

called themselves the Liberal Party. I am not slinging off, but why change the name at different periods? This Labour Party was born in adversity. It was only because of the unjust conditions prevailing that the struggles of the early pioneers of the Labour movement made it possible for every man in this Commonwealth to have a vote.

It was only through the sacrifices of the men who fought for trade unionism, and were prepared to go to gaol for their rights, that trade unionism has become such a force in the public life of the Commonwealth to-day, and the same remarks apply to the political aspect of the Australian Labour Party. While we have made mistakes, and we may be misrepresented by the daily Press and some of our opponents, and at times some of our leaders have left us and gone over to the enemy, the Labour movement has gone forward since its inception in 1890. There must be some substance and foundation in it when it can withstand all the onslaughts made on it from time to time.

On motion by Hon. E. Nulsen, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 26th August, 1948.

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

QUESTIONS.

SHIPPING, INTERSTATE.

As to Tonnage of Cargo from Eastern States.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping:

What is the tonnage of cargo which arrived at Fremantle from other States—

(a) for the six months ended the 31st March, 1947;

(b) for the six months ended the 30th June, 1948?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

For the member's information, the following figures were the tonnage for the year for Fremantle alone:—

Year ended the 31st March, 1947—
391,614 tons.

Year ended the 31st March, 1948—
401,384 tons.

Increase of 9,770 tons.

Notwithstanding strikes and hold-ups.

POLICE.

As to Transfer of Detective-Sergeant R. Kendall.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

What conclusion did Mr. H. D. Moseley, P.M., arrive at in connection with his inquiry into the transfer of Detective-Sergeant R. Kendall from the C.I.B. to the uniformed branch of the Police Force?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

That reasonable grounds existed for the transfer.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Wharf Charges at Port Hedland, etc.

Mr. HEGNEY asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Is he aware that wharf charges at Port Hedland have been increased?

(2) Will he supply details of such increases?

(3) Are any other northern ports similarly affected?

(4) Will he accede to the request of residents of the Port Hedland district for a reduction of such charges?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Wharf charges at Port Hedland have been brought into line with those applying at other outports controlled by the Commissioner of Railways. The amended scale of charges was published in the "Government Gazette" on the 13th August, 1948.

(3) No.

(4) Such a request, if made, will be considered.

WESTRALIAN HOTELS, LTD.

As to Position of Minister for Police.

Mr. HEGNEY asked the Premier:

(1) Is it a fact that Hon. Hubert Stanley Wyborn Parker, M.L.C., Minister for Police, is a director of Westralian Hotels, Ltd.?

(2) Are the police required to administer the Licensing Act?

(3) Is he aware that members of the public consider that the Minister should relinquish one of the positions mentioned in question (1)?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Licensing Act is administered by the Attorney General and/or the Licensing Bench.

(3) No. The only reference to the subject has been that of the present member for Pilbara.

MILK.

As to Board's Action in Fixing Price.

Mr. SHEARN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Did the Milk Board in the last fixation of the price to be paid to the producer do so in accordance with the provisions of the Act?

(2) Did the Board inquire into the cost of distribution of milk, or did it simply adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner in this regard?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The recommendations of the Royal Commissioner were adopted by the board.

RAILWAYS.

As to Late Running of Trains, Engine Failures, etc.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that owing to engine failure the train service on the eastern suburbs was dislocated on Wednesday afternoon for several hours?

(2) Will he have an inquiry made into the frequent late running of trains, engine failures and general decline in railway service in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. There were some delays to a few eastern suburban trains due to damaged switch points at Midland Junction, and a temporary failure of the coal handling plant at the East Perth locomotive depot.

(2) A departmental committee is at present investigating the matter.

SWAN RIVER.

As to Declaring Building Line, Causeway to Guildford.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) In view of the fact that there are areas of high ground on the banks of the Swan River between the Causeway and Guildford which are becoming increasingly likely to be built on, will he give the result of his inquiry into having a building line declared along the river bank between the Causeway and Guildford for the purpose of reserving the area for future beautification, and the possible construction of a riverside road and park?

(2) If it is not practical for the Government to declare a building line, can he suggest alternative means of achieving this result?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Government has no power to declare a building line along the bank of the Swan River between the Causeway and Guildford for the purposes stated in the question, but local governing authorities already have power to make resumptions for roads and reservations, while by-laws under the Town Planning Act provide for certain reservations in future subdivisions.

(2) Any comprehensive scheme would entail legislation for the purpose.

CEMENT WORKS.*As to Dust Nuisance at Rivervale.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Has the Health Department made any investigations to ascertain if the cement works at Rivervale have taken the steps recommended by the Health Department to minimise or control the distribution of cement dust?

(2) If the answer to question (1) is "yes," will he advise the result of the investigations?

(3) If the answer is "no," will he have such an investigation made?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) and (3) The investigation is proceeding.

HOUSING.*As to Two-unit Homes Erected at Middle Swan.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Does he agree with the statement of the member for Middle Swan that "dozens of two-unit families have been provided with houses in the Middle Swan electorate"?

(2) How many two-unit families have been supplied with houses in the Middle Swan electorate by the State Housing Commission during the term of the present Government?

(3) If the statement of the member for Middle Swan above referred to is correct, what is the explanation for the disproportionate allocation of two-unit dwellings which the member's statement has revealed?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

(1) No.

(2) 11.

(3) Answered by (1) and (2).

As to Papers.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: Will he permit me to peruse the papers in connection with the 11 cases mentioned by him in reply to my question.

The MINISTER replied:

Yes, I will agree to that. I could have

supplied further information in detail, but answered the question shortly and frankly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Twelfth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. NULSEN (Kanowna) [4.35]: I have listened attentively during the debate to speakers of various categories. In this Chamber one hears a great deal on the practical side of things that should be helpful to the community generally and I often wonder whether Parliament should have greater renown, from an educational point of view, than even our University. From my experience I would call Parliament the "Multi-versity" of Western Australia.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The "diversity."

Hon. E. NULSEN: It is true that sometimes we have a diversity of views expressed, but we do get down to the practical side of things. There is a great field of study available here for a psychologist in examining the attitudes of mind of Ministers and members generally. It would also prove a fruitful field for a psychiatrist, who would have the opportunity to analyse the mental faculties of the representatives of the people of the State. Here we see men as they are normally to be seen, but we also see them in an elevated mental state. Sometimes they are grave and sometimes they rise to superciliousness. In this House we get a fair view of the affairs of State, and receive our information direct from the horse's mouth.

On the 10th September, 1947, I introduced a Bill making provision for a flat rate to be charged for water throughout the State. It was an equalisation scheme, whereby no-one would pay more for water in the country than is paid in the metropolitan area. I feel that the plan was a good one for the State as it proposed to increase the metropolitan area water rate slightly and decrease the country rate considerably. An increase of about 9d. per thousand gallons in the metropolitan area would be sufficient to provide the Government with the same amount of money as it is getting at present, or was receiving at the time when I introduced the Bill. I pointed out that

80 per cent. of the water controlled by the Government is consumed in the metropolitan area and on that basis the increase would be fair and equitable because nine-tenths of the primary wealth of this State is produced in the country areas.

Country people should not be called upon to pay more for their water than is charged in the metropolitan area because the people near the city are favourably situated. In any case, water for domestic use, gardens and lawns should be on a flat rate basis for the State, and I consider that any person who owns a quarter of an acre of land and a house is entitled to receive his water at a price no higher than that charged to people living in the metropolitan area. On the hustings the President of the Legislative Council supported my contention and I hope that he intends to voice that view now that he has been re-elected. The member for Canning, too, in a recent speech, favoured a flat rate for water charges. He was a resident on the Goldfields for many years and knows the value of water in those areas. Water is something we cannot do without and it is next in importance to the air we breathe.

The member for Beverley, by interjection, stated that he was in accord with this view, as is the member for Mt. Marshall under certain conditions. There are various organisations, apart from those I mentioned in my speech twelve months ago, that agree with the idea, and I find that the C.W.A. is favourably disposed towards it for domestic use. I should also like to see the principle extended to the mines because it would increase their life and keep down costs. The main advantage of a flat rate would be that it would keep people in the country for, if something is not done to entice them to stay there, they will drift to the city. According to statistics, out of a population of about 503,000 in Western Australia, 272,000 persons are resident in the capital city. Why? Because there are more amenities and greater facilities! I trust that members representing country districts will at least support me in my efforts to have a flat rate charged per thousand gallons of water throughout the State, especially for domestic purposes. People in the country are entitled to some amenities and water would be a great help in that direction.

I live in the metropolitan area and it would not worry me a scrap if the cost of water I use were increased by a shilling per thousand gallons. For that matter, I do not think it would worry any other member of the House if such were the case and it meant a reduction of .90 per cent. in the cost of water to people in country districts. If the country people are given this concession it will help to keep them there and in turn produce more of the real wealth of the country and assist the development of this huge State of ours. Unfortunately, the Bill I brought down last year was disallowed on a constitutional point. I intend to introduce another measure this session for the same purpose and in an endeavour to assist the people in the country. I trust that this time I shall be successful and that the Bill will not be ruled out of order.

On behalf of the residents in the outlying areas, I advocated a flat charge rate for petrol and oil throughout the State. It is absurd that these people, who do not use petrol or oil unless it is necessary, should be called upon to pay such high prices, whereas in the metropolitan area considerable quantities of petrol are used for enjoyment purposes. The price is as much as one shilling or two shillings per gallon more in the country than it is in the city. I learned recently—and probably the member for Geraldton may correct me—that people pay more for petrol in Geraldton than they do in Perth. Yet the tankers call at Geraldton before they arrive at Fremantle. The people at Bunbury, Albany and Esperance also have to pay more for their petrol than do those in the metropolitan area.

An endeavour should be made to get the petrol companies to equalise the burden as far as the price of petrol and oil is concerned in this State. Some people will say—in fact I read in the paper myself—that this is not possible. It only needs simple arithmetic and it could be worked out. The Singer Sewing Machine Company, the patent medicine firms and the sugar refining companies of Queensland have been able to calculate flat rates for their commodities throughout Australia. Sugar is the same price in the capital cities of all States, and if a mathematician can work those figures out, the petrol companies should be able to calculate on a similar basis for a flat rate through-

out the State. A slight calculation has been made because the same price is charged for petrol in Fremantle as it is at Midland Junction, Armadale, Kalamunda and other parts of the hills. If it can be done on a small scale it can also be done on a larger scale, and I do not see any reason why the people in the country should be called upon to make the sacrifice of paying so much extra for their petrol.

I trust that the Government may be able to do something to influence the various petrol companies in an endeavour to have a calculation made on the basis I have outlined, because petrol and oil are necessary for the development of the State. Years ago I advocated a flat rate for railrage on a 100-mile basis, and I think that could still be done. Representing a country constituency, I feel that I should bring such matters before Parliament so that they can be given further consideration. If these things are considered it will help to carry out the policy of the Country Party and the Labour Party—although it originated from the Labour Party—namely, the policy of decentralisation.

Decentralisation is merely a farce at present—a delusion and a snare. Western Australia was developed on the basis of centralisation, yet we talk about decentralisation! For a start, the cost of power is much lower in the metropolitan area than that at which it can be produced in the country areas and made available to the people there. That very fact prevents the establishment of large industries in the rural districts. Unfortunately, the Perth City Council is obtaining its electric current for .75d. per unit and we could not produce current at that price in the country. The Fremantle Municipal Council purchases its supplies at .85d. and the Midland Junction Municipal Railway Workshops at .80d. It will be seen, therefore, that unless we do something to help the people in the rural areas, the position will become simply farcical. In the Press recently I read a statement by a man who said—

Generations of members of Parliament of all parties have given lip service to the idea of decentralisation, but meanwhile the trend of industry and population to the city areas goes on unchecked.

Unfortunately that statement is only too true. I hope that further consideration will

be given to the country areas in this respect so that we shall be able to render effective the plank in our platform regarding decentralisation. The suggestion has been advanced both by the Premier and by the Minister for Railways that there will be increases in railway fares and freights. I say right here that I shall oppose any such move to the utmost of my ability.

The Minister for Railways: You had better have a yarn with Mr. Chifley.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I do not care what Mr. Chifley or anyone else says: I will not see the people in the country districts sacrificed any more in the matter of transport charges. Members can refer to "Hansard" for 1942 and they will see that on the 10th December of that year, the member for Nedlands said that he was certainly opposed to the 12½ per cent. increase in railway charges suggested by Mr. P. C. Raynor, the Deputy Secretary for Railways. The hon. member accused me at the time of machination and of being a complete student of the ethics of Machiavelli. He told me that Machiavelli was not an admirable person and not a desirable one to follow.

Mr. Smith: He was one of the greatest men that ever lived.

Hon. E. NULSEN: He was certainly a able man and his writings probably hold good today with respect to members of Parliament throughout the world. Machiavelli, who was born in 1469 and died in 1527, was a prolific writer. He was the author of many historical books as well as some on the science of war. He was a great diplomat and a most able man. I do not really feel ashamed that I should be accused of following him, and certainly Machiavelli was very candid in his criticism of Parliament in those days. I had been asked by the member for Nedlands the following question:—

Is the statement correct which was made by Mr. P. C. Raynor, the Deputy Secretary of the W.A. Government Railways, on the 6th November last before the Commonwealth Grants Commission, namely, that an all-round increase of 12½ per cent. in railway charges was proposed?

My answer to that question was—

The statement made to the Grants Commission by the Deputy Secretary of Railways was made without reference to the Government and has not been considered by the Government.

That was quite fair. At that time the member for Nedlands definitely opposed any increase in railway charges.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He might do so now.

Hon. E. NULSEN: The then member for Avon, Mr. Boyle, also opposed it and I think the Acting Premier also did so.

The Acting Premier: How far do you say the railway deficit must go before you would change your point of view?

Hon. E. NULSEN: What, may I ask—

The Acting Premier: Answer my question first, and then I will answer yours.

Hon. E. NULSEN: Let me tell the Acting Premier—

The Acting Premier: How big must the railway deficit grow before you would agree to change your point of view?

Hon. E. NULSEN: My point of view will never change if the country areas are to be penalised. As a matter of fact, the railways have paid very handsomely. If they had received the increment they were entitled to on account of the increased price of land and the further development of the country, the Commissioner of Railways would have had any amount of money to enable him to provide the State with a 4ft. 8½in. gauge railway.

The Acting Premier: Why did you not carry out some of these excellent reforms when you were in office?

Hon. E. NULSEN: That has always been my opinion, and the Acting Premier knows that is so.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That makes him chew his gum a bit more!

The Acting Premier: What action was taken by you to give effect to your views? I did not hear of any.

Hon. E. NULSEN: When I was Minister for Railways, the war had just started. We had only one thing to do then and that was to win the war.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Which we did handsomely.

Hon. E. NULSEN: No action could be taken at the time with regard to the railways, and that was the reason why nothing was done by me as Minister.

The Acting Premier: Did you ever lay down any plans to enable it to be done in the post-war period?

Hon. A. H. Panton: There was no post-war period when he was Minister.

The Acting Premier: Did you have any plans?

Hon. E. NULSEN: If the Acting Premier will peruse "Hansard," he will see what action the Government took in those days. I have always definitely opposed the increase of railway charges.

The Acting Premier: And you laid down no plans to relieve the railway position.

Hon. E. NULSEN: We had a war to contend with in those days, and very little could be done. The Labour Party was in opposition to any increase in railway charges and the Acting Premier himself said—

In view of the condition of the railways at present and unless they are put on a better basis, I cannot support any increase in freights.

The same attitude was adopted, I think, by the Minister for Railways.

Hon. A. H. Panton: In fact, the Minister for Railways was bitter and savage about it.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I have always supported the standardisation of our railways. One reason for that is that they have been built on very flimsy foundations, and there is only one way in which they can be made really effective. I refer to the standardisation of railway gauges throughout Australia. I have supported that policy right through. When I attended a conference that was held on the 29th and 30th May, 1945, to discuss the standardisation of Australian railway gauges, I supported the proposal under certain conditions. At that time we had to consider the financial aspect, although the chairman of the conference said he would like to hear our views without bringing the question of finance into it. Of course that was not possible. Despite that, we supported standardisation in principle. I shall read what I said at the conference and shall do so because of rumours that have been circulated. In fact, I have received a letter acquainting me of the statements that have been made. The rumour is to the effect that the Labour Government and I as Minister for Railways did not support the standardisation of railway gauges. At the conference I happened to be the first speaker, which was something unusual for a Canberra conference because, Western Australia being

one of the less populous States, its representative generally speaks next to last. I was reported as follows:—

Mr. Nulsen: First, let me say, Mr. Chairman, that I find it difficult to dissociate the financial considerations from any discussion of this matter. I certainly shall be frank. We are not opposed to the standardisation of railway gauges, but Western Australia, as a State, is not in a position financially to advocate standardisation; because, even if the Commonwealth proposes to carry out the scheme as a whole, Western Australia must still remain almost in an impossible position from the financial point of view.

It is estimated that the section from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle will cost a little over £9,500,000, and that upkeep, exclusive of interest, will amount to over £300,000 annually. At the same time, we shall not receive a corresponding increase of revenue. Further, in view of our isolated position, we fear that the completion of this section will not draw any substantial increase of business over the trans-Australian line, because, in any case, we cannot compete with seaborne freight, which is very much lower. Therefore, we cannot anticipate increased transport on this line.

Secondly, we must remember that Western Australia is an importing rather than an exporting State. Thus, the probability is that there would be no backloading from our end of the line. Of course, the project appears in a totally different light so far as Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland are concerned. They are contiguous States and the elimination of the break of gauge at their respective borders would benefit them financially. However, in the case of Western Australia, our isolation prohibits recommendation of the scheme from a financial point of view.

I repeat that, whilst we would be involved in an additional expenditure at the rate of £300,000 annually on the upkeep of the section from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, we would not receive a corresponding increase of revenue. The number of miles to be converted would be 419, but, at the same time, we would still retain the 3ft. 6in. gauge even if we had this section of 4ft. 8½in. I want the conference to understand that thoroughly. From a defence point of view standardisation is warranted; but we think that it is a Commonwealth obligation, and that the people of Australia as a whole should contribute towards the cost on a per capita basis. If that were so there would be no quarrel as to who should pay and who should not pay.

Another important aspect, as Sir Harold points out in his report, is that if we are going to have standardisation we must have modernisation also. We must modernise our rollingstock and services. However, it has been implied that in this respect the New South Wales railways will be the pattern. From what I have learned the coaches in New South Wales are not of the latest type. They are 9ft. 9in. wide and 72ft. long, whereas in

America the width of coaches is 10ft. 4in. and the length 85ft. Those points also must be considered.

I repeat that Western Australia is not opposed to standardisation. However, it is a question of the ability of the State to pay. As I read Sir Harold's report, standardisation is not so much a matter of economics as a matter of defence. Therefore, I repeat that standardisation must be a national undertaking, and, therefore, the obligation of the Commonwealth.

The Chairman: We are anxious that at this stage our consideration of this project should be divorced from the financial considerations involved, because that aspect will be considered later. However, I take it that Western Australia is not opposed to the plan submitted by Sir Harold Clapp.

Mr. Nulsen: No.

The Chairman: You say also that standardisation is a defence matter, and, therefore, a matter for the Commonwealth. The question as to how the responsibility is to be spread will be a subject for later discussions. I agree with Mr. Nulsen that we must not approach this project purely from a State angle, but must regard it as a national work, in which the responsibility must be national.

Mr. Nulsen: I am in agreement with Sir Harold Clapp's report.

Consequently, I consider that the standardisation of gauges would be a good proposition for this State in that it would provide an excellent opportunity to establish our system on a reasonably good basis, but that seems to be the only way we can possibly do it.

Now I wish to say a few words about the prospectors. These men have done a wonderfully good job for the State. They have gone into the bush and lived under adverse conditions and have located many profitable shows. Their work has led to the population of the State being increased at a considerable rate. But for goldmining, the population would not be nearly as large, nor would the development of the State have been as great. To show how the the population has increased, I may mention that in 1893 the total was 60,000; by 1901, following the discovery of gold, it had risen to 181,779; in 1903, the total was 216,197, and by 1913 it had reached 307,702. Members will thus realise that in the 20 years following the discovery of gold, the population of the State increased by more than 500 per cent. If only that rate of progress could be maintained by the opening up of more auriferous country, Australia would probably have a population of

40,000,000 or 50,000,000 and this State a population of 10,000,000 or 20,000,000 people.

The allowance paid to prospectors is only 30s. a week, which is quite insufficient. I should like the Government to consider the question of increasing that amount by at least £1 per week and thus give these men, who have done such good work for the State, a reasonable amount of money to live on. We need more gold. If we could increase the production of gold, we could meet the dollar position much more easily. The price of gold is too low, relative to the cost of other commodities. All other goods have increased in price and many of the requisites of mining have advanced by more than 100 per cent., and yet the price of gold has not increased by more than 2.7 per cent. Hence the difficulties confronting the industry.

If countries like Southern Rhodesia and Canada can assist their goldmining industries, we should be able to do likewise. The State Government ought to be able to do something in this direction, even if it means increasing the deficit. I believe it would be better for the State if the deficit were increased, so long as genuine work were done for the development of the country. We need a general subsidy for the whole of the industry, not a bare subsidy for a few mines on low-grade ores that otherwise could not continue operations. Thousands of tons of ore of three and four dwts. per ton have been surveyed and unless there is a general subsidy it will have to remain untreated and so the gold will be lost. I feel we should do something in that regard. Russia is producing immense quantities of the precious metal. According to figures which I have seen in the Press she is mining about half of the world's gold production. In 1947, her output was between 16,000,000 and 18,000,000 ozs., the total world production being between 37,000,000 and 39,000,000 ozs. Members will therefore see the wonderful filip that gold has been to Russia and how she must realise its value, because gold is accepted by any country. How wonderful it would be if we could be producing 17,000,000 or 18,000,000 ozs. of gold per year!

The Honorary Minister: Does Russia subsidise the mines?

Hon. E. NULSEN: I do not know, but Russia is producing gold and gives every en-

couragement possible to the industry. This State has produced 51,928,607 fine ozs. valued at £294,708,832, and this achievement ought to be sufficient to warrant further development. Australia has produced over £800,000,000 worth of gold and this production has helped to increase our population far more quickly than otherwise would have been the case.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Tell us how much it cost to produce that gold.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I do not know. No doubt the cost of the production of that gold was high; but on the other hand, if we went into the cost of the production of each bushel of wheat grown in Australia, we should find that would be high also. Yet wheat has contributed to our real wealth and we cannot do without it.

I wish now to say a few words about our wheatgrowers, who have an important decision to make as to whether they will favour Commonwealth or State control of wheat-marketing. I was pleased to read in the Press that the wheatgrowers desire the Commonwealth scheme.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They are waking up to the State Government.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I am pleased because I feel the State Government has not the necessary power. The Commonwealth Government has an over-riding power in regard to exports. I desire to quote a leading article appearing in "The West Australian" of the 7th August. I think it puts the position fairly and gives us food for thought. The newspaper states:-

The problem as we see it is that while a vote for Commonwealth marketing will give the Commonwealth complete authority over wheat disposal, a vote for State marketing cannot give the State the same power though it would reinforce the State's powers of resistance towards some aspect of Federal policy. Nothing that wheatgrowers can do can divest the Commonwealth of the right to control exports and enter into sale contracts not only for wheat itself but for the products of wheat as a stockfood, notably pigments and eggs. Whatever a State pool may wish to do in the marketing of wheat will have to conform to over-riding Federal authority and policy during the life of the present Federal Government. The States, if they assume control of wheatmarketing, may not be able to do all that they would like to do to lift the average returns of wheatgrowers; indeed both State and Commonwealth discretion in the marketing of wheat must be limited in some important

respects by Commonwealth agreements and contracts operating now.

I am in agreement with that portion of the leading article. It would be no use for Western Australian farmers to join a pool if they do not get complete control; and, as far as I am concerned, it is my desire not to hinder the farmers in any way. The farmers should be sure of what they are doing. It might be all right for a farmer whose property is unencumbered and who has all the plant and machinery he requires and whose farm is in a good district with an assured rainfall. He could produce wheat, I should say, at half the cost of a farmer whose property is encumbered and at half the cost of the men now coming into the industry under the rehabilitation scheme. The latter are the people we should care for.

Of about 7,500 farmers in this State, probably only 1,000 would be really prosperous. Even some with encumbered properties are in a good position at present on account of the high prices they have been obtaining for their wheat. They have had fairly good crops and have been able to pay their interest of £12 10s. a month and buy a motorcar; but a time will come when they will not be so well off, when they will have no surplus cash, and then they will find themselves in difficulty. If they enter into any scheme for marketing, they should have a feeling of certainty that they would be helped over that difficulty. I now wish to read a letter from the Australian Wheat Growers' Federation, dated the 22nd July of this year and addressed to me. It is as follows:—

At a special conference of the Australian Wheat Growers' Federation held in Canberra on July 12 and 13, 1948, the following resolution was carried:—

After considering the new wheat proposals submitted to the Agricultural Council on July 12, 1948, the A.W.F. recommends the Commonwealth and State Governments to pass the necessary complementary legislation to enable this plan to be implemented. We require, firstly, one over-all Commonwealth central marketing authority to have the sole control over export sales; therefore, we point out the following desirable improvements to be made to the plan and reserve the right to seek amendments to the plan when it becomes law:—

(1) That the stock feed quantity be limited to 15 per cent. of the exportable surplus, and to be sold at the home consumption price. If any quantity is required

over this figure, the Governments to subsidise the balance to the average export realisation of that pool, and other coarse grains bear their share of the stock feed market.

I agree with that proposal. I see no reason why the farmers should not make a full contribution to the subsidiary industries that are living upon their industry, and the suggested 15 per cent. appears to me to be equitable. Of course, I know the argument will be advanced that 15 per cent. would be small if the farmers had a bad crop; but that would be bad for the wheatgrower as well as for the poultry and pig raisers. The letter continues—

(2) An authority to be set up to assess the farmer's equity in the reserve fund if he is arbitrarily forced out of production.

That is fair. A person having an equity in an insurance is entitled to receive it; similarly, a farmer who has an equity in a reserve fund such as this should be entitled to get it, even if he has been forced off his farm. The letter continues—

(3) The plan to be reviewed before 1952 with a view to its continuance for a further five years.

That also is quite fair. Continuing—

The Australian Wheat Growers' Federation expresses its appreciation that all the State Governments represented at the Agricultural Council agreed to recommend acceptance of these proposals to their respective Governments.

We feel sure you will realise that, in order to establish some administrative authority to handle the coming harvest, no further delay can take place. The Federation therefore desires that you will take all possible steps to have this legislation implemented as quickly as possible.

The letter is signed by T. C. Stott, general secretary. I think that when the wheatgrowers of this State received that letter it must have been an incentive to them, and the leading article in "The West Australian" also gave them food for thought. I was very pleased indeed that the wheatgrowers agreed to support the Commonwealth wheat pool.

The Minister for Railways: They have not agreed.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Honorary Minister for Agriculture has said it is hard for him to understand the mentality of the many farmers who want the Commonwealth plan.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I do not want to be rude, but I feel that probably he might be looking into the future, because in all these things one must have a future and not just a present. One must look ahead.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That leading article told the farmers that a vote for a State marketing system would be a step towards free marketing and I think that scared the farmers into preferring the Commonwealth scheme.

Hon. E. NULSEN: There might be something in that, too. I am afraid my time is almost up. I did intend to say a lot about the treeless plain, but time does not permit. I am glad a survey is being made and that an experimental plot is to be put on the plain. I am very pleased that the Premier has promised to have a look at it for himself. Lights have been installed on the jetty at Esperance. I would like to ask the Minister for Railways whether he has given consideration to the establishment of a diesel coach service. I think he did promise such a service and I hope it will be provided. When I was Minister for Railways I considered—and the member for Murchison when he held that office and also the Commissioner for Railways concurred—that as soon as there was a diesel coach available it should be used on the Esperance line. Is that likely?

The Minister for Railways: I hope so.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I would have liked to say something about pyrites and salt, but I will leave those things for discussion on the Estimates.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Geraldton) [5.23]: I do not think I can commence my speech better than by giving pride of place to that subject of State-wide importance—water. In view of the remarks made on this matter by the member for Kanowna and by many other members, especially from country districts, my comments will be brief. There is an old saying, "A lot of water has gone under the bridge since then." As a native of this State, the fault I have had to find with administrations over the years since responsible Government was proclaimed is that they have failed to conserve the water that the heavens have been benevolent enough to send to us. In many parts of the State we

have a very short supply of water; but in many other parts there is a fairly decent average rainfall. Administrations in the past, however, have failed to take the necessary measures to conserve water and to stop it from running into the sea—water that has been so very necessary to enable people to live and industries to succeed. Other members have mentioned the matter and I think it is something worth mentioning.

It was refreshing indeed to find a member representing a metropolitan constituency directing the attention of the Government to the need for doing something in connection with water charges. I refer to the remarks of the member for Canning. Now that we have a new Government in power whose policy is decentralisation, something will be expected of it in connection with this very important matter. I wait with a great deal of confidence the action to be taken by the Government to prove that it has the interests of country districts at heart in the matter of water supplies. I am not forgetting the eternal necessity to balance the budget, the ever-present need to keep down deficits. But, as the member for Kanowna said, in a big undeveloped State like this, the Government, while exercising care in the matter of expenditure, should, when convinced that the spending of money is justified to develop the resources of the State, adopt a bold and courageous policy.

The late general manager of the Midland Railway Company gave a great exhibition of what can be done to augment supplies of water by spilling bitumen about; and I think a little of this has been done at the Wicherina Reservoir at Geraldton and has been found well worth while. That is nothing new; but I hope the Government will continue, if supplies are available, to lay down bitumen so as to increase the run-off of water into the reservoirs. Reading a recent "Hansard," I came across a statement by the Hon. G. W. Miles, one of the three representatives of the North in another place; and I was astounded to find that, according to him, the people in Port Hedland are paying 30s. per 1,000 gallons for water. If Mr. Miles is correct, his statement proves how very necessary it is that the Government should give attention to these matters. If

we want people to go to outback places and develop the State's resources, we must see to it that the necessities of life are made available to them at prices comparable with those charged to people in the metropolitan area.

Another matter of State-wide importance upon which I would touch is the goldmining industry. I cannot claim to have a very great knowledge of it; but I have lived on the Eastern Goldfields and in the Murchison for some years, and I come from a town which has profited very largely from the goldmining industry. The member for York stated last night that he thought wheat was responsible for the circulation of more money than was any other industry. That may or may not be so, but we all appreciate the circulation of money for which the goldmining industry has been responsible; and I cannot understand the attitude of the Prime Minister in connection with this industry, which means so much to Western Australia. I would have thought that a man with his experience would know of the number of small mining townships where people are putting up a brave fight and are worthy of assistance. I cannot understand his refusal to be more generous to us in that regard.

I read in the paper the other day—I hope it is not true, because I have been there and know what a sturdy, independent lot the people are—that there is a danger of the little township of Reedy closing down. It is only a year or so ago when we saw a similar happening at Youanmi, a place 60 miles from the railway, that was battling along with a happy and contented lot of people. The town just vanished. What has become of the people? They had their little homes there, and as far as one could see they were contented and happy and were putting up a great fight against all sorts of disabilities. An industry that maintains people of that sort is worthy of every assistance. If wishing could do any good, the Prime Minister would certainly grant assistance to keep this State-wide industry going. Not only does the Commonwealth Government stand over us in regard to gold, which plays an important part in our monetary system, but it takes a lot from us in connection with our base metals. I wonder why? The Northampton lead mining field is an old one. At present the in-

dustry there is being resuscitated. I have here a cutting from the "Mining Journal of Western Australia," as follows:—

Present fixed prices for home consumption requirements are costing the Australian base metal industry millions a year. This is because the Australian prices have been fixed at levels which bear no relation to existing world parities. . . . At present the local fixed selling price of lead is £90 a ton under British parity.

It seems that when we have the things which will enable us to establish an industry, the Commonwealth Government, for some inexplicable reason, imposes these charges.

The next subject I want briefly to refer to is that of fish. The previous Government was considering doing something in this matter. I have a circular which states that the member for Leederville, who was acting as Minister for Fisheries, was in touch with the association, but nothing was done.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I had two conferences.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I know the present Minister has given consideration to the subject. Although I am aware the Government dislikes establishing further boards, I would like to point out that the board functioning in Queensland is giving, so it is stated, entire satisfaction to all parties concerned in the fishing industry. If we can get a board which will give us results of that sort, even though the establishment of boards is not popular, the sooner we have it the better, because the price of fish, as was mentioned the other evening, is absolutely beyond the reach of the ordinary householder. I have here the "Fisheries Newsletter," a very good publication, put out by the Commonwealth Director of Fisheries, Department of Commerce and Agriculture. It has this to say about South Australia—

A £250,000 programme for the extension of fishing facilities in South Australia was announced by the Premier (Mr. Playford) in a broadcast on June 18.

The same publication tells us what South Africa is doing in connection with canned rock lobster tails, an industry that has assumed some proportions in Western Australia.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: How long would you like the price of fish controlled?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not understand the interjection.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You are talking of setting up a board to control the price of fish. For how long would you like the price to be controlled?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I would like a board set up that would give the results we are told have been achieved by the Queensland board, which has given entire satisfaction to all concerned. I would like to go there and look into the matter. We are advised by responsible people in the fishing industry here that that is so. I think the Government should make some inquiries to see whether that is correct, and, if it is, a board should be set up to ensure that everyone in the industry gets a fair deal.

Mr. Hegney: Do you know whether the Queensland board fixes prices?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: A further part of this "Fisheries Newsletter" mentions the wonderful development that has taken place in South Africa in connection with canned rock lobster tails, a commodity in which we are doing a fair business at Geraldton and the Abrolhos Islands. The extract is rather lengthy, so I will not read it but let it wait until the Estimates. The other evening reference was made to a publication called "Thinking Ahead," which most of us received. I read with great interest an article from it that was referred to in this Chamber, and I want now to make a short quotation from it—

The first point to realise is that money is not itself wealth.

The writer goes on to say—

Finally in most countries one metal—gold—became the basis of money. While the world was undeveloped this proved a reasonable enough medium, but with the coming of the machine age, production enormously increased, work more specialised, and some additional medium became necessary. It was at this point that a rather interesting development took place which was very well summarised by Professor Dennis Robertson in an address he gave to the Lombard Association in October, 1946. Addressing an audience composed mainly of bankers, he said—

"I think you started—in the 17th century, so far as this country goes—by being quite respectable folk with honorable intentions. You borrowed money from people (everybody thought they knew what money was in those days, nice hard lumps of gold and silver, not boiled wood pulp or even cupro-nickel)—you borrowed money from people who did not want to use it and lent it out to people who did. But very soon you made, in rapid succession,

two demoralising discoveries. First, you discovered the receipt forms which you handed out were themselves being treated as money, so that a person in possession of one of your receipt forms could in effect spend money which he had already lent to you. Secondly, you discovered that in this respect of acceptability there was very little difference between an actual form of receipt and a general promise to pay. Thus you were led on to commit felony or treason—I am not sure which—anyway, to invade the King's prerogative of fleecing his loving subjects by the creation of money out of nothing. And in the course of a couple of centuries in which your wings had been clipped from time to time in various ways, your money had become what it still is today, by far the largest element in the money supply of the country."

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I think you must have been having an early morning session with the member for Murchison.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The article continues:—

It is perhaps only fair to state that Professor Robertson went on to say that "this monstrous piece of impertinence" (on the part of the banks) "was undoubtedly on balance highly beneficial to society," a view with which to a limited extent I can agree. At the same time it seems rather fantastic at this stage in our history that we should continue with a monetary system based on such a development. Surely today we have learned that the issue of money should be so regulated to ensure that all that is produced and imported in exchange for exports can be consumed. We must establish the principle that money must bear an exact relationship to real wealth (i.e., goods and services).

Those remarks were not made by an hon. member on my left, but by Mr. Edward Holloway, Hon. Directing Secretary of the Economic Reform Club, London.

Mr. Marshall: And not by the member for Murchison, either.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That is so. When we find men of his calibre taking up the cudgels on behalf of monetary reform, it is up to us to take notice. I wonder how many members have read a book, which I did some years ago? I refer to the book called "The Beloved Physician" which is in the Parliamentary library. This beloved physician was a Dr. Mackenzie, who afterwards became Sir James Mackenzie. When he started as a Scots boy he had to walk miles to school, as his parents were not very well off. He eventually obtained his degree and became a doctor. Attending the case of a woman who lost her life made such an

impression on him that he vowed he would make a study of heart diseases. He did so and won out in the end, after a long and bitter struggle. He had to overcome not the indifference and ignorance of the general public, but the hostile criticism of members of his own profession.

When one hears people who are qualified to speak on monetary reform asking what are the qualifications of certain other people who have not made a study of the subject, my mind goes back to that book, "The Beloved Physician." This week I read another book called "The Fight for Life," which I obtained from the Parliamentary library. It contains the story of a surgeon named Elliot, which is similar to that of Sir James Mackenzie. After years of bitter opposition he won out and established the principles for which he had been fighting for so long. It is time that we, in this country, did something about the monetary system that has us by the throat. In "The West Australian" of the 19th August last there appeared a paragraph headed, "Alberta Government Wins Again." It reads as follows:—

The 13-year-old Social Credit Government of Alberta Province swept into its fourth term of office when returns from yesterday's election showed that the party had won at least 42 of the Legislature's 57 seats. In a plebiscite held with the elections on the question of Government ownership of the power industry, returns from over half the districts indicate that the proposal was favoured by voters.

That party has been in power in Alberta for some years. I have here a publication called "Alberta Now." It covers the period from 1935 to 1945 and gives some of the accomplishments of the Government of that State. The National Parliament of the Dominion of Canada stands in much the same relation to the Parliament of Alberta as the Commonwealth Parliament stands to that of the State of Western Australia. If such things can be accomplished in Alberta, we might try to achieve something similar in this State.

Mr. Marshall: Our Constitution permits greater liberties in monetary reform than does the Constitution of the Dominion of Canada.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: In this publication there appears the following list of achievements:—

Reduced Provincial Debt of Alberta; Reduced Provincial Income Tax; Abolished the

Provincial Sales Tax; Augmented the Dominion Old Age Pension; Increased Mineral Production; Rehabilitated Farmers, making them prosperous; Instituted Treasury Branches to augment purchasing power.

That is a record of achievement.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That would almost shock the Stuart Kings.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: This afternoon members bid farewell, as a branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association, to the Leader of the Opposition on the eve of his departure to London to take part in a meeting of that body. I wonder whether this Government, which is in such a desperate financial position, would ask the Leader of the Opposition—in whom we all have the greatest confidence—to go to Alberta, after the meeting of the Empire Parliamentary Association is over, and inquire personally into the system obtaining there. On his return he could convey to the Government details of that system, thus enabling us to achieve something similar to what has been done by that Government.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I suggest to the hon. member that he should read the report on Social Credit in Alberta prepared for the Government of Tasmania by K. J. Binns, M.A. and Bachelor of Commerce.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I would be glad to read it. With the Commonwealth Government standing over the States as it is, we will soon be starved out of existence. I wish now to refer to the recommendations of the Commissioner who recently inquired into native affairs in this State, and I wonder whether an attempt will be made to give effect to some of them. I have here a leading article from "The West Australian" in 1944, and another in 1948. That newspaper circulates beyond the boundaries of Western Australia and it is not nice to read, in such a journal, that the Government of the State is so lax in its administration of native affairs as to give rise to the comments contained in the articles I have mentioned. I draw the attention of the House to some comments made by the Commissioner who inquired into native affairs about conditions for which there is not the slightest justification. The article published in "The West Australian" of the 28th July last reads:—

Moore River native settlement also needed reorganisation. Its outlook from an institutional point of view was at present hopeless.

Without a change of policy, it was a waste of money and effort.

Delinquents, indigents and natives suffering from venereal disease mixed quite freely, with the result that many schoolgirls had become pregnant. In view of the ample opportunity for sexual intercourse during daylight hours, it was incongruous to lock girls in dormitories at night. Any good done through schooling was immediately nullified by the children's contact with the undesirable adult population of the institution. Moore River should be for adult natives only. Its buildings were sadly decayed and neglected. Sanitation and hygiene did not exist. Bedding in the children's dormitories was filthy. Drainage, sanitation and laundry facilities were primitive and sometimes disgraceful.

Surely it is a poor administration that cannot remedy such a state of affairs as that. Probably the majority of the people in this State read in the Press that the Prime Minister had turned down a suggestion by our Minister for Housing and Native Affairs that the Commonwealth should take some share in raising the money necessary to enable us to do our duty towards the natives.

I come next to some remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the Housing Commission. I pencilled some notes, which I think are fairly accurate, and this is what the Leader of the Opposition had to say—

The Leader of the Opposition expressed his disappointment at any suggestion of the necessity for a Royal Commission to inquire into housing, and he hoped that the recommendations would very soon be forgotten.

I entirely disagree with his remarks. When the member for East Perth moved for the appointment of the Royal Commission, I was the only other speaker on that occasion. I spoke very briefly and stated that if the hon. member could prove only 50 per cent. of his charges, he would have justified the appointment of the Royal Commission. The member proved more than 50 per cent. of his charges but, fortunately for the service and the staff, he was unable to prove the most serious of his statements, and that was the charge of bribery and corruption, or something of that nature.

Housing is a matter with which all members are very concerned, for we know the unhappiness and misery that the shortage of homes has caused to thousands of our people, and, with the exception of the remarks of the member for East Perth and

the brief reference I quoted from the Leader of the Opposition, I have not heard any other member refer to the Royal Commissioner's report. I was very disappointed to read the following remark made by the Royal Commissioner. It is on page 14 of the report, and he says—

The value to be attached to Mr. Graham's statements may, I feel, be fairly assessed by adopting his own words, which he used when giving evidence before the Royal Commission—and the following remarks are purported to be made by the member for East Perth—

Frankly, I do not think my statements in Parliament are to be taken any notice of.

Mr. Graham: By the Royal Commission, was the obvious meaning.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I was astounded when I read that, because what is the use of a member making serious charges in this House, and before a Royal Commission, if when invited to prove his case, he makes a statement of that type? I cannot understand it. Of course, if the hon. member's explanation is correct, there may be some reason for it.

Mr. Graham: That was subsequently borne out by legal opinion when the Royal Commissioner could not take into consideration statements made in Parliament.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I cannot understand the hon. member making a statement such as he did before the Royal Commissioner. I quote again from the report of the Royal Commission, for I think this is important and merits attention—

Pride of place must, I consider, be given to the case of the two Byfields. These were among the first cases mentioned to me and they have received frequent comment since.

Mr. Byfield is the Assistant Under Treasurer is occupying a responsible position and, Housing Commission, and the allocation of homes in this case was not to the credit of the gentlemen concerned. The Commissioner goes on to state—

In both of the above cases I have formed a definite conclusion that in the granting of a priority to Noel Byfield and in the allocation of a tenancy house to his brother, the members of the Commission have been greatly influenced by their friendship and close association with the Assistant Under Treasurer.

That is a regrettable finding by the Royal Commissioner. The Assistant Under Treasurer is occupying a responsible position and, instead of protecting the Commission, he

did something which, in the opinion of the Royal Commissioner, was distinctly not right. If such people do not play the game, how can we expect the thousands of people clamouring for homes to do so?

I come now to the recommendations of the Commissioner, and I ask the Government what it intends to do about them? The recommendations are—

1. Members of the State Housing Commission not to enter into any contracts with the Commission.

2. Appointment of a full-time chairman; or, re-organisation of chief executive position and appointment to that position of one with wide administrative experience.

3. All senior officers to be permanent public servants.

Those are three of the recommendations. Another recommendation was that there should be publication in the Press of monthly statements of permits granted and tenancy houses allocated. Three public servants form the principal part of what is known as the personnel of the Housing Commission. In 1946, in another place, I adopted exactly the same stand as I am taking today. The Housing Commission was originally known as the Workers' Homes Board, and the job is such a big one and the matter so important from the point of view of the happiness of the people, that it deserves a full-time chief.

I do not know Mr. Reid very well, but I have the greatest respect and admiration for his ability, and I realise how difficult the position must be for the Premier, who is in close contact with such a highly-placed civil servant. Mr. Reid and Mr. Clare are very able men. Mr. Harler is employed in the Wyndham Meat Works, although I do not know him. But the Government, having appointed a Royal Commission, should pay some attention to its recommendations. I, like other members, am in frequent touch with the staff of the Housing Commission, and, in my opinion, as a staff, they are carrying out their duties excellently. It is a difficult job, and warrants either a full-time commissioner or a board of three. I do not know whether the appointment of a returned soldier and a woman to the State Housing Commission has shown any results or not, but I consider that a man with organising ability, who is familiar with all branches of the building trade, should be appointed as commissioner to do the job.

This week I spoke to one of my electors from the Geraldton district. He had written to the State Housing Commission on the 29th June and did not receive a reply until the 18th August. No reply at all! This man has a number of contracts for houses in Geraldton and, on inquiring at the State Housing Commission office, I was advised that a reply was being forwarded. That supports my argument that this job should be taken over and re-organised. It is a full-time job for one or more persons.

I was glad to read in this morning's paper that the Government has decided to do something for the poor unfortunate people who are placed in orphanages conducted by the various churches. I am reminded of the remarks by Mr. Roy Peterkin, a man who formerly held a very good position in the Education Department but resigned in order to take over the management of one of these homes. He adopted that course because of his love of children. On his return from the Eastern States recently he made an appeal to the Government to extend more assistance to these institutions, and from this morning's issue of "The West Australian" we learn that the Government has taken action in the matter. In 1939 the member for South Fremantle gave utterance to much the same sentiment when he appealed to the Labour Government, of which, of course, he was a supporter, to do a bit more for these unfortunate children.

From time to time we have heard of the misery and unhappiness caused by some people who advocated that others should be settled on land that was possibly not all it might have been. Some of it was too far away from the nearest railway and without water supplies. So it is that with very great hesitation one advocates the opening up of new areas. The Government of today has shown that it is willing and able to open up parts of the State not now developed. Those so far referred to have been mostly in the Great Southern.

I desire to draw the attention of the Government, as I already have with regard to Ministers individually, to an area in the north. The locality I refer to is not in the Geraldton electorate, and I have spoken to the member for Greenough who raises no objection to my referring to it. The country I have in mind is north of the Balla-Dart-

moor area. The land there has been classified and I think would provide a living for a considerable number of men if water and road transport facilities were made available. The classification was undertaken by Dr. Teakle who in his report, which the Minister has made available to me, stated that the total area subdivided was 378,000 acres, of which 205,000 were classified as first-class, 125,000 as second-class, and 48,000 as third-class.

I am keeping in touch with the Government regarding the matter, and I hope I shall be able to prevail upon Ministers to investigate the proposition with a view to providing facilities that must be made available to settlers who are established there, and also to induce further settlement. That is necessary if they are to do any good. From memory, I think there are 13 settlers in the Balla-Dartmoor area, which is 30 miles from an existing railway. The men went there just before the 1914 drought and, without the benefit of assistance from the Agricultural Bank or from other sources, have made good. All the original settlers are there today and all are comfortably off. Despite the drought years and the period of poor prices, they are still on their blocks and there is not one deserted or vacant holding in the district. In view of what has been accomplished there, I am entitled to ask the Government to do something regarding the area just immediately north of the district.

On motion by Mr. May, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 31st August, 1948.

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

QUESTION.

PUBLIC WORKS.

As to Undertakings in Goldfields Area.

Hon. H. K. WATSON (for Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham) asked the Honorary Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many P.W.D. jobs have been approved by this Government in the last 18 months for the goldfields area?

(2) How many of these jobs have been completed?

(3) In view of the private construction going on and not suffering from restriction of supplies, what reason has been advanced for the non-completion of the remainder?

(4) What investigation is being made or action taken to remove the cause for the reluctance of contractors to tender in this area?

(5) What was the cost of the trench dug by the department for the laying of pipes to the Kalgoorlie Abattoirs?

(6) What is the total amount involved in P.W.D. projects (approved) in this goldfields area?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) During the last 12 months the works set out hereunder have been approved in the Eastern Goldfields area. —

(a) Works in hand over £300	23
(b) Works in hand under £300	85
(c) Works which have been approved, and for which tenders have not yet been invited or for which reasonable tenders have not been received	11

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(2) (a) Over £300	9
(b) Under £300	42

51

(3) Shortage of materials and labour is the reason given by contractors for delay in completion of works.

(4) Inquiries have been made, and these indicate that the reluctance of contractors to tender for Government work in this area is due to the amount of private work avail-