult to obtain and an investigation such as I have suggested would be of benefit to the State. I was pleased last night to hear the remarks of Dr. Hislop with regard to institutions for the care of our chronically sick and aged people.

Up to the present we have not, in this State, paid much attention to making provision for the aged or chronically sick in country areas. Although perhaps it should not be solely the responsibility of the Government, I strongly urge the establishment of institutions in our larger country towns so that the unfortunates concerned

may be cared for within reasonable distance of their homes and families, instead of having to be brought to the metropolitan area for attention. I can speak from personal experience in this regard, as it was my duty to try to arrange accommodation in such a case. The difficulties that I encountered were extreme. I was eventually forced to accept accommodation, for this case, about which I was not very happy. However, I was able to secure accommodation in the Home of Peace. I cannot speak too highly in praise of the magnificent work that such institutions are doing for our aged and chronically sick, but, nevertheless, I reiterate that provision should be made for such people nearer to their homes.

Although I know that the increased cost of living is a dangerous subject, I must deal briefly with the ever-increasing rise in prices, as sooner or later we must face up to the position. Too often have we asked how long is this trend to last. I have no solution to offer. On the one hand we hear it said that wages should be pegged, and on the other hand it is said that the cost of living should be pegged. This problem should be investigated by an expert body, in the form of a Royal Commission, which would be entirely free from party bias. I believe that from the deliberations of a Royal Commission suggestions should be directed to the proper quarter. That would help to prevent the persistent increase in costs, which is of no benefit to anyone, and particularly the wage earner.

Hon. G. Bennetts: You will have the support of the Labour Party in any endeavour to keep prices down.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You have one convert already.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I am pleased to hear that. I congratulate the Government on putting into effect its policy of decentralisation, as exemplified in some of our outports today. I refer particularly to Albany. Although progress is slow—to the minds of many people—with the arrival of the dredge that is now on its way, I feel sure that rapid progress will be made and that the scheme for the development of that port will take shape in the near future. It is gratifying to know that the Albany Harbour Board, as now constituted, is doing splendid work and has cut down the time for the discharge of cargo and its distribution to country areas. From the financial point of view the board is doing far better than was envisaged by many people. I trust that the potentialities of Albany from a defence point of view have been fully realised by the powers that be and that the harbour will be ready for any eventualities that may arise in the present state of the world.

This brings me to another point. I sincerely hope the Commonwealth Government, together with the State Government, will reconsider the question of a broad gauge railway linking Fremantle with Kalgoorlie and that it will traverse the areas surrounding Corrigin and Southern Cross, along the lines which have been recommended by the Royal Commission which recently took evidence on this matter. Apart from its value in wartime, I consider that the construction of this railway line would, in peacetime, serve a useful purpose in opening up and developing the areas I have mentioned.

Referring to the tourist traffic for a moment, I sincerely hope the Government will, with the assistance of Commonwealth money, be able to develop it more than has been done in the past. It is an extremely profitable business, and I trust that the subsidy, which I understand has been granted to some local governing bodies, will be extended to all of them because I consider that the development of the tourist traffic is a matter that is far beyond the resources of any local governing body. I hope, therefore, that this money will be forthcoming to enable this tourist business to be properly developed to the advantage of the State in general.

I wish to express my appreciation for the bus service which has been provided by the Government to serve the Ravens-thorpe, Hopetoun and Lake Grace areas. This is a commendable step by the Railway Department. I hope that it will prove to be all that the people have long desired in that part of the State. I would also like to commend the Honorary Minister for Agriculture for the manner in which he has dealt with the question of soil erosion, which presents another major problem in Western Australia. I trust that as a result of the efforts being made today, we shall be able to see the benefits in the near future which will, of course, be of great advantage to the agricultural areas.

In conclusion, I thank members for their patient hearing. I realise that they fully appreciate my feelings today because they have all experienced the ordeal of making a maiden speech in this House. I will terminate my remarks by saying that we live in a State which offers to its people and to all those migrants who are entering it, great opportunities. There are still many benefits which this State can confer on its people, and it is up to each and every one of us, in our own individual way, to work and strive for their achievement. This will require faith, perseverance and a will to work. By such means we shall achieve our rightful place in this, our Commonwealth of Australia. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North)** [5.51]: In supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, I wish to refer briefly to some remarks made by Mr. Hearn regarding the North Province and which I wish to correct. I do not think the hon. member was quite conversant with his subject. For instance, he suggested that the Labour Government has never done anything for the North and to refute this statement I will quote an extract from the report on the North-West of Western Australia by a committee appointed by the Government to investigate measures necessary to promote the development of the North-West, which was published in 1945, wherein it says:—

#### Debt Adjustments.

Following on the recommendations made by the Royal Commission, the Government in 1941 appointed a Debt Adjustments Committee to carry out the agreement reached between the Stock and Wool-broking firms, one of the Associated Banks, the Pastoralists' Association, and the Government. A representative of each was appointed on the Committee which is known as the Pastoral Industry Debt Adjustment Advisory Committee. The whole of the adjustments made during the four years it has been in operation was made voluntarily.

Since 1936 the Government, on the recommendation of the Pastoral Appraisal Board, has granted relief from the payment of pastoral lease rents.

It was the Willcock Labour Government that achieved that. It goes on to say—

The figures for the first four years of this voluntary scheme, and the rent remissions, tell a remarkable story of assistance. They are as follows:—

Number of stations in respect of which assistance was given = 66.

	£
Amount written off by secured creditors .....	386,932
Relief granted under Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act .....	36,813
Rent on Leases remitted	94,051
Government contribution of interest .....	49,237
<b>Total Relief for 66 stations .....</b>	<b>567,033</b>

That is something at least, which the Labour Government, in those years, did do to assist the North-West.

Hon. L. Craig: The stock firms also wrote off some large amounts.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is correct, but here is one which the Government wrote off—

Rent on Leases remitted	£94,051
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